

Two Useful Models for Implementing Restorative Justice

By Ronald Claassen

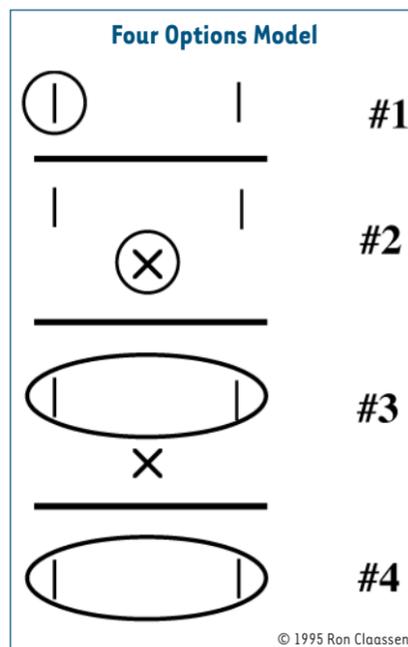
I came into this field after being a teacher of mathematics. Patterns and models are important to me. When reading *Getting Disputes Resolved* by Ury, Brett, and Goldberg, I was stimulated to search for a pictorial model to represent power, rights, and interests. What emerged was the Four Options Model.

Four Options Model

In this model, the I's represent the people (two as pictured but each I could represent any number of people) in conflict, the X's represent outside involvement, and the circles or ovals represent power or the ability to control. In #1, there is no outside involvement and one of the parties has the ability to control. In #2, an outside authority makes a decision for the I's. In #4, the I's share the power and all I's must agree. If one does not agree, then it is really a #1, not a #4. In #3 the role of X is to help those inside the circle.

This Four Options model can be used in any situation to help people think about and decide how they want to approach a conflict or make a decision. When presented with this model, most people choose to use #3 or #4 as their preference and reserve #2 as a backup. Systems are also designed with preferred and back-up options. A restorative justice system prefers #3 and #4 with #2 and #1 as back-up options. In a restorative justice system all options are done in ways that are reasonable, respectful, restorative, and intended to reintegrate those who are alienated.

I have just completed a questionnaire with 60 leaders (teachers, principals, attor-



neys, pastors, supervisors) who have used the Four Options model in at least six situations (some more than 100 situations).

1. 98 percent of all leaders indicated that using the model (verbal and visual) changed the likelihood that the response to the conflict was more constructive (6 or more on a 10 point scale) and 89 percent indicated that the response was much more constructive (8 or more on a 10 point scale).
2. 98 percent of the leaders indicated that using the model increased the likelihood of using a cooperative process (#3 or #4) rather than using an outside authority (#2) or coercion (#1) to resolve the conflict.
3. 95 percent of the leaders indicated that using the model made them, as leaders, more effective. No respondent indi-

cated that it made them less effective. All of the others indicated "no change."

Peacemaking Model

In working with victims and offenders, it became clear to me that some were able to make constructive agreements and some were not. Some found reconciliation and others didn't. I observed a "Peacemaking Model" among those who found constructive resolutions. The basic elements of this model include:

1. All parties make a commitment to be constructive.
2. They mutually recognize the violation, injustice and/or problem.
3. Parties find agreements that restore equity as much as possible and clarify constructive future intentions.
4. Follow-up meetings are held to celebrate keeping of agreements and/or discuss the need for further dialog, additional agreements and more follow-up.

Since people who found constructive agreements together and reconciliation followed this pattern, it made sense to me that if more people used this pattern, more would find constructive agreements and reconciliation. I have since used this model in many situations and others have adopted it in their work as well. It appears that when these steps are followed and agreements are made, the likelihood for trust and constructive transformation is increased.

In addition to constructive dialog, agreements are an important part of peacemaking. I have observed that trust

grows when people are willing to make agreements, keep agreements, and to acknowledge that agreements have been kept. If people are unwilling to make agreements or make agreements and don't keep them, trust diminishes.

Most people are willing and even enthused about helping each other solve their own problems rather than having someone tell them what to do. Most people are more willing to modify their

behavior when they decide that change is something they want to do. However, most of our structures still depend on coercion and authority and do not value cooperative decision-making as a central part of the organizational structure. Devising structures that prefer the use of cooperative and restorative models can help change old patterns of thinking and move people in new and more constructive directions.



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New Approaches to Classroom Discipline

By Roxanne Claassen

The myth of redemptive punishment is very popular. The criminal justice system is based on this myth. When someone breaks a rule, the guilty one is identified and punished in hopes that he or she will act better in the future. We hope that the punishment will help people learn from their mistakes and encourage them to not do it again. We want them to realize how much they hurt someone and be accountable for their mistakes. Unfortunately, punishment rarely accomplishes these objectives.

When I started teaching I soon realized that the discipline system we used operated much like the criminal justice system and from the same redemptive punishment myth. Using that system and wanting to be tough on misbehavior, we sometimes find ourselves being permissive. We sometimes tolerate, tolerate, and tolerate misbehavior, then single out one of the misbehaving individuals, come down hard with a severe punishment, and hope this will change the behavior for all the children who have been misbe-



having in a similar way. Using the models shared by Ron Claassen to guide me (see previous article), I have learned to confront misbehavior much earlier in order to offer students a chance to be cooperative. Those who usually are the brunt of the harsh punishment respond constructively when I invite them to consider

cooperative and restorative options.

The Four Options Model and the Peacemaking Model have assisted me in making the structural changes I desired in my discipline system. Implementing restorative justice principles in my classroom begins with personal decisions. I decide each day how we are going to be a

community together rather than how I am going to control the children. I focus on making things right rather than on punishment. I decide to be constructive with these precious young people, especially when one of them is not constructive with me. Using this framework, discipline is simply a continuation of my teaching and community building. It is practicing what the models guide one to practice.

When I show the Four Options Model to misbehaving students, and ask which model they would prefer, they usually choose #4. Giving them the power to choose puts them in a receptive frame of mind and encourages them to work with me directly to resolve our conflict or rule violation. I invite parents to join us if we are stuck. When they see the model, with all of us in the circle in #4, I find them to be supportive of both their child and me, and even stimulated and happy to work in a cooperative atmosphere.

Some people may believe that it is not possible for a teacher to be in #4 with a student because of the power difference. But I have discovered that using the model helps clarify roles for all parties and that usually the teacher does not need to exert "power over" as in #1 or #2 and can instead use "power with" as in #3 or #4.

We (parents, students, and I) discovered that there was nothing permissive about using #4. It was very "tough" on misbehavior and very supportive of the person. Students often struggled with this choice and some even wondered if it might be better to choose #1 and be punished so they would not have to agree to make any changes. It was interesting to watch them really wrestle with these ideas and then decide to work on the issues together (#4). They liked having a say in what should be done. They wanted to take responsibility for themselves. We discovered we enjoyed being cooperative together.

I discovered that #4 could sometimes be achieved through informal discussion and that sometimes we needed more structure. The Peacemaking Model that Ron developed gave us a road map for structuring how we would "make things right." It works almost every time. Follow-up meetings are usually celebrations, but in some cases, we need several meetings before we celebrate. Changing bad habits often requires time and support.

I look for opportunities to make agreements. My class and I begin the year by making a respect agreement. It is a simple and beautiful thing to do. My students and I think about and write what we would be doing and saying if students were respecting students, if students were respecting teachers, if teachers were respecting students, and if we were all respecting the facilities, and the resources of the school. We get all the ideas up on chart paper. We decide which ideas are the most important for us to put in a whole class agreement that will enable us to be a respectful community. We sign this. This takes care of about 90 percent of our discipline issues. I use the Four Options Model and Peacemaking Process to work with the students involved in the other 10 percent.

Understanding the principles of restorative justice has informed my teaching in positive ways and I think my students would agree. Discipline is an important aspect of my teaching and building of relationships. Working with conflict and discipline is one of my favorite parts of teaching. 



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