

Public Safety and Restorative Justice

Daniel W. Van Ness

On 28 May 1974, two young men pleaded guilty to twenty-two counts of wilful damage to property. After a night of drinking they had gone through the city of Kitchener, Ontario (Canada) slashing car tires, breaking windows, knocking down fences and in other ways destroying property of the citizens of that town. They were 18 and 19 years old at the time and were angry because the city police had pulled them over a day or two earlier for drunk driving.

Because there were so many victims and because the damage they caused was so widespread, the whole community was in an uproar. There were angry demands that they be sent to prison to “teach them a lesson.” And that probably is what would have happened if it weren’t for a conversation between their probation officer and the judge just before the court hearing.

The probation officer had interviewed both young men and was convinced that they did not understand the harm they had caused to the victims and their community. They had already been angry about the earlier drunk driving arrest, and if they were given a prison sentence they would eventually be released even more angry at the town. The probation officer made an unusual suggestion: “Why don’t you order them to visit each victim and offer to pay for the damage? Perhaps then they will realize how many people they have harmed.”

In Canada judges have considerable discretion when imposing sentences. After thinking about the idea, this judge decided to do what the probation officer had recommended. He continued the case for one month so that the two young men, accompanied by the probation officer and a volunteer worker, could visit their victims.

In all, they spoke to 21 victims (one had moved and could not be located). In each instance the young men went to the victims' homes, introduced themselves and explained why they were there. The victims reported total losses of \$2200. Some had received insurance payments, but there was still over \$1000 of losses.

When the young men returned to court, the judge placed them on 18 months probation, and ordered them to pay a fine and the remaining losses to the victims. When they had earned the money, the young men again visited their victims and paid each one what was due.

The probation officer and judge were so impressed with how both the offenders and the victims had benefited from this experience. Both groups felt that this was a more complete justice because it combined the justice system's impersonal insistence that these crimes required an official response presence with relational healing and reassurance that could come only through personal contact with each other. As a result, the judge and probation officer began using this approach in other cases as well, and this was how Victim Offender Mediation began.

This case is probably the first modern example of restorative justice. Restorative *approaches* to crime and conflict have been in use from ancient times in the Middle East to the present in aboriginal people's customary law. But the term "restorative justice" was

used by people who worked in this programme and in a similar programme started a few years later in the US, in an attempt to explain how it was different from the justice found in courts. That US programme, in the state of Indiana, was directed by Howard Zehr, the person who, as much as any person, is responsible for the modern restorative justice movement.

Many victims and offenders who meet together have a profound experience that results in what can only be described as transformation and reconciliation. For many others, the effects are not as dramatic; their anger and hostility decreases as they come to understand each other better. For still others, all that results is an agreement about what to do in the aftermath of the crime, but it is one they have been able to help create. On rare occasions not even an agreement emerges.

Restorative Processes

Victim offender mediation is not the only form of restorative process in use. All of them focus on the needs and responsibilities of the offender and victim in addition to the laws that the offender broke. All emphasize that there must be consequences when crime occurs, but that those consequences should help repair harm and rebuild peace. Each stresses the importance of communication and participation by the parties – the victims, offenders and other affected people.

Let's take a closer look at each of these processes.

First, victim-offender mediation. In its typical form, a trained facilitator prepares and brings together a victim and offender to discuss the crime, the harm that resulted, and the steps needed to make things right.

In some European countries, mediation does not necessarily involve a direct meeting between the two parties. Instead, the mediator conducts shuttle negotiation with each party until an agreement on restitution is reached.

Victim offender mediation can take place at any time during the criminal justice process, or outside the system altogether. Like the other restorative processes, it is used after guilt is no longer an issue either because there has been a conviction or because the defendant admits responsibility. It can take place before sentencing or after. It may have an effect on the sentence or it may have no effect, based on national law.

Second, conferencing. Conferencing developed in New Zealand as an alternative to Youth Courts. It was adapted from traditional processes of the Maori people, New Zealand's indigenous culture. Conferencing has been adapted in other countries, and there are now several versions of conferencing.

Conferencing differs from mediation in that it always involves a meeting of the parties. Furthermore, not only do the primary victim and the offender participate, secondary victims (such as family members or friends of the victim) as well as supporters of the offender (such as family members and friends) are invited as well. These people are involved because they have also been affected in some way by the offence, and because they care about one of the primary participants. They may participate in carrying out the

final agreement. Finally, representatives of the criminal justice system or of the social welfare department may join the meeting.

As with victim offender mediation, the facilitator arranges the meeting and makes sure that everyone present is able to participate fully. Facilitators do not play a role in the substantive discussions. Some forms of conferencing are "scripted", which means that the facilitator follows a prescribed pattern in guiding discussion by the participants.

Conferencing has been used early in the criminal justice process, although it also can be used at any point. In fact, some police departments use conferencing as an alternative to arrest and referral to the formal criminal justice process.

Third, circles. Circles are similar to conferencing in that they involve victims and offenders, their families and supporters, and sometimes government employees. In addition, any member of the community who has an interest in the case may come and participate. So circles are the most inclusive process of the three.

Circles are adapted from First Nations practices in Canada, and they retain some of that flavour. All the participants sit in a circle. Typically the offender begins with an explanation of what happened, and then everyone around the circle is given the opportunity to talk. The discussion moves from person to person, clockwise, around the circle. Anyone may say what they wish. The conversation continues until everything that needs to be said has been said, and they have come to an agreement.

The facilitator, called the "keeper of the circle," ensures that the process is protected.

There is a "talking piece", which is often an object that has special meaning to members

of the circle, that is passed around the circle. Only the person holding it is permitted to speak.

Circles are used at various stages of the justice process. They (and the other processes) are also used independent of criminal justice to address community or group problems that have not risen to the level of criminal activity. Sometimes called healing circles or community circles, these may not include all the parties: healing circles, for example, may involve only the victim and the victim's supporters or the offender and the offender's supporters.

I present these three as distinct models, but in reality there are many variations within each so that some programmes called “victim-offender mediation” programmes routinely invite family members and friends to participate, for example. Furthermore, other restorative processes appropriate to particular cultures and contexts are constantly emerging.

General Observations about Restorative Processes

There are four observations one can make about these restorative justice programmes. First, all were designed to be voluntary, cooperative, consensual alternatives to criminal justice. No one – victim or offender – should be coerced or induced to participate if they don't want to. The process will not be effective if one or more parties are there against their wishes.

Second, each requires an environment in which the parties may engage in restorative dialogue to resolve the matter between them. They need to feel safe to meet and to talk.

This can mean finding a location that works for the parties even if it is inconvenient to the facilitator. It means that the facilitator needs to have prepared the parties in advance of their meeting so that they understand what will happen. They need to be advised of any legal consequences that may come from their participation in the meeting. And so forth.

Third, I have emphasized the differences between the three models. In practice, well run programmes will adjust to the particular circumstances and the needs of the parties. So in individual cases, a programme that typically uses a victim offender mediation approach might use something that looks much like a circle.

Finally, it is likely that new forms of restorative dialogue will emerge in the future. At one time it was believed that victim offender mediation was the only restorative process. After conferencing was adopted by New Zealand, it was hard for some victim offender mediation advocates to get used to the idea that there were now two kinds of restorative processes, each with its own strengths. Then came circles and we now discuss three major programmes for restorative dialogue. Based on this history it should not surprise us if eventually a fourth, fifth, or even sixth option appears.

Each, however, will be useful as it makes it possible for the parties to come together to seek a resolution to the harms that have resulted from crime.

Restorative Outcomes

These harms are not merely physical or financial. In the example I began with it was possible for some of the harms to be converted into amounts of money: this much for a

broken window, this much to repair a fence, and so on. But there were other harms as well. The victims were more fearful because they did not understand why this had happened. Some had trouble sleeping at night. The community as a whole lost some confidence in their government's ability to keep order. So the harms were physical, financial, emotional, relational and social.

Restorative processes can address as many of those harms as the parties wish to consider. But the ones we expect would be the most important often end up becoming less important in the course of the meeting. If we look at the agreements made at the end of these meetings, we find that there are several common ways that offenders make amends.

One is by offering an apology – a genuine expression of remorse at having done something to harm the other. Many meetings begin with the offender offering an apology, but as the conversation continues the offender begins to understand more fully how the victims have been affected, and they close with a much more heartfelt apology, one that is made with a more complete recognition of the harmful impact of their actions.

A second way to make amends is for the offender to take steps to make it less likely they will do this again. They agree to do something about a condition that makes it likely that they will commit more crimes. In the story, the offenders' drinking led to their crimes. Other times it is the amount of free time that offenders have on their hands. Whatever the issue, one of the things victims want is for this to not happen to anyone else, and the agreements often include specific forms of changed behaviour: attend school, get a job, get substance abuse treatment, and so forth.

The third way to make amends is by paying money, replacing property, offering services to the victim or in some other way trying to compensate the victim for their losses.

Several studies have found that victims go into restorative meetings listing restitution as their primary objective, but after the meeting it has fallen to second or third place in a list of what was important to them. “Apology” and “Getting to know something about the offender” have taken its place.

One more frequently-used method of making amends is community service. This means the offender provides free services to a charitable or governmental agency. The more the community service is related to the crime and to the harm it caused, the more restorative it is. So, for example, removing graffiti has meaning to people convicted of vandalism because they placed graffiti on a fence or building. It would only be forced work to someone who was convicted of possessing drugs, for example..

Each of these four ways of making amends could be imposed on an unwilling offender by the judge rather than negotiated in a restorative process. In such a situation the "restorative" character of such a sentence is limited to the tangible value of ordered activity to the victim. The opportunities for explanation, expression of feelings and other relational interactions will not have been there. So while imposed restitution, for example, may provide money to the victim, and imposed community service may help the government or charity receiving the services, both have far more restorative effect when they result from a restorative process.

Restorative Justice Is More than a Programme

It is important to understand that restorative justice is not a particular programme. It is bigger than that. In fact, it is a theory or policy that has given rise to particular programmes, but it is more expansive than these.

So how should we define restorative justice? There are essentially three ways to do this. Each is similar to the others, but different in important ways.

The first centres on the idea of an *encounter*. It focuses on the meetings between victims and offenders that are the hallmark programmes of restorative justice. These encounters are considered important for several reasons. First, as the persons most directly affected by the crime, victims, offenders and communities have a right to participate in the resolution of the crime if they so choose. Second, when this happens in meetings that reflect restorative values, a number of positive outcomes emerge that rarely come from traditional court processes. I'll say more about this later on.

The second emphasizes the harm that is *repaired*. This focuses on the point discussed earlier, that crime causes harms and raises obligations for offenders and (for different reasons) societies to help repair those harms. Offenders have this responsibility as a matter of justice; they caused the harm and they should be expected to take steps to make amends. This does not happen in traditional criminal justice, where the system's response is either to impose additional harm on the offenders or to intervene with the offenders to make them more law-abiding. Society has a responsibility to help offenders make amends, and when no offender has been identified to respond to the needs of the victim in other ways.

Restorative encounters, under this conception, are very useful because they offer the victim and offender an open opportunity to directly discuss the harm and what to do about it. Furthermore, some of the harm is relational, whether or not the victim and offender knew each other before the crime. If they were acquaintances the harm includes issues of betrayal, mistrust and broken relationships. If they did not know each other, the victim often has difficulty regaining a sense of safety because the motivations, background and future intentions of the offender are unknown. In all these instances, a restorative encounter between the parties can be reparative.

But the reparative idea of restorative justice is not limited to those occasions in which the victim and offender are willing or able to meet. If no meeting is possible (because one or the other is unavailable or unwilling, for example), the reparative idea still seeks to understand the harm and identify steps to repair that harm.

The third conception, the *transformative* conception, is the most ambitious of the three. Under this view, the goal of restorative justice is not merely to repair but to transform – transform individuals, relationships and structures. This idea has taken hold because many victims and offenders experience some degree of this during restorative encounters. They move from fear and hostility toward the other party to empathy and sometimes understanding and acceptance. In fact, some find that the antagonistic relationship that existed before the meeting has shifted to one of friendship by the time it ends. In other words, they have been transformed.

Each of these three conceptions captures important elements of restorative justice. I believe that all three dimensions or conceptions are important, but that can they be

prioritized. Therefore, the definition we use of restorative justice is the following:

Restorative justice is a theory of justice that emphasizes repairing the harm caused by criminal behaviour. It is best accomplished when the parties themselves participate in cooperative processes, and when that happens, it can lead to transformation of people, relationships and structures.

In other words, this is a reparative definition that recognizes that the best opportunities for repairing all the harms happen when the parties meet together to discuss how to do that. When this happens, there is the possibility of transformation.

Restorative Justice Values

Another way to understand restorative justice is to consider its values. Restorative justice values may be grouped into two categories. In the first are *normative* values (the way the world ought to be); in the second are *operational* values (the way restorative programmes should function). Normative values find expression through the operational values implemented in restorative programmes.

There are four normative values. The first is a *peaceful social life*. Restorative justice seeks to build peace. This means more than the absence of open conflict. It really refers to ideas of harmony, contentment, security, and wellbeing that exist when a community at peace with itself and with its members. Furthermore, when conflict occurs it is addressed in such a way that peaceful social life is restored and strengthened. It is achieved through three operational values

- a. *Resolution*: the issues and people surrounding the offense and its aftermath are addressed as completely as possible
- b. *Protection*: the physical and emotional safety of affected parties is a primary consideration in all phases
- c. *Reintegration*: The parties are given the means and opportunity to rejoin their communities as whole, contributing members

The second normative value is *respect*. Restorative justice emphasizes the important of regarding all people as worthy of consideration, recognition, care and attention simply because they are people. This is achieved through two operational values:

- a. *Encounter*: affected parties are invited, but not compelled, to participate in person or indirectly in making decisions that affect them in the response to the offense
- b. *Empowerment*: affected parties are given a genuine opportunity to effectively influence and participate in the response to the offense

The third normative value is *solidarity*. This means a feeling of agreement, support, and connectedness among members of a group or community. It grows out of shared interests, purposes, sympathies, and responsibilities. It is achieved through three operational values:

- a. *Inclusion*: affected parties are invited to directly shape and engage in restorative processes

- b. *Assistance*: affected parties are helped as needed in becoming contributing members of their communities in the aftermath of the offense
- c. *Moral education*: community standards are reinforced as the values and norms of the parties, their communities, and their societies are considered in determining how to respond to particular offenses

Finally, restorative justice values *active responsibility*, which means taking responsibility for one's behavior. It can be contrasted with passive responsibility, which means being held accountable by others for that behavior. Active responsibility arises from within a person; passive responsibility is imposed from outside the person. It is achieved through two operational values:

- a. *Collaboration*: affected parties are invited, but not compelled, to find solutions through mutual, consensual decision-making in the aftermath of the offense
- b. *Amends*: those responsible for the harm resulting from the offense are also responsible for repairing it to the extent possible.

Restorative Justice and Non-restorative Responses to Crime

A third way to understand restorative justice is to compare it to non-restorative responses to crime. It should be evident that restorative justice is different in some ways from what we are used to. Restorative justice pioneer Howard Zehr highlights the differences by proposing the central questions to be answered by both. In a non-restorative proceeding those questions are: "What laws have been broken?" "Who did it?" and "What do they

deserve?” Answers to the first two questions are given when the accused defendant pleads guilty or is found guilty following a criminal trial. Judges answer the final question based on the sentencing policies of the jurisdiction.

A restorative response requires answering different questions in the aftermath of a crime: Zehr proposes the following three as alternatives to those posed by traditional criminal justice: “Who has been hurt?” “What are their needs?” and “Whose obligations are these?” The first question moves beyond considering whether lawbreaking has been proved to examining the harm that resulted. The second question changes the focus from a preoccupation with the accused defendant to concern for the victimized individuals and communities; the victim should be central under this way of thinking about crime. The third question emphasizes the need for accountability and reparation by the offender, and perhaps by the community as well. A just response is one that makes things right.

Each approach has certain strengths. Non-restorative approaches emerged over centuries of development, and it has important features that should not be given up lightly. One of these is the recognition that there should be safeguards provided to people accused of crimes. These rights are not always honored, but one would want to think carefully before giving them up entirely.

Non-restorative approaches are also good at condemning criminal acts. Their power of denunciation is considerable. They provide an alternative to personal or collective vengeance, which could lead to cycles of vengeance and violence. Furthermore, they offer a more efficient process by having professional police, public prosecutors,

governmentally-operated prison systems and so on rather than expecting individual victims to prosecute.

Finally, at its best, non-restorative justice aspires to overall fairness -- working toward consistency of punishment for similar crimes, for example. This is an elusive goal, but it is one that criminal justice takes seriously (at least in theory).

The strengths of restorative justice begin with its more holistic view of crime, recognizing the harm that results, and not the lawbreaking alone. It measures success not by the amount of punishment imposed, but by the amount of damage that has been repaired. Its focus on harm means that it should take the needs of victims seriously (although restorative programmes do not always do so). It recognizes that there is a need for community participation in society's response to crime, rather than leaving this to the government alone. And it offers considerably more flexibility in how particular cases are handled.

Blending the strengths of restorative justice with those of non-restorative justice is the challenge facing nations today. With some notable exceptions, restorative justice is usually viewed as a supplement to conventional criminal justice rather than as a replacement for criminal justice.

One exception is New Zealand, where conferencing actually replaced juvenile courts in all matters except the most serious, violent felonies committed by juveniles. As a result, the government closed down most of its juvenile detention facilities and juvenile courts. Over 20 years later, juvenile crime has not risen.

There are a number of possible “entry points” for restorative justice to be inserted into the criminal justice process:

1. police refer cases rather than file charges or issue a caution;
2. prosecutors refer cases rather than file charges or proceed with trials;
3. judges use these processes either as pre-trial diversion or as part of the pre-sentence investigation;
4. prison officials use it to allow victims to meet with their offenders. This helps the victim heal, but rarely has a significant influence on the prisoner’s sentence
5. parole officers use them to prepare prisoners, their families and their communities for the prisoner’s return after completing the sentence.

In all these cases discretion must have been given the justice system officials to use restorative measures. Typically, the results of those processes would be submitted to the justice official so that they can review them to ensure against the exception agreement that would be unjust to enforce, either because it is unconscionably punitive or lenient.

The Appeal of Restorative Justice

It is estimated that over 100 countries use restorative approaches in some form. The UN and the European Union have urged their members to create and use restorative programmes. Why such strong support? The following are five reasons that governments around the world have been interested in restorative justice.

1. Ease Overcrowding in Courts and Prisons. Virtually all countries struggle with the problem of judicial overload and prison crowding. There are simply more cases and prisoners than governments can handle effectively. Therefore, some countries have incorporated restorative justice practices in an attempt to alleviate overcrowding. This will achieve that purpose, however, only if the offenders sent to restorative justice programmes would otherwise have been sentenced to prison.

2. Increase Access to Justice and Transparency. Because restorative processes bring more parties into the justice process, they can help governments address lack of public confidence in the administration of justice. By including both victim and offender in resolving their conflict, restorative processes facilitate higher levels of satisfaction with how their case is handled, more understanding of how the justice process works among community members, and stronger collaborative relationships between civil society and the government, which enable dialogue and accountability between the government and society.

Furthermore, it is believed that citizen participation in the justice processes will reduce the likelihood of corruption and injustice based on the power one party has.

3. Respect the Rights of Victims. Another reason to consider restorative practices is recognition of the needs and rights of crime victims. In increasing numbers of countries, the right of crime victims to receive compensation and restitution from the offender is being written into law codes. Furthermore, in some countries victims are given opportunities to make statements to the judge before the defendant is sentenced.

Restorative practices provide an alternative to victims who wish to speak to the defendant or to play an active role in the justice process.

4. Reduce Crime and the Harm Associated with Crime. The growing research concerning restorative justice processes is remarkably consistent in key findings when compared to typical criminal justice processes. First, satisfaction with the processes is higher for both victims and offenders. Second, restitution and other obligations by the offender are more likely to be completed. Third, victims' post-traumatic stress symptoms are reduced and they have less desire for violent revenge. Fourth, offenders have a greater understanding of the harm they have caused, feel more empathy toward their victims, and are less likely to repeat their delinquent or criminal behaviour in the future. Studies on recidivism consistently show that offenders who go through restorative processes are less likely to re-offend than those who proceed through criminal courts. The few studies that have not found such a reduction have nonetheless concluded that offenders who participate in restorative processes are no more likely to re-offend than those who are dealt with by the courts.

Prison Fellowship International is an association with over 110 national affiliates around the world. A number of these have begun to use a programme we call the Sycamore Tree Project®. As you may have guessed, it is fashioned after the story about Zacchaeus the corrupt tax collector. A group of victims volunteers to meet with a group of prisoners for eight sessions. These are not each others' victims and offenders, so the impact of the programme is less direct than with the programmes I described earlier.

During the eight sessions the groups discuss crime, the harm it causes, and what it means to take responsibility for that harm. The programme was designed to benefit both the prisoners and the victims, and many of them report being transformed by the experience. Listen to the comments of two participants at the conclusion of the programme.

- A prisoner in England said: *“Sycamore Tree Project really makes you think. It’s not like any other course I’ve been on. It makes you think about feelings. It’s about what’s inside. It changes how you feel about victims and all that. I’ve done other programmes and that’s easy. You know all the answers before you go in there and it doesn’t change anything. STP is different because it’s about what’s inside.”*
- A victim from New Zealand said: *“I witnessed a man murdering my father. I have been carrying this hatred and hurt for more than 25 years. For the first time, I can truly say that I have forgiven the man who murdered my father. The feeling is something I can’t describe.”*

Those two affiliates, England and New Zealand, have used Sycamore Tree Project extensively. Several years ago, outside researchers conducted evaluations of each program, using a before-and-after questionnaire aimed at gauging the attitudes of prisoners about crime.

In both studies, the researchers found that the attitudes of prisoners had changed significantly during the programme in a direction that has been shown to lead ex-offenders away from committing new crimes.

Other Applications

Restorative processes are being used outside the criminal justice system as well. One is in settings where there are rules and disciplinary processes, such as in schools or at workplaces. These are interesting environments in which to use restorative justice because they are self-contained. Several studies have shown that schools that adopt restorative discipline have a noticeable improvement in the overall learning environment. However, there is some resistance to using restorative processes because teachers and administrators are unwilling to give up their authoritarian role and power.

A second arena in which restorative justice has been applied is when there has been conflict but no criminal or immoral action. For example, consider a disagreement between two people or groups over the best course of action to take. The values and process of restorative justice can be adapted to help the parties communicate effectively and find a mutually-beneficial solution.

The third use of restorative justice has been in post-conflict situations in which the number of crimes is so great that it would be impossible to conduct criminal trials in each instance. This is the situation in Rwanda, for example, where traditional processes with many restorative features are being used with people who are willing to admit their participation in the genocide that took place in 1994 and the surrounding years.

Restorative justice can be useful in constructing a political settlement at the top levels, as happened in South Africa. It can also be critical at the grassroots level when offenders and victims must learn to live together in the aftermath of war.

Conclusion

Let me close with the following story. A 15-year-old boy's parents divorced and his mother was given custody of him and his younger sister. Because the mother worked in the afternoons, the boy was unsupervised once the school day ended. He stopped using that time to do homework, and as a result his grades suffered. He began to spend his free time with a group of boys who were also doing poorly in school; several had been in trouble with the law before.

One afternoon one of his friends dared him to break into a home and steal something. After some hesitation he agreed. They found a house where no one was home, and he entered through a window and stole a video game. After playing with it for a couple of days at one of the boys' houses, they sold it.

Four people lived in the home that the boy broke into, a mother and her three boys aged 7, 12 and 21. The video game belonged to the oldest son, and he was of course angry that it was gone. But the whole family had been affected. All of them were anxious when they left their home each day. The 7-year-old had nightmares. The mother had to take time off work to be at home when the repairman came to fix the window. She had difficulty paying the man when he was done because of her tight budget.

The police questioned neighbours who were themselves very concerned to hear that there had been a burglary on their street because most of them work during the day and they felt vulnerable. One neighbour said that she had noticed some boys hanging around on the street the afternoon of the burglary. She recognized one of them and this is how the boys were eventually caught by the police.

This story is an actual case that was resolved in a restorative meeting between the offender, his mother, his sister and a family friend, and the victim and her oldest son. A facilitator prepared them all for the meeting and helped them as it unfolded. In this particular case neighbours and police did not participate, although they could have been invited. The offender had already admitted that he had broken into the house and taken the video game.

At the victim's request, the meeting was held at her house (not unusual in cases of residential burglary). The meeting opened with the offender and the victims describing their experiences and emotions, and the other summarizing what they had heard. The mothers then spoke to each other about their hopes and fears for their children. The victim said that her principal concern was that the offender should not repeat this kind of activity again. However, they also spoke about the value of the stolen videogame and the widow repairs. In the end they agreed that the offender would give the victim his own video game, which was a newer model of the one the offender had taken and sold. This agreement was put into writing and signed. They decided to meet again in several weeks after the agreement had been completed for a celebration. The offender's mother invited everyone to their house for a meal.

When they met again several weeks later, the offender's mother had prepared a wonderful meal, complete with a birthday cake for the victim's youngest son, who had been so traumatized by the burglary. Together they celebrated that the offender had completed the agreement and that he was making new friends. The victim said that she felt much safer. All felt that the matter had been resolved and were satisfied with the outcome.

Justice had been done, and kind of justice that directed offender accountability toward repairing the harm he had done. In pursuing justice in this way, hostility had given way to agreement and celebration. Conflict had given way to peace.

And after all, isn't peace a wonderful way to achieve public safety.

Thank you.