

## International Conversation Cafe

Lifestyle Topic: Justice and Mercy

Justice is the quality of being just; fairness.

Mercy is an act of kindness, compassion, or favor.

Lady Justice comes from ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman legends about a goddess of justice.

*What is she holding in each hand?  
What do you think each represents?  
Why is she blindfolded?*

### Famous Quotes

Crime does not pay ... " Obviously crime pays, or there'd be no crime. ~Alfred E. Newman ~G. Gordon Liddy

*What do you think it means that "Crime does not pay"? Give some examples.*

*Why do you think that G. Gordon Liddy thinks it does pay? Give some examples.*

*Where do you think our ideas of justice come from?*

*What makes it so difficult for justice to prevail?*

Liberty, equality - bad principles! The only true principle for humanity is justice; and justice to the feeble is protection and kindness. Henri-Frédéric Amiel

*What is liberty and equality? Are these ideals important in society?*

*Is liberty and equality more important than justice?*

*What is crime? Can you give an example?*

*Should a criminal be shown mercy? Why or why not?*

*A "feeble" person is one who has no strength or power of his or her own. Who is "feeble" in our cultures?*

*Whom should they be protected from?*

*How should they be protected and who should protect them?*

*Read the quote again. What do you think the author is saying? Do you agree or disagree?*



Themis armed with sword and balance scales (Legislative Council Building, Central, Hong Kong)

## How L.A. Court Handles Mentally-Disturbed Defendants Amid Service Shortage

Thecrimereport.org

Armies of mentally disturbed defendants march through The Airport Courthouse, a branch of the Los Angeles County Superior Court south of Los Angeles International Airport, daily, says Los Angeles Times columnist Steve Lopez. "I would bet the Airport Court has more mentally ill people than anywhere else," said Ellie Schneir, a public defender who handles arraignments before Judge Keith Schwartz. There's a shameful shortage of sensible, humane, cost-effective services that would divert people into recovery rather than into jail, says Lopez.

"My biggest gripe with the system is why are we spending \$50,000 a year to jail somebody when we could be spending \$5,000 to put them in a treatment program," said Lynn Meltzer Brewer, a public defender. Part of the problem is that mental illness is routinely criminalized. "I have a reputation as being very tough on sentencing on violent stuff, but I'm practical," Schwartz said. "I've been in this court now for seven or eight years and I've seen what we need to do. We need to help the sheriff with overcrowding and we need to help the prisons. With nonviolent, non-serious people we can help, we need to divert them from being in jail to being in a program that can change their behavior." Such programs are hard to come by.

*What is the main complaint by the public defender?*

A mental illness is a disorder in which a person's thoughts, emotions, or behavior are so abnormal they cause suffering to himself, herself, or other people.

*What do you think would be the just way to handle non-violent, non-serious crime by people who are mentally ill?*