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**Latest Trends, Tips and Opinion**

1 message

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**ICJE, Inc.** <jimrechel@icje.org>  
Reply-To: jimrechel@icje.org  
To: pcalvert@faulkner.edu

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## How Do WE Change Criminal Behavior?

### Learn How to Change Our Weaknesses

I recently ventured to the nearest open mall to find some new pants and sport coat. I had to pass three empty/abandoned malls along the way, but that's another story.

I ended up finding a couple of styles and colors I thought would work, but I wasn't sure what size (waist and length) I needed because each manufacturer's actual sizes varied. So I just grabbed two of each and took the collection of 12 different pants to the register.

Easier to try everything on at home than wading through my pile of pants in the small changing room was my thought.

The salesclerk was perplexed and asked why I had so many similar pants. So, I jokingly told her that if I picked what I thought looked good while at the store, my wife would inevitably ask "Why that color? or Why that style? Didn't they have anything that looked better than those?"

I told the clerk it was just easier to take them home and ask my wife what I liked best, then choose those.

We both laughed, and I walked out with half the store's casual pants.

My wife chose the ones she said I liked, and I returned the rest. Fate would have it that the same salesclerk was working the register when I returned them, and our laughter continued as I embellished the story even more.

For the record, I wear the pants in my house! :)

But it got me thinking about more serious issues and disputes we all encounter in life. At work, at home, with neighbors, with folks of different political views. And I was reminded that what generally keeps us from growing is that many of us are unwilling to consider that we actually "may be wrong".

And why do so many criminal actors keep returning to crime?

Then I stumbled upon a Pastor Michael Youssef online church service talking about what keeps us from growing closer to God in our faith, and as I listened, I thought the principles he identified apply not just to our faith, but across the board in our lives, and criminals who keep making bad choices over and over.

He opined that in order to grow in our lives, in our jobs and in our faith, we have to address three impediments to personal growth:

1. The Inability to Accept Correction
2. The Unwillingness to Change
3. Confusing the Journey with the Destination

He continued with examples for each principle, and I found the advice to be very interesting, so I have adopted them for a law enforcement perspective. In short, he made the following points for each:

#### **The Inability to Accept Correction**

- a. very few people see themselves as they really are
- b. we see ourselves as we think/hope we are
- c. unwilling to accept advice from persons committed to helping us
- d. failure to look for genuine, real, honest affirming correction.

Self-examination requires us to examine ourselves through the lens of each point.

#### **The Unwillingness to Change**

- a. growing requires change and many are uncomfortable with change.
- b. change can have negative consequences to the status quo.
- c. failure to see beyond the moment.

A willingness to embrace the risks of change is required to change for the better.

#### **Confusing the Journey with the Destination**

- a. we are all susceptible to this principle, as daily encounters in our life become dominant.
- b. losing perspective when dealing with liars, cheaters, and crooks everyday.
- c. failure to see ourselves as **travelers** in this world, not permanent citizens.

Maintaining a perspective that there is meaning to everything we do, which involves understanding that there is a greater purpose to our lives than the daily grind.

We often think we are about holding criminals responsible for their actions, ("the rightful destination") but begin using techniques and methods that are expedient at the moment

("the journey") because the management of our organization looks only at short term measurements, that ignore the bigger picture.

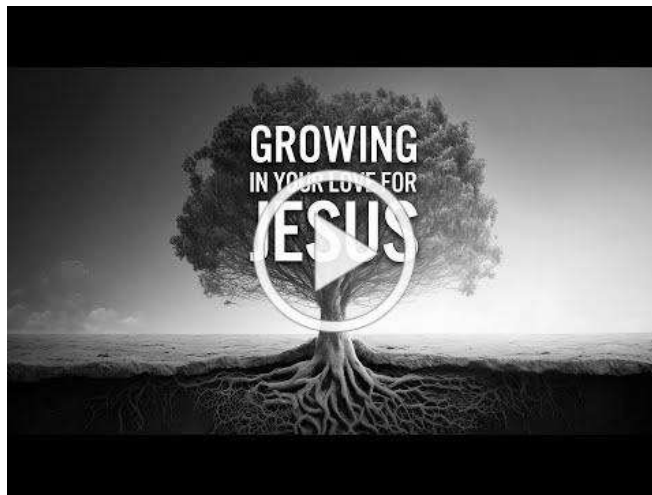
While the principles referenced above were delivered in the context of Christian faith, I found his message to be applicable in all aspects of our lives and thought it would be of interest. As we make better choices, we become models to some of those who may be in need of radical course corrections in their lives.

May God bless each of you.

Jim Rechel  
ICJE Newsletter Editor  
jimrechel@icje.org

*Please feel free to email comments or suggestions. Thanks, Jim*

PS - The entire Michael Youseff video message is linked below.





## Repeat Offenders Destroy Quality of Life in All Communities

Alabama is grappling with a growing problem of repeat criminal offenders who are wreaking havoc on communities throughout the state. Their actions are not only causing a significant increase in crime rates but also diminishing the quality of life for law-abiding citizens. The situation is dire, and urgent action is needed to address it.

The issue of repeat offenders is nothing new, but the magnitude of the problem in Alabama is alarming. These offenders are committing crimes at an alarming rate, and many are being released back into society without any real consequences. The result is a revolving door system that is ***failing to protect citizens*** and ***allowing criminals to continue*** their destructive behavior.

The impact of this situation is being felt throughout the state. Families are living in fear, businesses are suffering, and the overall quality of life is being diminished. The time has come for a comprehensive strategy to be implemented to address this issue. This should include tougher sentencing laws, increased funding for law enforcement, and a focus on rehabilitation for those who are willing to change their ways.

Alabama is a great state with many wonderful communities, but the problem of repeat criminal offenders is threatening to tear it apart. It is time for everyone to come together to find a solution and restore safety and security to our neighborhoods.

If you think crime can't destroy Alabama communities, read on. See what has happened to San Francisco. It was once one of the most vibrant cities in America. It's now a wasteland.



## **Author Shelby Steele loses \$30K worth of camera gear in San Francisco car break-in**

June 15, 2023

Eli Shelby said they had left their rented SUV at the top of the city's famous Lombard Street for just 10 minutes and returned at around 11 a.m. to find three of its windows smashed in and gear miss...

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## **Five Homicides Recorded Over Memorial Day Weekend**

Over Memorial Day weekend, five deaths resulting from gunshot wounds were recorded at the coroner's office.

[Read More](#)

## **Recidivism Rate: What Are We Doing in Alabama?**

by

**Dr. Stanley Tippins Sr. (2023)**

**The Institute for Criminal Justice Education (ICJE)**



When we talk about recidivism, most understand it to mean recurring criminal events. When discussing the crime rate and criminal activity, there are a plethora of negative consequences associated with this topic.

Those consequences include, but are not limited to, rearrests, reconviction, and returning to prison. The above-mentioned dilemma is just a small part of the overall problem that many states and communities face. Recidivism rates are a national and societal problem that requires a comprehensive approach that would be impossible to thoroughly examine in this article.

In fact, tackling this complex dilemma would take several books; therefore, this article will simply highlight the general problem; recidivism rate, briefly address this national problem, and provide recent data collected in Alabama relative to its effort to combat recidivism.

### **The Problem: Recidivism Rates!**

The National Institute of Justice took a snapshot of the recidivism rate between 2005-2014 and found that about 68% of released prisoners committed additional criminal acts

So, let's put these findings in simple English: over 400,000 released state inmates account for about 2 million arrests within nine-years of their release date. The results show an 83% recidivism rate in this study group (Archived | Measuring Recidivism | National Institute of Justice (ojp.gov)).

Consider that only 17% in this study did not fall back into criminal activity over this nine-years period. Now, think about the quality of life for citizens, and the negative economic impact on the communities in this observation. Upon doing so, one must ask, "what did the 17% of the non-reoffenders do or have that the reoffenders did not do or have?"

The negative impacts surrounding the recidivism rate are far-reaching and should concern everyone.

Research has revealed that women report being victimized more frequently than men; therefore, for that reason alone, something must be done.

Upon considering this, one could assume that young men need to have purpose and positive reinforcement while incarcerated. David Trilling cited Crystal Yang's study on the labor market and criminal recidivism and found that there are many reasons why former inmates struggle finding meaningful employment.

Yang said that limited job experience, lack of education, little or no skills along with employer apprehensions are major factor in the hiring process. This study found that about 60% of released inmates have trouble finding good paying jobs (Trilling, 2017).

There is a need to inform stakeholders, state legislators, business owners and the community about the negative impact associated with isolating those recently released from prisons. This population will need the necessary skills and a vibrant support network to successfully reintegrate into our communities.

### **What Are We Doing in Alabama?**

J.F. Ingram State Technical College (J.F. ISTC) is a part of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS). J.F. ISTC is unique among most two-year community colleges in America because all its students are incarcerated in the Alabama Department of Corrections (ADOC). ISTC is committed to returning responsible citizens back to Alabama's communities.

The college offers adult education and valuable trades such as plumbing, HVAC, welding, diesel mechanics, auto body repair, marine technology, carpentry, masonry, ServSafe, forklift operator, OSHA certification, logistics, cosmetology, barbering and several other trades that quickly translate to good paying jobs for those students who complete the program (AL Daily News, Feb. 22, 2023).

Recently, J.F. ISTC collaborated with Lightcast to analyze the effectiveness of the college and examine the economic impact in Alabama. Based on Lightcast modeling, J.F. ISTC graduates are projected to have about a \$124 million dollars' positive impact in the state. "In FY 2020-21, J.F. ISTC alumni generated \$123.9 million in added income for the state economy, which is the equivalent to supporting 1,785 jobs."

Due to data limitation, the recidivism rate is not included in this analysis. However, the efforts of J.F. ISTC is adding intrinsic value to communities in Alabama, improving the local economy and refining the lives of graduates (CBS 42 News, Feb. 21, 2023).



J.F. ISTC has programs in most prison camps across Alabama, and they are starting programs in Day Reporting Centers (DRC) (AL Daily News, Feb. 22, 2023). Alabama leaders are finding that those who complete the program along with completing the drug rehabilitation program are less likely to return to prison. In fact, Alabama Pardon and Paroles report the recidivism rate among those who fully complete the program drops from 30% to 4.1% (CBS 42 News, Feb. 21, 2023).

Alabama state leaders are finding that educating the incarcerated population and training them to work in skilled trades is the smart way to reduce crime, return responsible citizens to our communities, and positively impact Alabama's economy.

**Reference:**

**AL Daily News** - College exclusively serving incarcerated population pushes for more funding

**(CBS News, Feb. 21, 2023) Retrieved:** 'Providing them a second chance': State officials tour Alabama's largest correctional education system | CBS 42  
**Trilling, D. (2017).** The economy and ex cons' odds of returning to jail (journalistsresource.org)

**U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs:** Archived | Measuring Recidivism | National Institute of Justice (ojp.gov)



**Training Dates on ICJE Website - Click "Training Information" below:**

Training Information

## Thought of the Month

“All men make mistakes, but a good man yields when he knows his course is wrong and repairs the evil. The only crime is pride.”

— **Sophocles, Antigone**

ICJE, Inc. | P.O. Box 293, Montgomery, AL 36101

Unsubscribe [pcalvert@faulkner.edu](mailto:pcalvert@faulkner.edu)

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