Social Discipline and Restorative Practices

When I first came to Ghilgai School three years ago I noticed a curious phenomenon: if I went for a walk outside around, say, 10 o'clock, I might have concluded I was the only person at school — it was *so* quiet. Then, when classes were walking up to eurythmy, or to music, or PE, I watched the children moving in orderly fashion. Quietly. And after school, I witnessed the remarkable process of pick-up down on the driveway – again, orderly, quiet…

Were these children repressed, I wondered? Elsewhere, in some other schools I had visited, the children were noisy, lively. And at times, almost feral… I watched the Ghilgai children at break times and they seemed normal — noisy, lively… But they did not run wild as though getting rid of pent-up energy. They did not seem repressed.

The teachers did not seem to yell or shout at the children. I did not hear raised voices when children were being spoken to about their behaviour. What I did notice however was that in the classrooms, and in the playground, the teachers seemed consistent in their approach, as though they shared similar standards.

So — when I've walked around the school with prospective parents, or have talked to them at interviews or introductory evenings, I've found myself referring to the unique qualities I have experienced here — I call it a *kind firmness*, a *firm kindness*. Let's juxtapose these two key words on the blackboard here:

Firm Kind

They can seem poles apart — yet it is the dynamic form they engender when united as *kind firmness*, *firm kindness*, that is so interesting. And over these past three years I have reflected on this, and I've found that it has affected me, and has influenced the perspective I have been presenting in my parenting workshops around Australia. Now, in talking to you today, I feel I am telling you about yourselves — perhaps formulating a conceptual framework around your actual practice, and within that considering some ways of looking at behaviour.

The framework — see overleaf — is the Social Discipline Window (or matrix) developed by Ted Wachtel, which I've adapted here. This matrix presents the consequences of greater and lesser degrees of *Control*, involving boundary-setting, discipline, and firmness; and greater and lesser degrees of *Support*, involving nurture, encouragement, and kindness.

Those of you who are as old as I am might remember experiences at the hands of teachers or parents which would be placed at the top end of the scale of Control — experiences we could associate with the words *authoritarian*, *moralising*, *blaming*, or *stigmatising*. This was the norm during the fifties, for instance — the assumption of power by our elders and authorities. It was how manners were usually inculcated. There was little to be felt as Support in such a regime — it was punitive, and we might all narrate numerous experiences of this…

Then, during the seventies we saw the effects of a permissive society which tended to be 'hands-off' regarding the upbringing of children. This was often accompanied by intense feelings of guilt regarding violence and violations of human rights. A view developed that a

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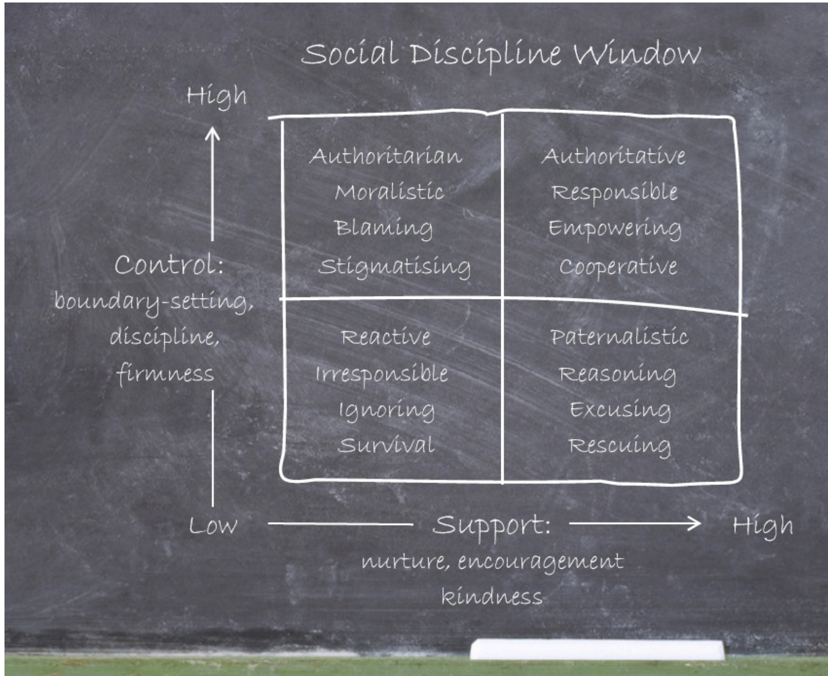
caring and compassionate community would offer high levels of Support, and trust that the innate goodness of children, of people in general, would thrive and prevail.

But the excesses of Support without Control are experienced as *paternalism*, where *reasoning*, *excusing*, and *rescuing* become the norm. During this period we saw these behaviours in our attitudes towards criminality, and all lesser social misdemeanours — as well as in society's attitudes towards indigenous questions. And children's behaviour would be explained and excused; manners or thoughtfulness might be talked about and encouraged, but they were no longer expected.

At least these two extremes, which also represent attitudes of the right and left respectively in politics, have the virtue of commitment. A far worse option is to exert no Control, offer no Support. I've seen — elsewhere, I hasten to add — a teacher who has no reflective practice, who is *reactive* and *irresponsible* in the classroom. In utter denial regarding her professional obligations, she is constantly *ignoring* signals that perhaps it is her issue, and consequently she is unable to meet the students' desire to learn. This is bare *survival* — and it is negligent. Unfortunately, these attitudes set the tone for the behaviour of the students: why should they try, when she doesn't? Actually, year-by-year, successive classes of adolescents outgrow her. And the school is colluding with her — what sort of support, or control, is it demonstrating?

Now, we can complete the matrix by looking at the upper right hand quadrant, where we can consider what high levels both of Control and Support might look like. And I suggest that a teacher, a professional community of teachers, exerting Control and offering Support appropriately — that is, exhibiting *kind firmness*, *firm kindness* — such an individual or group will be *authoritative*, *responsible*, *empowering*, and will foster a *cooperative* environment. Does this make sense? Do these qualities sound familiar to you?



This framework gives us an orientation for considering behaviour. Control and Support then become 'map coordinates' for the social field of the classroom and playground. We decide

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where we want to be — but I'd suggest that it is best when our practices are located in that upper right hand quadrant, with high levels of control and support.

Let's consider now what Rudolf Steiner has said regarding behaviour. I've found it useful in the immediacy of the situation to consider most outbursts of behaviour as essentially *choleric* in nature. Steiner's indications — in his *Discussions with Teachers* — regarding the choleric child may initially seem contradictory. First, he says:

> With the choleric child you must try to be inwardly indifferent, to look on in cold blood when he is in a temper. For instance, if he flings an inkpot on the floor, be outwardly as phlegmatic and calm as possible during his fit of temper — quite imperturbable! Although you do need to talk over these things with the child as much as you can, do not do so immediately. At the time you must be outwardly as quiet as possible and say to him with the utmost possible calm: 'Look now, you have thrown down the inkpot.' The next day when the child himself is quite calm again, you should talk the matter over with him sympathetically. Speak of what he has done and give him your sympathy and understanding. In this way you will be compelling him to repeat the whole scene in his memory. You should then also pass a calm judgement on what happened.

Then in a subsequent discussion he comments:

> For the choleric you should make as much use as possible of fictitious situations, describing situations which you have made up for the purpose… If, for instance, you have a child who gets into tempers, describe such situations to him and deal with them yourself, treating them in a choleric way. For example, I would tell a choleric child about a wild fellow whom I had met, whom I would graphically describe. I should get quite roused and excited about him, describing how I treated him and what I thought of him, so that he sees temper in another, in a fictitious way — he sees it in action.

There is no actual contradiction here… In the storm of the event, we are to be calm; and in returning to the event to talk it over, likewise. Subsequently, Steiner suggests, the teacher could dramatically characterise temper in a time of calm, when no immediate event is being addressed. It is pure theatre, and the genuine choleric will enjoy it, and be affected by it.

In each case, we are inviting the child's conscience to become involved. Steiner does not refer directly to the workings of conscience in *Discussions*, but this calm reflection of the event, and the subsequent conversation after a good night's sleep, is an effective way of allowing the child's conscience have its say. If we have witnessed the event clearly, the best way to 'speak of what he has done' is to make a series of simple statements, asking him to confirm each one as we proceed from the event towards its consequences. Too often, we overwhelm the child with statements of a judgmental nature, even 'wagging a finger' at the child. But it seems to me that Steiner is recommending high levels of Control *and* Support in his approach, which together open up a space into which the child's conscience may speak — and through which he or she may *repent* (French *re-penser* = to think again).

The other aspect that emerges here is that of the power of the *story* — of what an imaginative picture enables a child to see (Ruth Wittig's little book *Food for Thought* has some wonderful indications in this regard, as has Susan Perrow's *Healing Stories for Challenging Behaviour*). Now, when I was a teacher in Class One, I had to deal with that shift in moral consciousness in the child that accompanies the transition from kindergarten into school. Something had gone missing. When this had happened in the kindergarten a few months earlier, it was simply a matter of commenting that the object — in that case a quartz crystal — seemed to be missing, but no doubt it was being cared for, and that caring person would surely let it come back to the kindergarten soon so that others could treasure it… And of course it reappeared. But now, in Class One a valuable object was missing and it did not seem to return so readily. I had a fair idea of who might have it in his possession, but while I might have sensed a little guilt there, I did not want to confront him. So I told the class a story — that powerful tale by the Brothers Grimm of 'The Stolen Farthings':

> A father was one day sitting at dinner with his wife and his children, and a good friend who had come on a visit was with them. And as they thus sat, and it was striking twelve o'clock, the stranger saw the door open, and a very pale child dressed in snow-white clothes came in. It did not look around, and it did not speak; but went straight into the next room. Soon afterwards it came back, and went out at the door again in the same quiet manner.
>
> On the second and on the third day, it came also exactly in the same way. At last the stranger asked the father to whom the beautiful child that went into the next room every day at noon belonged? 'I have never seen it,' said he, neither did he know to whom it could belong.
>
> The next day when it again came, the stranger pointed it out to the father, who however did not see it, and the mother and the children also all saw nothing. On this the stranger got up, went to the room door, opened it a little, and peeped in. Then he saw the child sitting on the ground, and digging and seeking about industriously amongst the crevices between the boards of the floor, but when it saw the stranger, it disappeared.
>
> He now told what he had seen and described the child exactly, and the mother recognized it, and said, "Ah, it is my dear child who died a month ago." They took up the boards and found two farthings which the child had once received from its mother that it might give them to a poor man; the child, however, had thought, 'I can buy myself a biscuit for that,' and had kept the farthings, and hidden them in the openings between the boards; and therefore its spirit had had no rest in its grave, and had come every day at noon to seek for these farthings.
>
> The parents gave the money at once to a poor man, and after that the child was never seen again.

So — it's a 'ghost' story! I told it however without any dramatisation — and right at the key moment, that boy about whom I had been wondering cried out, 'I didn't mean to do it!' Strangely, no one else seemed to notice, and when I suggested, apparently speaking to no one in particular, 'Perhaps if anything is missing from our room, it might just arrive on my

table tomorrow,' no one seemed to take note of that either. Except, out of the corner of my eye, I felt rather than saw a slight nod of that particular boy's head. And the next morning, there the object was on my desk. You could create your own story of course, and here there is a second indication by Rudolf Steiner that seems pertinent. As articulated in the *Curative Course*, it is as follows:

> Here we encounter a law, of the working of which we have abundant evidence throughout all education. It is as follows. Any one member of the being of man is influenced by the next higher member (from whatever quarter it approaches) and only under such influence can that member develop satisfactorily. Thus, whatever is to be effective for the development of the physical body must be living in the etheric body — in an etheric body. Whatever is to be effective for the development of an etheric body must be living in an astral body. Whatever is to be effective for the development of an astral body must be living in an ego; and an ego can be influenced only by what is living in a spirit-self.

Let's just 'unpack' that a little, so that it does not remain jargon, or a slick formulation… If you've ever worked with little children, either in a family or in kindergarten, you will know how exhausting that is! That task — of conscious presence spread out into the surroundings, a *diffuse awareness* of everything that's happening — is an utter drain of your life-forces. The little child is busily making their physical body into a suitable instrument for life — but adult supervision of this activity demands your very life-forces — the life-substance, the vitality, of what Rudolf Steiner calls your etheric body. And you know what happens if you are tired, or inattentive — the child then has an accident. Or there is a behavioural incident. There is an unfortunate event in the physical world. And you feel you have been negligent. Now, the word 'to attend' has the same origin as the word 'tendril' — that of a *stretching towards*… Think of the living fibres of a tendril stretching out into the space around it — this is what it means for an adult to be sensitively conscious in the kindergarten or in the home.

For the primary school teacher, there is another challenge — the child's life forces are fully active — most apparent in those noisy, lively activities at school break times, but also in the 'connective tissue' of consciousness developing through all their lessons… Here, in their learning, *processes* are paramount — processes which are the essence of the life-world, and which live in the images within our minds. It is the teacher's responsive, non-reactive, calm guidance that enables this way of learning. This is just the opposite of emotional stimulation and excitement. And in dealing with behaviour, which in children of primary school age tends to be social ineptitude rather than maliciousness, the teacher's calm demeanour is the core educative element. That is, mastery of our soul's (astral body's) reactiveness provides a space for the child's consciousness to develop. As a picture, we can imagine the clarity of a pool, in which bright images reflect whenever the atmosphere is still — when the disturbing influence of the wind no longer whips up waves…

A high school teacher, on the other hand, can only give soul-guidance to an adolescent by being the master of the soul — an ego ('I Am'). The teenager's stormy weather can stir up our own reactions — recall that teacher I referred to earlier who exerted no Control and offered no Support… The steady awareness of purpose and meaning that lives in a teacher who is a true *individual* (who cannot be divided against him- or herself) stands as a lighthouse in the storm, giving orientation. And ultimately, the child's emerging sense of Self can establish

itself as an ego in the inspiring presence of those mentoring figures whose Self has been spiritualised — whose way of life is indeed a *vocation*, a *calling*, whose commitment to service and self-sacrifice is enlightened through a transpersonal consciousness that encompasses an awareness of the whole. Such an individual might be called Mahatma Gandhi, or Nelson Mandela. And, to some extent, each one of us who is inspired to work here… In summary, we can represent this Pedagogical law in the following table:

Child			***Teacher***
Body	(*physical body*)	<	Life
Life	(*etheric body*)	<	Soul
Soul	(*astral body*)	<	I Am
I Am	(*ego*)	<	Spirit Self

In reality we live at every level, consciously or unconsciously — but our tasks become quite specific when we work with children at those different stages of development. It seems to me, reflecting on this, that our work is about establishing and maintaining an environment in which the child can do its work of *becoming human*.

A third indication by Rudolf Steiner that contributes to an approach to children's behaviour — although he does not refer to it in this context — can be drawn from his lecture *The Lord's Prayer*. When I talk about it to parents in my workshops, I introduce the Lord's Prayer as an ancient behaviour management document! (although I should add that I try to do this in a good-natured way that does not offend Christians, nor cause an affront to atheists, agnostics, or adherents of other faiths…) But I do find it helpful to consider particularly those petitions concerned with the details of human existence: 'Give us this day our daily bread; forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil'… Here is how I interpret what Rudolf Steiner has said, bringing it into a behavioural context.

Because we exist in our physical bodies, we have basic needs, and therefore an essential right to sustenance, our *daily bread*. This includes those elements of nurture which have to do with protection and safety — so in a school, there must be an awareness of basic health and safety requirements. And secure boundaries. These are functional expectations, fulfilled by adults who are necessarily charged with responsibility in the situation. How important this is in the kindergarten especially!

However, *trespass* has to do with those transgressions that are habitual, and are non-social through the fact that in general we are not conscious of them. This is social ineptitude, once attended to through the inculcation of manners but so often today left unschooled. Here, we can *forgive* the clumsiness of the person whose inept behaviour impinges on us; but it is not a matter so much of 'forgiving and forgetting', but rather of forgiving and *remembering*. This remembrance however is not of the deed, but of the agreements we make with one another, to hold up a mirror in which the unconscious habit becomes perceptible. Then we can begin to be mindful of the effects of such awkward and inept behaviour, and eventually modify or change the habit. *We forgive learners*. Tact — related to the word 'tactile' — is the ability 'to be in touch' with what is required socially, and develops only with time and consistently kind, firm reminders.

When we give way to *temptation* it is much more deliberate. Often, in such instances we have been adequately restraining ourselves for a time, and then suddenly we let fly. We can even enjoy it. We may have self-justifications for this — we are certain that the other person *is* to blame, after all, and deserves it! On the other hand, we might feel like an onlooker, seeing our behaviour and not liking it, even wishing for it to be otherwise, yet unable to moderate it. Temptation obviously belongs to the reactive and emotional nature of the astral body, and such instances of anti-social behaviour are most characteristic from the twelfth year on. An apology here can be a beginning, but does not necessarily earn forgiveness; it usually needs to be accompanied by *amends* and a *commitment to change*.

To complete this picture, a premeditated act of harm deliberately directed at another is *evil*. This is an immoral decision, originating from within the core of the person, the Self. Children are especially vulnerable, and need strong protection from evil. Hence the need for many of our laws. In children, however, we do not usually encounter behaviour originating from this source; their actions are more spontaneous, reactive rather than coldly premeditated.

Thus, an anthroposophical understanding of the Lord's Prayer indicates the following set of correspondences:

Physical body:	Give us this day our daily bread
Etheric body:	Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us
Astral body:	Lead us not into temptation
Ego:	Deliver us from evil

Now, in regard to our children's behaviour, we can look more closely at the nature of *trespass* and *temptation*, and consider some techniques for working with them to develop effective social relationships. In order to better understand this, we can reflect on the nature of sport, and on what is involved in *playing the game*. Any game has boundaries and rules. There also are the elements of skilfulness. The degree to which a child is skilled, and can go along with the rules, makes the game interesting. But the rules only are intended to serve the flow of the game. If the child lacks the necessary skills, he or she might blunder about, spoiling the flow of the game, and potentially annoy other players. A *trespass* is committed through ineptitude. However, such a child does not need punishment, but training and practice of the requisite skills. Then he or she can play better.

Behaviour of the nature of trespass needs to be *trained* and *guided*.

If the child breaks the rules, however, not through ignorance or ineptness but in order to get an unfair advantage, he or she has succumbed to *temptation*. The broken rule is an indicator that social harm has occurred. The result is a deliberate foul, and in some games the player can be sent to the 'sin-bin' for some 'time-out'. There is an appropriate consequence, a direct response to the offence. Players who intentionally break the rules can also be brought before a tribunal, and consequently be fined or suspended. Any coaching required is not so much to do with practical skills, but with counselling an appropriate attitude-change. For temptation presupposes that the offender does know better.

Behaviour of the nature of temptation needs to be *coached* and *regulated*.

Does this distinction between trespass and temptation illuminate the nature of children's behaviour? And consequently, our response? I believe that when we are able to identify the respective behavioural mode, we can work more directly with the situation. Especially in the case of trespass, we must put away the 'wagging finger' — indeed, in most instances we do not need to blame or find fault; we need to help the child hear the voice of conscience.

So how do we talk these things over with the child? I think there is a definite process — the sequence begins with the physical phenomena. These might need to be checked: 'What I saw happening was… Is that how it was?' Here it is important to simply identify events, to not go into self-justifications of recriminations against others. As the facts emerge, we thank them for the apparent accuracy of their account. The next stage can lead to observations that have more to do with those habits and patterns that are lodged in the life (etheric) body; we might say: 'I seem to recall that something like this has happened before…' Let them remember — that is, to bring the various elements together in their minds…

At this point we try to distinguish between those acts that are habitually inept, and those of a deliberately malicious nature: 'Are we looking at something you really meant to do, or was it just something that happened…?' Children will sometimes take the opportunity to exonerate themselves, but often they are quite honest about motives. Whatever their answers, this area can be explored a little; the range of thoughts and feelings can be acknowledged: 'You know, from here, it might look like this…' 'Do you think that maybe the other person might feel..?'

In opening up the possibility of seeing the other person's viewpoint, we do not look for any deeper significance, but for clues towards the necessary consequences. For if the behaviour is simply inept, there is a need for some coaching, some specific skills development. If it seems more deliberate, we need to decide whether it is bullying, or whether the child needs to be referred to a specialist. In the case of bullying, there is a straight-forward process towards change, through the so-called 'no-blame' approach. Let them admit (let in) responsibility…

Thus we give, as Rudolf Steiner puts it, 'sympathy and understanding'. Then a conclusion is reached: 'I've decided that…' And the consequence can be announced. 'I think you need to just sit here for a while each break-time…' Or else the child can be asked, 'Can you think of anything that would help now?' Or, 'Is there something different you could do next time..?

Especially when we may not have the whole picture, the best way to 'speak of what he has done' is to ask questions. These questions need to lead from the basic phenomena of the event forward to its consequences; the most important question can be 'What can you tell me that will help me understand…?' Again, this is not a matter of being psychological, but of looking for appropriate next steps.

So, we can summarise this approach to 'talking the matter over with him sympathetically' as a process of enquiry and outcomes:

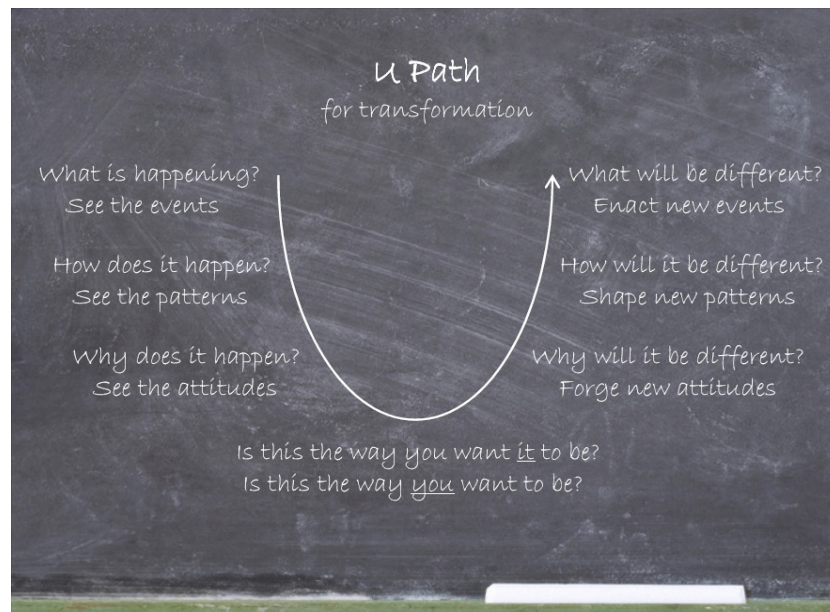
Concrete observations of the event(s)

Typical or habitual patterns discerned in the event(s)

Attitudes / underlying values regarding the thoughts, feelings, behaviours involved

Decisions for change, consequences, responses

This process of enquiry can be followed through as an archetypal U Path, as depicted below (on my website there are two lectures — *Presencing through the Life Processes*, and *Learning to Accompany the Child* — in which I have developed the principles of this U Path):



Finally, we will consider some aspects of what is called *restorative justice*. First developed in New Zealand, this is an approach that seems implicit in our practices at Ghilgai. For instance, in the kindergarten, when a blow-up occurs between a couple of children — maybe one child has carelessly knocked over a tower of blocks and the other has thrown a block in frustration — it would be typical not to censure them but to intervene, change the situation to make it safe, and then later perhaps to ask the two protagonists to help to do something — maybe to take a handle each of a basket of blocks to carry them into a corner of the room… This is simply part of the *daily bread* — simply, what sustains our existence.

That's restorative practice. Essentially it's a way of living. A prerequisite for any restorative practice is a general consensus that *respect*, not *revenge*, is the single desired outcome. A core principle is that unsocial / antisocial behaviours are breaches in common community-feeling, not simply breaches of rules. There is an increasing tendency — a result of materialism — for people to see one another merely as objects for gratification or degradation — we often lose sight of the other's essential reality as a *being*. We de-humanise the other. In such situations, rules are then seen as obstacles — they erect barriers between the protagonists, so that the breaking of a rule is not seen as having human and social implications.

Through restorative practices we work with relationships and the healing of any social rifts. Thus, when a group of teenage boys fire-bomb a little old lady's letterbox, restorative justice requires the boys to meet with her, to learn that she is a person with feelings who maybe is dependent upon mail for connection with family, and who therefore looks forward every day to the walk to the letterbox… So it's not just that the letterbox is damaged, but rather that she is damaged by their action. Therefore they might agree to repair the letterbox, she makes them scones, and a community relationship is restored — or maybe, in such instances established for the first time, as community rift increasingly tends to be the norm…

I think of a couple of ancient Chinese sayings when I talk of restorative justice:

> If you want revenge on someone, first dig two graves
>
> Whoever is unable to forgive, harms themselves a second time

They're suggestive, aren't they? Now, a little reflection on life will convince you, I hope, that if we could find a better alternative to punitive methods, with their inevitable hardening of relations, it would potentially open up a more positive future. The principles of restorative justice are predicated on this potential for people to be more fully human — it recognises that life is not only a competition, a fight for survival, but very importantly that life also is a work of cooperation. This is evident in nature as well as in human society — interestingly it has been feminist scientists who have emphasised this more recently.

In this approach, all behaviour is seen as a form of communication. Restorative practices are a completion of the dialogue. The intention is to explore the harm suffered, acknowledge it as an undesired experience, to make amends, and ensure that such harm is unlikely to occur again. So we can summarise the approach as follows:

> Social misbehaviour is a violation of people and community relationships
>
> Such violations create liabilities and obligations
>
> Restorative justice seeks to put things right and make healing possible

There are some essential principles involved in facilitating restorative justice, which we as teachers can probably readily acknowledge, but which in reality might require attention to become consistent practices:

> Separate the deed from the doer
>
> Reflect on the effects of behaviour upon others
>
> Use collaborative inclusive language to engage with the situation
>
> Entrust / empower all parties to find solutions
>
> Look towards the future (ie what will be different?)
>
> Establish simple achievable action plans (the art of small steps)
>
> Monitor and support change

And there are also some specific soul-qualities, which must translate into recognisable social skills — that is, we must *do* them — in order to support these practices:

> Impartiality, non-judgemental viewpoint
>
> Respect for the perspective of each person involved
>
> Active empathetic listening
>
> Creative open questioning
>
> Clarity, compassion, patience

These are not unfamiliar expectations. If we reflect on Rudolf Steiner's example from his *Discussions with Teachers*, we note that each of these skills is evident in his recommendations.

Perhaps just one needs comment: that of empowering people to find their own solutions. In the case of even quite young children, it is supportive to ask, 'Is there something you could do to help the situation?' For instance, it is generally unhelpful to force an apology from any child, but such an *empowering* question will usually elicit a sincere response of apology.

In developing restorative practices, once we have put away that 'wagging finger' we need to learn new ways of speaking and listening. For instance, in making *affective statements* (which are never accusatory — rather, they articulate personal experience), we engage with the child in such a way as to let his or her conscience participate. So we will:

Reflect on the impact of the behaviour or incident on self / others

Use narrative or anecdote to illustrate circumstances

Affective questions are never moralistic or legalistic — they open up experience, enable others to become visible, and then lead all concerned towards the future… It is recommended that questions such as the following be asked of those who have caused harm:

What happened?

What were you thinking about at the time?

What have you thought about since?

Who has been affected by what you did? In what ways?

What do you think you need to do to make things right?

Then, those who have suffered harm will be responsive to questions such as the following:

What did you think when you realised what had happened?

What impact has this incident had on you and others?

What has been the hardest thing for you?

What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

We do not directly ask *why* the incident happened — we do however search for insight into respective attitudes and values by asking each person what they were thinking about during and after the events. 'Why…' is frequently experienced as accusatory by the perpetrators and discourages dialogue — letting them instead reflect on their thoughts and associated feelings often leads to positive restorative suggestions.

Here we might speak of a specific practice I've found very effective in addressing instances of bullying in the school — the so-called *No Blame Approach*. Ken Rigby, in his book *Bullying in schools & what to do about it*, states that bullying is 'repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person.' A particular form of bullying prevalent now amongst adolescents is via mobile texting — this is a deliberate tearing open of the social fabric, a breach of the trust implicit in adolescents' desire to feel *connected*.

So, in terms of what we have been considering today, bullying refers to particular events in the field of *temptation*, not *trespass*. They are *deliberate*, and they are *repeated*. A single incident may indeed be inept, clumsy trespass. Discerning the difference is important — and in recent years there have been some notable developments of 'learning space' processes which enable

such discernment to arise through the process itself, and which empower children to change what has been happening. As well as the *No Blame Approach*, there is also the process known as *Shared Concern*, developed by Anatol Pikas. Each approach acknowledges the complexity of social situations, and the transformations that become possible through *connecting* (anti-social behaviour can be seen as *dysfunctional connection*). However, as the Shared Concern method requires more specific skill on the part of the facilitator, I usually would recommend the No Blame approach in schools. In the following outline, for convenience of language the facilitator is a man, and the child is a girl.

The facilitator (teacher or counsellor) meets with the child who feels bullied, supporting her for confiding in him. This is an important first step**.** The child needs to feel that she has done nothing wrong and has a right not to be victimised — it is the behaviour of the other children that seems aberrant. She is encouraged to share with the facilitator how it feels to be bullied — to identify all those common human emotions that result from feeling isolated, hurt and rejected.

The facilitator tells the child that he is going to work with the bullies and some others in the class to get them to understand the effect their behaviour or lack of support is having on a classmate. He asks whom she admires or respects in the class and suggests that he would include them in the group conversation. He invites her to spend some time putting down on paper her feelings (many victims of bullying — especially girls — begin diary-writing as a response to isolation from their peer group). He explains that he wants to share these feelings with the group in an effort to end the bullying. He then informs the child's parents of the situation and the chosen course of action.

The facilitator then consults other teachers to ensure that he is able to assemble a balanced group to look at the behaviour. He wants to have present the main perpetrator, a couple of colluders, one or two bystanders who might have been friends of the victim in the past, as well as a couple of assertive children who usually are unafraid to speak up but who in this instance may have abdicated responsibility (they *will* be aware of it).

He then convenes a meeting of this group, allowing at least 30 minutes during school time (meetings in break-times are felt as punishment). In this meeting he explains that there is a problem, that [the child's name] is very unhappy, and tells them her feelings, sharing these either by speaking for her, or by reading out (if he has permission) her written work (or perhaps a poem about the feelings related to being bullied). He does not discuss any details about the incident, and doesn't apportion any blame.

The facilitator introduces the concept of group responsibility (and may allow some relevant discussion), creating a space for the group to acknowledge why their classmate is feeling the way she is. This may lead to a wider conversation about class dynamics. He encourages each group member to suggest ways through which the girl's problem may be resolved. He then tells them he thinks they can do it. He does not solicit promises.

The facilitator reinforces that he trusts all of them to support the affected child and change the behaviour. Another meeting time is scheduled for a few days' time in order to review progress. He needs now to inform all the parents of the students involved, giving a brief summary of the process (which will have been established already as school policy). The

facilitator supports the victim by meeting informally with her daily to check on progress. In the meeting with the group a few days later, he acknowledges and warmly commends any progress made by any of them. They agree then on any further steps.

That is a description of an actual case; there are many variant but similar ways of doing it. Such a process works, especially in the older classes of a primary school, where the social fabric is being damaged by the kinds of behaviours we sometimes observe that characterise pre-adolescence. It builds a strong sense of peer responsibility. It fits together well with the lessons in Civics and Citizenship we are developing in Ghilgai, and also with our Resiliency Programme.

In conclusion, we observe that in these restorative practices we assert high levels of Control and Support. Not hard, yet not soft — rather, simultaneously *hard-soft*. *Firm-kind*, *kind-firm*. Together, these establish a safe social field for students, in which they can begin to find their way towards effective relationships. This field is necessary for the development of resilience. Children will develop resilience, not through being forever protected and sheltered from challenge, nor through the experience of the survival of the fittest, nor through an adult's authoritarian assumption of power, but through repeated experiences of difficulty and then subsequent resolution. This is possible in a learning environment where the teachers are authoritative, responsible, empowering, and cooperative — that is, where both Control and Support are consciously unified in all aspects of social discipline.

Especially in No Blame processes, this becomes a form of *moral technique* on the part of the teacher — creating a formed space in which the child's Angel and their Voice of Conscience may have a 'dialogue' — this is the significance of 'sleeping on it' — about experience and response. In order to become *response-able*. This widens the context of that final word in the upper right hand quadrant of the matrix — for the social world is *cooperative*.

Thus, we bring a number of concepts and practices towards the challenges that our students present us. The Social Discipline Window enables us to recognise what our approach might — and indeed must — be. Its principle of the 'reconciliation of opposites', or polarities, was developed by the poet-philosophers Goethe, Novalis and Coleridge two centuries ago, and forms the basis for much of Rudolf Steiner's thought. The indications by Steiner presented here suggest that social discipline has a moral dimension, requiring of every teacher the development of qualities of observation, forbearance and restraint, reflective insight, and initiative. And all of these are essential 'no blame' principles of restorative justice.

I believe, in presenting these thoughts and pictures today, that I may have brought to the surface of consciousness what actually is living in you. For they are not my ideas, but those of humanity, of our human-ness, of what is *common* amongst us — and thus, of the nature of *communion-substance* that can nourish us as we begin this term. Thank you.

~ John Allison, revised from a talk given to teachers at Ghilgai Steiner School in October 2008, with additions from talks in the Blue Mountains and Samford Valley Steiner Schools where this theme was first developed.