

Concepts of Restorative Justice

Chapters 5-10

Fundamental Rights

- The entire book elaborates on the molding of a restorative system and how the court plays a major role.
- It is crucial for the government to remember that the victim and offender have **fundamental rights** even if the law was broken. "It recognizes that those authorities should themselves act in accordance with the law and that persons accused of crimes should be afforded safeguards against the abuse of power of the government or the community"
- In recent news, many states are revising their abortion laws as Mississippi's 15-week abortion ban decision is being made soon.
 - "Red states — which are responsible for a majority of the new laws — have enacted some of the strictest limits on abortion in decades. Meanwhile, blue states have sought to secure abortion access as a fundamental right within their borders, as well as prepare for out-of-state women seeking to terminate their pregnancies" (Shutt, 2022).
- With opposing views as such, the government and Supreme Court needs to go back to the fundamental roots and evaluate the right course of action that will further unite or divide our nation.

Amends > Apology

- An important aspect of Restorative Justice is giving an offender a chance to make things right.
 - "An offender can make **amends** through apology, changed behavior, restitution, and generosity"(Van Ness & Strong, 2012, page 109).
- And within amends, I aspect of this is understanding the depth of an **apology**, where the author explains that the offender must acknowledge what they did wrong, have private remorse and be affected by their wrong, and being vulnerable that they have no defense (Van Ness & Strong, 2012, page 101).
 - It is only when an offender truly feels the weight of their crime, I believe that the latter of changed behavior, restitution and generosity will follow.
- In the video on a previous gangster and rapper, Dean Stanbury, we learned he shot a cop, and after his sentence feels the need to make amends.
 - Stanbury had done the work in prison to come out with changed values and changed behavior, and while the victim did not want to see him since this man hurt his relationships, his career, and his family, the officer says that he wants to see Stanbury change and make an impact and he really hopes he is successful, which Stanbury desires to do as a way to apologize and make amends.

Reintegration

- Our textbook defines **reintegration** as "re-entry into community life as whole, contributing, productive persons".
 - Chapter 7 goes on to explain that this is not just dealing or tolerating a person but accepting them as a member in society, and both parties forming a relationship.
- An institution can serve as a vehicle for healing and reintegration by being an example on how to hold an offender accountable for their actions while also offering them the opportunity to "gain a full place in the community".
 - Churches and community centers that host groups for offenders a place to share their story, have community, have the chance to serve and regain purpose are great examples of healthy reintegration.
- In the last year, Congress had an idea to set up a "one-stop shop" organization to have resources for those coming out of incarceration to have job trainings, mental and medical health services, and financial counseling.
 - The article shares how "the national average rate of crime after leaving incarceration is 49.3% during an eight-year period, according to the U.S. Sentencing Commission" (Grisales, C., 2021).
 - This is powerful for Congress to address a need and write up an Act to be passed from a national level.

Facilitator

- According to chapter 5, "In mediation, conferencing, and circles, **facilitators** are responsible for approaching the victims and offenders, helping prepare them for the meeting, and then guiding the actual meeting" (Van Ness & Strong, 2012, page 91).
 - While facilitators are not on the victim or offender's side nor do they decide a case, they are used as a middle man to make an often tense encounter into a safe environment for both parties to communicate and hopefully come to a decision.
- This happening in our world now with the Russia-Ukraine war,
 - Turkey has stepped up as an honest facilitator between the two countries with hopes to refrain from the drama of the media, keep information disclosed and hopefully bring about a peace deal where both countries can come to an agreement and compromise.

Elements of Transformation: perspective, structures, persons

- In chapter 10 of our textbook, the case study is the response of RJ City to the burglary on Mildred's home by two men.
 - This crime affected an entire community. Every party needed a strong support group to make it through better.
 - The first burglar, David came forward and to make amends, he decided to have a meeting with Mildred in a **circle**, with both of their support groups where he could hear his impact, apologize, pay **restitution** monetarily for what he had taken from Mildred's home, and gain trust back.
- This transformation of the one burglar from making a bad decision to being a coach and teaching young men what not to do really took the whole community.
 - First, David had to change his perspective and acknowledge he hurt people and did not want to continue this way
 - Second, he had to use the programs around him and trust the structures that the system had in order to make things right
 - Finally, he watched as a neighborhood grew closer and relationships were fixed and strengthened from him coming forward.
 - This success is because the community worked together to not shame the men but to hope for success.

APA References

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