

## FOREWORD

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Those of us who are involved in the daily work of applying **Conflict Resolution Education (CRE)**, **Peace Education (PE)**, or **Restorative Justice (RJ)** in schools are rejoicing that our combined efforts are gathering momentum around the globe. The book you have begun to read, is, in this professor/practitioner's estimation, a most useful contribution. It is born out of the research and life work of Ron and Roxanne Claassen, who have nurtured the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of conflict resolution, peacemaking, and restorative justice in both their professional and personal lives.

To propose Restorative Discipline or Discipline That Restores (DTR) as described by Ron and Roxanne in public education is indeed courageous. We all know how firmly ideas about traditional school discipline are rooted in notions of punishment and reward. After all, the Puritan Ethic and Skinnerian Behaviorism are part and parcel of our nation's cultural past. Our public schools are perhaps the institutions most illustrative of this heritage. So Ron and Roxanne are brave, but not without foundation. Roxanne's years of work in the Raisin City school system using DTR and Ron's career at Fresno Pacific University where Restorative Discipline now guides university procedures around student behavior are evidence of the model's power and potential to restore.

Discipline That Restores (DTR) is a restorative discipline system for schools, classrooms, and homes that parallels, contributes to, and draws from emerging international conflict resolution education, peace education, and restorative justice

movements with emphasis on the last. Before reading further, you may wish to consider the many ways practitioners, educators, and researchers conceptualize their labors in overlapping fields. This understanding may increase your appreciation of the authors' work and message.

**Conflict Resolution Education (CRE)** curriculum exists for learners in grades kindergarten through graduate school. Some states have wisely integrated this content with language arts, health, and social studies curricula. This book provides an approach for integrating these into the life of the classroom as a community. Teachers teach and children learn that conflict is a natural part of life and that learning constructive conflict-related skills is as important to becoming an educated person as is knowing the order of operations in math. An underlying principle of CRE is that conflict resolution skills are essential for life and should be embraced at all educational levels (Jones, 2004). Said another way, this aspect of social-cognitive human development requires guidance and practice, too. To be prepared for life is to develop knowledge about conflict, confidence in dealing with it, and values around the importance of considering the welfare of all in the conflict-related processes. CRE programs typically fit one of three delivery formats: 1) direct skills instruction, 2) peer mediation, 3) embedded curriculum (Garrard and Lipsey, 2007, p. 12). The book you are about to read focuses classroom CRE on restorative justice practices specific to the relationship between student and teacher.

**Peace Education (PE)** is an approach inclusive of building knowledge, skills, and disposition to "make peace" and to advocate for the same in a variety of venues. According to UNICEF (Fountain, 1999):

Peace education refers to the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behavior changes

that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully, and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level.

The international organization, Service Civil International (SCI) defines Peace Education as learning *about* and learning *for* peace:

Learning *about* peace means obtaining knowledge and understanding of what contributes to peace, what damages it, what leads to war, what does "peace" mean on each level anyway, what is my role in it, and how are the different levels connected? Learning *for* peace means learning the skills, attitudes and values that one needs in order to contribute to peace and help maintain it. For example, this means learning to deal with conflicts without the recourse to violence, learning to think creatively, learning to apply the methods of active non violence or learning to deal with cultural differences in a constructive way. (SCI, [www.spaceforpeace.net](http://www.spaceforpeace.net)).

While Ron and Roxanne do not emphasize the connection to the peace education movement, their book clearly adds to the knowledge base of educating students to live in community peacefully and responsibly. The book serves as a teacher guide to nurturing knowledge, skills, and disposition to approach conflict constructively. The strategies recommended are both intra and interpersonal. It also guides teachers to create a discipline structure that provides multiple strategies to resolve conflict peacefully.

**Restorative Justice (RJ)** as defined by Howard Zehr (2002, p. 37) is "a process to involve, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offense and to collectively identify and address harms, needs, and obligations, in order to heal and put things as right as possible." (Ron is also an international contributor in the RJ movement. In 1996 Ron's Restorative Justice Fundamental Principals were adopted by the United Nations Working Party on Restorative Justice.) Because DTR is firmly rooted in RJ, it is well to consider the RJ goals for change. Again, Howard Zher suggests, "We must have a process

that gives attention to those societal needs and obligations that go beyond the ones held by the immediate stakeholders. We also must not lose those qualities which the legal system at its best represents: the rule of law, due process, a deep regard for human rights, the orderly development of law" (2002, p. 60). Schools are very concerned about the latter. The proliferation of "zero tolerance" approaches to educational code violations are evidence of this concern. DTR offers much hope for a sea-change in school climate by providing a strategy that encourages collaboration and cooperation without ignoring due process and the rule of law.

Education has been experimenting with models since the Founding Fathers began to define and advocate for an "American culture." However, in our current essentialist climate—emphasizing accountability and assessment—we now demand evidence-based practices. Knowing *what* to measure and *how* to measure it will also determine the extent to which restorative justice principles find their way into classrooms and whole-school practices (Garrard, 2007). A recent study of schools employing RJ-centered discipline practices in Australia indicates: "for a restorative philosophy to be implemented and sustained in schools, the aspiration must be ... changing from behavior management to relationship management" (Shaw, 2007, p. 134). This is no small task for a system in which behaviorism, with a focus on punishment for negative behavior, reigned for forty years.

Discipline That Restores. Restores what? Respect, order, civility, face, accountability, integrity, dignity, hope? If you are an administrator, teacher, or counselor, as you read this book, you may find yourself envisioning an approach to discipline in the schools that looks, sounds, and feels very different from what you or your children experienced. Read on!