

## Prisons

Stopping crime with prisons is like stopping diarrhea with a cork.

There are many types of criminals; those who are violently insane; those who turn to crime because they don't know any better; those who find themselves in a situation where hunger supersedes morality; and those who've done nothing wrong except break a law.

For the violently insane, we can differentiate between those with pathological disorders of the brain {often associated with drug use, predominantly alcohol and meth}, and those with insane thinking habits. For the pathologically insane, if their ailment can't be cured medically, confinement of some kind may be necessary, but it shouldn't be punitive. Punishment is totally ineffective and cruel. For those with insane thinking habits, confinement may be necessary, but rehabilitation is possible with stern compassion and education.

Those who turn to crime because they don't know any better have grown up, for whatever reason, without contact with moral behavior, or, in many cases, with negative reinforcement associated with moral behavior. These are probably the hardest to rehabilitate, but enough years on a stern, but compassionate chain gang might do the trick, and would at least make them less toxic parasites on the community.

For a large portion of the population, hunger supercedes morality. Sometimes hunger is real and stealing is about survival. A basic cultural safety net that covers the basic needs of the poor and disabled is less burden on the community than the inefficiency of poverty and crime associated with real hunger. Sometimes hunger is about addiction. Education is most of the cure for addiction. If people are fully aware of the eventual consequences, very few will choose to become addicted. Most hunger is about gluttony. Humanity was born hungry, and the sense of hunger often persists long after our physical needs are met. A lot of people confuse want with need.

Several hundred years ago, when the US constitution was constructed, life was relatively simple and culture was relatively uncomplicated. It didn't take very many laws to cover the range of individual transgressions and disputes. As the complexity of civilization increased, the number of laws has exponentially increased, but their accuracy has so decreased that our law enforcement system is starting to look like a cop running through a crowd blasting away at the bad guy with a sawed off 12 gauge. A very large percentage of incarcerated people haven't harmed anyone. An amendment to the constitution requiring immediate proof of intentional harm is needed to curb the current travesty of the American prison system.

Because prisons contribute to poverty and poverty contributes to crime; because prisons foster and spread a culture of criminal behavior; because, for most types of criminal behavior, prisons create more crime than they deter; because millions of good people around the world are abused in and by prisons; in their present condition, prisons are a crime.