

TRUST

What is the purpose of prison?

Some would say its purpose is to keep ~~and~~ dangerous criminals off of the street. But what do we mean when we say 'dangerous criminals'? Not all crimes involve violence and some crimes the only victim is the perpetrator.

We have laws for a reason. Breaking those laws is a breach of trust. In order for society to function we need to feel safe around each other. There must be a level of communal confidence. Without this I have no idea what a stranger will do and that makes them 'dangerous'.

Criminals are labeled 'criminals' only after they've broken the law. The capacity to do harm existed before any legal repercussion (existed and made manifest by a diminished sense of belonging and trust.) Every body has the opportunity to steal threaten or destroy. We all depend on each other for our collective wellbeings. Without that I don't know when where or by who my life or property will be threatened.

This is common enough in our society today, evidenced by our rising crime rates. We have also seen an increase in criminal behavior from our public officials, police officers and, more alarmingly, teenagers in our schools. People blame 'crime' and 'criminals' the same way we like to point fingers at the ambiguous 'them' for any problem. Some think the way to fight this surge is by creating more laws. But the law has already been established. Otherwise we wouldn't have crime and criminals.

It's not that the prohibitions don't exist. People break the law because they don't care or feel they have no other choice. Sometimes people just make mistakes. Though, of course, in hindsight every bad decision is a mistake.

The issue is a matter of morality more than law.

Values like responsibility, truth and respect are most appropriately and advantageously taught at a young age by our parents. If a child grows up in a broken or chaotic home, statistically speaking, the likelihood of antisocial behavior will be higher.

The responsibility of the state of the household belongs to the parents, what they do as individuals. If the parents are immature or irresponsible their children will watch them and think that's how they're supposed to act.

We are so influenced by the world in which we are born, we will reflect the spirit of that place. Even the most noble souls raised in terrible circumstances but refusing to be defined by them, will bear the marks of its influence.

Our nation is a household, we are each responsible for the state of our community, we share in the creation of its character and values, just as we are affected by the nation and generation into which we were born. It shapes who we become and what choices we make, so to will what we make of today affect our children.

We must hold ourselves personally accountable for the condition of our country, we must so greatly value honor and fairness that the law becomes a handclap to our greater moral character. We must earn and maintain each other's trust by the sharing of common goals and interests, our children will watch us, will know the way and keep it. And we will have provided a better future for our kids, no matter what lay behind us.

