

Conversations About ...

“ Establishing a Culture of Harmony in the Presence of Dissonance “

Abstract

Honor-Shame: Its Effect on Community Harmony and Harm. *Is There is a Place for Restorative Justice?*

Honor is an ancient virtue which societies have lived by. When each society member exists in a state of Honor, that community remains in Harmony. All assist the community, attend to their commitments, and do nothing to shatter the fabric that holds together that community. To maintain this state of affairs, these societies need the community as a whole to respond with the same rhythm. That rhythm includes adherence to the expected norms established by the community as a whole.

Of course, the opposite of Honor is Shame. Those in the state of Shame do a Harm to the community's rhythm. Even so, those in Shame need not be isolated or needlessly scorned. A return to the state of Honor is not only the responsibility of the individual, it is also the responsibility of the community. This is a necessity in order to preserve Harmony. Dealing with these opposite states and returning all to Honor is where this paper is directed. It is an investigation of the concept of Honor and Shame, and how to turn Harm into Harmony.

When altercations causing a harm occur - whether they be from criminal activity, disputes, or “neighbors not being neighborly” - they need to be resolved before that harm escalates in severity. Restorative Justice is an ancient method of resolving such conflicts by involving participation from all parties related to that harm. Restorative Justice methods have been continually used by indigenous societies to maintain community harmony, before and after an altercation occurs. Restorative Justice methods are in use today around the world.

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PRESENTER

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Im is an independent professional advisor who consults with government and non-government agencies, institutions and firms on ethical and cultural issues related to their policy-making and strategic action plans. His contract work includes identifying the root and nature of specific social and civic problems, assessing the factors which promulgate those problems, proposing solutions that meet relative cultural differences, and creating ethical and lawful action plans for municipal bureaus, police services, institutions and, profit and nonprofit entities. Creating community peacemaking initiatives is a significant part of Jim’s current world view. Working on these programs has resulted in his lecture series “Establishing a Culture of Harmony in the Presence of Dissonance,” which presents and promotes an Ethics of Right-Relations for community diversity and peacemaking. These lectures have been presented at professional conferences and universities in USA, Canada, UK, Netherlands and Hungary. These are in addition to his lectures at local colleges, faith communities, and community groups. Jim is an ethics instructor at an adult continuing education institute, with courses in social and professional ethics, as well as restorative justice. As a conflict resolution facilitator registered with The Restorative Justice Society USA, he is an advocate for the implementation of restorative justice programs in the community. As a Certified Restorative Justice Peacemaker with a Rochester New York Police Department Family Services program, his duties are to facilitate Restorative Justice resolutions to confrontations in the City of Rochester public school system. He is a North American member of Restorative Justice Council, and Conflict Research Society - both in United Kingdom; and, of National Conference on Restorative Justice USA. Jim holds Master degrees in ethics and critical thought from Queen's University, Kingston Ontario Canada, and Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, Rochester New York USA.