

What Should We Do When a Loved One Starts a Life of Crime?

It's not very often, but it's not incredibly rare either, that I hear a story by a fellow voluntaryist that a friend or family member has chosen to pursue a life of hunting down peaceful people, to hurt them and to take their stuff.

It's typically not an evolution either, like someone who's out to make a quick buck and finds it a relatively simple thing to engage in petty theft. Sooner or later the heists get bigger, and with it the need to become accustomed with the use of violence.

It's more often a seemingly spur of the moment revelation. Something they've been thinking long and hard about, and the prospect of both a sufficient, regular payout and the "thrill of the chase" to give one "purpose" is just too much to resist. That or they've developed some sort of righteousness-based motivation, a belief that their crime is a necessary evil in order to keep the bosses happy, or other, worse bosses will one day take over.

Whatever the reason, when this happens, what should a voluntaryist do? Unfortunately, I don't have the answer. I only have questions.

Should we try our darndest to talk them out of going through with it?

Should we lecture them on how it makes us feel (betrayed, disgusted, outraged, *et cetera*)?

Should we shame them?

Should we ostracize them from our life and hope never to cross paths with them?

Answering these questions depends on who this person is. I'm sure the answer would go one way for a college roommate, and another for a close family member. It's easier to ostracize an old friend than it is a brother, for example.

Are we the only other person in their life who feels terribly about their choice to pursue crime?

Are we alone in our retaliatory crusade, or do we have support?

That probably depends on the exact nature of the crime being pursued, and a million other considerations each person has to weigh in the context of their relationship with the pursuant criminal.

I have criminals in my family. One time I offered a joke/criticism of an [unfortunate]

achievement by one of them, only to be met with what I gathered would have been my own ostracism had I not made amends.

What if we don't do anything, but continue on, business as usual?

What if we keep attending barbecues together, and talking about football, or the latest binge watch?

What if we are too attached to those who engage in crime? Love them? Adore them? Care less about what they do and more about ensuring they make it home to us safely every night?

When will this attitude toward these criminals start to bite us in the ass? What if it already is? What if our society is already sick from the disease of criminal worship and the horror that entails?

Tough questions. Do you have the answers?