

CHANGING

CRIMINAL

THINKING

The philosophy in a criminal mind includes a consistent pattern of distorted thinking that results in irresponsible and arrestable behavior. One of the most common errors in this way of thinking is the failure to consider injury to others.

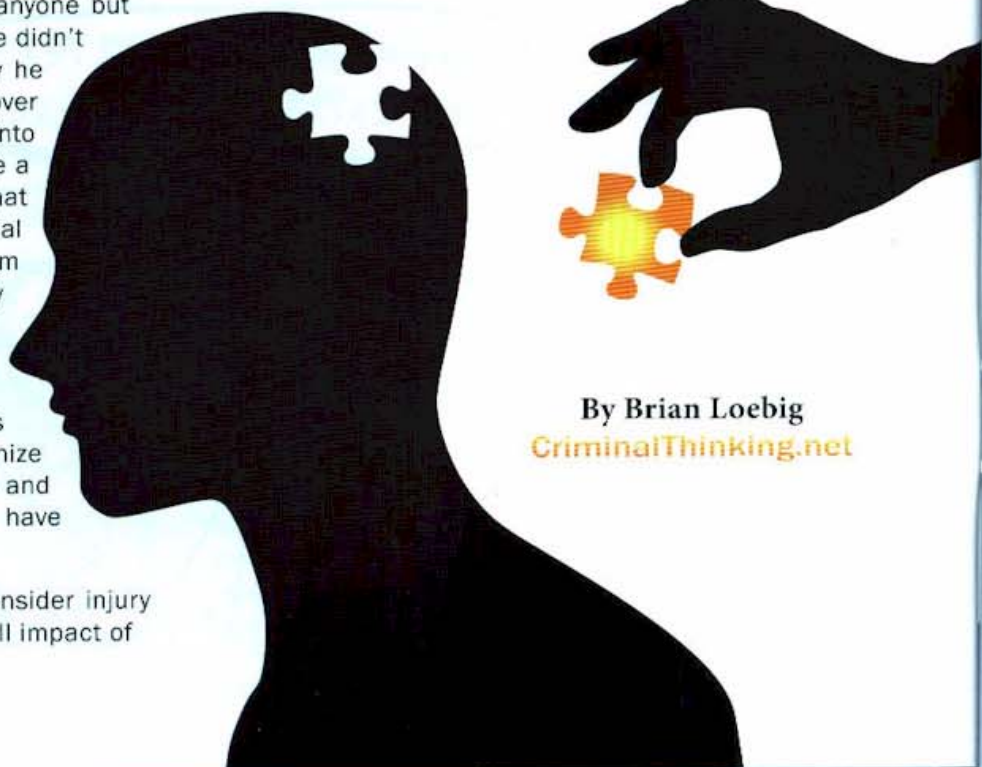
As a general rule, criminal thinkers do not consider the effect their actions have on others. Brief moments of guilt or remorse are quickly replaced with feelings of being victims themselves or self-righteousness about the harm they have caused. When offenders express what appears to be sincere regret, careful examination will show that these declarations are typically used to tell others what they want to hear. Most criminals are sorrier they were caught than remorseful for the harm they have caused by their actions.

While failing to consider injury to others, criminal thinkers also don't consider themselves bad people. Criminal thinkers can believe this through a long process of repeating the same behavior patterns over and over again. Feelings of guilt and remorse are erased, and negative thoughts about the impact of their behavior fade completely. The drug dealer will argue he isn't forcing anyone to buy drugs. Drug addicts will claim they aren't hurting anyone but themselves. The domestic abuser will say he didn't mean to hurt anyone, and the thief will say he has to make a living and insurance will cover it anyway. When criminal thinkers enter into recovery it is strongly advised that they write a searching and fearless moral inventory, one that includes an honest reflection of their criminal history. By seeing their past in front of them on paper and sharing it openly and honestly with another person, criminal minds begin to change their distorted view of the way situations have always looked from their angle. Then they can see the consequences of their actions more accurately and recognize that they are victimizers more than victims and see clearly for themselves the harm they have caused others.

Replacing the thinking error of failing to consider injury to others involves becoming aware of the full impact of

abusive and criminal behavior. It is important that a person not only look at legally defined criminal behavior, but also examine irresponsible actions such as lying, deceit, conning, game playing and vindictiveness. For lasting change to occur it is essential that criminal thinkers go beyond immediate injury and consider the consequences their behavior has on their victims. The more a criminal thinker is willing to look at his or her behavior, the more a criminal mind will develop and expand a sustaining and moral conscience. Guilt is only of value if it is used to change undesirable behavior and develop a sensitive, well-formed conscience. Recovery is possible through learning to redefine moral principles, which include deterrents that promise undesirable consequences from practicing illegal and criminal behavior.

Offenders, addicts and even the tax-paying public can benefit from understanding and trying to avoid the thinking errors we all possess at difficult moments in time throughout our lives. True freedom begins in the mind.



By Brian Loebig
CriminalThinking.net