Types of Thieves and the Reasons behind Stealing

Thieves are in similar categories as compulsive shoppers. Since most of us are impulsive shoppers, it will be easier for us to vision the different categories. The individuals who get a “high” when shopping are the classic compulsive spenders and if we secure merchandise without paying for it, we are call the “thrill seeker” theft offender.

Trophy and collector shoppers can be compared to the professional thieves who plan and shoplift purely for profit.

The bargain shopper is driven by “need” regardless of income. The impoverished offender perceives that he/she needs to steal to survive. They do not explore resources and issues of pride prevent them for asking for help.

It is tempting to put morality on a shelf during tough times but do not let yourself justify it.
The background on preventing shoplifters

- On the average, an individual has experienced one-hundred and fifty shoplifting incidents before the offender’s apprehension and police action. Shoplifting is one of the most common but least detected and reported crime. A research company developed this information by following individuals and actually catching offenders stealing. Other information was acquired by subjective surveys completed by individuals about shopping and stealing.

- People appear to have fewer inhibitions about stealing from department stores and retail chain stores.

- One of our clients, Elle states she grew so brazen that she did not believe the signs in Macy’s around the dressing room indicating that you are on camera. She got caught and arrested two days in a row for cutting tags off of clothing.

- Robin used the shopping bag the store provides to aid her while committing her theft acts. She walks in with an empty Hermes or Prada shopping bag. In addition to filching all manner of clothing from Macy’s or Dillard’s, she would grab endless amounts of beauty supplies and stuff those in her bags as well. Her third arrest resulted in court mandated treatment for alcoholism and shoplifting. Being on probation and aware that any violation would send her to jail keeps her fairly focused.
CHANGE IN MANAGEMENT OF INVENTORY

- The financial burden is upon the business owners to prevent loss of merchandise by theft. This one factor brought about change in management of inventory and employees. Through education, business owners developed ways of monitoring suspicious activity in manageable ways. Employees were trained to keep a watchful eye on customers and store exits. Employees at a Wal-Mart store made a discovery about one of their fire exits. An organized theft ring of four males would come to the store and distract employees and move large flat screen TVs out of the fire exit to a waiting pickup truck. The men had offended four or five times. They were living at Up-Town Suites motel near this Wal-Mart store.

- New rules were set-up about the sales process of electronics. An employee takes the merchandise to a certain cashier for processing the sale. Employees that stock the merchandise are required to attach anti-theft merchandise tags that only employees can remove.
Did you grow up in less than desirable home as a child? How did your family of origin teach you about how to deal with emotions and how to communicate your needs and feelings to others? Have you found yourself fighting or arguing a lot? Do you tend to conflict a great deal with others? Does your desire to steal come out only in certain situations such as with relationships but not at work? Or is it the opposite with you?
FIVE “R’s”

- Let's look at your point-of-view with the five R's that behavior scientists state that keeps you in denial and unaware of your need for change. The first "R" is reveling. What is reveling? This means that you are not only unaware of the problem, you are exalting in the behavior. The party is on! You enjoy stealing and see it as a positive thing. You celebrate what you are doing and cannot imagine why others cannot see the benefits of your behavior. Your enthusiasm blinds you to the possibility that stealing might cause you some problems in life.
SECOND "R"

- The second "R" is reluctance. You find yourself procrastinating once you decide that you will never steal again. Change is scary and somewhat intimidating. You are used to getting away with stealing and are sure that you will never get caught. It is a comfortable lifestyle for you.

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THIRD “R”

- The third "R" is rebellion. You enjoy being anti-social. You rebel against change even when you want to make the change. You often respond to even self-imposed behavioral changes with the same ferocity you feel when someone tells you to do something.
FOURTH “R”

- The fourth "R" is resignation. You may feel resigned to current state of things. You may feel attempting to change is useless. Your fear of another failure raises its ugly head and causes you to surrender before you begin. You believe that other people can change but for you it is too late. What change have you made in order to change a behavior after several attempts?
Fifth “R”

The fifth "R" is rationalization. You may come up with some creative ways to talk yourself out of making changes. You may have a friend who drinks too much. You may have heard that friend say "You'd drink too if you had my job". Rationalization is self-talk designed to convince yourself that your old behavior is okay. The on and on justifications for your behavior is okay has been keeping you from change. Rationalize is to tell "Rational-Lies". You are trying to convince yourself that you are doing okay.
**Impulse Control**

- Theft, shoplifting and stealing can be an impulse control disorder. The AMA (American Medical Association) uses a guideline for impulse control disorders. Impulse control disorders are a specific group of impulsive behaviors that have been accepted as psychiatric disorders under the DSM-IV-TR. The impulsive behaviors refer to violent behavior, sexual behavior, gambling behavior, fire starting, stealing, and self-abusive behaviors. But it is very important to distinguish between the diagnosis and the impulsive act. The impulsive act is a criminal behavior.
The diagnosis is a psychiatric condition. A psychotherapist would give you a DSM-IV-TR code for the impulsive behavior disorder. The DA (District Attorney) would charge you with the criminal behavior (the impulsive act).

Impulse Control Disorders are often present in a number of specific personality disorders, primarily borderline, anti-social, narcissistic, and histrionic. Impulsivity in the form of risk-taking behaviors, sexual promiscuity, gestures and threats of self-harm and other attention-seeking behaviors. They are less prevalent in avoidant, dependant, obsessive compulsive personality and other disorder types.
There are a large number of less frequently occurring impulse control disorders that do not fit the five categories under the general diagnosis. The five categories under the general diagnosis are trichotillomania, intermittent explosive disorder, pathological gambling, kleptomania, pyromania. The less frequently occurring impulse control disorders are listed under "NOS" - not otherwise specified.
Most impulsive behaviors under NOS can be corrected with behavior modification and cognitive behavior therapy. Cognitive behavior helps you focus upon your thought patterns and what thoughts prompt your behaviors. Changing your thoughts will change your behaviors. With behavior modification, an individual will learn strategies for changing undesirable behaviors. Also an individual acquires structure and alerts to help you remember the strategies.
JEAN PIAGET

- Another factor to consider with impulsive behavior is an individual's moral development and education. Children examine the rules of a game. A fair rule is one that is in the game. Jean Piaget is among the first psychologists whose work remains directly relevant to contemporary theories of moral development. In his early writing, he focused specifically on the moral lives of children, studying the way children play games in order to learn more about children's beliefs about right and wrong. Based on his observations of children's application of rules when playing, Piaget determined that morality can be considered a developmental process.
MORAL REASONING

- From his observations, Piaget concluded that children begin in a "heteronomous" stage of moral reasoning, characterized by a strict adherence to rules and duties, and obedience to authority.

- This heteronomy results from two factors. The primary factor is the young child's cognitive structure. According to Piaget, the thinking of young children is characterized by egocentrism. That is to say that young children are unable to simultaneously take into account their own view of things with the perspective of someone else. This egocentrism leads children to project their own thoughts and wishes onto others.
MORAL REALISM

- It is also associated with the un-directional view of rules and power associated with heteronomous moral thought, and various forms of "moral realism." Moral realism is associated with "objective responsibility," which is valuing the letter of the law above the purpose of the law. This is why young children are more concerned about the outcomes of actions rather than the intentions of the person doing the act. Moral realism is also associated with the young child's belief in "immanent justice." This is the expectation that punishments automatically follow acts of wrong-doing.
Piaget rejected the belief that children simply learn and internalize the norms for a group; he believed individuals define morality individually through their struggles to arrive at fair solutions. In other words, an individual needs opportunities for personal discovery through problem solving to learn moral development, rather than indoctrinating individuals with norms. This approach is premised in the idea that virtues and vices are the basis to moral behavior, or that moral character is comprised of a "bag of virtues", such as honesty, kindness, patience, strength and includes empathy.
**Empathy**

- Empathy is to identify with another's feelings. It is to emotionally put yourself in the place of another. The ability to empathize is directly dependent on your ability to feel your own feelings and identify them.

- If you have never felt a certain feeling, it will be hard for you to understand how another person is feeling. This holds equally true for pleasure and pain. If, for example, you have never put your hand in a flame, you will not know the pain of fire. If you have not experienced sexual passion, you will not understand its power.
FEELING REBELLIOUS OR DEFIANT

- Similarly, if you have never felt rebellious or defiant, you will not understand those feelings. Reading about a feeling and intellectually knowing about it is very different than actually experiencing it for yourself.

- Among those with an equal level of innate emotional intelligence, the person who has actually experienced the widest range and variety of feelings—the great depths of depression and the heights of fulfillment, for example—is the one who is most able to empathize with the greatest number of people from all walks of life. On the other hand, when we say that someone "can't relate" to other people, it is likely because they have not experienced, acknowledged or accepted many feelings of their own.
Reliving Emotions

Once you have felt discriminated against, for example, it is much easier to relate with someone else who has been discriminated against. Our innate emotional intelligence gives us the ability to quickly recall those instances and form associations when we encounter discrimination again. We then can use the "reliving" of those emotions to guide our thinking and actions. This is one of the ways nature slowly evolves towards a higher level of survival. In other words, over time, awareness of our own feelings may lead us to treat others in a more pro-survival way.
**BEING IN TOUCH WITH FEELINGS**

- For this process to work, the first step is that we must be able to experience our own emotions. This means we must be open to them and not distract ourselves from them or try to numb ourselves from our feelings through drugs, alcohol, etc.

- Next, we need to become aware of what we are actually feeling—to acknowledge, identify, and accept our feelings. Only then can we empathize with others. That is one reason it is important to work on your own emotional awareness and sensitivity—in other words, to be "in touch with" your feelings.
INDIVIDUALS NOT IN TOUCH WITH FEELINGS

- Those who are not in touch with their own feelings are not likely to have a sense of conscience. They may feel no remorse, no guilt for causing harm to others. As could be expected, studies show that such people are unlikely to respond to rehabilitation.

- One thing which could easily cause a person to lose touch with his own feelings and to lose his natural sense of conscience is an extremely painful childhood and adolescence. Such people have experienced so much pain that they shut themselves from it. This pain may have come from physical, sexual or emotional abuse. The end result though is similar. They do not experience their own pain, so they have no compassion for the pain of another. Nor so they have any empathy.
Psychological pain defense

- They are also likely to be extremely needy. In other words, they have many deep, unmet emotional needs. As adults, they will have developed elaborate defense mechanisms in an attempt to block the pain coming from both these unmet needs and from the guilt they would feel if they allowed themselves to feel.

- Sigmund Freud, one of the founders of American Psychiatric Association, helped us see, attempts to defend our brains from psychological pain usually involve the cognitive parts of the brain. For example, common defenses are rationalization, justification, denial, intellectualization, moralizing, preaching, proselytizing, self-righteousness, projection, suppression, etc.
Absence of a Conscience

- In the absence of a conscience, behavior must be controlled by fear, threats and punishment, or by separation from society. This comes at tremendous social cost, and evidently is ineffective, given the overcrowded prisons and rising fines.

- It seems that laws are really only needed when conscience has failed. We might say that the more laws a society needs, the less emotionally intelligent. Many people, including the President Barack Obama, believe empathy is something we could use more of in society. In fact it is likely that our human ability to empathize is one of the main ways our emotions contribute to the survival of the species.
SOCIETY WITHOUT EMPATHY

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- To adjust your moral conscience and emotional intelligence, a professional therapist will be required to guide you step-by-step in a recovery program.
EINSTEIN QUOTE:

"A human being is a part of the whole, called by us "Universe," a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts, and feelings as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole nature in its beauty. Nobody is able to achieve this completely, but the striving for such achievement is in itself a part of the liberation and a foundation for inner security." (Do you watch the TV show "Criminal Minds"?)
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