

16 So, what is needed? [24 Feb 2020]

In the prior post, we discussed people's need to be needed. It plays out sadly in pet food commercials that tug at owners' generosity emotions. Pets are supposed to give their owners happiness by gobbling up the advertised food. Careless owners are tempted to overindulge in watching their pets eagerly eating, resulting in obese pets. Carried to excess like this, the **artificial** need to be needed is injurious. In this post, we examine **what** is needed.

Insensitivity quickly becomes sinister. For example, people rightly feel needed when they practice empathy and encourage their neighbors to succeed. However, the process turns sour when domineering attention amounts to policing and punishing neighbors. It is a small fault to put enticing food in front of an overfed pet. It is a larger fault to put deleterious controls on suffering people—to take away the very tools they need to succeed.

Hurting people hurt people. Injurious behavior reveals that there is something missing in the psyche of the perpetrator. One possibility is that people do not act with love because they do not experience love. In the face of this deficiency, there is *harm* in taking something *away* from people whose needs are already not being met. Obese pets need regulated nutrition. The human offender needs psychological bolstering.

Forgiveness does not include being vulnerable to reinjury. We do not shower an offender with opportunities to go on offending. That said, we do not take away *beneficial* conditions. Antisocial behavior is not repaired by taking away *all* behavior. It is treated by replacing *bad* with *good* behavior. Injecting love into the void provides direction and fosters improvement.

In one example of restorative justice, there is no black-robed judge seated on an elevated platform. Instead, there is a round table providing equal dignity to all the parties involved in a resolution process. Participants examine the deficiencies that led to one or more infractions of rules. Together they carry out a program of reconstruction and healing. Injuries may not be reversible, but the process redirects lives, and results in restored and improved social environment.

The best thing to be needed **for** is a better future.