

Thich Nhat Hanh, *Understanding Our Mind*, pp. 59-60.

[A]ll psychological manifestations, such as anger, sadness, fear, and anxiety—all are manifestations with both individual and collective aspects. There is no manifestation of a phenomenon that is purely individual or purely collective.

Looking into the seed of anger in us, we can see its individual and its collective nature. Our anger has roots in our experiences with our parents, teachers, friends, and our own lives...

Because all manifestation has both an individual and collective aspect, it would not be correct to say that a young man in prison bears the whole responsibility for his crime. He is the product of his family, his schooling, and society. If we look deeply, we may find that when he was younger, his parents often fought and caused each other and their child to suffer. Perhaps he was abused. Lacking love, lacking education, he tried to forget himself in drugs. With drugs, his ability to make good choices diminished even further. Committing a crime was the result.

Looking deeply, we see that the conditions for this young man's actions did not arise only from his own mind and experiences. All of us bear some responsibility for creating the conditions that led him into the cycle of crime and addiction... People use drugs because they are in pain and want to run away from life. Putting someone who is suffering like this in prison is not the way to solve the problem. There has to be love and understanding, some means of bringing him back into life, offering him joy, clarity, and purpose.