Restorative Resources

COMPLETING THE CIRCLE

RESTORATIVE PRACTICE, DEPTH PSYCHOLOGY, & THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Too often, the learning that youth experience at school has little relation to their deeper sense of meaning and purpose as a human being. In recent decades, restorative practice has emerged as a system of principles and practices that help students and adult educators to reconnect to their core self and cultivate trusting, meaningful relationships to others and with life in general as part of the teaching and learning at school. Much of the success of restorative practice, particularly the practice of restorative Circles, comes from its implicit links to many of the principles of depth psychology. In this article, we explore three core links, including integration of the shadow and restorative justice, the ego-Self axis and the Social Discipline Window, and restorative Circles as a practice for furthering the process of individuation. Through describing these connections between these two fields as they are applied in education practices at school, we begin to open the door to further correspondence between these mutually enhancing fields of knowledge. This, in turn, has a wealth of potential for adding a much-needed depth to current educational practice and empowering youth to grow into the full responsibilities of being human in order to step into a more sustainable future.

Keywords: restorative practice, depth psychology, Circles, Self, education

GROWING TOWARD THE SELF

As human beings, we cannot really live unless we experience meaning in our relationship to the world. For children growing up, their experience of meaning is determined in large part by their time spent at school. Unfortunately, most youth in Western culture right now are faced with an approach to teaching where meaning is a secondary concern at best. Those in the field of depth psychology have sought to address this lack in a variety of ways. In recent decades, restorative practice has developed with similar objectives in mind. What follows here is a preliminary description of how bringing together these three threads—depth psychology, restorative practice, and education—can allow us to take an important step forward toward reclaiming an approach to education that prioritizes the need for meaning at every step of a child's growth into adulthood.

To begin, I would like to orient the reader toward my use of certain terms within the depth psychology field. First, the term ego refers to the small portion of the psyche that is at the center of our conscious awareness (Stein, 1998). It is the ego that forms our everyday sense of identity and directs our conscious decisions and actions. This is in contrast to the Self, which is the numinous center of consciousness that constitutes our essential nature and simultaneously contains the totality of the psyche (Jung, 1951/1959). The work of forming a conscious relationship between the ego and the Self and living from a knowing of one's essential wholeness is called the process of individuation (Jung, 1943/1966; Stein, 2006). Another important concept is the archetypes, which are universal structures in the collective human psyche, expressed as symbolic images, which inwardly influence all aspects of humanity's outer interactions with life (Stein, 1998). The Self is considered the primal archetype and the source of all other archetypes. Finally, though not a depth psychology term, I make frequent use of the word sacred as a descriptor of the Self, as well as in connection to restorative practice and depth psychology in general. My understanding of the sacred can best be described through the following words from Margaret Wheatley.

> Sacred is nothing special. It's just life, revealing its true nature. Life's true nature is wholeness, Indra's net embracing every living thing, able to contain all unique expressions. In a sacred moment, I experience that wholeness. I know I belong here. I don't think about it, I simply feel it. Without any work on my part, my heart opens and my sense of "me" expands. I'm no longer locked inside a small self. I don't feel alone or isolated. I feel here. I feel welcomed. (p. 133)

When I was about 12-years-old, I experienced such a sacred moment, which was one of my earliest direct encounters with the Self. I can still see the scene clearly in my memory. I had just entered the kitchen of the house where I grew up in Mobile, Alabama. The dining room table was to my left, and the counter and kitchen was to my right. Without warning, I could see clearly before me the entire sequence of events that most people in our society call life. It was not a visual seeing, but it was as if the knowing were being directly infused into my awareness.

What I saw was this: We're born. We go to school. Later, we get a job and work. We get married and have a family. If we live long enough and are fortunate enough, we eventually retire. Then, we hang around doing this or that for a little while longer. Finally, we die. And that's all.

It was a stark image. And something in me that I wasn't aware of before looked at this picture of life and asked, "Is that all?" Of course, in the question is also the answer. To ask that question is also to know that, no, that's not all. Though my 12-year-old psyche could not immediately integrate all the implications of that experience at that time, even then, this mysterious new awareness in me knew without a doubt that I was not interested in remaining only within the surface play of outward events, but needed also a knowing of my own deeper purpose and a broader view of my relationship to life. And from that moment on, the Self within me has laid claim to my life, directing both outer events and inner experience toward its own ends.

It is contact with the Self that allows us to engage meaningfully in the world around us. For me, this experience gave me a thread to follow as I navigated through my teenage years and emerged into adulthood. Although it is important for children to maintain an ongoing relationship with the Self throughout their childhood, in my experience, this relationship acquires a special significance during adolescence and early adulthood, when youth emerge into their distinct identity and attempt to establish their rightful place in society. The immense benefit of embarking on the work of finding one's place in the world with the guidance of the Self is that we can assess our life choices in the light of our own personal sense of meaning, rather than only in relation to inherited familial or cultural values.

For instance, in these times, it is expected that an adolescent preparing to graduate from high school is looking toward options for further education at college, which in turn is meant to lead to one's career path. When this sequence of events is set in motion, it would be much better for adolescents to make such decisions in the context of at least a partial knowing of what would suit the needs of the Self, as well as the ego. It can be easy to assume that it is only natural for an individual to first prioritize the needs of the ego with respect to education, career, family, social obligations etc., and only later work backwards in an effort to re-establish contact with the Self, once the former objectives have been accomplished. However, I would argue that this view is not only altogether unnecessary but is actually untenable in light of the current needs of our time. The journey toward individuation has a significance beyond an individual's own life destiny. It is also connected to the wider cultural context in which it exists. At the same

time that an individual is subject to the cultural conditions that he or she exists in, these individuals who are growing into adulthood and taking up social roles are also maintaining and creating those same cultural structures.

When we accept as normal a childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood that is not in relation to its own sacred Self, we create institutions that reflect this same experience of disconnection between the Self that is our sacred core, and the ego that directs our everyday activities and relationships. This further reinforces a long-standing cultural split, which says that what is sacred is only relevant to my private, individual experience (including perhaps my family and other intimate relationships), while the sacred has no place in my work and experience in society's institutions. However, as the destructive consequences of this split become increasingly apparent with each passing day, we find ourselves at a point where there is no other way forward except to seek out ways to invite the Self into all aspects of our lives, including the public institutions that set the context. We see the evidence of this need in our corrupt and ineffective political system, in the greed and gross inequity perpetuated by our economic system, in the global destruction of our living ecological systems, and, of course, in an education system that emphasizes rational, technical learning in its subject matter, and through its structure of imposed authoritarian power, seeks to transform children into obedient worker-citizens as adults.

These circumstances provoke an interesting situation regarding the approach to education that is needed today. In a culture that is healthy and strong, rooted in the sacred nature of humanity and a right relationship to the world and all levels of life, the task of education could simply be to pass on these traditions from one generation to the next. However, given the state of our current culture, we are faced with a need to allow youth to do things very differently than what we may take for granted today. This instinctual sense of the need to go back to basics, back to what is most essential, in order to create a new cultural context for our lives, has already been making its presence felt for some years now.

In my work with teachers, students, and their families, I see in them now the same hunger for a meaning beyond the superficial events of our daily experience that I personally experienced throughout my time in school, especially during middle and high school. There is a longing for real connection, heartfelt communication, sharing of wisdom and the stories that we live by, and experiences that remind us of what we are really here for, whether or not we have thought to ask the question. I also see a desire for justice and meaningful change that will put right the wrongs that are committed daily, as well as a new vision for what it means to live together as a community, one that is founded in shared human values and a concern for the welfare of the whole of life, of which we are each a part.

I have seen the evidence of this deep disconnection in a variety of ways during my time working with schools. When I work with groups of students, I often hear that the high point of their day

is the moment when they get to leave school. The downside, they say, is that they know they have to come back. I hear from both students and educators that school is a primary source of stress in their life. Students suffer from the pressure of meeting academic requirements, while educators struggle with nearly impossible demands that their role requires of them, often with very little in the way of support. For all involved, the education experience is, more often than not, something that must be endured for the sake of some external objective, either the grades needed to graduate, or to meet job performance requirements and maintain a livable income. In an environment such as this, there is no time or space for the Self.

It is in this context that restorative practice has emerged as a system to reframe the culture of schools as learning environments characterized by shared values, meaningful learning, and deep, trusting relationships embedded in an experience of belonging to a larger community. Through restorative practice, and particularly within the dialogue structure of Circles, which I will describe in more detail later, I have seen sparks of meaning come alive among teachers, students, and others in spontaneous ways that can't be planned or manufactured. Often when I first work with teachers and other school staff, I ask them to share their story of what inspired them to work as educators. After this sharing, almost without fail, I hear them remark that in that short time, they have learned more about their colleagues and felt closer to them than they have in years, sometimes decades, working together previously.

In such instances, I see the possibility of the healing waters of the inner world being channeled back into our daily outer experience to bring new life back to a barren, fractured landscape that thirsts for meaning. My sense is that the deepest potential of restorative practice in schools is to provide a framework in which students and adult educators can collaboratively create learning environments that place primary importance on developing an intimate correspondence with the inner world of the sacred, and the Self at its core, as an ever-present thread running through all aspects of the formal and informal instruction at school. And in this way, the work of teaching and learning can become more than a simple transmission of academic knowledge and technical skills. Instead, we can begin to allow schools to become venues of radical discovery, where students are given the opportunity to grow into the mystery of what it really means to be human, rather than just what they want to be when they grow up in order to make money. And the work of bridging the inner and outer worlds can come out of the narrow confines of therapeutic analysis and can be given back to communities at large as a standard feature of public education.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICE

At its core, restorative practice is about connection—connection to our own sense of meaning and to our natural place in the world. It is a response to the ever-increasing fragmentation that we feel as individuals, as communities, and as a culture. It invites us to realign with our own innate value by offering a space for our authentic voice to be heard. It also requires us to practice the art of deep listening, so that we can begin to attune ourselves to the subtle signs of our daily life that call to us to be awake and present to our immediate experience. This dual practice is encapsulated in two common Circle guidelines that invite us to listen from the heart and speak from the heart, which serve as shared commitments that help us to meet each other from heart to heart, rather than through the filters of our conditioned judgments.

These same attitudes of speaking and listening also emphasize the importance of story in the health and well-being of a community. It is through our stories that we share the wisdom we gain through life experience. And it is through sharing our experience that we also come to recognize the story that our life is telling, the one that we write moment by moment through our attention, thoughts, words, and actions. And we also begin to weave the thread of our own story into the larger tapestry of life as whole, into the story that is being told right now both within and all around us. Restorative practice emphasizes the need to bring the practice of story in all its facets back to the center of our community, where it is needed to remind us again of who we are and how we are meant to live together.

In a time of so much fast-paced complexity, restorative practice is also a call to return to the simplicity of our sacred roots. Many of the core principles, practices, and values of restorative practice are based on the sacred traditions of First Nations peoples (Thorsborne & Blood, 2013; Pranis, Stuart, & Wedge, 2003; Zimmerman & Coyle, 2009). At the heart of these shared principles is the knowing that all of life is fundamentally interconnected, and that humanity has a central role in preserving balance within this living network. This includes cultivating an awareness of the broader impacts of our decisions and actions beyond ourselves, knowing that the harm experienced by one is felt by all. This is the beginning of real responsibility, and there is an urgent need for all of us to renew our commitment to taking up this responsibility with an attitude of reverent humility and with the intention to be in service to the needs of the whole of life. While we need not model ourselves after other cultures' sacred traditions and try to imitate their ways, contact with these sacred traditions has brought to our eyes that sacred dimension which our own Western culture has left behind long ago, and what we in the West must now recover in a new way appropriate to our own cultural heritage and our current time. The emergence of restorative practice is one manifestation of how we may begin to do this.

Because of the far-reaching and profound implications of these shifts in our mindset, restorative practice is deeply relevant to many different domains of our society, and the different ways that it has already been applied have exerted a beneficial influence in each of them (Wachtel, 2015). The field of education in particular has seen a significant upsurge in interest regarding restorative practice and the potential it has to radically reframe our approach to teaching and learning. For the past four years, I have worked at a non-profit agency called Restorative Resources, which has partnered with schools to provide training and implementation support in restorative practice. My role in this work includes leading formal trainings with groups of school staff, including administration, teachers, counselors, campus safety, office workers, etc., which is usually followed by on-site mentoring with school staff as they apply their learning according to their role within the school community. My observations come from this experience working with school personnel and students to bring about a shift in school culture that prioritizes the health and quality of relationships in the school community and incorporates restorative principles and practices as essential components to effective teaching and learning.

Though each school that I work with has its own unique context, and the training and support is always adapted to meet each school's specific needs, there are some general patterns that guide the implementation process and also outline the scope of my experience with restorative practice in schools. I have observed these patterns through our agency's work in partnering with schools over the last four years, as well as through connecting with other practitioners in the field. I usually begin with an introductory training over two days with groups of 15-25 school staff. With large schools, this training takes place over multiple sessions. This training includes an overview of restorative principles, as well as how these principles are applied in specific practices, such as affective language, restorative dialogue, and restorative Circles[1], which are the focus of this article.

After this initial training, I provide ongoing mentoring, as school staff apply the practices in their various roles. One central aspect of the mentoring is working with teachers in their classrooms as they establish a regular restorative Circle practice with their students as an integral part of the learning in class, regardless of the specific subject matter of the class. This usually involves me first demonstrating actual Circles, then co-leading with the teachers, and finally simply observing as just one other participant in the Circle. In addition to this, I offer other forms of implementation support, such as parent evenings, interventions with students, leadership meetings, staff Circles, informal check-in conversations, etc. As time goes on, I work both formally and informally with various members of the school community to assess implementation progress, schedule and conduct additional trainings, and provide further support actions as needed. The implementation process as a whole generally lasts approximately three to five years before it is fully embedded in a school's culture.

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[1] In accordance with some practitioners of Circle, I have chosen to capitalize the word Circle throughout this article, in order to designate it as a practice designed to connect us to our own sacred roots as human beings.

DEPTH PSYCHOLOGY IN EDUCATION

Connecting people's everyday awareness to the inner world of dreams, myth, symbols and other carriers of meaning has always been a primary concern of depth psychology. And while the field of depth psychology undoubtedly has much potential to enhance the field of education in that respect, it has yet to be consistently applied in this domain, for a variety of reasons. Even so, there have been many and varied attempts at doing so in the past several decades (Gitz-Johansen, 2016). Some of these applications are already implicitly present in restorative practice, while others would be complementary additions that would go far to enhance restorative practice itself.

Clifford Mayes has written extensively on the importance of depth approaches in education, which he calls an archetypal pedagogy. He outlines ten pillars of a Jungian approach to education, each of which serves to create a bridge between the outer subject matter and the inner world of the archetypes. One of the primary archetypes that influence education is the teacher-student relationship. Teaching and learning is a universal experience throughout the world and throughout history, though its exact forms and conventions vary from culture to culture. An awareness of this archetypal dimension of the teacher and student roles brings an added sense of the sacred, which in turn brings a corresponding change in the attitude and behaviors that both bring to this relationship.

Other pillars that Mayes describes include the importance of connecting curriculum in each subject area to its archetypal roots, cultivating the intuitive function of students, and incorporating spirituality in ways that respect the students' autonomy and beliefs. Mayes, citing Jung, demonstrates that archetypal pedagogy can be viewed as education in the spirit of the symbol, as opposed to training in the service of the sign, which characterizes conventional education (2016). Training in the service of the sign focuses on transmitting an official curriculum designed to objectify students, divorce them from their natural sense of self, and reinforce existing social power structures and the dominant cultural worldview on which these structures are founded. In sharp contrast, in the same way that a symbol points beyond itself into the mystery of that which it represents, the education in the spirit of the symbol emphasizes subjectivity, creativity, and exploration into the mystery of being human, of which each of us are living symbols (Mayes, 2016)

Main (2012) explores how educators' relationship to their own unconscious is an important determining factor in how they relate to their students. Educators who are familiar with the many subtle dynamics inherent to the influence of the unconscious, both personal and collective, can not only avoid entangling their students in their own psychological problems but can also meaningfully interact with students as they attempt to process their own unconscious contents, allowing the teacher-student relationship to be a container for their

students' psychological growth (Main, 2012). The absence of this, of course, brings with it a host of unhealthy relationship dynamics among teachers and their students and sets up a classroom culture that poses a significant hindrance to any sort of true learning taking place.

Another important way that depth psychology fills an unrecognized need in education is by unraveling certain assumed dichotomies such as self and world, individual and collective, and inner and outer (Rowland, 2012). This fluidity of perception derives from the natural movement of the psyche toward wholeness, under the influence of the Self. As a result, learning can begin to deconstruct some of these assumptions that only serve as barriers to our sense of belonging to a participatory world that values our gifts and requires our contribution. From this view, "Jung denies that the individual can be treated in all senses, including the educational, as apart from the world. Indeed, to treat the individual is to treat the world, in education as well as therapy" (Rowland, 2012, p. 14).

Rowland (2012) describes how a healing fiction can operate in a classroom to bridge students' individual learning and their broader collective contribution. This term refers to the ordering of our experience into a narrative that reveals a meaning that inspires the engagement of archetypal and sacred dimensions (Jung, 1933; Rowland, 2012). Jung found that healing in therapy rarely occurs unless clients can situate themselves within a story that accounts for the totality of who they are. By the same token, classroom learning requires its own healing fiction whereby students can feel themselves included in a broader story with mythic dimensions and invited to participate from that same mythic capacity in themselves. Where this is missing, which is usually the case, we have a situation in which teachers are forced into an endless and futile battle to engage students in subject matter that does not feel remotely meaningful to them, but to which students must submit for the sake of grades, graduation, and the ultimate objective of earning a livelihood as adults.

Susan Roberts (2014), a school counselor, reflects that youth today are desperately searching for soulful adults who are not caught in the busyness and distractions of our culture. They seek adult educators who can recognize the emerging light of the Self within their students and relate to them in a way that offers a bastion of safety from the intense, ever-present pressures from family and society toward academic achievement and other cultural images of success. Roberts offers profound insights into the ways that the Internet—a powerful symbol of our time that has, thus far, mostly been unrecognized and misused—has strongly shaped the millennial generation's basic outlook on life and relationships. The Internet has attuned them to a greater identification with a more collective sense of self that includes their individuality but does not separate them from a sense of being part of something greater. At the same time, the Internet also supports their seeking out like-minded youth with whom they can connect not only around common interests, but also vulnerabilities and hardships, in a way that may not feel safe among peers in their geographic community. And finally, "Like some human-generated mundus imaginalis, the Internet supplies endless fodder for imaginations starved

by a real world that is disenchanted and de-souled" (Roberts, 2014, p. 437). Youth acutely feel the absence of life's natural magic and wonder, though they may not always articulate it, or be able to identify or explain why this situation has come about.

Roberts models a particular attitude of openness and curiosity that adults need in order for youth to accept much-needed guidance from adult mentors and to feel valued for who they are. The many facets of this mentor-student relationship have strong connections to the subject of initiation, another topic of some importance in the depth psychology literature and also relevant to the role of schools in preparing youth for adulthood.

Throughout human history, there has been an understanding that moving through important life stages is not just a matter of reaching a certain age, but also stepping into a new, inner sense of identity and our relationship to our community and all of life. As a result, there have been rituals of initiation, led by initiated mentors that help us to move into a new identity both outwardly and inwardly, for our own sake as individuals, and for the sake of the community with whom we share our gifts (Henderson, 1967; Meade, 1993; Prechtel, 1999; Somé, 1994). Unfortunately, in our culture, there is little understanding of the essential function that mentors serve in our community, and the initiation rituals have long been forgotten (Henderson, 1967). What we are left with now are too many uninitiated adults with little understanding of their real responsibilities or their true potential for individuation into mature adults (Henderson 1967; Meade, 1993). This includes many adult educators who may be well versed in their academic subject matter but have not been guided into the depths of their own psyche, so they are in no position to take up the responsibility of guiding their own students in this way.

Most current educators lack an understanding of depth psychology and the foundational skills needed to apply it appropriately at school. Aside from a small number of inspired individuals who take upon themselves the responsibility for rebalancing a conspicuously one-sided understanding of education, there is little hope for anything approaching widespread, consistent application of depth approaches without a cohesive framework within the education institution itself. As a result, the burden of responsibility lies with those who do have the needed knowledge and skills to find ways of offering their services in a manner that can be effectively integrated into an educational context. Roberts (2014) summarizes the situation succinctly as follows:

> Having glimpsed the possibilities myself, I still believe that schools can be incubators of soul and agents of psychological transformation. And I believe depth psychologists are naturally suited to this role, if only they would care to come out of their private consulting rooms to meet the younger generation where they are. Doing so would

require letting go of inherited beliefs about what psychological work should look like and attachment to elitist ideas about one's professional identity. It would require imagining new cultural forms to integrate the insights of depth psychology into the world at large… and if we do not want depth psychology to vanish with the old world that is dying, we must find ways to reinvent it for the new one being born. (p. 442)

What is needed is a suitable framework that preserves the essence of depth approaches and not only makes it accessible to an educational setting, but also meets a recognized need from the perspective of schools. This is precisely what restorative practice can potentially provide.

RECLAIMING THE SHADOW

Incorporating restorative justice into a school's discipline practices highlights one of the clearest links between depth psychology and restorative practice, which is the need to work with the shadow. The shadow includes those qualities within us that the ego cannot accept, and Jung emphasized the importance of recognizing and integrating these qualities as a primary first step in psychological maturity (Jung, 1951/1959). This shadow integration can be done in a number of ways, such as through dreamwork, art, active imagination, ritual, and interpersonal relationships (Stein, 1998). In relationships, we encounter our shadow through unconsciously projecting its qualities onto others, usually those people whom we dislike most. With attention and dedication, we can come to notice that those qualities that we previously assumed belonged to others are actually parts of our own psyche that we have disowned, and we begin to allow them a place within ourselves, thereby reclaiming and integrating our shadow.

This dynamic of shadow projection and integration has direct relevance to restorative justice in schools, particularly in understanding its role within school discipline practices. The most obvious example is the frequent use of punitive and exclusionary discipline practices, such as detention, suspension, and expulsion, for students who behave in ways that the school deems unacceptable. At an individual level, what we refuse to see in our own psyche gets repressed into our own unconscious, while in a school community, those who behave in socially unacceptable ways are likewise banished from the school community to various degrees. The progression of exclusion from school leading to further marginalization and ultimately to incarceration is known in the restorative practice field as the school-to-prison pipeline (Gonzalez, 2011; Payne & Welch, 2015). From this perspective, we could look at our prisons as the shadow of our society.

However, as we inevitably discover in our own psyche, the more we neglect our shadow and the unconscious in general, the darker and more powerful it becomes, and the more it haunts our steps and exacts an increasingly high cost on our well-being. Likewise, within school communities, there is an increasing recognition that suspending or expelling students from their school community has a similar effect at a collective level, and this is one of the central needs that restorative justice is called on to address. The effectiveness of restorative justice practices is a result of the way it mirrors at a community level the same approaches that depth psychology takes at an individual level in the work of integrating the shadow.

One of the core principles of restorative practice is that, because each person is part of an interconnected whole, all individuals have a deep desire to be in authentic relationship with others in their community, even though this desire can get distorted or covered over in various ways (Boyes-Watson & Pranis, 2015). When an incident of wrongdoing occurs, those who are

responsible for the harm are encouraged to recognize and accept that responsibility. Through a process of guided, structured dialogue, mutual sharing and understanding takes place among those who caused the harm and those who were harmed, and consensual agreements can be reached regarding what actions need to be taken and by whom in order to allow for healing of harms, repair of relationships, and, if possible, prevention of future harm (Mullet, 2014; Ryan & Ruddy, 2015).

Past studies of restorative justice in a school setting have explored different facets of how this approach to student discipline cultivates a school culture that actively promotes inclusion and belonging. One theme highlights how restorative justice processes are implicitly connected to larger social justice issues such as racial injustice (Payne & Welch, 2015). This means that we cannot fully address the school-related behavior issues and interpersonal conflicts in a fully restorative manner without taking into account the sociocultural and historical contexts in which these behaviors are situated. Another important facet looks at how restorative justice has the potential to enhance the development of resilience among marginalized students by providing spaces where their authentic voice can be heard and acknowledged (Knight & Wadhwa, 2014). This brings about a feeling of power and agency within their community that encourages their unique gifts to more fully unfold. Finally, authors in the field emphasize the need for restorative justice to challenge institutionalized power structures that emphasize control and compliance (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012). For a school implementing restorative approaches, it can be easy to focus solely on student behavior as the determining factor in school culture and in creating a positive school climate. However, adult educators often fail to critically examine their own practices that prioritize their own authoritarian power, rather than fostering a truly inclusive learning environment that is open to students' active participation.

Restorative justice challenges many long-held assumptions about what justice looks like in a school community, both in our interpersonal relationships and in the social structures of our institutions. By demanding that we courageously face the shadow qualities that we can easily project onto those individuals and groups that we don't want to accept, restorative justice provides effective processes for integrating our community shadow and truly taking responsibility for the darkness that lives in all of us. Only by doing so can we accept ourselves and each other in our fullness, bring our fragmented inner qualities together, and so come to a greater sense of wholeness, which is a precondition for being able to fully live the meaning of the Self in our everyday life, both as individuals and as communities.

One illustration of this shift toward wholeness comes from a Circle that was convened to address the harm caused by two high school boys who stole from a department store. The participants of the Circle included the two boys, their mothers, and some community volunteers who had been trained to lead the Circle. When one of the youth was later asked about the most important thing he learned from that experience, he described how, before the Circle, he would walk down the street and see the people around him as strangers. But as a

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result of that Circle, when he walks down the street and sees people pass by, he now sees them as members of his community.

As a result of that Circle, this youth's inner landscape is broadened to include a larger whole, called community, that has his interests at heart and to which he can meaningfully contribute as a participant. And with that experience of connection comes a desire to contribute creatively rather than destructively. From the perspective of the other conference participants, they can now welcome the youth back and affirm his growing awareness of responsibility. He is no longer someone who needs to be externally controlled by the adults of the community. Rather, he is recognized as a source of gifts that the community needs, gifts that he can now offer in full freedom, knowing that by serving the whole, he himself will also benefit.

FINDING OUR CENTER

THE EGO-SELF AXIS AND THE SOCIAL DISCIPLINE WINDOW

In the depth psychology literature, one of the central concepts for developing a relationship to the Self and understanding the psychological journey toward individuation is the ego-Self axis (see figure 1), first described by Neumann (1954) and developed further by Edinger (1972). According to Edinger, children go through developmental experiences of both inflation—through identification of the ego with the Self—and alienation—through the experience of the ego being cut off from the Self. The experience of inflation begins with children's feeling of being the center of the universe, entitled to have their desires fulfilled immediately and the right to do exactly what they want to do. The experience of alienation inevitably comes when children are faced with the natural limitations of life or through interactions with other people, particularly the limits of discipline set by parents and other caretakers. This pendulum swinging back and forth between the empowerment of the Self and the limitation of the ego goes on in various forms throughout childhood, adolescence, and into adulthood. Eventually, however, there is the potential that an individual can begin to integrate both poles of experience into a functional unity in which both ego and Self remain distinct, yet dynamically interrelated in a manner appropriate to their respective nature. This development is a central aspect of the process of individuation, whereby the ego finds its right relationship to the Self as the vehicle through which the Self can experience and engage with this world.
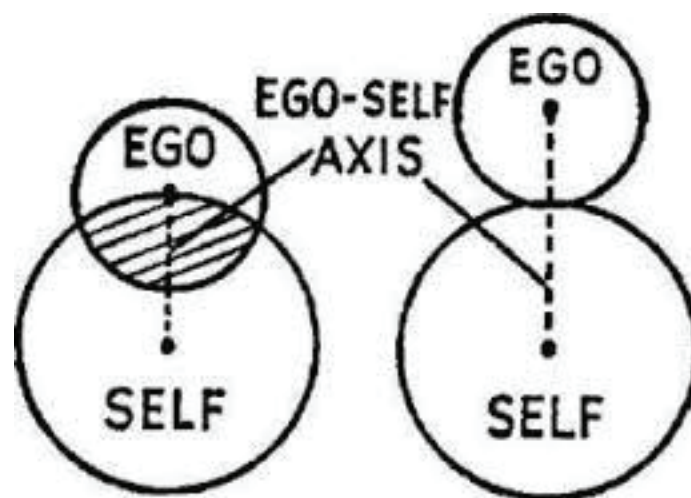

FIGURE 1 THE EGO-SELF AXIS

Interestingly, the ego-Self axis is closely mirrored in the restorative practice literature by what has been called the Social Discipline Window (see figure 2). The Social Discipline Window describes four general approaches to human relationship, based on the different interactions between degrees of support and control. A punitive approach is characterized by high control and low support, and is described as "doing *to*." A permissive approach is characterized by high support and low control, and is described as "doing *for*." A neglectful approach is characterized by both low support and low control, and is described as "*not* doing." Finally, the restorative approach combines high support with high control and is described as "doing *with*." This understanding of basing our relationships on an approach of "doing with" is what Wachtel (2013) has called his *fundamental hypothesis* for restorative practice:

> A basic premise of restorative practices is that people (students, teachers and staff) are happier and more likely to make positive changes when those in authority (teachers, staff and administrators) do things with them, rather than to them or for them. (Costello, Wachtel, & Wachtel, 2010, pp. 7-8)

What we find in both of these concepts is two opposing polarities. With the ego-Self axis, there is inflation and alienation. With the Social Discipline Window, there is support and control. Upon close observation, what we find is that the punitive relationship approach, which prioritizes control at the expense of support, produces the experience of alienation that Edinger (1972) described. Likewise, the permissive relationship approach, which offers support but is lacking in control, leads to the experience of inflation.
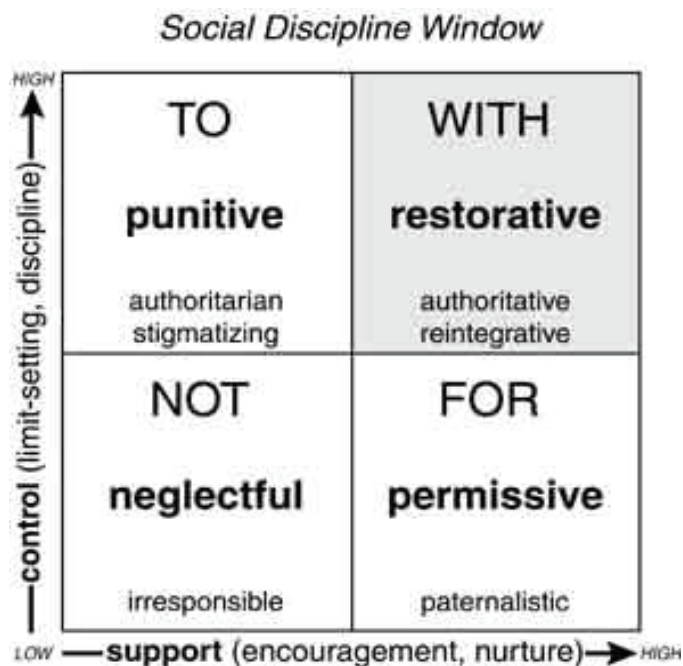

FIGURE 2 THE SOCIAL DISCIPLINE WINDOW

Restorative Resources

Edinger (1972) explains the functioning of these two pairs of opposites as follows, substituting the word *discipline* for the word *control* as I have used it:

> Permissiveness emphasizes acceptance and encouragement of the child's spontaneity and nourishes his contact with the source of life energy with which he is born. But it also maintains and encourages the inflation of the child, which is unrealistic to the demands of outer life. Discipline, on the other hand, emphasizes strict limits of behavior, encourages dissolution of the ego-Self identity and treats the inflation quite successfully; but at the same time it tends to damage the vital, necessary connection between the growing ego and its roots in the unconscious. There is no choice between these—they are a pair of opposites, and must operate together. (p. 12, italics added)

Therefore, when educators are relating to students in this restorative manner, applying both support and control at the same time, they are simultaneously fostering in their students a greater consciousness of the ego-Self axis. And the reverse is also true, that the more our consciousness is aligned to the ego-Self axis through our own inner work, the more we are equipped to relate to others in a restorative manner. This foundational principle is woven like a thread through every aspect of the restorative practice approach and all its explicit practices, and in this way, the energy and meaning of the Self can infuse every moment of our daily interactions at school.

One of the primary manifestations of this shift in relationship among adult educators and students is when educators begin to honor their students as sources of inherent wisdom, complete in themselves at any given moment. Though from the perspective of the ego, fewer years of life experience means less knowledge and less standing, when Self meets Self, regardless of the individuals' age, it is always a meeting of equals. When this happens at school, then students can truly engage with their learning environment from a place of freedom and autonomy, and the adult educators can be responsive to the natural learning impulse that drives all youth toward new experiences and further growth. And this is what all educators and students long for out of their school experience but all too rarely find.

THE ARCHETYPE OF WHOLENESS

Although every aspect of the restorative practice framework is attuned, in the manner described above, to the meaning that the Self carries, this is felt most directly in the practice of restorative Circles. The practice of Circle has become the cornerstone for how restorative principles are applied in a school community. The restorative approaches to student discipline already mentioned usually happen in Circles (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012; Payne & Welch, 2015; Ryan & Ruddy, 2015). However, there are other applications that seek simply to provide an open space for students to listen deeply, share authentically, and connect through stories of their life experience, which is, essentially, the practice of being in community. Regardless of the specific objective for meeting in Circle, or the specific style of the practitioners guiding the dialogue, the Circle is always designated as an intentional space that allows for a depth of meaningful interaction, even transformation, to occur that would not be possible otherwise.

Individuation requires a particular quality of space in order to unfold. This space is not necessarily defined by physical parameters, but depends rather on more intangible, qualitative factors. Stein (2006) characterizes it as a place where notions of inner and outer are fluidly related, where we find a feeling of containment that allows us to simultaneously discover our own uniqueness, while also holding a door open to what lies beyond us. This means allowing for the dissolution of rigid identity patterns so that the subtler, archetypal Self can begin to emerge in new forms. As Schwarz-Salant (1998) echoes, "…we must move beyond the notion of life as consisting of outer and inner experiences and must enter a kind of 'intermediate realm' that our culture has long lost sight of and in which the major portion of transformation occurs" (p. 5)

There are a number of specific, intentional elements that are included in order to create a particular sacred space that allows Circles to be a place of discovery, transformation, and individuation. These elements include the opening and closing, talking piece, centerpiece, guidelines and agreements, and circle keeper. The opening and closing mark the Circle as a sacred space and help the participants to transition into and out of that space. The talking piece ensures equity of voice and allows us to practice listening first, knowing that our opportunity to speak will come. The centerpiece is one or more symbolic objects placed at the center of the circle, whose purpose is to serve as a focus of attention, to invite the influence of the inner worlds, and to remind us of our highest values. Guidelines and agreements provide shared commitments for how we intend to practice relating to each other from our common values. And finally, the circle keeper is a rotating position of leadership, whose role is to hold the Circle space, facilitate heartfelt dialogue and interaction according to the Circle's purpose, and help to preserve the integrity of the Circle amidst a wide range of changing dynamics (Baldwin & Linnea, 2010; Boyes-Watson & Pranis, 2015; Costello, Wachtel, & Wachtel, 2010; Pranis, Stuart, & Wedge, 2003; Shinoda-Bolen, 1999; Zimmerman & Coyle, 2009).

The practice of Circle is enhanced by a depth psychological perspective that reveals the hidden dynamics of how Circles function as sacred spaces of transformation that link the inner and outer worlds, channel the archetypal energy of the Self, contain that energy within its structure, and make it accessible to the Circle participants to the extent that they are able to assimilate it. Circles are a community ritual for activating the archetype of wholeness, the Self, and allowing those who participate to be nourished by it.

Central to this process is the understanding of the symbolic nature of the circle shape itself. In the final chapter of his work *Aion*, Jung (1951/1959) describes the structure and dynamics of the Self. As the final part of his detailed description of the symbolic structure of the Self, he includes a symbol that he calls the *rotundum*. According to Jung, "The rotundum is a highly abstract, transcendent idea, which by reason of its roundness and wholeness refers to the Original Man, the Anthropos" (p. 246)[2]. Jung is clearly naming the circle as the Self's primary, natural form. This connection between the Self and the symbolic dimension of the circle is a crucial starting point for understanding the transformative potential for the practice of Circle as a space for individuation.

The sacred nature of the circle as a symbol is well-known in the restorative practice literature as well, though it is usually described as such in relation to sacred teachings of First Nation cultures (Pranis, Stuart, & Wedge, 2003; Zimmerman & Coyle, 2009). However, Baldwin and Linnea (2010) specifically refer to the circle as an archetype, though they do not explicitly connect it to the Self and individuation. Along with this connection between the circle shape, archetypes, and the sacred, many practitioners have observed that the true power of the Circle lies not in the individual capacities of its participants, nor even in the quality of their interpersonal dynamics (though these are both important), but in the way that the Circle space creates a synergistic interactional field that opens the door to new and surprising possibilities, as if the Circle were a being in its own right with its own autonomous life.

People who have experienced circle often refer to this archetypal energy as the "magic of circle" that occurs when the best (or sometimes the worst) comes out of us and we find ourselves capable of responding with a level of creativity, innovation, problem solving, and visioning that astound us. Others talk about circle as an experience of synergy, as being able to tap into something they didn't know was in them and could not have predicted as a possible outcome at the start of a circle meeting. (Baldwin & Linnea, 2010, p. 6)

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[2] With this, the last piece of his visual model of the Self, Jung goes on to summarize the overall model—which is also a circle, or a sphere, to be exact—placing particular emphasis on the paradoxical relationship between the rotundum and the Anthropos, a name used to describe both the primordial and divine nature of human beings.

> Accordingly our four double pyramids would arrange themselves in a circle and form the well-known uroboros. As the fifth stage, the rotundum would then be identical with the first; that is to say, the heavy darkness of the earth, metal, has a secret relationship to the Anthropos…This curious relationship is explained by the identity of the lowest, most material thing with the highest and most spiritual….
>
> In Plato the rotundum is the world-soul and a "blessed God." (Jung, 1951/1959, p. 246)

These experiences correspond closely to what Conforti (1999) calls an *archetypal field*. "Archetypal fields organize behavior by creating complementary relationships within their area of influence…This orients the individual to a set of experiences and influences that are synonymous with the nature of the activated archetype" (p. 133) Shinoda-Bolen (1999) describes the process of centering the circle by evoking the same image of an archetypal field: "You are creating a circle with a center. Keep an image of spokes of a wheel in your mind or the archetype of a fire at the center of a round hearth, because an archetype energizes the circle" (p.36). Therefore, by calling a Circle and creating a space that calls upon the archetypal influence of the Self, Circles bring participants into alignment with the specific qualities and behaviors characteristic of the Self, such as "…wholeness, totality, the union of opposites, the central generative point…" (Edinger, 1972, p. 4), and many others. These themes of connection, meaning, wholeness, essence, inclusion, centeredness, etc. are the same primary descriptions of people's experience of the interactional field of Circle.

In the same way that a person feels the call to individuate not only for their own need for meaning and a relationship to the Self, but also to respond to the needs of their culture, so Circles also operate simultaneously at an individual level and at a collective, cultural level. Pranis et al. (2003) speak to this dual nature of Circles in the context of Circles for community healing in response to crime.

> Circle dialogue seems naturally inclined to go beyond the immediate issue in two directions: (1) inward to participants' more personal stories, and (2) outward to the larger context or environment surrounding the crime. Both can shed light on the root of the problem and point to solutions…The impetus in Circles to 'get to the root of things' motivates us to complement immediate and obvious changes with more fundamental ones" (p. 144).

Returning to the image of archetypal fields, Shinoda-Bolen (1999) takes this a step further beyond the archetypal field of an individual circle and describes a global morphic field of Circle (particularly women's circles), with each discrete Circle contributing and adding to the global field's overall effect of rebalancing a fragmented world.

> The more circles there are, the easier it is for new circles to form; this is how morphic fields work. Each circle is a regeneration of the archetypal shape and form that draws from every woman's circle that ever was, and each circle in turn adds to the field of archetypal energy that will make it easier for the next circle. (p. 15)

> In her view, "…what the world needs now is an infusion of the kind of wisdom women have and the form of the circle itself is an embodiment of that wisdom" (p. 14).

Speaking more specifically about this feminine wisdom that the Circle embodies, Shinoda-Bolen refers to the peculiar nature of the Self as simultaneously being both the center of the psyche and the totality of the psyche. As such, it serves the primary function of allowing polarities such as light and dark, good and bad, self and other to be experienced consciously as complementary pairs rather than oppositional adversaries. This allows the Circle to be a space where people can bring their unique story and felt experience and allow that experience to be different from every other person and also equally true. As those who teach restorative practice explain, the objective Truth is not owned by any one person. Rather, it is held in the center of the Circle, where each individual, subjective truth meets and is held in its diversity and uniqueness, and also within a shared experience and larger unity. Only in a space such as this can the differences that so often divide us be held and honored equally so that a mysterious unity can emerge from the apparent contradictions. And only in this space can we begin to let go of the fixed cultural mindsets, powered by their own archetypes, which keep us locked in repetitive behavior patterns, even when it becomes inescapably clear that these patterns no longer serve us (Vaughan-Lee, 2007).

It is from this knowing that Baldwin wrote her first book on Circles and referred to Circle in the title as "the first and future culture" (1994). It is this quality of returning to the essence of being human in order to allow a new cultural story to emerge. While the attitudes and structures of our current culture keep us trapped in a nightmare of materialism, ecological devastation, social injustice, and spiritual disconnection that is so far from our natural way of being human, "Circles are about going to the roots of our being, searching our hearts, souls, and truths, and rediscovering the values that help us express how we most want to be" (Pranis, Stuart, & Wedge, 2003, p. 80). Though the effects are far-reaching, the process is very simple and very natural. It is the expression of our true Self in relation to the world as a whole and living the real meaning of being human.

Circles invite the archetypal energy of the Self that is required for any real change to take place, either at a school site or any other level. All cultural patterns are governed and sustained by archetypes, and the archetypes do not respond to reasoned arguments, scientific evidence, political agendas, or anything else like this. But as the beginning and end of all archetypes, the Self can exert an influence. The activation of the Self through Circle can draw us back to our center, loosen the bonds that our cultural images imprison us with, and allow us to step into new ways of relating that are more in keeping with our true human values, both individually and collectively. Berry (1988) describes in detail how the Western industrial worldview in recent history has been a kind of collective delusion that convinced us to completely disregard the soil, water, air, and all living things that form the basis of our biological systems for the sake of a misguided vision of "progress."

But now that the trance is passing we have before us the task of structuring a human

mode of life within the complex of the biological communities of the earth. This task is now on the scale of "reinventing the human," since none of the prior cultures or concepts of the human can deal with these issues on the scale required. (p. 82)

And so it is that Circles are an ideal venue for this work of "reinventing the human." And beyond all the academic curricula that schools are currently required to offer their students, this is the over-arching task that the education institution must now confront.

COMPLETING THE CIRCLE

There are many profound implications for how restorative practice, and Circles in particular, can potentially change the experience of teaching and learning at schools for all involved. By far the most central impact, however, is the possibility of school becoming a place where youth and adult educators can welcome back the inner world into their relationship to life.

One simple example of this comes from a Circle that I once led with a class of fourth grade students. The topic of the Circle was about who and what makes us feel good. As part of our dialogue, I invited the students to draw a picture of someone or something that makes them feel good. After that, we passed the talking piece around the Circle, and we each had the chance to share our drawing and say what it is about the person or thing we drew that makes us feel good. One girl drew a flower and explained that flowers make her feel good, not only because they are pretty, but also because they never really die. Even if one flower dies, she explained, the seeds that come from it can be planted to make new flowers. So, from a very basic question, we see an archetypal theme of death, rebirth, and renewal emerge spontaneously, and suddenly the inner world is present in the midst of a regular public school classroom.

This simple step of linking the inner and outer worlds can be likened to unkinking a water hose so that the water can start to flow again. With an approach to education that dismisses what is symbolic and soulful, we have blocked the flow of meaning, which is an indispensible, basic nourishment that we need in order to be healthy, whole human beings. Now, with Circle practice beginning to take root within many different schools, we are beginning to reacquaint ourselves with the notion that, beyond increasing academic knowledge and technical skills, schools can also be a place for developing consciousness.

As I described above, Circle facilitates a particular development of consciousness that invites more direct access to the energy of the Self. This consciousness not only grounds us within our

own deeply rooted sense of belonging and meaning, but also connects us to a greater wholeness of which we are a small part. This dual shift of consciousness that involves reconnecting to the inner world of meaning and broadening our sense of identity to include the global Earth community in its fullness is a crucial precondition for anything approaching a sustainable future. It all comes down to a willingness to take responsibility for our role as human beings. How can we pretend to educate with any kind of integrity if we have no real understanding of what it means to be human? What kind of world are we educating our children to live in? I do not suggest that restorative practice and Circle is the only answer to this. Even the notion of finding some definite answer is the wrong approach. Rather, Circle is a space where we can begin to ask the right questions together and see into what new worlds they may lead us.

If we follow this thread where it leads, we begin to find ourselves in a very different landscape regarding what education really is, what we can allow it to become. For many, what I am suggesting may appear strange, because of how distorted our vision has become. It may seem difficult, almost impossible, because of how far we have wandered from what is most simple and natural to us. In truth, however, this is all just a matter of completing the circle. It is about taking one step forward and arriving back at the beginning. Only by returning to the beginning can we restore our sense of wholeness. And only from an experience of wholeness can we see where we come from, who we are, and where we are going. And it is only from that vantage point that we can see clearly enough to make a real contribution to the new story that is unfolding now—in our classrooms and throughout the world.

This is a story that is so different from what we are accustomed to, that we have no images or concepts that adequately represent it. Our participation requires a willingness to be open to mystery and to courageously step through an open door without knowing exactly what awaits us on the other side. This attitude of unknowing returns us to the heart of all learning. It is the recognition of not knowing that is the source of true creativity. All we have to do is say yes.

In the Circle, Self can relate directly to Self. Threads of connection are woven from heart to heart, as we each offer our attention and our voice to give color, shape, and form to this shared mystery that is emerging anew each moment. It is us, and it is more than us. It is life coming to know itself in a new way. Everything has a place at this table. Everything is invited. But nothing can be excluded. The price of admission is to live nothing less than everything.

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