

FS News: Celebration Time!

Summer Edition

Hi Folks ~

In the past 30 days, we've celebrated Juneteenth, Father's Day, Solstice and Independence Day. I hope your celebration season was invigorating and tasty!

These valued traditions bring us together and give our lives meaning.

Solstice is a real event, of course. The earth and sun are always in the dance that changes our seasons. Humans have recognized and celebrated the change of seasons for thousands of years. Solstice is both the longest and the shortest day of the year. On June 21st(ish) solstice marks the start of summer in the northern hemisphere and the start of winter in the southern hemisphere. Six months later, the seasons switch: December marks the start of summer in the southern hemisphere and the beginning of winter in the northern. This is because the earth spins on a tilted axis (about 23.5 degrees). As it rotates around the sun over the course of the year, the tilt causes one hemisphere or the other to become closer to the sun. Spring and fall begin on the equinox (around Sept 23rd and March 21st) when the sun is the closest to the equator, and the length of the day and the night are nearly the same everywhere on the planet.

The next oldest tradition that we celebrate is the United States' independence from England, 250 years ago. Our claim of ownership of this part of the planet goes back a little further, though, to the 1500's, when Spain, France and England all decided they could simply assume the ownership of land that was already inhabited from the furthest point in the south to the frozen lands in the north. Between 70 and 110 million people lived in the "Americas" when Europeans first arrived...and 80 – 90% of them had died by diseases and violence when we celebrated our independence. In 1776, the entire United States was just the first 13 colonies bordered by the Atlantic Ocean and the Appalachian Mountains (east and west) and from Maine to Georgia (north to south).

About 90 years later, on June 19th, 1865, General Gordon Granger ordered the enforcement of the Emancipation Proclamation in Texas, starting our commemoration of Juneteenth. The Emancipation Declaration, of course, was declared on Jan 1, 1863, by President Abraham Lincoln...but it would take until the end of the Civil War (April 9, 1865), and the US military to reach Texas (3 months later), for the entire nation to recognize it.

Father's Day started in 1910 after the first Mother's Day in 1905. If it weren't for fathers, none of us would be here. For those of you who are fathers, I hope your day was special!

Holidays stir emotions; for better or worse. Those deep, important feelings shape the stories that we create to make sense of our life experiences. Shared stories can meet our need to belong. But some of our collective stories divide us.

Each one of the above stories is complex. All of them have become what they are today through both difficult and joyful feelings. Like Solstice, most of the early human rituals have been incorporated into, or over-shadowed by, modern holidays.

Our newest holiday, Indigenous Peoples' Day, has not yet been recognized by the federal government....but the cool thing about making new holidays is that we don't need any kind of authority to start them! Indigenous People's Day – on Monday, October 12, 2026 – always falls on the 2nd Monday in October.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world: indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." - Margaret Mead

What other holidays should we create? Harambee Day? Harambee is a Swahili term for 'let's pull together' or 'all together for one'...celebrating the power of community. Or maybe Free School Day, where we all take turns teaching something we've learned, and then attending classes taught by other folks? That could be done in-person and online!

While we're imagining...how about if we reimagine AI? Instead, of seeing it as only for surveillance and profiteering from selling our data and control to corporations, we can also use it to build ideas for holidays...where we can see ourselves pulling together to make the community center/school where children realize THEY are our national treasure.

To get to a better place, we need to steer, intentionally, in that direction, all the time. A tiny shift today turns into a huge shift as we move forward, increasing the distance from our previous path with every step.

In REENTRY NEWS...

Today, reentry is barely in the news. Oh sure, there is still a lot of talk about job training and developing entrepreneurial skills, but serving as a cog to satisfy 'the 'economy' is just one aspect of building success. We need money for a home, for transportation and for 'stuff', but we don't need money to be fully human. In fact, when we focus too much on money, it can become twisted into a value. In fact, economists will say you are 'rational'! But that's false. Every human has deep needs: to belong, to express ourselves, to experience competence in our efforts, to strive toward our own goals, not goals created for us. We need to grow in our unique way, and we need to listen curiously but defensively, so we can learn how to trust without being taken advantage of. And so much more! Which reentry courses would you like to take? I hope you'll share your response! And share the question with others, too, so we can provide the evidence needed to build more effective reentry courses...which could become available to everyone on tablets!

TRAINING/LEARNING OPPORTUNITY: IBM SKILLS BUILD

From their website: "Earn digital credentials from IBM and other professional organizations for free! Add the credentials to your professional networking profile to showcase your new job skills and boost your job prospects.

With IBM SkillsBuild, you'll gain core technology and important workplace skills like: leadership skills, communication skills, programming skills, problem solving skills, and/or writing skills. Plus, you can earn digital credentials to show employers what you've achieved."

They offer no mailing address, but after release you can find them here:
<https://skillsbuild.org/adult-learners/explore-learning/user-experience-design>. Send your supporters there to check them out!

SPOT THE BIAS: The FUNDAMENTAL ATTRIBUTION ERROR (FAE) in the claims of some reentry programs.

Have you noticed that when a person is successful after incarceration, some 'programs' claim that the program is the reason? Have you also noticed that programs do not state their 'failure rate'? The FAE at play: THEY are responsible for your success; YOU are responsible for your failure.

The Fundamental Attribution Error is a bias. Biases are mental shortcuts to a judgement that is based on an insufficient amount of, or simply incorrect, information.

The FAE's shortcomings are demonstrated in the following statements:

If good things happen to me, I am a good person!

If good things happen to you, you must've gotten lucky.

If bad things happen to me, it's not my fault; it's just bad luck.

If bad things happen to you, you were wrong, ill-prepared, or failed to be careful.

The FAE is a mindset we all learned through school, TV shows, movies, radio, news, church groups, political parties, and other areas of our culture. We may engage the FAE at one time or another, but when an organization uses a bias to persuade others, that's a marketing strategy, so we have to be on our guard!

EXCERPT FROM A NEW BOOK: "The Prisoner's Epiphany: Redemption, Peace and Seeing Yourself Change Before Anyone Else Does By Brian Zater

(The paragraphs below have been edited - by me - with the author's permission.)

"Redemption begins in a moment that no one else witnesses, in a place no camera records, in a decision that no one confirms or validates from the outside. It begins when a person, alone with the fact of his life, stops running from what he knows to be true and simply sits with it. That is harder than it sounds. It is, for most people, the hardest thing they will ever do.

Prison slows everything down. Dramatically. Sometimes viciously. But in that slowness, if a person is willing to use it, is an opportunity that many people in the free world never get: the opportunity to stop, look honestly at a life, understand what went wrong, understand what needs to change and begin, carefully and deliberately, to build something different.

Finding peace in prison requires courage.

The courage required for redemption is the courage to sit with yourself. The courage to look at what you have done without immediately reaching for an excuse. The courage to say, in the absolute privacy of your own mind, I did this. I made these choices. I hurt these people. I wasted this time. I could have been better. And now, starting here, in this place, I am going to become better, not because someone told me to, not because there is a benefit attached to it, and not because it will look good at my hearing, but because it is the only honest response to everything I now understand.

Accountability is the price of peace."

If you'd like to read the entire book (It's short: it will be 3 or 4 (full) messages long) let me know and I'll email it to you ~ :)

RANDOM QUOTES:

"The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking." - Albert Einstein

"Live out of your imagination, not your history." - Stephen R. Covey

"Change your thoughts and you change your world" - Norman Vincent Peale

"The ultimate hidden truth of the world is that it is something that we make, and could just as easily make differently." - David Graeber

"Positive thinking is like any tool. A hammer is useless for cutting wood, but that doesn't mean hammers are bullshit. Believing in yourself works. – Mark Manson

"Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything." - George Bernard Shaw

"People are just as wonderful as sunsets if you let them be. When I look at a sunset, I don't find myself saying, "Soften the orange a bit on the right hand corner." I don't try to control a sunset. I watch with awe as it unfolds." - Carl R. Rogers

Another world is possible. We can Affectively* Imagine (AI) it now, to orient our decisions and shift our path. How to start? Here are a few suggestions: Recycle! Share information! Help someone work on reading or math. Draw your vision of a future that works for everyone.

I hope you'll share your thoughts and ideas with me.

Ubuntu and all the best! ~ sue

*Affect vs Effect: Affect...mood, tone, feeling, intention
Effect...result, consequence

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