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IS it Civil? OR just barbaric punishment

There is a problem within our Society that I believe has not been addressed in the right way, More in a civilized manner.

Each year our prisons fill up with more and more youth offenders. The Crimes they are committing vary in degree but mostly they are very serious crimes with consequences that change these youths lives forever.

Recently in Utah a seventeen year old girl was charged with life charges because she was allegedly an accomplice with an adult to a very serious crime.

It is incidents like this young ladies, that I refer to.

In our country a person is considered



as a minor if they are under the age of eighteen. We have various laws in place to protect minors and it is common knowledge that as humans we do not attain full adulthood until we reach around the age of twenty one. This has been verified by numerous scientific studies and acknowledged by our government.

Knowing that, we do our best to protect the rights of minors, putting all the laws we can in place to protect them.

But I want to ask you a serious question. Do we truly do all we can to protect our minors? Or is it only those who don't need serious mental help, that we actually protect?



As I mentioned our laws acknowledge that a minor is not a fully mature adult. Yet at the same time there is very little leniency for youths who commit serious crimes. And for those who are convicted - no rehabilitation.

Now I cannot speak as to why youths make some of the choices they make, but neither do I believe can anyone else. We all grow up differently, in different environments, making different decisions. None of us are the same and while many of us may be similar, we are all uniquely individual.

What I can speak from is my own experiences in life and from the things I have seen growing up inside a prison. I have talked to and made friends with



one youth offender after another. Looking for trends and trying to find ways in which we can improve our society or at least ways of how we can fix the inadequacies within our justice system.

Sometimes there are some horrible situations and crimes that as a society we cannot stop. Some people just break and lose all sense of civility or morality. In those cases we have just laws to find justice. But I have found that is rarely the case when it comes to youth offenders. In almost every case, I have found the youths have been led astray by someone of vast influence over them be it their parents, family or role model. And they follow that persons decision making.



Lets go back to the young lady I mentioned earlier. Her age establishes her below the mentality of an mature adult.

What does that actually mean?

Being Seventeen she obviously has the ability to think and reason, atleast as much as a regular Seventeen year old can. A regular Seventeen year old in our country is still in school and is not an legal adult. meaning they must be protected by a guardian. We protect our youths assuring that they have a legal guardian for the simple fact that they are not fully mature. - meaning they do not yet have the ability to fully comprehend the right choices. So a guardian or parent must make some of those choices for that youth



until the time they become a legal adult.

Having established that, How responsible is she or any other youth offender, for any action they allegedly participate in? How much responsibility can be assumed by them? Let's say she or any youth offender convicted or accused of a horrible crime, was actually consciously aware of the choices they were making at the time of the crime.

How responsible for that crime does that actually make them?

Being a youth it is already established that they are not fully mature. They could be aware of the consequences of their actions, But what does that actually mean if they still are not consciously mature?



I am not saying youth offenders have no responsibility for their actions. What I am saying is that it is uncivilized behavior to lock up youths without a chance of rehabilitation. Because despite ~~the actions~~ the most horrible of the youth offenders actions. They are still youths and proven beyond doubt not as consciously mature as an adult.

By us locking them in prison for life with no chance at rehabilitation we are failing our youths. We send them to prison, for crimes they committed or are involved in, for more years then they were alive before their wrong choices. Where is the civility in that?

How is it that we cannot rehabilitate a youth in less years then it took that youth to stray from the civil path? Or is it that we are



So hooked on punishment that we will torture youths just to prove a point?

To me, if it is about punishment, don't punish our youth, rehabilitate them. Punish those who lead the youths astray. The adults giving our youths drugs. The adults convincing youths to do as they do. For in all actuality it is them who are responsible for the weight of the wrong choices our youths make.

Because despite the severity of the wrongs committed by a youth, the fact remains that all youths are susceptible to outside influence. No youth is born evil or broken. It is the influence of others around that child or the environment the youth grew up in that perverts their judgement.



There is no excuse for Society to refuse to help those in our Society that truly need their help. And no excuse for our Society to not rehabilitate those who Commit Crimes before they are even consciously mature. For it is the only Civil and reasonable Choice our Society Can make Concerning our youth offenders.

As a Society it is our responsibility to take care of our Sick and needy. And who needs that help more than our youth offenders? They were not born evil, they make wrong choices brought upon them by their Lack of maturity, environment and bad influences. All things given the chance that our Society Could have fixed before the youths made the Choices that broke our Civil and moral laws. And Can fix once the Causes are known.



Locking up youth offenders for any more than ten years is by all reasoning inhumane and borders on uncivilized torture. There is no reason a youth offender cannot be rehabilitated within that amount of time. And their immaturity can in no way give cause for society to force upon them the full responsibility of their actions especially when their age in itself shows they are not consciously mature adults. And are not capable of fully understanding the consequences of their actions on others or themselves. And while such severe crimes cannot go unpunished, neither can that punishment be unreasonable or unjust to the youth offender. To who a decade is a life time.

It takes a youth two decades to become



an adult. The second decade from eleven to twenty one ~~#~~ is the one where the most dramatic changes take place in the youth, both mentally and physically. It is also during these years that most youth offenders make their wrong choices.

There is not one person who reads this that cannot say they have not made a choice during those years that they wish they could take back or change. How much more is that so for these youth offenders, who will do decade upon decade of their lives locked in a prison with no chance to get out? All because of a choice they made using the reasoning or lack of reasoning of an immature mind and body. Most if not all who have been mentally



Setback and Chemically unbalanced by the use of drugs and alcohol. I have yet to meet any youth offenders in prison for a Severe Crime who has not done drugs. And I do not believe I have to more then mention all of the Studies that have been done Concerning the Negative affects and Chemical alterations that drugs do to the mind of users. Not to mention the lessening of inhibitions drug use causes.

Severe punishment is not a great deterrent when it comes to youth, most of whom do not as yet truly understand the consequences to their actions. And do not learn them until it is too late.

In example; it is like teaching them a mathematical equation using a formula. They learn how to solve the equation using the



formula. But if you take away the formula and tell them to solve the equation without using it. Unless they fully understand the nature of numbers, they won't be able to solve it. And most youths don't just understand the nature of numbers without a lot of studying. It is something they have to think about.

Life is the same way. We can give children ideals and laws about life, morality and civility. And most will follow them without fully thinking about them, trusting in those who guided them. But when life gets difficult and those doing the guiding abuse their influence. The youths mind finds it hard to pull away from that guidance. Few teens fully understand the true reasons behind the laws and



Ideals they are taught as children. If some are even really taught at all. And because of that it is easy for them to ignore a law even if doing so can hurt themselves or others.

It is easy for a teen to quote a law taught to them. But ask them to explain the true reason behind that law and most will give you some shallow response that has nothing to do with Civility to others. And that is because most have as yet to mature mentally.

I, myself knew little to no difference. I never understood what Civility was until I came to prison and taught myself to think. My teen years were wasted getting drunk and high. I had no time to think about myself or others. My thoughts were all



Centered on doing what I could to remain oblivious to the disaster I thought my life was. And most youth offenders I have talked to lived basically the same way. Different circumstances, different role models, but the same characteristic in not really being conscious of their lives or the consequences of their actions.

So when we send one of these youth offenders, like this seventeen year old girl I mentioned earlier, to prison for the rest of their lives. Is it justice we are seeking? Or is it just an act of punishment? Because I think it is obvious to all of us, despite whatever a youth offender is accused of doing or being apart of. And despite whatever law certifies



that offender as an adult. They are still not fully mature. We certify offenders based on the severity of the Crime, not upon the true maturity of the offender. It is an excuse for Society to turn a blind eye to what that youth is sentenced to. And if we need an excuse to blind justice - are we truly as Civil and unbarbaric as we claim to be?

Youth offenders do have to take responsibility for their own actions. That does not mean it is Civil to place the full responsibility of an adult upon them. They are still youths and the responsibility for the youths actions should also, if not more fully fall upon the older person who influenced their actions in such a way as to break the laws of Civility.

Holding them responsible for the youths actions



Will make people understand more fully the responsibility they have to the youths around them and to society in which they are a part of.

If we truly want to make headway on the War on Crime, we will go after those adults giving drugs and alcohol to children and teens. We protect our children from child molestation and rape and we go after the offenders, no matter how long it takes. Can we do no less with those abusing our children and teens by giving them drugs and alcohol? Changing not only their bodies but also their mentality and the chemistry of their minds?

All the youth offenders I have met are in need of help in one way or another. The problem is they never get that help until it is too



late. And even when they do come to prison, the reasons they made the choices they did never come to light because once in prison, it's not about fixing the offender so much as just holding the offender until someone who does not know the offender and has never met or spent time with the offender, finally decides to release them.

How is that in anyway treating our youth offenders civilly, let alone justly? Are we as a society justified in locking youth offenders up for such long periods of time, for decisions they make when they are not as yet fully mature adults?

These are questions I want you to ask yourselves when you look at your families and



friends.

What if it was your son, daughter, niece,  
nephew, cousin, friend or yourself being locked  
up without a chance at rehabilitation? A  
person you know beyond doubt is not evil.  
Just misguided and in need of some help?  
Because that is what we need to do as a  
society. The more we think of others and  
how they must feel or what they must be  
going through, the stronger and more  
civilized our society will become. Which in  
turn will create less crime and less  
youth offenders.

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