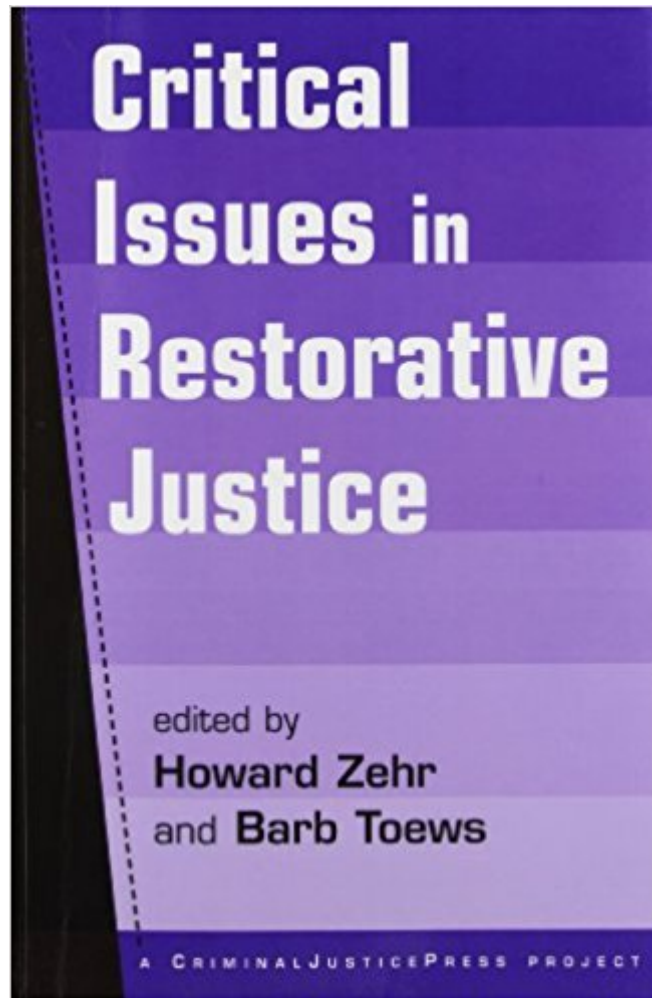




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Critical Issues In Restorative Justice



Synopsis

In a mere quarter-century, restorative justice has grown from a few scattered experimental projects into a worldwide social movement and field of study. The contributors to this book critically examine restorative justice, identifying the main threats to its integrity and effectiveness. The ground that they cover ranges from victim, offender, and practitioner issues, to the role of the state, to broad questions of social justice.

Book Information

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"...a book to be savored. Each chapter provides a thoughtful and thought-provoking glimpse into critical challenges facing restorative justice." -- Daniel W. Van Ness, Prison Fellowship

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"a book to be savored. Each chapter provides a thoughtful and thought-provoking glimpse into critical challenges facing restorative justice." -- Daniel Van Ness, Director, PFI Center for Justice and Reconciliation"

"raises the most important questions in restorative justice today...assembles an impressive array of scholars and practitioners to answer them." -- Prof. David Karp, Skidmore College

Howard Zehr is one of the founders of the restorative justice field, having directed the first victim

offender reconciliation program (VORP) in the U.S. He is a Professor of Restorative Justice and co-director of the graduate Conflict Transformation Program at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) in Virginia. He is the author of the classic book "Changing Lenses: A New Focus for Crime and Justice," and editor of "The Little Books of Justice and Peacebuilding" series. Barb Toews is a restorative justice practitioner, trainer and mediator, who was the founding director of a VORP in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. She currently facilitates restorative justice programs in prisons through the Pennsylvania Prison Society, and she holds a masters degree in Conflict Transformation from EMU.

Conventional punishment is based mainly on the principle of retribution and deterrence. A great deal of it is still hinged on the age old doctrine of *lex talionis*, an eye for an eye. Most, if not all, judicial punishment has followed this path which seems to serve its purpose well in spite of many troubling defects. Judicial punishment satisfies the victim's desire for revenge, it provides a relatively effective deterrence against crime, and it demarcates reasonably clearly the line between good and evil. So what is restorative justice and why should we fix a system that is not broke? Restorative justice is a theory that offers an alternative to judicial punishment. In large, it is a sentencing alternative that has its aims at restoring both the victim and the offender at minimal social and economic costs. "Critical Issues in Restorative Justice" (CIRJ) claims that restorative justice has made great inroads in the past 15 years (the book was published in 2004). It still commands a large following - see the more recent (2007) book "Restorative Justice" by Marian Liebmann). Restorative justice enables families and the community of the offender and victim to be involved in the process of restoring the victim from the effect of the crime, and the rehabilitation of the offender. It utilizes mediation, compensation, and shaming of the offender among other methods in the process of restoration of justice to the parties involved. CIRJ answers some of the criticisms against the theory and method. It answers charges that the victim might be "short changed" and the dangers (such as the totalitarian threat) of reliance on the community. The first known modern instance of the application of restorative justice took place in Canada in 1974 where two offenders apologized to the victims whose home they vandalized. See Liebmann. CIRJ offers practical steps in the enhancement of a restorative system of dealing with crime. It also identifies the necessary essentials towards the treatment of the offender. Judicial punishment may still provide the measure of most comfort to the society at large, who might in the hustle of modern life prefer to let the state handle crime. Nonetheless, the theory of restorative justice has many appealing aspects in, among others, the healing of victims and making the offender take responsibility for his act. This is a book for anyone who is interested in crime and punishment. By its alternative stand alone, it offers the keen eye a

wider view of what is best for the victim and the offender. This book was jointly edited by Howard Zehr (a pioneer in modern restorative justice scholarship) and Barb Toews.

Another Great Text for Restorative Justice and IPCR!

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