



DOUBLE STANDARDS

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I often wonder how would things be if double standards were eliminated and people were held responsible only for their own individual acts, if we did not have a “social blanket” placed over the entire group for the bad behavior of one person.

For example, if an ex-convict on parole commits a crime and returns to prison, a social blanket is placed over all convicts and they are held accountable for that ex-convict’s foolish actions. Emergency moratoriums are established to stop parole, and special legislation is enacted to curtail commutation for prisoners who had absolutely nothing to do with the guilty ex-con’s bad judgment.

But if a paroled prisoner created a positive business that employed numerous out-of-work citizens in society, no credit would be given to all prisoners.

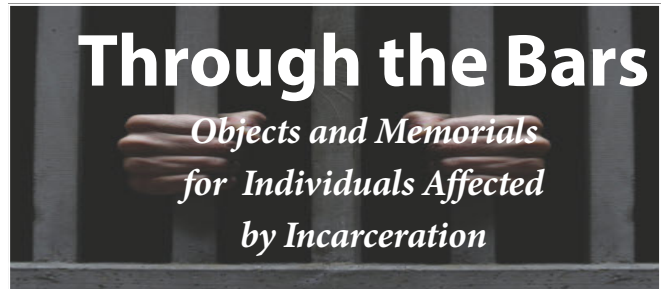
On the other hand, if a police officer commits a crime, there isn’t a social blanket placed on all police officers. Instead, you hear sympathetic excuses like: “One rogue cop can’t destroy the good reputation of all cops,” or “It was just an aberration by one venal police officer.”

It’s the same thing for medical doctors. If one doctor performs illegal abortions and causes unnecessary deaths to innocent babies and women, not all doctors are blamed for that one doctor’s bad behavior.

My point is this: individuals should be held accountable for their own personal actions and deeds. Let’s stop blaming everyone in specific groups for the wrong one person commits. People should only be held accountable for their own individual judgments and decisions. If credit isn’t given to a specific group for the good of one, then don’t give another group credit for the bad.

Let’s stop the double standards in all aspects of life. Society will advance in a positive way and deserving individuals will reap the benefits from their own personal sacrifices and efforts.

All people are unique. People should be judged on their own merit and behavior, not by someone else’s bad actions and deeds.



HOLDING IT TOGETHER

Reesy Floyd-Thompson, Mrs. GE-6309

As a prisoner’s wife, it’s not uncommon to hold onto items to keep the memory of one’s husband alive or to create his presence; we keep things like cologne, hair, and clothing. But to keep my husband with me, it required that I go one step further.

When my husband was home, he had an annoying habit of using my bobby pins as toothpicks. And, as you might suspect, these out-of-shape pieces of metal never made it into the trash. Fed up with seeing them all over the house, I began pointing them out each time I came across one: “Tooth apparatus, tooth apparatus, tooth apparatus!”

After my husband was incarcerated, I moved into a new residence. And during the final walk-through of our old home, I noticed a few tooth apparatus.

I collect each one I find.

Once in our new home, before I even unpacked, I inconspicuously position the tooth apparatus I found in the old home around places where together we shared no memories. And now, each time I come across one, I move it; that way, the element of surprise keeps my husband alive, marks his territory, and fills my heart’s empty space.

While he was home, keeping the tooth apparatus pushed the boundaries of my sanity and cleanliness. But with long prison sentences, it is hard to recall the moments that matter, especially when fading memories are replaced with the demands of prison life.

For me, these tooth apparatus are symbols of auld lang syne, a contorted pathway between yesterday and today that pushes the play button on this life lived before incarceration. It takes me back to the time we fell in love, our courtship, and our engagement. And whenever I discover these apparatus, it all comes back to me with the promise of better days; a promise he left behind.

But whether the bobby pin is used as intended or a tooth apparatus, its greatest use for me is that it keeps two people connected who are caught between two different worlds.