

The Method of Giving Up Crime

Giving Up Crime: a real time and real world method of rehabilitation

Dr. Peter Nelissen

Implementation and impact of the method of Giving Up Crime in Dutch Prisons

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Thinking Outside the Cell, reducing the use of imprisonment
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Introduction

Ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to my presentation about the method and the workbook Giving up Crime that Marie-Louise Schreurs and I have developed and published in 2008.

In my presentation I will highlight the rehabilitation model or theory that underlies the method and its workbook. I will discuss the aims, etiological assumptions and practice implications of this rehabilitation theory. I will conclude my presentation with some reflections on the relevance of Giving up Crime to the main theme of this conference of thinking outside the cell.

A couple of years ago, the Dutch Custodial Institutions Agency decided to start a pilot-study on the usefulness of the workbook Giving Up Crime for its Prison Modernization Program. In four prisons the book was handed out by mentoring prison officers to detainees. Detainees were asked to read the book and to make the assignments in various life domains of interest. Their mentoring prison officers were asked to encourage and assist detainees with their use of the book.

To give you a more tangible impression of the method and its workbook I start my presentation with a small story about our experiences during the pilot-phase.

A small story about a detainee and the workbook

When we visited one of the prisons to interview detainees about their experiences with the workbook, we were introduced to a group of detainees. I will never forget one detainee.

He was sitting behind a table and kept the book close to his chest, like some precious object, and he said this: "Before we start, may I ask you something sir?" I said: "Yes, go ahead." He asked me this: "How did you get the idea to write this book?" I answered: "Well, may be later I can tell you something about it, let me first start to interview you". But a few seconds later he repeated his question: "Sir, how did you get the idea to write this book?"

Then I asked him: “ Why do you want to know this now?” He said: “In the past years nothing worked out very well in my life, I reoffended many times, even after having completed on two occasions a cognitive behavioral programme. But now after reading your book I feel and think much more positive about the possibility of living another, better life. I am very delighted that reading your book helped me to discover on my own what to do with my life and how to proceed with it in another way. And because of this experience, which I never had before, I became curious about how you were able to find and strike the right chord with your book which really encouraged me to take control of my life. “

When we interviewed this detainee about his use of the book he told us this: “My mentoring prisoner officer gave me the book. At first I wasn’t interested at all. I put the book aside. But when I was lying on my bed, every time my eye fell on the cover with its bright colors and I started to think about the possibility of giving up crime. I realized that during all these years in prison and participation in programs no one has ever asked me if I wanted to stop with offending and what I wanted with my life. I began reflecting more and more on these questions and at the end of the week I took the decision to read the workbook. “

This story gives you a first impression of what the workbook is about. It is about assisting prisoners to see desistance from a life in crime as being both desirable and possible. It assists them in becoming and staying focused on a better, other life outside the cell. Addressing their views on the possibility of their living a better life is an important step in enhancing their motivation to take control of their life. Next, the workbook assist detainees in developing and enacting upon intentions and implementing plans. Its ultimate aim is to help them speed up motivation and personal agency in the service of desistance from crime.

To achieve this aim of speeding up desistance, defined as the assumption of the role of a changed person, it is important to understand the natural process by which over the life course, people become involved in crime and eventually, abandon a life in crime. From the perspective of the Motivational Theory of Life-Span Development, this process has all to do with major challenges faced by individuals throughout the life course and the motivational and self-regulatory processes used to meet these challenges (Heckhausen, Wrosch & Schulz, 2010). When meeting life-course challenges, people may experience problems in individual agency and the regulation of motivation in the service of adaptive outcomes involving positive contributions to self, others and society. In order to maintain a (symbolic) sense of being actively involved in shaping one’s life, people may develop criminal motivations. Eventually however, by a process of ongoing, age-graded psychosocial growth and maturational changes in offenders’ desires, goals, psychosocial problems and (coping) abilities, criminal motivation fades out and adaptive capacity, including motivation for change takes over (Levitt, Selman & Richmond, 1991, Brezina, 2000).

In the etiological assumptions of the method of Giving up Crime, these motivational and self-regulatory processes play an important role. Therefore, we first address the question why and how people become motivated for a life in crime and eventually, develop motivation for change and conformist identity and behavior.

Why and how people become attracted to crime

In criminology, mainstream socio-environmental theories explain people’s *attraction to crime* or criminal motivation from a problem solving perspective. They emphasize the role of

criminal solutions providing people with the means to cope with their problems in living (Brezina, 2000).

- *Problems in living* involve difficulties in the satisfaction of basic goals referring to basic human needs for safety and biological integrity, obtaining sense of control over the environment, having secure positive and supportive human relations and maintaining a belief in one's self-worth and autonomy. Research shows that people's problems in living and especially the satisfaction of the basic need for control over one's social environment tend to trigger appraisals in terms of alienation from self, others and society (Antonovsky, 1987). Perceived alienation involves a lack of existential meaning (or the experience of meaninglessness) and difficulties to focus on purpose in life and reasons for existence, which are linked to (long-term) goal directed behavior and fulfillment in life (Antonovsky, 1987).
- *A weak sense of meaningfulness* tends to hamper the acquisition or growth of resources and as a consequence, people are 1) more stressed by adversity and problems in living; 2) have fewer perceived or real conventional problem-solving resources to call on and 3) feel powerless to change or control current or future life situations and resolve their problems through socially acceptable means (Brezina, 2000, Griffith, 2010). Under these circumstances, often in combination with an environment marked by peer-sanctioned criminal values and social expectations (Polizzi, 2011), people may develop specific interpretations of adversity and day-to-day pressures. These interpretations, in their turn, feed into disengagement from the pursuit of long term developmental goals and the pursuit of the more attainable immediate personal goals related to risky criminal behaviors of a criminal peer subculture. By participation in this deviant subculture the *personal meaning* of crime is learned and construed as an attractive means to feel good about oneself and one's ongoing interpersonal relationships.
- Protection of one's immediate emotional well-being is a major outcome that people hope to achieve by risky, criminal acts (Rawn & Vohs, 2011). Crime gives them a reasserting *illusion of control* in adverse situations that are perceived as uncontrollable (See also Lyng, 1991 and the definition of 'edgework'; Wood et al., 1997). This illusion includes a sense of self-efficacy defined as a sense of being the cause of things and being self-determining (Burnett, 2004, p.175). The satisfaction by criminal means of this need for a sense of 'becoming' ('make things happen', Matza, 1964) and being actively involved in shaping and giving meaning to his/her (gendered) identity and (social) life, may be a major motivating drive for people's enduring involvement in a life in crime.
- Motivational Theory of Life-Span Development's concept of *compensatory* secondary control strategies (Heckhausen & Schulz, 1995; Heckhausen, Wrosch & Schulz, 2010) offers a conceptual tool to clarify the cognitive and auxiliary motivational processes. These strategies enable offenders to gradually break up their commitment to conventionality through specific adjustments of goal value, expectancy of goal attainments and causal attributions of action outcome.
- They help people to deflect the potential negative effects of failure experiences on important motivational resources such as the need for control and being able and effective in bringing one's environment in line with one's wishes. They refer to: 1) biases in causal attributions of action outcomes, (exaggeration of external causes when encountering failure; conceptions about uncontrollability of and poor personal capacities for control over conventional societal success; 2) devaluation of and disengagement from long term life goals referring to positive contributions to self, family

and society; 3) enhanced valuation of the pursuit of immediate personal goals related to risky, criminal behaviors; 4) expectation bias, including: lowering of one's aspiration level; strategic selection of social reference groups with peer-sanctioned, deviant social expectations and values; enhancement of the emotional, affective value of selected criminal action goals (for instance by exaggerating the likelihood of their benefits).

The movement away from crime and the larger process of recovery

Let us start with some facts about people's movement away from crime or the phenomenon of desistance from crime.

Desistance may be defined as "the movement from the behavior of non-offending to the assumption of the role of a 'changed person' (Maruna et al., 2004).

Sooner or later, virtually all people who commit crime will desist from crime and stop with offending. By the time they reach the age of 28 most offenders seem to stop offending (Blumstein & Cohen, 1987). Even high risk, serial offenders cease with offending often spontaneously, that is, without treatment. It is a criminological fact that when people desist from crime they mostly do so without formal intervention. Very few people actually desist as a result of formal professional interventions alone. In general offenders spend only a tiny fraction of their lives undergoing treatment. Most of the hard work involved in behavior change takes place outside therapy or other formal interventions.

This suggests that in desistance from crime a larger process of recovery is at work. Professionally driven rehabilitation, re-entry or reintegration is part of or an adjunct of this larger process of recovery which also includes self-restorative forces.

Let us take a look at this the natural process of desistance or recovery from a life in crime.

Why crime becomes less attractive

There is consensus in the literature that the movement away from crime and growing commitment to conformity is initiated by the experience of criminal activity or criminal solutions as less attractive.

Crime may become less attractive by:

- 1) structurally induced events or finding new pro social interests (a partner, a child, a good job, a new vocation) that are valued by the individual because they add to the quality of life. The fact that by these attainments people have something to lose and to be guarded makes crime less attractive.
- 2) the accumulation of the legal, social, personal and moral costs of continued offending and incarceration. These costs can *deter* offenders and trigger a *change in criminal calculus* which involves a changed appraisal of the relative costs and benefits of criminal activity, including repeated incarceration
- 3) developmental changes that may reduce the attractiveness of criminal options by the maturing into adulthood and an increased cognitive capacity (or knowledge as the growth of understanding) to assess the long term negative consequences of continued offending or incarceration

Self-restorative forces and a process of intentional self-change

Research shows that in the desistance process these three type of factors trigger a gradual change in the personal meaning of crime including a growing belief that it is no longer worth risking the consequences of crime (Byrne & Trew, 2008). This is followed by the onset of a

self-restorative pathway out of crime which, according to Paternoster & Bushway's theory of desistance (Paternoster & Bushway, 2009) includes a process of *intentional self-change*. Eventually, this process of self-regulation leads to recovery in terms of stable commitment to conformist identity and behavior.

But how do offenders succeed, often without treatment, in making a commitment to change, implementing change and maintaining change?

To answer this question, we focus on how the process of intentional self-change actually works.

Initial stages of the process of intentional self-change

First of all there is *the 'feared self'* or fearing how one's life may turn (Paternoster & Bushway, 2009). The 'feared self' refers to the person that one does not want to become. Central to this notion are: a) the individual's experience of personal isolation from his/her connection to any pro-social life and, b) a gradual accumulation and connection of diverse negative events associated with a life in crime. These accumulated and impending losses of a life in crime and the accompanying negative affect are often a powerful catalyst for producing an initial motivation for change.

The 'feared self' in its turn feeds into:

- *A crystallization of discontent* or life dissatisfaction. Dissatisfaction with one's current life in particular refers to changes in the lived experience of a life in crime. Lived experience is not a linear passage of time but is the way a person's present is made meaningful by past experiences and future goals and expectations (Griffith, 2010).
- Offenders come to view their present life in crime as "*dysfunctional*" (Brezina, 2000). Dysfunctionality refers to a diminished (reinforcement) value of criminal solutions. They cease to be an attractive device to deflect and control the negative (emotional) effects of failure and loss associated with problems in living. Shover & Thompson (1992) found quantitative evidence for the relationship between experience of criminal solutions as 'dysfunctional' and decreased expectations for achieving friends, money, autonomy and happiness *via* crime. To the extent that expectations color experience (Simons et al. 1988), criminal involvement becomes increasingly associated with distress, negative affect, and ontological insecurity.
- *Ontological insecurity* is rooted in threats to one's sense of 'being and becoming in the world'. The notion of ontological insecurity corresponds with the individual's search for meaning in life. According to Frankl (1946; 1962) human beings are constantly searching for meaning. This basic drive to find and fulfill meaning creates purpose in life and, *meaningfulness provides motivation*. When offenders come to view their life in crime as "*dysfunctional*" they make sense of their life in crime in terms of purpose, values and beliefs which implies a changed view on what is important in life.
- A changed view on what is important in life refers to the *global or generalized meaning in life*. Global life meaning involves assumptions, beliefs and expectations about the world and the self in the world. Global life meaning not only involves purpose/goals, values and belief about what is important in life. It also includes a sense that life is understandable and predictable.
- When offenders come to view their present life in crime as dysfunctional (or self-defeating, foolish, dangerous) the situational meaning of current life events associated with a criminal life-style is increasingly perceived as incompatible with the individual's

global meaning of life which, according to the literature, refers to “why questions” (Baumeister & Tierney, 2011) and the core beliefs that characterize a person’s “true self or “real and normal me”.

- According to Maruna (2001) this “real me”, together with an optimistic perception of personal control over one’s destiny and a desire to be productive and give back to society, represent the “narratives” that help the desisting offender “to find a meaning in a life filled with failure and shame”. (p. 88)

Global life meaning as a key factor in the change process

An increased orientation on (global) life meaning:

- directs the human mind away from a one-sided focus on the here and now, and towards “a longer time horizon” and an increasing focus on the future and long-range plans (Brezina, 2000).
- helps the individual to develop *inner strengths* (Frankl, 1962; Maruna 2001) to effectively deal with a motivational dilemma involving conflicting short-term and long-term alternatives.
- feeds into enhancement of *self-control potential and the willpower* to resist temptations or provocations referring to alternatives that are most advantageous for short-term, immediate emotional well-being but that incur costs in the long-term (Baumeister & Tierney, 2011).
- acts as both a source of drive, energy and action potential that helps people to effectively cope with challenging life events/situations.

Cognitive strategies that support motivational and volitional commitment to intentional self-change

The process described above may be further conceptualized in terms of Motivational Theory of Life –Span Development’s concept of *selective secondary control strategies* (Heckhausen, Wrosch & Schulz, 2010). These strategies support people’s motivation to take control over their life and react to challenging events in an adaptive and constructive way.

Selective secondary control strategies are cognitive in nature and serve to enhance and maintain motivational and volitional commitment to a chosen developmental goal, particularly when the goal is challenged by unexpected obstacles or attractive alternatives. Developmental goals refer to investment in positive contributions to self, family, and community. Selective, secondary control strategies involve the following aspects of action regulation:

- a *shift in goal value* in terms of enhanced valuation of long term developmental goals (or life plans, life goals, possible selves, goals of intentional self-change, Paternoster & Bushway, 2009). Of further importance is a revision of aspirations (Shover, 1985).
- Desisters become motivated to pursue a life with positive contributions to self, others and society because they value it as personally meaningful. In addition, desisters *devalue* action outcomes related to the satisfaction of short-term immediate emotional well-being by criminal means. Enhanced meaningfulness of a crime free, positive life relates to life meaning and the motivation to approach challenging problems in living with dignity and responsibility. Life meaning or *meaningfulness* promotes motivation.
- *Improved efficacy expectancies*. Motivation of desisters is further promoted by a more optimistic perception of personal control over one’s destiny. This phenomenon may include positive illusions about one’s control potential (Maruna, 2001). Of importance is

that desisters expect or believe that (a) specific actions will bring them closer to a better life and, (b) they are capable of identifying, organizing, initiating, and executing courses of action that will bring about the desired end state. Efficacy expectancies involve the belief in personal agency that drives motivation. It refers to the concept of *manageability*.

- Shifts in the reasons or *attributions* that the individual identifies for previous failures. *Attributions* refer to making cognitive sense of life events and action outcomes and relate to the concept of *comprehensibility*.
- *Environmental context*: goal value, expectancies and attributions *interact* with a supportive broader environmental context in which they exist. In this interaction desisters come to view their social environment more and more in terms of an appraisal of its value and opportunities for reform and a *positive possible self* (Paternoster & Bushway, 2009) which results in a *strategic selection of prosocial reference groups*. The interpretation of the context therefore undergoes a shift in terms of its potential value for building social capital and personal reform.

Behavioral outcomes of the change process: avoidance/approach motives and reaching a desired end state

The auxiliary cognitive and motivational processes related to desistance support behavioral outcomes in terms of avoidance of commitment to a criminal identity, criminal actions and criminal peers and the approach of prosocial preferences, reference groups, actions and coping styles.

The desired end state of desistance involves a sense of being in control over one's life and a changed identity. Commitment to a stable conformist identity and behavior is supported by using one's resources in the service of positive contributions to self, others and society. Criminal activity is abandoned by desisters as a maladaptive means to experience a (symbolic) sense of being self-determining and being in control over one's life.

Desisting offenders' increased motivation to engage in the pursuit of long term developmental goals/intrinsic aspirations causes a decline in criminal propensity and reduces the risk of reoffending. Criminal propensity declines because in general, long term life goals in terms of positive contributions to self, family and community are impossible to achieve with criminal activities, they require the use of one's resources in a pro social way.

More often than not, reaching the end state of desistance and personal reform is preceded by a so-called zig-zag process with stops and restarts in criminal activity (Piquero, 2004).

Because this zig-zag process takes far too long and leaves to many victims in its wake, it is important to speed up the natural process of desistance.

Now let us take a look at the key features of the mechanism of change that is proposed to speed up the movement away from crime.

Key features of the proposed change mechanism

Focus on personal agency as the 'engine' of the change process

- "At the end of the day you rehabilitate yourself" is a truism that is frequently expressed by successful desisters (Maruna & Ward, 2007). Research shows that in the perceptions of successful desisters themselves, the treatment program itself is not enough to successfully recover from addiction in combination with a life in crime (Gideon, 2010). Level of motivation, the genuine desire 'to make' it on your own, self-generated activity

and self-recovery are perceived by them as factors that are critical to pull oneself out of a life in crime.

- This finding is in line with psychotherapy outcome research: psychotherapy outcome variance is attributable to the following *common (or non-specific) factors* in discernible proportions: 40% client and extra-therapeutic factors; 30% therapeutic relationship, 15% expectancy and placebo effect (client self-healing through hope and belief) and 15% techniques unique to specific approaches (Lambert, 1992).
- In other words, the bulk of client improvement is attributable to factors common to all different types of counseling and psychotherapy as distinct from being attributable to factors specific to individual approaches (Hubble, Duncan & Miller, 1999). It is further estimated that the client's capacity for self-healing is responsible for 70% or more of the outcome variance.
- There is reason to believe that also in pathways out of crime offenders' own capacity and self-activity is an important determinant of improvement and recovery. Offenders' own capacity and self-activity involve human agency or an agentic, individual pursuit including the gradual discovery of one's own good reasons to change, goal-setting and transformative actions. Mostly, successful desistance requires *personal agency* and hard work in terms of self-activity outside therapy or other formal interventions (Nelissen, 2003).

Working in partnership with the 'engine' of change

- The important role of self-restorative capacities in the change process does not imply that techniques are irrelevant. They can be used to optimally work in partnership with self-restorative forces. In our opinion, a specific technique can characterize and deeply influence the role of the other three factors. The influence of technique is not just a matter of simple enhancement of the other common factors. To work in partnership with self-restorative forces requires advanced, credible techniques about *what works* in terms of some leverage for offenders to be better agents of responsibility for their own life. In other words, we need techniques with sufficient explanatory depth and respect for empirical evidence in order to effectively interact with and promote the functional accomplishment of client/extra-therapeutic, expectancy/placebo and relationships factors.
- A major assumption of the method of Giving up Crime is that a self-enclosed cycle of reinforcement (Jacobs & Wright, 1999) including offenders' framing of high risk-situations in such a way that the rewards of criminal activity are evaluated as outweighing the costs, has its roots in the belief of crime as 'the only way out' and a *general feeling of disempowerment*.
- Empirical evidence shows that although a majority of (imprisoned) offenders wants to go straight, only a minority thinks they will definitely be *able* to go straight. Many offenders show low efficacy expectations and difficulties in generating sufficient personal agency to control one's destiny. As a consequence, the personal meaning of crime as a (socially) rewarding activity remains intact and conflicts with incentives or attempts to change.
- This state of ambivalence or conflicting motivations results in offenders being stuck in a state in which they are unable to change despite shifts towards desistance and then towards persistence and back (see for instance Maruna, 2001; Farrall, 2002; Burnett, 2004, Piquero, 2004). In addition, ambivalent motivation is an abiding or recurring experience among incarcerated offenders.

- Helping offenders to resolve motivational conflict and abandon the belief of crime as the only or best available option with the aim of triggering appropriate behavioral changes is not an easy task. More often than not, (incarcerated) offenders: 1) have only an inchoate sense of what kind of conventional life they want, 2) expect to have limited access to sources of social capital, and 3) experience and foresee high levels of social disadvantage, stress or strain (Paternoster & Bushway, 2009). To help overcome these obstacles it is important to understand its origins.
- The feeling of disempowerment relates to the perception of an unsupportive environment in which 1) *causal attributions* or complications in the ability to make cognitive sense of life events (comprehensibility or thinking through ways of achieving goals) and 2) poor *efficacy expectations* of having the necessary personal and social resources to cope with the demands and stresses of life (manageability) interact. According to sense of coherence theory (Antonovsky, 1987), both types of complications are related to a weak sense of meaningfulness or alienation and the feeling that life lacks meaning.
- A weak sense of meaningfulness can be de-motivating. When an individual holds the belief that life lacks meaning, he or she experiences apathy, uncertainty, boredom and a general feeling of alienation from self, others and society (Antonovsky, 1987; Griffith, 2010). Problems of finding meaning in life may hamper people in generating feelings of more *autonomous* forms of motivation (Markland et al., 2005) efficacy and situational mastery (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000). To get the 'engine' of change running, the method of Giving up Crime addresses therefore the above motivational aspects including life meaning as a major source of drive, energy and action potential that helps targeting expectancies effects (or negative biases).
- Drawing offenders attention towards issues of life meaning and reflecting on what is important in one's personal life focuses on a personally meaningful rationale for engaging in change. This strategy helps offenders to mobilize personal agency and autonomous motivation in the service of positive contributions to self, others and society. It generates commitments to change. Commitments, as expressions of a person's life meaning, can push a person toward more comprehensibility, early hopes (a sense that something desired might happen, Farrall & Calverly, 2006), a more optimistic perception of personal control over one's destiny (manageability), a decision to use one's resources toward the achievement of positive, developmental goals and finally, ameliorative action.
- Keeping the 'engine' of change running requires a supportive environment that enables offenders to exercise choice, initiate productive actions themselves, engage in self-directed learning associated with difficult tasks and experience success. Guiding and supporting a gradual shift in the personal meaning of both crime and conformity is a key feature of keeping the 'engine' of change running. The ultimate aim is consolidation of offenders' improved desistance *optimism* and help them establish a genuine belief or rather, *feeling*, that engaging in risky, criminal behavior is harmful both to themselves and others.

Creating a real time and real world rehabilitation structure

Intentional self-change is fostered by using the *technique of real time and real world rehabilitation* that helps offenders experience themselves as a cause and to feel autonomous, competent and connected or supported in one's actions.

- This technique is based in the *first* place on the assumption that our knowledge, as the personal growth of understanding, is closely tied to first doing things in our everyday lives. This implies that in order for self-change or self-relabeling to occur, first one has to be actually involved in new roles and productive actions. Moreover, growth of understanding in the service of self-change not only starts with this *tasting* of alternative, productive actions (Maruna, 2001).
- Of further importance is that these actions are initiated by the individual him/herself instead of by external controls exerting pressure or coercion. In order to develop genuine motivation for change the individual must feel autonomous in his/her actions and experience one's self as a cause rather than feeling controlled or compelled to act. Therefore, discovery of the value of alternative courses of action *on one's own* is crucial to the development of autonomous motivation. It helps the individual recognize that he/she can exercise *choice* regarding his /her behavior and future life (Markland et al., 2005).
- In the *second* place, the technique of real time and real world rehabilitation is based on the assumption that high subjective value of a desired outcome (or goal) and positive expectancies for success are not enough to promote optimal motivation. Also the natural environment and its interpersonal forces at play and the nature and the structure of its communication patterns, must combine to support the individual's motivation to pursue alternative behaviors. In other words, growth of autonomous motivation for change also presupposes an ecologically valid and facilitating environment.
- Despite the provision of a standard treatment context of reducing skill-deficits, prison's rehabilitation structure often lacks ecological validity precisely because the control-oriented nature of the prison context tends to obstruct the development of autonomous motivation and the initiation of actions by detainees themselves.

The powerful tool of a personal workbook

To bring the principle of a real time and real world rehabilitation in practice, and to amend the problem of lack of ecological validity of the prisons' rehabilitation structure, the method of Giving up Crime propose the tool of a personal workbook for (incarcerated) offenders.

Offenders are invited to use this book in collaboration with members of staff with whom they interact on a daily basis in the natural setting of the prison unit.

- A workbook with a lot of exercises and assignments is a powerful technique to generate, *in collaboration* and dialogue with workers, offenders' self-motivation and self-change. By the workbook and its framework, '*the ownership*' of the change-process is, almost literally, given back to offenders. The workbook not only assists offenders in discovering and steering the power of *self-directed learning* toward the mobilization of personal agency and autonomous motivation for change. It also motivates them to utilize and tailor what *outer* resources (therapy, training of (risk-related) skill-deficits, education, employment and social support by significant others and/or services) provide to address their problems. Outer resources become yet other resources that motivated clients utilize to mobilize personal agency in the service of positive contributions, to self, others and society.

Helping offenders to become self-changers

If we want to facilitate, support and focus offenders' self-restorative efforts to pull themselves out of a life in crime, we need to rethink our standard rehabilitation structure in prisons.

Key practice implications

Now let us briefly consider how the previously described aims of rehabilitation, the etiological body of knowledge about crime and desistance and the proposed change mechanisms, are applied on the level of the intervention practice of a personal workbook

How intentional self-change is initiated

Initiation of intentional self-change is addressed by aspects of cognition and motivation involving issues of life meaning that trigger the development and growth of autonomous motivation. Discovery of a personal meaningful rationale for engaging in self-change lies at the core of this initial phase.

- Swinging motivational ambivalence in the direction of desistance is an important first step within this strategy. This is done by inviting detainees to find out for themselves what exactly the costs and gains of their life in crime are. The purpose of this exercise is eliciting both an initial taste for productive activity in the service of change *and* triggering feelings of dissatisfaction with one's life in crime, recognition of the need for change and an incentive to consider two options. The first option is a decision to stop with offending and exploring the possibility of an alternative life with positive contributions to self, others and society. The second option refers to the decision to continue one's life in crime.
- In order to help offenders to see crime as dysfunctional and *devalue* action outcomes related to the satisfaction of short-term immediate emotional well-being by criminal means, offenders are invited to focus on the lived experience of criminal involvement. This involves life review of the present in terms of the current situation of imprisonment and review of the past in terms of problems in living, unsatisfied needs and events leading to current criminal solutions and arrest.
- Next, offenders are introduced to the concept of identity and they are assisted in becoming aware of the notion of 'a real me' or 'true self'.
- The 'real me' is connected to the discovery of personally meaningful life goals that have high relative value to the individual and involve his/her own good reasons to abandon a life in crime and to approach a life in which commitment to a stable conformist identity and behavior is supported by positive contributions to self, others and society.
- Becoming aware of obstacles and strengths that may either block or promote the attainment of valued life-goals and developing clear and realistic expectations about what behavior change can do for the person, is also an important feature of the phase of initiation of self-change.
- Initiating self-change involves the development of a plan and strategy to implement the desired end-state of positive contributions to self, others and society.

How intentional self-change is implemented and maintained

Implementation of intentional self-change involves enaction of intentions and plans by:

- Building domain specific competencies to achieve positive contributions to self, others and society. This involves engaging in self-activity and self-directed learning aimed at the

execution of necessary and productive actions on the life domains of accommodation, relationships with significant others, physical and mental health, education/employment, financial matters and balance in life.

- Self-directed learning leads to further enhancing awareness of strengths and obstacles in these domains.
- Self-activity on life domains enables offenders to further experience success which, in its turn, improves self-efficacy in terms of expectancies that (a) specific actions will bring the individual closer to a better life and (b) one is capable of identifying, organizing, initiating, and executing courses of action that will bring about the desired state.
- Implementation of intentional self-change also includes self-activity aimed at connecting with relevant networks of social support and aftercare. Especially a supportive context with opportunities to build social capital in terms of giving back to others/society and informal help, social support and social control is considered a critical factor in the movement away from crime.
- Implementing intentional self-change does not exclude clinically relevant and psychologically informed approaches referring, for instance, to assessment of risk factors and protective factors. It neither excludes referral to treatment programmes. Participation in treatment programmes however, is viewed as an adjunct of and as auxiliary to the aim of promoting the larger process of intentional self-change or recovery.
- Maintenance of self-change: involves the use of relapse prevention techniques which contributes to risk reduction.

Benefits of the method of Giving up Crime

The method:

- Is a rehabilitation theory or framework model that is explicitly based on specific etiological assumptions about the variation over time of *motivational self-regulation* or, the *dynamics* of the cognitive and motivational mechanism at work in offenders' pathways into and out of crime.
- Helps offenders to engage as soon and as much as possible in self-activity directed at the movement away from crime and toward stable commitment to conformist identity and behavior.
- Expands rehabilitation beyond the standard treatment context of reducing risk-related skill-deficits.
- Embeds the possibility of living a better life into prisoner's and prison-officers everyday lives (real time) and natural setting (real world).
- Makes therefore the implementation of the rehabilitation structure in prisons more ecologically valid.
- Offers an easy accessible tool for the mentoring prison-officer or other workers to become an active and collaborative supporter/trainer of self-change.
- May be used as a portfolio that contributes to the perspective of 'desistance signaling' (Bushway & Apel, 2012)
- Counteracts the pains of imprisonment that can seriously disable the prisoner to think outside the cell. It is a well documented fact that pains of imprisonment may impede the development of prisoners, undermine their overall well-being, negatively affect their potential for post-prison adjustment and make the factors associated with reoffending

worse. When exiting prison, prisoners not only face stigma and societal barriers, they also have to come to terms with the past and develop a sense of purpose for the future. Even when having undergone treatment prisoners may leave prison with the burden of their own *experiential* responses to confinement in terms of identity crises, withdrawal, estrangement, loss of sense of purpose and direction, inability to settle and loss of capacity for intimacy. While being physically outside the cell after release, it can still be difficult for ex-prisoners to *think* outside the cell because of a profound sense of existential displacement and inability to find a sense of purpose for the future. Because of its strong emphasis on the role of life meaning, sense of purpose for the future and ecological validity, the method of Giving Up Crime contributes to counteracting the destructive effects of people's experiential responses to confinement.

Thinking outside the cell

- Modern control-oriented prisons are very successful in keeping prisoners *in* but, despite their ideology that one objective of imprisonment must be to turn prisoners in law-abiding citizens, they show little penal progress in assisting prisoners to see desistance from crime as being both desirable and possible. Compliance to bureaucratic rule management and countless organizational and institutional barriers can pose serious constraints on prison's rehabilitation structure and opportunities to capitalize on offenders' motivations.
- To improve this situation, enlightened leadership, organizational creativity and management of innovation in penal governance are required.
- If we want fewer men and women behind bars, for instance by more frequently combining incarceration with electronic detention, an innovative framework within which prisons and re-entry can be made to work is required. In the Netherlands, the current Prison Modernization Program offers such an innovative framework. It emphasizes a prison with a person-oriented approach, a constructive detention climate and more collaboration with external partners.
- The theory- and evidence based approach of Giving up Crime is a valuable and innovative part of this program and has been successfully implemented in all Dutch prisons.

Thank you!

