



THE RESTORATIVE PRACTICES --ADVOCATE--

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A NEWSLETTER for LEARNERS & PRACTITIONERS

Restorative Expression

“Retributive theory believes that pain will vindicate, but in practice that is often counterproductive for both victim and offender. Restorative justice theory, on the other hand, argues that what truly vindicates is acknowledgment of victims’ harms and needs, combined with an active effort to encourage offenders to take responsibility, make right the wrongs, and address the causes of their behavior. By addressing this need for vindication in a positive way, restorative justice has the potential to affirm both victim and offender and to help them transform their lives.”

— Howard Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*

“Remember: courage, unused, diminishes. Commitment, unexercised, wanes. Love, unshared, dissipates.” — Tony Robbins



By Dr. Jan Petersen
CRC Co-Founder

Cultivating a Restorative Attitude: People and Relationships Come First

Restorative Practices have become increasingly familiar in all facets of society: schools, workplaces, families, churches and other community settings where people live and work together. Many of us have learned to conduct circles, ask restorative questions, use affective statements, facilitate conferences, and develop procedures for responding to harm, hurt feelings, and conflicts.

These are valuable practices; however, there is danger in believing that learning and utilizing the tools of restorative practices automatically makes us restorative.

IT DOES NOT.

We can learn restorative skills and language while continuing to approach people and conflict with judgment, defensiveness, control, a desire to punish, or a desire to win. Focusing on being right or on winning an argument is the opposite of the restorative approach. Even a well-structured restorative conversation can become another way to pressure others into admitting we were right. Perhaps we have focused so much on teaching restorative practices that we have neglected examining the underlying attitudes required to be authentically restorative.

Restorative Practices depend on the attitude of the person using it. Before we can respond restoratively to hurt and conflict, we need to cultivate a restorative attitude about people, relationships, conflict, responsibility, and repair.

To understand what it means to cultivate a restorative attitude, we need to identify what an attitude is. Social psychologists **Alice Eagly and Shelly Chaiken (1993)** describe an attitude as a psychological tendency expressed by evaluating something with some degree of favor or disfavor. In other words, attitudes are internal thoughts and inclinations driving how we perceive and react to the world around us.

An attitude is not just what we say we believe. Our attitude shapes what we notice, what we assume, the questions we ask, and the outcomes we seek.

Some examples of attitudes foundational to restorative practices are the following:

- **All people have inherent worth.**
- **Compassion and accountability can coexist.**
- **Relationships matter.**
- **People are capable of accountability and change.**
- **When harm and hurt occurs, our first response must be to ask what may be repaired rather than who should be punished.**

It must be noted that cultivating a restorative attitude does not mean every relationship can or should be preserved. Sometimes the healthiest restoration is a repaired relationship, sometimes it may be establishing a respectful boundary, and sometimes it may be a peaceful ending.

The deeper purpose of restorative practices is to cultivate people who respond to conflict, harm, and hurt with compassion, accountability, and dignity. This begins with examining our attitudes while we hold ourselves and others accountable for difficulties among us. We focus on repair when repair is possible, realizing compassion and accountability can coexist. In a world marked by chaos, division, and distrust, cultivating a restorative attitude offers hope for a different way of living together—one that chooses understanding over judgment, accountability over blame, and repair over division. And...

We. Stay. The. Course.

CALENDAR

FROM YOU!

SHARE RESTORATIVE EVENTS OF VALUE! We'll promote them here. Write to the Editor: rob@centerforrestorativecommunities.org OR jan@centerforrestorativecommunities.org

For YOUR Information



As restorative justice (RJ) grows and expands, NACRJ shares opportunities for trainings, conferences, and events that can deepen relationship with RJ practices while encouraging independent evaluation of each event for suitability and preferences. For possibilities: <https://members.nacri.org/event-calendar>

BUILDING A NEW REALITY

REVOLUTION BY CONVERSATION

The Restorative Practices future is still being influenced by Ted Wachtel, founder of The International Institute of Restorative Practices. BANR is part of the new vanguard of community focused RP! Ted's current thoughts and notice of BANR events can be accessed at <https://banr.foundation/>.

Focusing on “The Good of the Whole” and Why It Matters (Part 2 – Expanding The Restorative Practices Social Engagement Model)

In modern organizations – including schools, prioritizing the good of the whole shifts a group from a collection of isolated individuals competing for resources to a cohesive, high-performing system. [1] Industrial-organizational psychology and management sciences translate these evolutionary mechanisms into actionable strategies. [1]

1. Collaborative Capital vs. Individual Silos

Organizations often suffer from internal competition. When employees focus purely on individual metrics, it triggers a destructive "Prisoner's Dilemma" dynamic where teams actively hoard information. [1]

- **The Solution:** Companies like Whole Foods Market apply **Conscious Capitalism**, creating value for all stakeholders rather than maximizing short-term individual or shareholder profit alone. [1, 2]
- **The Research:** Research highlighted in [The Science of Cooperation](#) shows that creating structural transparency and building "cooperative reputations" eliminates the free-rider problem. When collaborative efforts are openly recognized, it creates a virtuous cycle where employees actively support the organization's overarching goals. [1, 2, 3]

2. Psychological Safety and Trust

Putting the group first requires risk. Employees will not share innovative ideas if they fear personal backlash. [1]

- **The Solution:** Fostering genuine organizational harmony relies heavily on establishing a **psychologically safe environment**.
- **The Research:** Studies from organizational behavior show that high-trust groups achieve significantly better performance. When folks feel secure that the group protects them, they shift their energy from self-preservation to collective problem-solving. [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]

3. Purpose-Driven Leadership

Modern leadership frameworks emphasize that a manager's role must include being a steward for the community. [1]

- **The Solution:** Frameworks like the **Positive Leadership Action Framework (PLAF)** bridge the gap between individual employee behavior and societal flourishing. [1]
- **The Research:** Leaders practicing **Servant Leadership** prioritize the growth of their team members. This aligns with evolutionary multilevel selection: when a leader protects the group, the group naturally functions at a higher capacity to defeat external market competition. [1, 2]

Direct Comparison: Individualistic vs. Whole-Oriented Organizations

Organizational Element	Individualistic Focus (Self-Interest)	Whole-Oriented Focus (Good of the Whole)
Information Flow	Siloed, hoarded for personal advantage.	Openly shared to drive collective innovation.
Employee Well-being	Treated as a transaction (labor for wages).	Addressed via a whole-person health approach.
Horizon Planning	Short-term profit and immediate personal metrics.	Long-term organizational continuity and stakeholder value.

Ctrl + Click links above for more depth.

For your...

RESTORATIVE
TOOLBOX



MAKE HARM REPAIR NORMAL AND IT GROWS! Self-Directed Harm Repair is Possible ... and a worthy GOAL.

Repairing harm, generally, is a [Restorative Justice](#) process that focuses on healing relationships and addressing the specific impacts of wrongdoing rather than using traditional, punitive responses. It is also most often facilitated from the outside in. [Self-directed](#) harm repair is an internal accountability process where an individual who caused harm takes personal responsibility to heal and change without waiting for an external mandate or punishment. In restorative practices, this is an achievable ideal. It starts with these core concepts:

- **Self-Reflection:** A person in relationship at any level examines how their behavior hurt others and themselves.
- **Intrinsic Accountability:** Ownership of hurtful actions comes from personal values rather than fear of a penalty.
- **Voluntary Action:** Steps to make things right are chosen freely by the individual.

Then, given this foundation, the steps toward repair include:

- **Acknowledge the Impact:** Name the specific damage done to relationships or the community.
- **Listen and Learn:** Understand the perspective of those affected.
- **Change Behavior:** Take concrete steps to ensure the harmful action is not repeated. *(Critical in any apology)*
- **Make Amends:** Offer genuine apologies or restitution when appropriate. [1, 2, 3]

Here are two internal reflection exercises that can begin to foster the integrity that self-directed harm repair requires:

- **The Ripple Effect Mapping:** Draw a circle representing your action. Add outer rings to map the direct impacts on the victim, indirect impacts on their family or friends, and the broader consequences for the community or your own life.
- **The "Why" Chain (a.k.a. "The Five Whys"):** Write down the harmful behavior and ask why it happened. For each answer, ask "Why?" again five times to drill past surface-level excuses down to the core unmet needs, insecurities, or biases that drove the choice.