

Awakening to the Disturbing Economic Value of Crime

It is a possibility that misbehavior may be altogether misunderstood. Misbehavior may be caused by those trying to regulate behavior. For example, in politics, the platform many politicians use to get elected is that of law-and-order. Certainly if there was no crime the politicians would lose a powerful platform. Is it not possible, on a planned, or on a subconscious level, that the politicians actually encourage unlawful behavior so that they will continue to have a potent political platform? They do this by fostering beliefs in certain myths such as: "Hard work is all that is needed to get ahead." It is easy then to believe that anyone who doesn't get ahead must have chosen not to work hard. With that myth in place, the blame for poverty automatically falls on the impoverished. So what happens to the children?

Let's take a quick look at this myth. The key to getting ahead may in fact be the result of hard work. The unasked question is, "Hard work at what?" Surely the answer is hard work at school in order to get a college education. Still many youth insist that they are working hard at school, but they just don't get it. The reality is that education has evolved largely into an abstract learning environment and unfortunately many people just cannot learn abstractions without an experiential foundation. If so provided these people can learn through the direct real life application of the materials to be learned. Unfortunately this model is not available. Because to succeed in school one must be an abstract learner, being able to process information visually and auditorily through reading or through listening to lectures. The experiential learner tries very hard, but cannot effectively process the academic material. So, in the case of the experiential student, hard work does not necessarily lead to academic advancement. Let's explore the myth of "hard work equals success" a bit further.

The experiential learners who do poorly in the abstract realm of education have the potential of making a very satisfactory living if they can enter the trades. The problem for many minority experiential learners who try to take this path is that the door to the trades is guarded. It seems that if one doesn't belong to the correct ethnic group or is at least a male, then getting an apprenticeship is impossible except for a token number. So, in this way, even having a pathway that could reward hard work in general it too is denied to this large group of experiential learners. With a large enough group of poor experiential learners shut out of employment that pays a living wage we have set the groundwork for crime.

It's very sad. The experiential learners have the same level of intelligence and potential as the abstract learners, yet they are unable to completely process the academic information in the way that the school system has evolved to present it. Trapped in a nightmare reality in which they are presented the opportunity to learn through an educational model that excludes so many of them of course they are confused and bewildered. Why is there no one to explain this to them? Without this source of information in regards to their learning style isn't it understandable how this "failure" can lead to frustration, disappointment, resentment which then can turn into anger.

For some, experiencing this endless hopelessness from early childhood this blow to their self-esteem may give rise to "misbehavior" which expresses itself within the family and overflows into the community. Violence festers within this anger, and truthfully, it is the kind of violence that is not expressed directly at the source, that being the educators and those who develop curriculum, rather it is contained within the experiential learner's local community; often the ghetto or the barrio. With no means of rectifying this inequity, should it ever be realized, anger may be expressed by the individual through drug/alcohol addiction, gang affiliation, and crime.

Certain politicians find this type of violence perfect for their platform of law-and-order. The orchestrated scenario of this situation is that the violence is not a direct threat to their voting constituents, but rather an abstraction, presented as a reality, through the careful manipulation of targeted marketing. The white-collar middle-class is largely abstract learners. They believe that what they learn through books, lectures, TV., news publications, and schools of learning is true and fairly presented. With abstract learners trained in this “perspective,” the expression of anger by the experiential learner through self/family/neighborhood violence is easily misunderstood. It is presented as though this violence is seething, and ready to claw its way toward the peaceful and law-abiding citizens of the middle-class, much like the “killer bees” that are making their way into the United States.

This manipulation of the misery and the subsequent violence contained within the local lower-class community has created a mentality of warfare. "Us against them." The solution has been an acceptance within the middle-class of a “War Against Crime.” Where the United States has made a commitment to down-size the military establishment and the industries associated with them, is it truly surprising that it is being replaced by a domestic military force and industry that serves the national security at home? This domestic defense industry is the police, the prison system and its privatization, the legal system, and the private contractors that provide support. These forces are becoming increasingly powerful as billions of government dollars are directed into their hands. Their ability to hire lobbyists, to elect officials, to direct funding, gives this group sway over the United States by influencing the educational system thereby threatens the institutions that makes the United States a democracy. Creating a war is the way to economic recovery, and has always been so within the United States. A war against crime is as good as any other war.

The application of this is that what we call Reality is no more than an illusion that is self-serving. Much of criminal misbehavior is created by those who are best served by its creation. Criminals get politicians elected. Criminals give jobs to police. Criminals give jobs to the courts. Criminals give jobs to prison personnel. Criminals give profits to the contractors that build and provide the goods and services to support this blooming industry.

If this reality is conscious, then is it just good political/business practice or a conspiracy? Consciously creating an educational system that favors abstract over experiential learners is criminal. It’s criminal because those who are connected to life experience are being eliminated from being able to present their viewpoint and thus culture is eliminating those people who actually know how things work. This just leaves people with no real life experience in decision-making positions, thus the dysfunction that is ever growing. This elimination is accomplished by casting the experiential learner into poverty and hopelessness. However, if creating crime through poverty is a subconscious act, then this reality must be viewed clinically as a form of mental illness. Hopefully, between the two, a conspiracy or mental illness, the truth would be that the behavior is a mental illness.

How can people who make their living from punishing crime be encouraged to see their subconscious connection to the causes of crime? How can these people then cope with the awareness that they are benefiting financially from the suffering of millions of their fellow citizens? Certainly it would require a societal style of therapy, which would address the individual as part of a large group, thus diminishing the severity of the emotional shock to the individual. Moving the group to awareness however might be tremendously difficult and threatening.

What of all the jobs associated with crime? What happens to those who make their living from apprehending, prosecuting and incarcerating and overseeing the "criminal?" What of all the politicians who get elected on the platform of crime? What of all the suppliers of goods and services and their employees who make their living providing guns, bullets, uniforms, transportation, jail and prison construction, etc.? What of their misery should their industry be downsized? The "reality" is that this possibility is an illusion. The Congress and the President have already passed legislation that provides for tremendous growth in law enforcement. Growth in crime is essential to the justification of the billions of dollars being directed to the "Fight Against Crime?"

It is hard to turn the path of a flood. The best one can do is to get out of the way. But what of those who can't get out of the way, who have no mobility? They become victims of those who do not care to practice their human values although they talk of them incessantly. For the experiential learner to be able to compete the educational system must begin to develop and deliver instructional materials so that all people can process the information. Honesty, courage, and integrity are the strengths of democracy. Who are really undermining these values? The criminal? I think not!