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Discipline

For other uses, see [Discipline \(disambiguation\)](#).

In its natural sense, **discipline** is systematic instruction intended to train a person, sometimes literally called a disciple, in a craft, trade or other activity, or to follow a particular code of conduct or "order". Often, the phrase "to discipline" carries a negative connotation. This is because enforcement of order—that is, ensuring instructions are carried out—is often regulated through punishment.

Discipline is not a course of actions leading to certain goal or ideal. A disciplined person is one that has established a goal and is willing to achieve that goal at the expense of his or her individuality.

Discipline is the assertion of willpower over more base desires, and is usually understood to be synonymous with self control. Self-discipline is to some extent a substitute for motivation, when one uses reason to determine the best course of action that opposes one's desires. Virtuous behavior is when one's motivations are aligned with one's reasoned aims: to do what one knows is best and to do it gladly. Continent behavior, on the other hand, is when one does what one knows is best, but must do it by opposing one's motivations. Moving from continent to virtuous behavior requires training and some self-discipline.



Military discipline

The regulation of the behaviors of members of any military, involving rules that govern goal orientation and behavior inside and outside the institution, including the socialization processes that happen in military training. Rules of discipline are firmer or laxer depending on the prevalent culture of the military's country or institution.^[1] As early as the time of the Roman Army, discipline was enforced through military justice, but broader compilations of laws such as the Codex Theodosianus contained provisions dealing with military discipline.

Prison discipline

Main article: [Prison discipline](#)

Prison discipline refers to the means by which prison staff maintain order inside prisons and correctional facilities. This includes various types of punishments, such as solitary confinement, monetary restitution, exclusion from certain prison programs, and forfeiture of good conduct time. In the past, some prisons also used corporal punishment on inmates who violated prison rules.

Justifications for punishment include retribution, deterrence, rehabilitation, and incapacitation. The last could include such measures as isolation, in order to prevent the wrongdoer's having contact with potential victims, or the removal of a hand in order to make theft more difficult. Of the four justifications, only retribution is part of the definition of punishment and none of the other justifications is a guaranteed outcome, aside from obvious exceptions such as an executed man being incapacitated with regard to further crimes.

If only some of the conditions included in the definition of punishment are present, descriptions other than "punishment" may be considered more accurate. Inflicting something negative, or unpleasant, on a person or animal, without authority is considered either spite or revenge rather than punishment. In addition, the word "punishment" is used as a metaphor, as when a boxer experiences "*punishment*" during a fight. In other situations, breaking a rule may be rewarded, and so receiving such a reward naturally does not constitute punishment. Finally the condition of breaking (or breaching) the rules must be satisfied for consequences to be considered punishment.

Punishments differ in their degree of severity, and may include sanctions such as reprimands, deprivations of privileges or liberty, fines, incarcerations, ostracism, the infliction of pain, amputation and the death penalty. *Corporal punishment* refers to punishments in which physical pain is intended to be inflicted upon the transgressor. Punishments may be judged as fair or unfair in terms of their degree of reciprocity and proportionality. Punishment can be an integral part of socialisation, and punishing unwanted behaviour is often part of a system of pedagogy or behavioral modification which also includes rewards.

Definitions

In philosophy

Various philosophers have presented definitions of punishment. Conditions commonly considered necessary properly to describe an action as punishment are that

1. it is imposed by an authority,
2. it involves some loss to the supposed offender,
3. it is in response to an offence and
4. the person (or animal) to whom the loss is imposed should be deemed at least somewhat responsible for the offence.

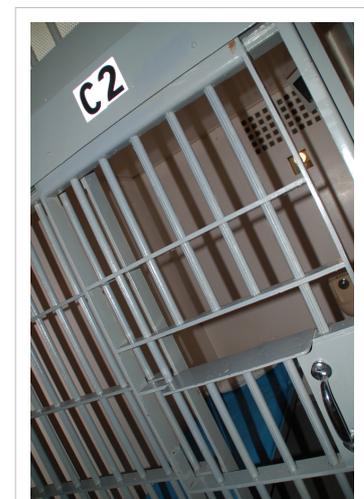


Barbed tape is a feature of prisons.

In psychology

Main article: Punishment (psychology)

Introduced by B.F. Skinner, punishment has a more restrictive and technical definition. Along with reinforcement it belongs under the Operant Conditioning category. Operant Conditioning refers to learning with either punishment or reinforcement. It is also referred to as response-stimulus conditioning. In psychology, punishment is the reduction of a behaviour via application of an adverse stimulus ("*positive* punishment") or removal of a pleasant stimulus ("*negative* punishment"). Extra chores or spanking are examples of positive punishment, while making an offending student lose recess or play privileges are examples of negative punishment. The definition requires that punishment is only determined after the fact by the reduction in behaviour; if the offending behaviour of the subject does not decrease then it is not considered punishment. There is some conflation of punishment and aversives, though an aversive that does not decrease behaviour is not considered punishment in psychology.



A modern jail cell.

In socio-biology

Punishment is sometimes called *retaliatory* or *moralistic aggression*;Wikipedia:Citation needed it has been observed in allWikipedia:Please clarify species of social animals, leading evolutionary biologists to conclude that it is an evolutionarily stable strategy, selected because it favors cooperative behavior.

Scope of application

Punishments are applied for various purposes, most generally, to encourage and enforce proper behavior as defined by society or family. Criminals are punished judicially, by fines, corporal punishment or custodial sentences such as prison; detainees risk further punishments for breaches of internal rules. Children, pupils and other trainees may be punished by their educators or instructors (mainly parents, guardians, or teachers, tutors and coaches) — see Child discipline.

Slaves, domestic and other servants used to be punishable by their masters. Employees can still be subject to a contractual form of fine or demotion. Most hierarchical organizations, such as military and police forces, or even churches, still apply quite rigid internal discipline, even with a judicial system of their own (court martial, canonical courts).

Punishment may also be applied on moral, especially religious, grounds, as in penance (which is voluntary) or imposed in a theocracy with a religious police (as in a strict Islamic state like Iran or under the Taliban) or (though not a true theocracy) by Inquisition.

History and rationale

Seriousness of a crime; Punishment fits the crime

Main articles: Retributive justice and Eye for an eye

See also: Felony and Misdemeanor

A principle often mentioned with respect to the degree of punishment to be meted out is that the punishment should match the crime.^{[1][2][3]} One standard for measurement is the degree to which a crime affects others or society. Measurements of the degree of seriousness of a crime have been developed.^[4] A felony is generally considered to be a crime of "high seriousness", while a misdemeanor is not.

Possible reasons for punishment

See also: Criminal justice

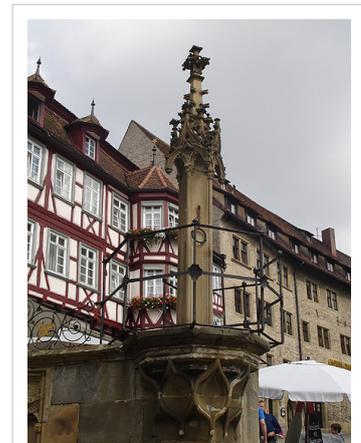
There are many possible reasons that might be given to justify or explain why someone ought to be punished; here follows a broad outline of typical, possibly conflicting, justifications.



Hester Prynne at the Stocks - an engraved illustration from an 1878 edition of *The Scarlet Letter*



Punishment of an offender in Hungary, 1793



Gothic pillory (early 16th century) in Schwäbisch Hall, Germany

Deterrence (prevention)

One reason given to justify punishment is that it is a measure to prevent people from committing an offence - deterring previous offenders from re-offending, and preventing those who may be contemplating an offence they have not committed from actually committing it. This punishment is intended to be sufficient that people would choose not to commit the crime rather than experience the punishment. The aim is to deter everyone in the community from committing offences.

Rehabilitation

Main article: Rehabilitation (penology)

Some punishment includes work to reform and rehabilitate the wrongdoer so that they will not commit the offence again. This is distinguished from deterrence, in that the goal here is to change the offender's attitude to what they have done, and make them come to see that their behavior was wrong.

Incapacitation and societal protection

Incapacitation as a justification of punishment refers to the offender's ability to commit further offences being removed. Imprisonment separates offenders from the community, removing or reducing their ability to carry out certain crimes. The death penalty does this in a permanent (and irrevocable) way. In some societies, people who stole have been punished by having their hands amputated.

Retribution

Main article: Retributive justice

Criminal activities typically give a benefit to the offender and a loss to the victim. Punishment has been justified as a measure of retributive justice, in which the goal is to try to rebalance any unjust advantage gained by ensuring that the offender also suffers a loss. Sometimes viewed as a way of "getting even" with a wrongdoer — the suffering of the wrongdoer is seen as a desired goal in itself, even if it has no restorative benefits for the victim. One reason societies have administered punishments is to diminish the perceived need for retaliatory "street justice", blood feud and vigilantism.

Restoration

Main article: Restorative justice

For minor offenses, punishment may take the form of the offender "righting the wrong", or restitution. Community service or compensation orders are examples of this sort of penalty.

Education and denunciation

Punishment can be explained by positive prevention theory to use the criminal justice system to teach people what are the social norms for what is correct, and acts as a reinforcement.

Punishment can serve as a means for society to publicly express denunciation of an action as being criminal. Besides educating people regarding what is not acceptable behavior, it serves the dual function of preventing vigilante justice by acknowledging public anger, while concurrently deterring future criminal activity by stigmatizing the offender. This is sometimes called the "Expressive Theory" of denunciation. The pillory was a method for carrying out public denunciation.

Unified Theory

The unified theory of punishment brings together multiple penal purposes - such as retribution, deterrence and rehabilitation - in a single, coherent framework. Instead of punishment requiring we choose between them, unified theorists argue that they work together as part of some wider goal such as the protection of rights. .

Opposition of punishment

Some people think that punishment as a whole is unhelpful and even harmful to the people that it is used against. Professor Deirdre Golash, author of the book, *The Case against Punishment: Retribution, Crime Prevention, and the Law*, states in her book that,

We ought not to impose such harm on anyone unless we have a very good reason for doing so. This remark may seem trivially true, but the history of humankind is littered with examples of the deliberate infliction of harm by well-intentioned persons in the vain pursuit of ends which that harm did not further, or in the successful pursuit of questionable ends. These benefactors of humanity sacrificed their fellows to appease mythical gods and tortured them to save their souls from a mythical hell, broke and bound the feet of children to promote their eventual marriageability, beat slow schoolchildren to promote learning and respect for teachers, subjected the sick to leeches to rid them of excess blood, and put suspects to the rack and the thumbscrew in the service of truth. They schooled themselves to feel no pity—to renounce human compassion in the service of a higher end. The deliberate doing of harm in the mistaken belief that it promotes some greater good is the essence of tragedy. We would do well to ask whether the goods we seek in harming offenders are worthwhile, and whether the means we choose will indeed secure them.^[5]

She also makes statements about imprisonment,

Imprisonment means, at minimum, the loss of liberty and autonomy, as well as many material comforts, personal security, and access to heterosexual relations. These deprivations, according to Gresham Sykes (who first identified them) “together dealt 'a profound hurt' that went to 'the very foundations of the prisoner's being.

But these are only the minimum harms, suffered by the least vulnerable inmates in the best-run prisons. Most prisons are run badly, and in some, conditions are more squalid than in the worst of slums. In the District of Columbia jail, for example, inmates must wash their clothes and sheets in cell toilets because the laundry machines are broken. Vermin and insects infest the building, in which air vents are clogged with decades' accumulation of dust and grime. But even inmates in prisons where conditions are sanitary must still face the numbing boredom and emptiness of prison life—a vast desert of wasted days in which little in the way of meaningful activity is possible.

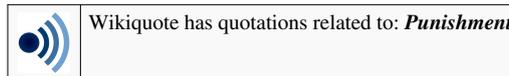
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