



Do you think you have a difficult job? Is it because you are trying to control what you cannot - students? It is not a road to happiness if you are trying to make them do things you want. It is a road to exhaustion, discouragement, anxiety and danger. The familiar warning signs are conflict, health problems and the expressed desire for a job change or early retirement. If you recognize these markers ask yourself:

- *Do I want to be responsible for my students' behavior or do I want them to be responsible for their own behavior?*
- *Do I think it's my job to make them learn or do I think I am responsible for providing them with a safe, information rich environment so they can learn for themselves?*

Welcome to Restitution Self-Discipline, if you want students to be responsible for their own behavior and learning. It is about restoring and strengthening young adolescents by obtaining a balance between providing them with enough structure and educating them to understand and manage their own behavior in ways that help rather than hurt others.

What Is Restitution?

For a long time when our society talked about discipline we meant consequences, both positive (rewards) and negative (removal of privileges). However, consequences are external discipline or sanctions. They are something we do to others or have done to us. Consequences are about learning to please others or to stay out of their way and they are both positive and negative "paybacks."

Restitution Self-Discipline Definition

- 1..... **To create conditions**
- 2..... **To fix the mistake, and**
- 3..... **To return to the group strengthened**

Restitution as we use the word is not a payback. It is about self-discipline. The original meaning of the word discipline de-rives from the Greek word *disciplina* that means learning. Self-discipline is learning about oneself, learning to be a moral person and learning to repair mistakes to heal hurt for oneself and for others. A real restitution embodies: 1) creativity and it strengthens the person who offers to make it and it helps the group, and 2) identifying the needs of both the victim and the offender and the solution is one

that helps both parties. Mistakes are shifted into learning conditions.

The Least Coercive Road

Teaching the ideas of Restitution Self-Discipline in schools is based on what we call the Least Coercive Road, a process to help create conditions for students to be honest with themselves and to evaluate the impact of their actions on others. It is based on teaching William Glasser's theory that one's actions are directly linked to having a basic need met. We all have the same basic needs of belonging, personal power, freedom and creativity/fun. The Least Coercive Road's four parts and eight tools give educators common language to help students move toward self-discipline. The following is an overview of the Least Coercive Road components.

The Least Coercive Road Overview

Part 1	Open Up the Territory (Freedom) Tool 1: Does it really matter? Tool 2: Yes, if
Part 2	Social Contract (Belonging) Tool 1: Person I Want To Be Tool 2: Class Beliefs
Part 3	Limits (Personal Power) Tool 1: My Job Your Job Tool 2: Bottom Lines
Part 4	Restitution (Creativity/Fun) Tool 1: Self-restitution Tool 2: Restitution Triangle

Part 1 - Open Up The Territory

This part is named "Open Up The Territory" and it is based on the basic need of freedom. It has to do with giving choices which gains you, the teacher, "freedom from" responsibility while at the same time providing students "freedom to" do the task in their own way. There are two restitution practices or tools a teacher can use to "Open Up The Territory."

Tool 1 - Does It Really Matter?

What middle school teacher hasn't thought, "Does it really matter?" Restitution advocates ask themselves this question before going toe to toe with a student on a discipline issue. For example, does it really matter if his feet are up or if her shirt has a slogan on it? Many incidents can be bypassed if the answer to this question is, "No, it doesn't really matter." However, it does matter when it is tied to safety or to a core belief. Then you can't say it's okay.

To determine what really matters to you, as an educator, ask yourself the following questions:

1. What are my family beliefs?
2. What do I believe about learning?
3. What does it say about me if I do it?
4. What will help me to be loving, powerful, free and playful with my class?
5. Who am I becoming in the life of this child?
6. What do I want for them long after they've left my class?

As one teacher said,

"I took time to decide what really mattered during work time. For example, sharpening pencils during work time drives me crazy because it is so noisy. To account for this, students can sharpen pencils in the morning or during snack time. Otherwise, they need to borrow a pencil from me. I simply have a "sharp pencils" container on my desk for students."

Also, I don't believe students have to be silent when working unless they are taking a test. The important part for me is the work is getting done. As long as the class is on task they can talk with a neighbor or some music

may be played.

Taking the time to look at what was important helped because I knew where I stood on the work time behavior before it occurred and I expressed my expectations to students at the beginning of the year.

Tool 2 - Yes, If

The second tool in "Open Up The Territory" is "Yes, If". Say, "Yes" as often as possible. If you can't say "Yes", say "Yes, if..." The "if" is always followed by some version of what the teacher or the school needs.

Example:

(Student): "Can I get out of homework tonight? We have an out of town game?"

(Teacher):

- ✓ "Yes, if you can show me you know the work."
- ✓ "Yes, if you can do double tomorrow."
- ✓ "Yes, if you can work faster and smarter in class and get it done."
- ✓ "Yes, when you can come up with a way to learn without having homework. Create a solution."

Part II - The Social Contract

Establishing the Social Contract with the school and personalized by the various teams is rooted in our need for belonging. It is our nature to want to be with people. To do so we need to make social agreements by first thinking about the kind of person one wants to be and establishing class beliefs. Specialists, counselors, assistants and administrators should be involved in developing the social contract of at least one team in the school so they feel part of the process.

Tool 1 - Person I Want To Be

Students are asked to reflect on the kind of person they want to be. First, they draw or write about the kind of friend, student, or team member they want to be. Secondly, they think about the kind of family member (e.g., sister, daughter, grandchild, niece) they want to be. From this information students create self portraits based on the kind of person they would like to be. Students are building themselves up from inside out.

Tool 2 - Class Beliefs

Students are encouraged to share their self-portraits and talk about their family beliefs with their parents the night before the team beliefs building exercise is done. This is very important to do because the parents are our partners. It also helps to set the stage for discussion on how the team's classes be set up so all people, including the teacher, get what they need. A common picture of the ideal learning environment and the beliefs behind this picture is created so everyone can stand shoulder to shoulder looking at it, each individual managing oneself towards the common goal. This is how one school and team did it to identify the kind of learning environment that is most desirable:

As a school, we brainstormed what we wanted our middle school to look like, feel like, and sound like. The students, the parents and the school staff completed this activity. The information was compiled into three short lists and posted throughout our building. My team posted the list as a large Y-chart on the back wall in all classrooms used by the team.





Part III - Limits

The third part of the Least Coercive Road arises out of the Social Contract. It is called "Limits" and is rooted in the power need. Each of us wants to feel competent and we also want to know there is some predictability or control in our life.

Limits are needed because students will say, "What if someone doesn't do what we agree?" The answer is to help the person look at what the team agreed to and return to this agreement. When students ask, "What if he doesn't want to?" school personnel have to be willing to invoke the right of the group to limit the freedom of an individual. If the established beliefs won't be protected by the whole school/team, they aren't worth the paper they're written on. It is important to define roles and bottom lines.

Tool 1 - Roles: My Job Your Job

"My Job/Your Job" is where the teacher and students collectively define each other's jobs. One middle school teacher comments:

"At the beginning of the year my team worked with our students during flex and reading time to create a list of teacher jobs (my jobs) and student jobs (your jobs). Grouping specific ideas into more general statements condensed the list. The new list was used for a student activity and as a visual reminder when students approached us for such things as extra time, forgotten supplies or lost assignments. Parents see these lists during our Open House, and we discuss with them what this means for their student. This has worked very successfully for us."

It is also important to list what my job and your job is not. This

exposes the gray areas and identifies potential conflict that could occur because an individual is not clear about what is expected of him. For example, a teacher might write, "my job is not to take or give abuse" or "my job is not to make you learn."

Tool 2 - Rules: Bottom Lines

The second tool in this section is "Bottom Lines". Some people think of punishment when they hear the word bottom line, but this is not our meaning. The purpose of a bottom line is to preserve the Social Contract. All staff must be involved in creating the "Bottom Lines" which includes having a common picture of what constitutes a bottom line and what consistent follow through entails.

Individuals cannot be permitted to override what the school/team decides. However, individual questions are welcomed and the voiced dissent can help the school/team define boundaries and purpose. The bottom line is used when an individual is deemed to interfere with a belief the team holds dear. If an individual doesn't want to look at himself, reflect on values, or make amends, school personnel have to fall back to the monitor position of external discipline which involves consequences. For example, consequences are needed to protect people from being injured. Usually this would include some form of removal such as the individual going to see a counselor or an administrator or he must leave the classroom, playground, gym, lunchroom or the school depending on the threat of injury to others.

"Bottom Lines" are used sparingly and only when the team has been unable to create conditions for the person to think and manage themselves in a responsible, non-hurting way. A bottom line is a last resort. It is also important to realize this is monitoring. This alone will not help us get to Restitution - we need beliefs and self-evaluation discussions.

Part IV - Restitution

This fourth part is rooted in the basic need of creativity/fun. People who learn Restitution continue to do it because it is a pleasurable experience inventing win-win solutions with a student who has violated an aspect of the Social Contract (e.g., school belief, didn't do their job).

A restitution evolves us all as human beings. There is the potential for learning and healing for both parties. The following is an example of a restorative restitution that evolved from my workings with school staff at a multi-racial middle school in Winnipeg. An Ukrainian student said to an English as a Second Language student from Pakistan, "You f--- go back to your own country."

This was first of all a bottom line situation so the student was suspended for a day. The staff asked me if they should suggest the student study Pakistan as a restitution? I said they could do that and he might agree but would he be doing it to avoid your wrath, would he be doing it to please his parents or would he be doing it to become a less racist person? Only the third motivation would be strengthening for him. They had their qualms. I asked, "What ethnic background is this boy?" They said, "Ukrainian." I said my guess was there was someone in his family (e.g., grandparent, uncle or aunt) who didn't speak English when they came to Winnipeg. I suggested they have him interview his relative about how it was to go to a school in Winnipeg fifty years ago speaking English with a Ukrainian accent. They were then to have him talk to the boy from Pakistan about what he learned.

Tool 1 - Self-Restitution

There are two important tools when modeling restitution for students. The first is called self-restitution. This involves an adult identifying a personal mistake and then taking responsibility for their part of the problem.





Self-restitution is a multi-process task that involves fixing (restoring) the self to the person one wants to be. In order to do this one must first reflect on who one wants to be and also recognize when one's actions, thoughts, words and feelings are not aligned with who one wants to be. The second process is picking up a piece of the problem to work on. By doing this you hold a piece of the solution. The third process is verbalizing what you will

do next time. This completes the self-restitution.

Most of the time when a teacher models self-restitution a student will self-evaluate and suggest how they can change by responding, "It wasn't just you, I should have...done my part." This models making mistakes and fixing them is normal. If a student jumps up and says, "Yeah, you sure did mess up!" the teacher can reflect by saying, "Would you rather punish me or would you like to solve this problem?" or "Do you just want to tell me how bad it is or do you want to make it better?"

Self-Restitution

1. I don't like how I am talking to you.
2. My part of the problem is...
For example:
 - a. I had information you do not have.
 - b. I was tired and trying to go too fast.
 - c. I was not clear on what I wanted.
 - d. My picture was different from yours.
3. Next time I will...

One teacher began to use the statements of self-restitution which had unexpected consequences.

While I intuitively understood I was part of the problem, I was at first leery to admit it to a student. It seemed I would be losing power to do so, and I was reluctant to give any of that up. However, I have learned I get more of my power need met by allowing them to exercise more freedom because I am being more of the kind of person I want to be.

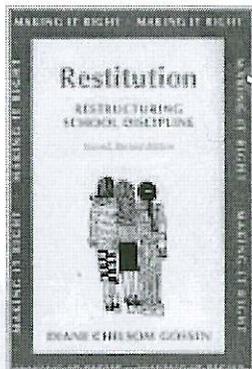
Continued on next page

Book Watch

Restitution - Restructuring School Discipline (Second Revised Edition) By Diane Chelsom Gossen

It's All About *We*
By Diane Gossen

Restitution is an innovative approach to discipline based on the recognition that young people will make mistakes. By focusing on how young people can correct their mistakes, Restitution emphasizes positive solutions to problems when they do occur. Using real-life examples culled from her years of experience working in schools, Gossen demonstrates clearly the numerous advantages of Restitution over traditional discipline methods. Included are role plays to facilitate the practice of Restitution techniques. Learn how to teach kids a valuable skill they can use for life - making it right!



This exciting new book by the author of *Restitution: Restructuring School Discipline* analyzes the process that schools go through in shifting from external teacher discipline to internal self-discipline for students. Beginning with the question, "Is it okay to coerce people for their own good?" it continues with practical examples of a new way to talk with youth

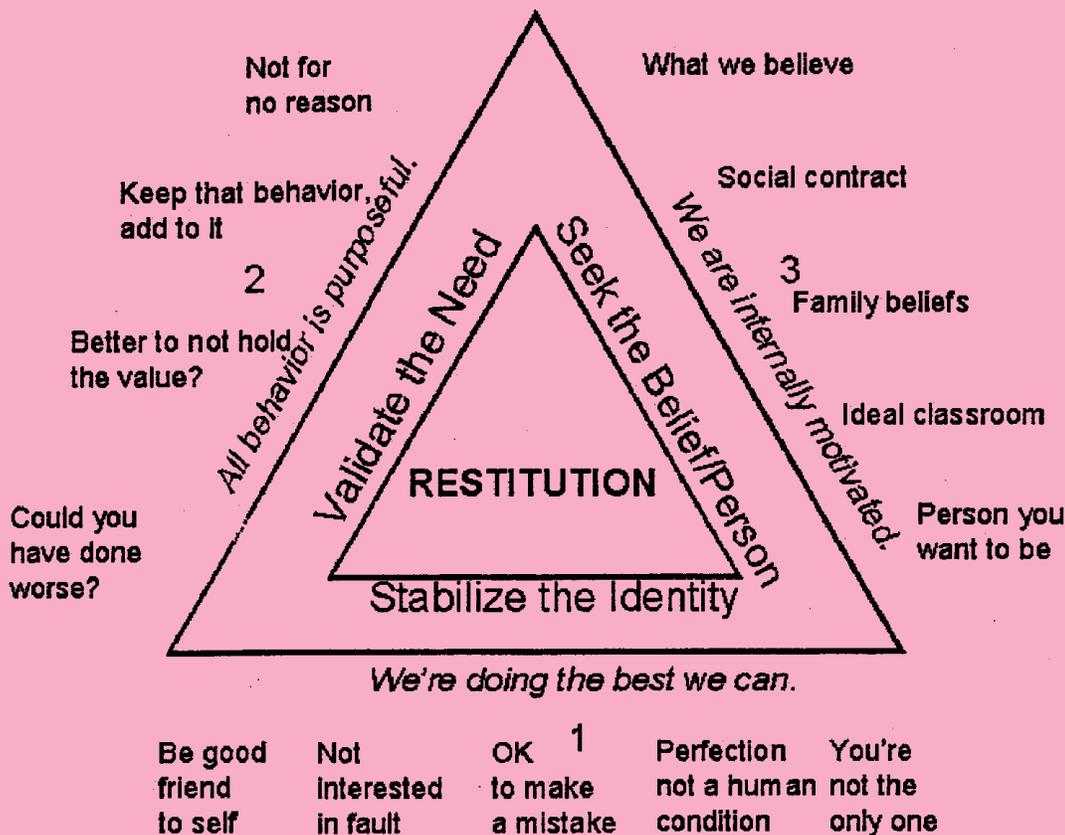


about problems viewing each misbehavior as an opportunity for growth. No matter what discipline program you have been using you will find the discussion about weaving between the social contract and the bottom line to be invaluable.

(1996, 139 pages, soft cover, ISBN 0-944337-36-8)
To purchase contact Chelsom Consultant by phone -(800) 450-4352;
by Fax (306) 955-8834; www.realrestitution.com

Tool 2 - The Restitution Triangle

The Restitution Triangle



The second tool, the Restitution Triangle, instructs us to first stabilize the youth, then seek the underlying cause for her behaviour (her need), to validate the need and to say, "I agree, it's important to meet your need. Then we add, "The way you met it hurt someone else." At this point it is productive to ask if she could have done worse to help her understand herself. A student who is aggressive is usually sticking up for herself and to be worse would be to not care about the value violated by another's taunt. For the student who is passive, skips school, walks out of a conference or comes to school stoned, the worse thing they are avoiding is being in pain. We can agree with them that it's not good to be in pain. We can say, "It's okay to make a mistake. It's how we learn." Then we say to the youth, "Think about the kind of person you want to be in this difficult situation." We also ask her to reflect on our group beliefs to evaluate her position on them and to figure out how to remedy the situation in a win-win way.

Conclusion

It is very important for middle school students to have role models so we encourage teachers to demonstrate restitution practices with their students. As one teacher concluded,

"The philosophy of restitution is wonderful: the student takes responsibility for their actions and makes it right on their own. It teaches the child to do what they're supposed to be doing, whether someone is watching over them or not. Because restitution doesn't rely on rewards and punishments, the child learns to do the right thing for himself, not for someone else. This is a skill that once learned, they'll carry with them throughout their lives, and I'm happy to be part of the process. My entire middle school uses restitution, and I believe the more students are exposed to the principles of it, the more it will positively affect their behavior."

About The Author

Diane Gossen is the author of *Restitution: Restructuring School Discipline* and has shared her knowledge with groups in Canada, the United States, Australia, Japan, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Ukraine, Croatia, Slovenia, Indonesia, and Iceland. Diane has presented at the Association of Supervision and Development Curriculum annual conference and for Phi Delta Kappa Gabbard Institute. In April 2001, Diane received the YMCA Women of Distinction Award in the Lifetime Achievement category. She was also the creative consultant to the Canadian award winning video series on class management, *Monday - Marbles and Chalk* and is featured on the Journal of Education's video, *Dealing with Disruptive and Unresponsive Students*.

