

Can Yoga Provide A Solution To Soaring Crime Rates?

Crime and Yoga are not often two words that are used together in the same sentence, and that is part of the reason that they are combined in this article. When you think of a stereotypical criminal, someone who does Yoga just doesn't spring to mind. We think of criminals as being angry, or at least very active, while Yogi are seen as calm and sedentary. Really the two are so far apart that it's hard to consider that someone who regularly undertakes Yoga classes could ever become a criminal. Perhaps Yoga should become compulsory to fight the crime rate? Here's why:

Yoga classes begin with a simple standing exercise - the exercise is this: Breathe. You can spend a significant part of a Yoga class concentrating on the simple action of taking a deep breath, breathing it in and feeling it's life giving force extend to all the far reaches of the body, and then exhaling it just as deeply and completely. This simple act of concentrating of breathing has an unparalleled ability to focus our mental concentration. It allows us to clear away unwanted or disturbing thoughts and restore ourselves to a central balance.

The calming and focussing benefits of a Yoga breathing exercise can, quickly and easily clear away the types of distractions and temptations that can lead to a criminal act, at least an impulsive one. Imagine the potential of that on habitual criminals - the ability to take a moment before committing a crime, focus their thoughts and realize that it is not the best course of action and should be avoided.

Most domestic violence is a direct result of too much stress and strain in a relationship. Statistics show that the arguments that lead to an incident of domestic violence are almost always of the 'little things'. The final straw being a little thing rather than a big important issue. Let's insert the ability to calm ourselves, sharpen our mind and rationalize into that situation. Domestic Violence is a result of people 'snapping'. Uncluttering the mind and calming oneself would mean that people never got to that point.

Other forms of violent crime are similar to domestic violence - they occur when tension rises up over time until one person snaps and throws a punch or pulls a knife. With the right self-calming tools at their disposal these criminals would be far less likely to offend.

Of course, all that assumes that the criminal does not want to commit a crime and only does so due to a failure to see an alternative when a certain set of circumstances present themselves. They are hungry and can take a loaf of bread

so they do, or they feel threatened, unappreciated or disrespected and see striking out as the only options. Yoga would not benefit the kind of calculating mind that makes a career of criminal activities because each crime is carefully pre-meditated.

Or would it?

Most people know of the physical side and have at least heard of the mental and spiritual benefits of yoga, but few know that the exercises that form the basis of Yoga are only the Western Worlds interpretation of Yoga. Traditionally Indian Yoga includes an entire philosophy on how to treat each other and live our lives. If criminals also followed this component of Yoga it would be possible to see crime disappear. One can only dream...

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