

Tenzin,

I'm sorry my post offended you. That certainly wasn't my intent. Your strong feelings came through very clearly, which anyone would, or should, respect. I do, and that's why I'm personally replying, though some ppl tell me that no response is best.

It's clear that you don't like me, so I hope I don't upset you further, but your comments suggest you are smart and passionate, so maybe you'll appreciate a more direct ~~acknowledgement~~ ^{acknowledgment}.

About Justin Berry, I chose his example because it is very public and well-known. He's been personally conducting seminars on the subject of online exploitation for over a decade, telling his story to schools, to police, and to the general public, largely because his case ^{was} so high-profile. You might be right, maybe he was saved from himself and from an unhappy life of debasement when the FBI knocked on his door, but even if so, the tactics that police used in his case, much as they used ~~on that brave~~ ^{on that brave} girl in ~~Pennsylvania~~ ^{New Jersey} (?) and probably many thousands of others, are painfully heavy handed and contemptful of the humanity of their young targets. I wonder if you and I could agree at least that many 14-year-old people, who cannot legally consent to sexual actions in most countries (as you rightly pointed out), still do, in fact, do things like taking and sharing nude photos of themselves, no matter what anyone else says or thinks about it. That's just a fact, no? So, my question is, do we want to see them criminalized? I wrote that post because it just seems tragic that in this country, the typical response when youthful sexuality becomes visible is to aggressively target the young person, and often with the most coercive and damaging tools of the American punishment system. Wouldn't you agree that this must create real trauma and stigma for young people, especially those who never imagined their private lives and thoughts were of so much interest to such powerful people they'd never even met?

I realize that your anger toward me might be less about what I wrote and more about who I am or what you believe I've done. You sound like someone with a heart for prisoners... are you a prison abolitionist too? You didn't say where you're from, but maybe (hopefully!) the problems of policing and caging aren't quite so bad there as they are here. I hope you'll keep in mind that the processes that lead to imprisonment, at least in this country, are very far from fair or honest. You wrote that I "object to sentences for my fellow inmates." Yes, that's true. I do. I've met many prisoners, caged for murders, robberies, rapes, fraud, gang violence, drugs, and a thousand other things, but I've never met one yet whose actions couldn't be explained by a

Careful and caring consideration of their life circumstances, on one hand (which are mostly far beyond their control or even conscious awareness), and the largely hidden processes and motives of the American criminal punishment system, with its twin engines of manufactured panic and political expediency, on the other hand. Yes, there's a lot more to it than just that, but that's usually enough to come to a reasonable understanding of a particular prisoner, and as the saying goes, "To Understand All is to Forgive All." Sadly, and you may find this hard to believe, but there aren't even many prisoners whose official conviction record even matches their actual actions. In that sense, I'd say that most prisoners aren't even "guilty," though almost all of them would be quick to point out that they did a lot that they were never punished for, so it balances out in their minds. As you've probably seen, ~~most~~ most prisoners are eager to "take responsibility," even when they really don't deserve the blame, contrary to the popular stereotype of convicts. The regrettable reality is, most prisoners took "deals," so the truth gets lost in the game and it's worth being skeptical of the one-sided stories presented only by those with the most privileged voices... especially those voices who are paid to tell a specific story.

My point is, yes, I oppose other prisoners' sentences — all of them — because I advocate for all prisoners, even those who might hate me. Anyone in a cage is in the same boat, so I do appreciate your support of people in prison, even if it doesn't extend to me. As you said, "many inmates" (maybe all?) "have serious concerns and legal problems," and you are to be respected for caring about them. So few do.

~~Tenzin~~ Tenzin, my posts are all expressions of my experiences or reactions to injustice. I hope to be a little lighthearted or funny sometimes, but that's tough from this position. The list you referred to, my likes & dislikes, comes from a paper I've been adding to for years. I wanted to offer a little bit of what makes me me, just to get a little more personal in a forum where I often feel I'm just observing and commenting a little too clinically. It seems you've read many of my posts, so you may have seen that I feel strongly about the rights of youth and the responsibilities of post-youth people. You'd probably say the same about yourself, true? And we probably differ on some of those ideas, which might say a lot about the nature of "rights" and "responsibilities," when you think about it, but maybe not so much about the character or sincerity of any two people who disagree about them. Even you or me.

You know, I'd bet we'd actually agree on a lot more than not, but that's probably a mystery to be solved in another lifetime, unfortunately. Take care.