

What if there's a Better Way?

by Kalin - Monday, April 09, 2012

<http://kalinbooks.com/anarchism/what-if-theres-a-better-way/>

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have a few questions for my fellow Americans and human beings...

- What if our core attitudes about criminal justice are deeply flawed and have not served the long-term interests of a peaceful and prosperous society?
- What if the sense of security provided by government and police is mostly an illusion?
- What if the hatred and fear toward police and government is a predictable consequence of those organizations infringing on people's rights?
- What if the greatest human suffering is almost always caused by government and war and not by common criminals?
- What if teaching people to live their lives based on legal and illegal is also teaching them to ignore right and wrong?
- What if being overwhelmed with laws makes it virtually impossible for many people to make decisions based on ethics?
- What if revenge, even when labeled "justice", does not magically cause criminals to want to become better people?
- What if countless victims choose not to report crime because they are not vengeful or because they know the punishment will be worse than the crime?
- What if those victims wished their tax dollars could be spent on a more compassionate system?
- What if people are statistically *more* likely to commit crime after going through our justice system?
- What if every criminal, even the violent ones, are actually human beings with thoughts and feelings?
- What if criminals came to be who they are through psychological processes that could be addressed compassionately and scientifically?
- What if a huge percentage of the criminal population committed their crime because they somehow decided it was the right thing to do and not because they are evil?
- What if frequently throughout history it was the criminals who were the true heroes?
- What if it were criminal organizations who were ultimately responsible for ending not only prohibition in the United States, but slavery as well?
- What if criminals and criminal organizations were one of the only things standing between America's freedom and her corporate, judicial overlords?
- What if people were wrongfully convicted in our justice system as often as teachers mistakenly punish the wrong student in our public schools?
- What if prisoners are not allowed contact with the outside world because the justice system does not want the public to hear their side of the story?
- What if the mothers of criminals often suffer more than the criminals themselves at the hands of the justice system?
- What if the suffering of an entire family is not a fair trade-off for the justice of one criminal?

- What if the prison industry is a racket, serving the interests of huge corporations who inspire fear and invent reasons to write laws so they can use prisoners as slave labor?
- What if the drug war is a scam, perpetrated by the alcohol and pharmaceutical companies and the prison and military industrial complex?
- What if our legal system provided little to no motivation for its employees to make long lasting change?
- What if police get away with brutality and lying as easily as drug dealers get away with selling dime bags on the street?
- What if the American public would be appalled if they truly understood what the police do on a daily basis?
- What if torture in American prisons is worse than any of us realize?
- What if controversies like abortion and the drug war will never go away, no matter how many laws and guarantees we write, until we change our fundamental attitudes about how we deal with people who do things we don't like?
- What if George Orwell was right?
- ... but what if there's a better way?
- What if we could come at the problem from a different perspective, one based on science that advocates the bottom line, which is peace and crime prevention, and is not clouded by the emotional need for retribution?
- What if there was a way to treat criminals like human beings without increasing crime?
- What if the human race wakes up and realizes that policies based on communication, compassion, and science are always more effective than vengeance, hatred and prisons?
- What if finding ways to inspire people to care about right and wrong can provide for a more peaceful world in the long run?
- What if teachers and social workers prevent more crime than police and prosecutors?
- What if interventions are shown to not only be more effective, but also cheaper than prisons?
- What if a system filled with psychologists, interventionists, and peace advocates would be more effective than one filled with police, prosecutors and lawyers?
- What if we truly could have peace on earth, if only we were willing to make a few sacrifices in our sense of security, got to know the people we think are evil, and had faith in the human spirit?

Ladies and gentlemen, I ask of you to keep an open mind and consider a science-based perspective of communication, peace and compassion that does not attempt to place temporary band-aids on fundamental human problems, but instead addresses those problems directly, attempts to understand them, and works toward a better future. There are other possibilities, if only we open our minds to see them and have the courage to give them a chance.