

The Way of the Compassionate Spirit in Restorative Justice

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Since March 2002 I have been volunteering my time with a Community based Restorative Justice program for the municipality of Victoria.

Restorative Justice is a response to crime that focuses on:

1. Restoring the losses suffered by victims,
2. Holding offenders accountable for the harm they have caused and
3. Building peace within communities.

This is, in my opinion, a much more holistic approach to dealing with crime, particularly first offender youth.

I began to wonder what it was that attracted me to this work and I began to see an analogy with my Jin Shin Do® knowledge. This is my personal hypothesis.

When tension develops in our bodies, the chi flows stagnate within the different meridians.

If this condition is left long enough the accompanying tension build-up can cause dis-ease to occur.

Jin Shin Do® acupressure treatments help the body to regain its physical, emotional and spiritual balance.

Young people in conflict with the law are usually feeling dis-ease with themselves or their environment and tensions build up to the point of acting out in an anti-social manner. They become a “sore point” in the body of the community.

Their sense of worth and self-esteem is deficient and stagnated. Their lawless action is like an acupressure point calling out for attention and desiring balance and unity.

The Restorative Justice process with first offender youth uses a “treatment” modality called “Family Group Conferencing”. It is designed to be a safe place for people to have difficult conversations and disperse aggressive chi.

Creating change requires focusing on the real needs and issues, just like holding focus on a point brings about change. The offending person voluntarily meets with the person they harmed along with support persons from their respective families and affected members of the community. This is not the “easy way out”.

Most importantly, it is a safe place for the person harmed to tell the offender how the incident has affected them, and is an opportunity to receive restitution and experience a sense of closure regarding the offense

The offender receives support from the community to take responsibility for their actions, to “Heal the Harm” they have caused and cease wrongdoing. In return, the community allows for graceful redemption and re-integration into the community.

Thereby the offender, the victim and the community regain their physical, emotional, and spiritual balance and crime can be reframed as an opportunity to reweave the fabric of community.

”The work you do for yourself goes to your grave. The work you do for others lives on in the community”. (Winston Churchill).