

Discipline will keep you out of jail

BY ANTHONY DILLON

Thoreau said “For every thousand hacking at the leaves of evil there is one striking at the root”.

This simply means that most people deal with the symptoms and not the underlying causes of a problem.

Dealing with the roots is often very difficult.

It is so much easier to deal with the leaves or the symptoms.

Often it is just simpler to complain because it looks as if you are doing something.

As a lecturer, I have often had the chance to work with counsellors.

I ask them “When clients come to see you, do they want ‘symptom relief’ or the underlying problem dealt with?” You’ve already guessed what the answer is.

So do we see this focus on symptoms with Aboriginal issues?

Well to take one example, consider the fact that Aboriginal people are over represented in jails.

Thankfully people are starting to realise that jails are often an ineffective way of dealing with crime and those who commit those crimes.

But amongst ‘our mob’ while there is much talk about not putting young offenders with adults, over representation in jail, outrage that Aboriginal people die in prison (even though it is as the same rate

as non-Aboriginal people), we hear very little discussion on why our people end up in jail in the first place.

Or if I do, I usually hear excuses like ‘it is due to colonisation’ or ‘racist police’, etc.

With that mentality, they will continue to be over represented in jail.

I just spoke on the phone with my father (a policeman for more than 35 years) who said “To address the problems of bad (criminal) behaviour, it must start in the home.

Discipline is needed.

If the children are not disciplined from an early age, they will neither have respect for themselves nor others, and head down the wrong path.

By the time they get to their teens, it is too late”.

Following from my father’s words, be loving, and be tough.

Not necessarily tough in manner, but tough in establishing the boundaries.

On the matter of discipline, I would like to relate to you a story told by my favourite

author on raising children – John Rosemond.

When he speaks with large groups of parents, he asks them to raise their hands if when they say “no” to their child, their child knows exactly what they mean?

He said that only a few hands go up.

He then asks them if they knew what their parents meant when they said “no” to them when they were children.

Most hands go up.

The point is, we need to return to how things were a generation or two ago.

The children knew their parents were the boss.

When they spoke, the children listened and obeyed.



Juvenile justice by Julie Dowling

Should we not be investing our energies in looking at why too many Aboriginal people end up in trouble with the law in the first place?

For those who believe it is the ‘system’s’ fault then fine, state your case and justify.

But the solution to all the problems associated with jail is to avoid going there in the first place.

Now before any of you start telling me your stories about how you knew of a poor young black kid who was unfairly targeted, etc., remember that that sort of thing happens with non-Aboriginal folk as well, and that these incidents (which should be dealt with) cannot possibly account for the large over representation of our people in jail.