

Failure to Consider Injury to Others

How often have you wanted to do something and then, with little thought about the consequences, immediately acted on it?

Did you decide to break into a home, steal a car, hold up a store, snatch a pocketbook? Or did you lie, con, insult and threaten? Your mind was only on what you wanted at the time.

Maybe you saw a night clerk alone -- and felt positive that, at the sight of your gun, he or she would empty the cash register. Perhaps you've seen a woman standing alone at a bus stop, purse swinging loosely in her hand. The opportunity was there, and you acted.

At these times, you were so intent on what you wanted that you never thought about how upset and fearful the clerk would feel, or how the woman whose purse you stole might be afraid ever to go out again by herself.

Every time someone commits a crime, there are many victims. Yet criminals consider only what they want at the time.

Imagine that your wife or husband, sister or mother has been harmed by a criminal. How would you feel? How would your family feel?

Have you ever told others that you don't hurt people -- you only take things? The truth is that the employee who was on duty may be so terrified that he or she cannot return to the job. The victim's children may be shaken and fearful. His or her family may be frightened. Neighbors may be plagued by fear.

The criminal who is arrested is also hurt. So are his or her children, family and loved ones. Everyone pays a price.

The criminal thinks only of himself -- and usually in the short term.

Each of us has a choice. We can be one of society's takers; we can spend a lifetime harming others, including those who care about us. Or we can choose to think about the consequences of our actions; we can commit ourselves to living responsibly. If we choose, we can become people who help instead of hurt. Instead of taking, we can contribute. The choice is ours.