

The background of the cover is a photograph of a prison hallway. The walls are made of light-colored stone or concrete, and the floor is a smooth, light-colored surface. The most prominent feature is the series of rusted metal bars and doors that line the hallway, creating a sense of confinement and institutional structure. The lighting is somewhat dim, with shadows cast by the bars.

Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement and Corrections
Human Rights: Background and Issues

Theo Gavrielides
Editor

Offenders No More

An Interdisciplinary Restorative Justice Dialogue

NOVA

CRIMINAL JUSTICE, LAW ENFORCEMENT AND CORRECTIONS

OFFENDERS NO MORE
AN INTERDISCIPLINARY RESTORATIVE
JUSTICE DIALOGUE

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AN INTERDISCIPLINARY RESTORATIVE
JUSTICE DIALOGUE

THEO GAVRIELIDES
EDITOR



New York

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FOREWORD

Kay Pranis

July 2015

Greetings to the reader of this book! Welcome to a diverse collection of perspectives on the intersection of restorative justice and offender rehabilitation. I was surprised and honored to be asked to write a Foreword for this work. I am not a researcher or academic writer myself and wondered what I could bring that might be of use to the aspirations of this wide-ranging exploration of theory and practice. What is my role? In my work in general I believe my role is to support people in bringing heart and spirit to their work, as well as their minds, in the context of Western culture that pulls us relentlessly in the direction of our heads.

What does it mean to bring heart and spirit to the social science analyses of restorative philosophy and practices? Two themes that have been a growing edge for me in recent years came to mind. Paradoxically one theme relates to 'not knowing' and the other relates to 'knowing'. I offer these reflections with awareness that I have a limited view. What is meaningful to me may not be to you, the reader. Consequently, I invite you to leave behind anything put forth here that is not of service to your journey with restorative justice.

For me restorative justice is a philosophy calling us to a very big paradigm shift – including how we think about *what* we know and *how* we know. First, knowing, having definitive answers, is highly prized in our current dominant world view. Second, one particular kind of knowing is privileged over other kinds of knowing. Restorative philosophy and practices challenge both of these assumptions.

Status in our culture is related to knowing, to having the answers. Our sense of worth – derived in part from our status – is related to knowing, to having answers. We are rewarded financially, socially, academically for knowing the answer to whatever question arises in our chosen field. We have more power if we are perceived as having answers. Our sense of competence in our field is directly related to having answers. To not know is to feel incompetent. Yet, all the restorative processes require us, as professionals, to not have the answers because those processes involve the key stakeholders in producing answers. Restorative processes are processes of accessing collective wisdom. If any one person has the definitive answer, the possibilities of collective wisdom may be short-circuited.

Not knowing is not a state we have been trained to value. The place of not knowing is a place of fear, a place of feeling inadequate, but the ability to not have answers and be open to

possibilities seems to be an essential skill in a restorative paradigm. To find joy or energy in the state of not knowing is extremely counter-cultural. In Western culture it is very difficult for people to enter spaces of not knowing, especially professionals who have invested heavily in learning to know the answers and whose identity is strongly linked to their sense of expertise.

Rilke offers a helpful perspective on this dilemma. He writes, “I beg you . . . to have patience with everything unresolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language. Don't search for the answers, which could not be given you now, because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer.”

We are not educated or socialized to live the questions – only to answer the questions. I think this is where bringing spirit to our work is important. I believe strength of spirit helps us to sit with uncertainty, ambiguity and the unknown with less anxiety. A sense of mystery is a positive way of relating to the unknown. For me this sense of spirit in restorative justice is rooted in the values which describe who we want to be when we are at our best as human beings – the values describing how to be in good relationship with others.

Because all thoughts, feelings and actions are in the context of thousands of influences, we cannot be prescriptive about what should be, but must be, instead, generative in the moment while staying within the bounds of those values of our best self. The mystery is in the generative nature of collective work. We cannot know at the outset how it should unfold or what it should unfold to, but we do know the values that would serve the well-being of everyone involved and therefore are appropriate guideposts for our collective work. For me any space rooted in those values is a space where heart and spirit are welcome and are part of the lived experience.

When the heart and spirit are engaged in a safe space they bring a kind of knowing that is different from our mental and physical ways of knowing. Our culture dismisses that kind of knowing, valuing only the kind of knowing that comes from linear, analytic processes. The collective wisdom of restorative processes depends upon these other ways of knowing in balance with our analytic knowing. How do we identify and assess the knowledge of our hearts, spirits and bodies with tools that have evolved in a linear, analytic research model?

This is a major challenge faced by researchers studying various aspects of restorative justice. The emergent, generative nature of restorative processes does not reduce readily to the predictability we expect in our current paradigm. Validity of knowing is tied to predictability which does not have space for the creative character of collective wisdom.

Restorative justice researchers are navigating through uncharted waters – still for the most part accountable to funding sources and governing bodies tied to the dominant paradigm while trying to test the ideas and ways of the new paradigm. This is not wrong - it is in fact necessary and is very messy.

What can our own processes teach us about how to engage constructively with this challenge? How can we bring a restorative attitude to our reading of research papers so that our interaction with the papers may transcend the limitations of the research paradigm? Restorative processes teach us to listen deeply and with respect, to listen for intent as much as for content. They teach us to be fully present with an open mind and an open heart. They teach us to hear and appreciate differences of perspective. They teach us to practice not knowing, leaving space for emergence of the unexpected. They teach us to be curious rather

than judgmental. Circle process teaches us to remember who we want to be in our best self before we begin an exchange of information, ideas or feelings. Restorative practices teach us to invite our hearts and spirits into the dialog incorporating their particular ways of knowing. They teach us to hold the uncertainty of ambiguity because language is fluid, relationships are dynamic and life does not separate into neat packages. And ultimately they teach us to speak our truth even when no one else sees it the same way. What might happen if we read this book practicing the restorative attitude described above?

I wish to honor all those whose work is presented in this volume and all those who will pick this book up and read it. We are joined by the connecting threads of the writing and reading process. We are all engaged in making meaning – living the questions as best we can.

REFERENCES

Ranier Maria Rilke, From Letter Four, Worpswede, near Bremen, 16 July 1903

Theo Gavrielides is an international expert in restorative justice, human rights and criminal justice and an advisor and project manager for EU and international programmes. He is the Founder and Director of The IARS International Institute and the Founder and co-director of the Restorative Justice for All Institute (RJ4All). He is also an Adjunct Professor in various universities and the Editor-in-Chief of three peer-reviewed journals.

"This timely book pushes debate ahead by exploring in depth the role that restorative justice principles and practices can play in efforts to reduce crime and empower offenders to reconstruct their social lives. By bringing an interdisciplinary perspective to bear upon this subject, with contributions from some of the leading scholars and practitioners in the field, *Offenders No More* provides a sophisticated analysis of the interpenetration of rehabilitation and restorative justice theories and practices. This is an important book for anybody interested in deepening their understanding of progressive penal interventions.

*Professor Dr. Gerry Johnstone
University of Hull, UK*

"*Offenders no More* inspires hope. Hope in the idea that human beings who have violated others can change. Gavrielides' edited volume offers a powerful corrective that moves us beyond our current punitive justice doctrine. This anthology is provocative, research-based and interdisciplinary. I recommend this as a critical read for those interested in changing the conversation around how we do justice restoratively".

*Professor Carl Stauffer
Zehr Institute for Restorative Justice,
Eastern Mennonite University, USA*

"I wish to honor all those whose work is presented in this volume and all those who will pick this book up and read it. We are joined by the connecting threads of the writing and reading process. We are all engaged in making meaning – living the questions as best we can".

*Kay Pranis
Circle Keeper, MN Dept. of Corrections 1994 - 2003,
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"A timely and much needed, evidence-based book for restorative justice and rehabilitation policies and practices internationally.

*Professor Dr. Vasso Artinopoulou
Panteion University, Greece*

"Theo Gavrielides, stands out as one of the most prolific researchers in restorative justice. The innovative ideas that are expressed through this collection are leading a revolutionary change in how we view the penal system and traditional criminology".

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