

# Summer of Peace™ 2013

## “Restorative Justice on the Rise” with Molly Rowan Leach (Sep. 19)

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Philip: Hello, everyone. Welcome back to the Summer of Peace, a celebration of our common humanity. This is Philip Hellmich, the Director of Peace with The Shift Network.

I am really touched and delighted with the session that we're going to have today, Restorative Justice of the Rise, the story behind the series. Our special guest is someone that people will recognize, Molly Rowan Leach who has been the champion behind the Restorative Justice on the Rise series.

It's a real honor to look at what inspired Molly to do this, create the series. Before I do a more thorough introduction of Molly, I just want to remind people to go to Facebook and Summer of Peace and look for our logo or look for [facebook.com/summerofpeaceshift](https://facebook.com/summerofpeaceshift). We welcome comments, shares, engagements and also what you're planning to do for the International Day of Peace.

Also, please follow us on Twitter. You can search for @peacesummit or just look up [twitter.com/peacesummit](https://twitter.com/peacesummit) and that's another place to engage in dialog.

This call here today is quite special because throughout the Summer of Peace we've looked at different situations for people who have gone through really challenging, difficult situations and have done the hero's journey, the inner work and then through that has been able to really step forward in creating innovative ways of peace building.

Molly Rowan Leach is yet another wonderful example of this. Molly is Restorative Justice Fellow with The Peace Alliance, which is a close partner with the Summer of Peace. Molly is leveraging virtual technology to bring the Restorative Justice practice to a wide field of participants.

She has hosted and produced the on-going webcast telesummit Restorative Justice Series on the Rise for over two years and has featured over a hundred different interviews and archives in ways showing how this field is emerging.

In addition, let me just say Molly is just an incredible human being, a mother of a beautiful son, David, a single mother and also close friends of mutual friends with James O'Dea who's the Lead Faculty of the Peace Ambassador Training.

Molly lives out in Preston nearby James and supports him in his work as well as doing her own work. So from my heart I just am a big fan and admirer of Molly. So Molly, thank you for being with us in the Summer of Peace.

Molly: Well, it's such a pleasure and an honor to be with you, Philip, and all of you who are listening whether now or in the future on the archives.

Philip: Yeah, wonderful, Molly. Molly, let's just dive in here. Let's just dive in for just a few minutes about the story behind the story. Let's go to your, you know, in just a few minutes if you could tell us about your family story and how that has impacted your journey, you know, your family story and then we'll go into your inner journey after that.

Molly: Sure. Thank you. I also want to thank The Shift Network and everybody involved on the back end for this incredible Summer of Peace series and look forward again to next year.

So about the reason why I do what I do, the story began almost 20 years ago and it involves the fact that I became what's called a stakeholder in the terms that many of us use within Restorative Justice practices meaning that I am now the daughter of a woman who remains in prison who is considered an offender in the languaging of the punitive system.

My mother had struggled with mental illness all of her life and did a very good at that and was very loving. I was brought up in a very caring context and household by both my mother and father. They were big contributors to their community. Our whole family was close knit and contributors to our community and neighborhood.

In 1995, my mother was misdiagnosed by her psychiatrist and she attacked a neighborhood child. It was an unthinkable event that caused me and everyone else to tailspin really shock and naturally shock and symptoms of PTSD and how to deal with this kind of situation.

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I'd like to say that that situation was something that was probably my greatest wound in my life journey overall. I've had quite a few of them as we all have, but this one was so deep and so close and so traumatic that I would consider it to be the most profound funny enough gift as well to me.

At this point, I see it in the context of both my greatest wound and my greatest gift.

Philip: Wow, Molly. Okay. Can you say just a little bit more how this impacted you directly and then let's go into how this became a gift. Just tell me a little bit more about the immediate impact this had on your life.

Molly: Well, the immediate impact was one that certainly didn't feel like a gift as you can imagine and as all of you listening because I know so many of us especially in these times are experiencing very traumatic either directly personal or witnessing very traumatic situations.

So what the causality of that event was a very strange combination of great compassion for everyone involves as well as my own personal dark night of the soul really. That was compounded by another loss, event in my life. My boyfriend died tragically. So the dark night of the soul that I went to and into I now see as necessary.

Philip: Okay, wait. Necessary, I mean we've heard other people talk during the Summer of Peace about going through a dark night in a soul, but necessary. Why do you think that was necessary, Molly?

Molly: It was necessary because it's important for us to be real about what's really happening. What my mom did to that innocent child and her psychosis was unthinkable and terrible and it almost resulted in an innocent person's loss of life.

So being real about that, being truthful about what happened for everybody involves first and foremost for the people affected, victims then everyone else is so important. That space of the dark night of the soul is also the seeding ground eventually for what our perhaps greatest contribution back is to the world.

We have these wounds that can become our greatest gifts. I think you know what comes up for me right now too is thinking of Aqeela Sherrills. That man is one of the most amazing peacebuilders in our world working with youth and gangs. He himself had great trauma in his early life and that's exactly where he's transparent about his story. He's open and he knows that that story itself has power that gives transparency, authenticity and truthfulness to the surface work that he now does.

Philip: Okay, all right. I think that's a really key part right there, Molly, that you mentioned is that transparency and authenticity that people can resonate with. We've heard that from Aqeela and we've heard that Azim Khamisa who lost his son to gang violence. We've heard it from others and so in a sense, your mother's tragedy with your mother and the person who was affected and the families and the community was affected and you taking that on and looking at it

real taking you into this dark night now empowers you to be able to speak authentically with people about Restorative Justice.

Molly: I believe so and certainly I don't think authenticity is exact destination point that we're deepening always in that and learning and growing together. So I wouldn't claim to be an expert in any of this nor although I feel like I have a strong voice because of my experience and the responsibility thus I feel that I'm always striving to move even deeper into the Truth, authenticity and transparency.

Compassion has always been at the forefront for me from the beginning even back in 1995. I visited the victims and her family and I loved them and sent them compassion all along.

**[0:10:08]**

Philip: Okay, okay. Before we go too far here, Molly, I want to just understand how you dealt with the trauma yourself. How did you go through this process? Looking at it straight on, going into it and then I mean how did you handle it? I mean we've heard Aqeela Sherrills talk about the people he had met with Azim Khamisa. He was in a meditation practice, had a teacher who was helping him.

How did you get through it?

Molly: Well, there's a couple points that I'd like to share that are along this line and one of them again is what I've already said. Don't deny the pain. So speaking of transparency and authenticity, something like this naturally is going to throw you possibly into a spiral that might be scary of just feeling like you've lost your place in the world.

You may feel like you're center of being and your purpose is lost. Of course you may feel displaced from your community, from your loved ones even and it's really a challenge. So being really real with that is the first thing to remember that that's not abnormal and that it actually if you can with that as much as possible and surrender into that then that is really appears to be the key.

Also how that relates to being real with not only your process, but other's processes within that conflict or crime or pain or whatever it is that you're amidst.

The second point ties into that and it's honoring the fact that we all have unique timelines meaning just because you may feel lost right now really doesn't. I mean it's similar to Elisabeth Kübler-Ross' work in grief. I mean we all have timelines and they're not linear necessarily.

We may feel like we've come a long ways and then the next day we may feel like we've gone nowhere or in fact even back slide. I remember that a tool that I picked up was to remember this that we all have those unique timelines and again to not force the wound to close too quickly.

The third, you need to call on your community, call on your tribe. If you don't have one perhaps in my own case practicing prayer and meditation, whatever that means to you. As a result of that, my community found me and making sure that in that you feel and you'll know this. You'll know when you feel safe, you feel heard and you feel seen because those are key elements in your journey through this dark night of the soul.

We know when we're not feeling that and we need to trust ourselves in that space and then again to reiterate, looking closely at the fact that things are not always as they appear. That doesn't mean we're excusing harm and wrongdoing and crime and the actions that harm others in very violent ways in the more subtle ways, that whole spectrum.

But remembering that your greatest wound whether you're a victim, whether you're an offender, whoever you are in the circles of harm and rebalancing, you have an opportunity. It may not look like what it seems to be, have patience with it.

Philip: Let's say a little bit more about that because -- well, first of all I just want to acknowledge, Molly. These depths that you just outlined, first do not deny the pain, surrender, go into it, honor the timelines what's organic for a person, not to force the process, calling on your community.

I thought that was beautiful that you said if you don't have a community, pray and meditate and that will draw. I think that's a really powerful statement there because often times a person, I have experienced where it can feel lonely when in a really, really painful place and that prayer and meditation is a good reminder that we're really never alone.

Also, in essence it creates magnetism. I thought it was really powerful when you said, "You'll know you're in your community when you feel safe, heard and seen." It sounds like that becomes the container then in order to allow the cooking process to happen of transmuting the pain and so forth. Would you say that's right like that becomes the container then to move through the process?

**[0:15:16]**

Molly: Absolutely. That's the container and a cooking process again like you're saying. I love that metaphor. It is a cooking process and we know that there are French

dishes that aren't the same requirement as a barbecue. So there's a lot of different ways that we all cook and that we come into a space of transforming out of that deep despair and grief.

Again, everybody has their own timeline and their own authentic recipe, but I really, really want to emphasize again like Azim, the wound becomes the gold and I see in Azim also and Azim Khamiza something similar that I'd like to call onto and that's an ineffable trust in the larger story that we only have a small glimpse, a view of.

Really, again, that whatever you can do to remember that you're this incredibly powerful being with a great purpose and gift on this planet and that's not just a platitude to call that back in while you're amidst this. You know, some people do that for dance, some people do that for exercise. I know for me back then I would go out for five mile, ten mile runs up in the foothills.

I would do a lot of sweating and praying all at the same time and it doesn't mean religious. I mean you can do it however you feel is right for you, but that it calls back that core essence that already is there for you.

Philip: Okay, Molly, let me just and there is so much wisdom here and the wisdom from life experience this thing about the wound becoming the gold and then also trusting the larger story. That's an interesting part because remember Azim said at one point he felt like he left this body the pain was so traumatic when he lost his son and he felt like then he was held by something that was much bigger than him and realize that his personality could not figure out the bigger story and like having to trust that.

Then to come back and this is the interesting part that you and Azim and Aqeela and Kimmie Weeks and others have modeled is then not staying in the pain, but once the cooking has moved to a place and then it sounds like the healing process then is starting to move into action. Is that accurate, Molly, in your case?

Molly: That's accurate and I would like to mention too that another important piece of coming towards your authentic voice fully, whatever gift it is that you want, what you feel moved to bring. The importance of trauma healing specific to recognizing a lot of times in the path you will be reacting instead of responding. Your story or your wound may precede you in some of the thing that you may not even realize.

It may precede you in feeling that you don't have a place in the world. Really be mindful of looking at where your trauma has informed your reality and once you've looked at that it also really helps you then to be comfortable in your body.

As Azim said he got knocked out of his body naturally. Of course, I mean that's what trauma does to us especially that kind of trauma. I mean it's unthinkable.

Philip: Right, right. For those who are listening, you may not have had the pleasure of hearing Molly interview Azim Khamisa. He lost his only son when he was delivering pizza in college and a 14 year old boy as part of a gang initiation shot and killed Azim's son and then he went into just a tremendous painful process and then came out of it today and is now one of the leading teachers in the world on forgiveness and working with a lot of young people preventing violence.

Now, Molly, let's look at these aspects. So this moving into action and where the Restorative Justice first came. So you and Azim, Azim was told by his teacher that he needed to start to working for peace for his son in order to help his son's soul basically.

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Aqeela then also started working to help young people then you started to work in Restorative Justice. I'm imagining that process with heart of your healing process. Could you speak to that?

Molly: Absolutely. Certainly, the call and response again between the opportunity and the gift of your wound and the gold that is just underneath the surface and through some of these layers that we've just talked about, the series was created and my authentic voice was found out of a responsibility.

So I see our wound and our own individual place in this world and the things that visit us as also our responsibilities. So this series, Restorative Justice on the Rise, came about as a response to the call that I had felt and certainly this was germinating over a time of over a decade.

So everything we've just described is a timeline that's quite stretched. I came to a place where I realized I had to face the situation of justice at large. What pointed me back to the original personal event was this feeling that nobody is getting what they need.

Okay, so when crime happens, victims are isolated. They don't have a voice. There's restraining orders between victims and offenders and you know in some ways those are needed, but in other ways that could be a gift and an opportunity.

Communities are isolated in fear, devastated, unable to really communicate. The media is another aspect of not being able to provide a story and a process that could be helpful instead of detrimental and punitive angled. So I felt like given all of the work that had already been done certainly this series is only really a celebration of the great and committed work that so many people have done for decades in the United States and is a recognition of the fact that this is nothing new.

It's actually inborn to us. Restorative Justice really is something that we know. If we really are honest with ourselves, we all want balance. We all want peace. We all want true justice and we've been made to think that punishment actually is the way to go about things.

So I felt a really powerful need to create a platform where all these incredible people from all over the world would come and share their stories, share their work, have a place to really get out there to a wider network and also for people who are interested in an answer to the current system and to their own individual lives and needs to have ways to find out how this works and how to implement it and how it's working for others.

Philip: Beautiful, Molly, beautiful. What was it like? Were you nervous at first in starting?

Molly: Oh, I can't even tell you. Honestly, I was terrified. I flunked speech class in college. I was so nervous. I was traumatized of public speaking and of sharing in this way and so that was another clue actually that I needed to move into it.

Philip: Say more on that.

Molly: Do what you fear most. Of course that's not easy; however, in this case given the factors of knowing that I was already really lit up about the possibility present with virtual technologies in our day and age. We have this fantastic opportunity to network people on an exponential level and rate and to help people get together because another underlying theme of this series with collaboration were all providing a very powerful contribution to a systemic transformation here.

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Not only in this field, but across the board and we're all desiring collaboration. We all know it needs to happen instead of just talking about it. The fear, that's a big deal and it's also something that is an illusion and is something that is there to edge us towards transforming through that wall.

Philip: Okay. I thought that was beautiful too what you fear the most. Oh, Molly, god love you. Thank you for all you're doing.

Molly: Well, it's not me that coined that, you know. I mean that was --

Philip: I know and this is like that you've embraced this and let's hear a little bit. So you were aware of this opportunity, the technology with providing platform for people to hear and you knew there were people who wanted to know more. There are people with great stories. So tell us two things here, a little bit about the initial interviews, you know, how do the people respond who were interviewing and then also what was the response from the listeners?

Molly: One of the first interviews that I hosted over two years ago was with Robin Casarjian of the Lionheart Foundation. They do incredible work within prisons as well as in communities around youth advocacy, youth restorative processes. I can't recommend their work more. That's the Lionheart Foundation and Robin and all of the people that I brought on in those first months were very enthusiastic and supportive of the idea given that it's free.

It's globally accessible and it's an act really of matching up my own personal experience and wound which, you know, that some of this as you were saying is part of my own individual healing, but for the collective really. This is a gift of love for our world.

People recognize that even from the beginning that it was an act of selfless service. It was something very impassioned and driven by personal experience.

Philip: I believe you were paying for this out of pocket, weren't you?

Molly: Uh-hmm. I was initially and not unlike other incredible organizations that are doing such important work like YES! Magazine for example whom Sarah van Gelder, the editor there has done incredible focused issues on Restorative Justice. She's done two so far and I think she's going to be doing more in the future in the print magazine.

They started out as a bare bones, two seat, one file cabinet grassroots movement because they knew it was needed. They knew that the media was failing us. They knew we needed. There was a niche that was crying out for someone to step in and say, "Okay, we're going to take this one on because it's needed. We're going to do it. We're on it." Since then it's only grown.

Philip: And the same is true here.

Molly: I've seen it's true here. That's right.

Philip: Yeah, the victims weren't being served. You weren't being served. Your mother in prison wasn't being served in terms of resources for the mental illness. You knew this wasn't working.

Molly: Right and the system still has a long way to go and they know that too. There's many good people within the system and there's, you know. We'll get to that.

Philip: Okay. Yeah. Let's say a little bit more about how the people you interviewed responded and then what was the response from the listeners when you started and how did that impact you?

Molly: I'll start with the listeners. The forum is set up and it goes for an hour and listeners come from all across the board, peace builders, Restorative Justice practitioners, educators, academics, correction officials, police officers and we've interviewed the like.

Everybody that has been affected by crime or conflict that you can image has been on this series. They've been enthusiastic about it. They ask questions. They interact. This is a people's forum really. So I feel that they pick up on that, but this is for them. It's not just about a chat between me and the guest speaker.

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Now, as far as the response from other guests, I've had enthusiasm and willingness from people such as Michelle Alexander, author of *The New Jim Crow* who is doing incredibly powerful work. She was a guest last year at about this time on the series.

She was very touched by Restorative Justice's truth or how it might respond to the very critical imminent pandemic that we're seeing at it affects our African-American young men especially. She was interested in learning more even than she admitted knowing about it.

Philip: Okay, this is really powerful because now you having done a hundred interviews and I can empathize with you having tons of interviews. You have a bird's eye view of Restorative Justice on the Rise literally emerging around the world.

This is an incredible gift and I would imagine you're an incredible resource and have incredible insights right now. So let's start first with this. What were some of the most inspiring interviews you did and why? Did you see any similarities to your own journey in those interviews?

Molly: Well, that is such a good question and also a very hard one to answer because of the fact that every single one I've done has had something of great marrow to it whether it applies to the conversation that I had with, for example, victim of her brother's murder, Therese Bartholomew and the film that she created called the Final Gift out of the experience of being the very first victim of a violent crime to go in within the high level security prison that her brother's murder is still within and to have the transformative experience that she had.

To think of Lauren Abramson at the Community Conferencing Center in Baltimore and the relationships that she has built over so many years and such dedicated day-to-day commitment. My experience doesn't even touch on that as far as like, you know.

We were talking decades of commitment that these people have given to this on the ground work and circle processes and really being there for even violent crimes to invite the possibility of a process to occur.

I think of Andrea Brenneke up in Seattle at the Mayor's Office implementing a Restorative Justice program. That just occurred in the last few months of 2013 here and what that entails for bridging our communities with existing systems not thinking that we have to come in and change what they're doing already, but really having honest conversations about what's working and what's not.

I can bring that back to my own individual situation and experience of still seeing that, you know, certainly it seems like many people haven't gotten what they needed in my mother's situation and how can we change that if at all.

I also think of Dominic Barter. I want to mention him. Dominic Barter from Rio and the work that he has done worldwide not just in Rio and in the favelas which is a shanti town, highly violent crime happening there and the work that he is sharing in school systems in Brazil working along with the Department of Education there as well as the Departments of Justice in Germany and other countries to help bridge systems and communities together.

Philip: Okay. Wow, Molly. Wow, this is really rich.

Molly: Can I just say one more thing about Dominic too, please? I just want to say --

Philip: Oh, please.

**[0:35:00]**

Molly: The important thing that I forgot to mention about Dominic Barter and Restorative Circles work and the thread and foundation that it lays for

restorative processes is this understanding that in order for us to move out of our conflictual status and our combative status perhaps is the transmission of meaning.

So he has set up a process that is actually very simple. It's almost so obvious that you can't believe that you didn't think of it yourself in a way and yet here it is a way to set a container and a process of asking a question and then making sure that each person is getting the meaning of what the others are conveying.

From there, the ground of building trust back, of building truths into even the most wounded relationships is possible.

Philip: You want to say a little bit more about that process and then we'll move on to looking at common things?

Molly: Sure. Well, I see what those principles I just mentioned as being not only key in a Restorative Justice process and practice, but also in our lives. Think about it. How often do we really truly listen? How often do we really open our hearts and our minds, close down the rest of our senses and be there?

Marshall Rosenberg is such an incredible conveyor of NVC practices and it's almost like in order to rewire ourselves from some of the conditioning of the western culture especially, we must practice these ways in order to begin to be able to offer them for one another.

I see that Dominic Barter's process and many other processes peacemaking circles, the work of Kay Pranis, the work of Howard Zehr and of Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz and so many others. There are so many that I can't mention all in one sentence, but that once we get a handle on rewiring ourselves in a way that helps us to listen deeply and to learn how to be a container for meaning and for meaning transmission we're getting somewhere then.

Philip: Okay, all right. I think one of the things I've heard in the Restorative Justice Series this summer is like a lot of these message and principles have indigenous roots.

Molly: They do. It's true.

Philip: Could you speak to that please?

Molly: I'll do my best, from what I can understand and what I've seen and heard not only in this series, but in appreciating indigenous cultures on a very deep and personal level. We are led by multiple practices over linear time as well as present time.

We can refer back to the Haudenosaunee, the six nations and the long house where they would come together and bring their minds as one in the thanksgiving process. It's not called Restorative Justice, but it definitely is the foundation for a process that is one of the equanimity, one of recognizing that we share common values and needs and that it is our responsibility to give thanks and to recognize those common needs and common values.

We have very common values in this world, peace, happiness, love, to be heard and seen. The Haudenosaunee people knew that once they gave thanks and I mean I believe those ceremonies would go on even for days at times and they knew when they needed it most and they practiced it even before trying to make agreements with their so-called enemies.

So they were on to something there and being able to set that field and ground of being and ground of connection for there to be possible meaning transmission and for the resolution or at least a movement towards that in setting that foundation in that way.

We look also to Rwanda. I mean, wow. Can you imagine 100,000 people macheteed, your next door neighbors, your families, your loved ones? Very few people left standing of the Tutsi people and out of that, I mean unimaginable atrocity that was cultivated a process called the "Gacaca Courts."

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Although they do have their own imperfections, they were one of our world's greatest signals towards even in the most terrifying global atrocities, there can be a process that is restorative and community involved which continues to hold accountable those who have caused harm and involving everyone in deciding how to rebalance and make things right.

Finally, we can look to New Zealand. There's many more that I'm not mentioning of course including the Huna people and Ho'oponopono, but New Zealand currently has Restorative Justice Processes and practice as their juvenile system and they go and they meet in a wharenui house. They begin by breathing together practicing what's called the "ha" and go into their process from there with their youth, with the community and all who were affected by the crime.

Philip: Okay. So it's not like some of these indigenous aspects you're talking about is a recognition of our connectedness, interdependence and also it's a community healing the community instead of taking the person who's done something and locking them away.

Molly: That's right. There's a recognition of the fact from an African tribe, we all come into this world with a song even before that African tribe's baby is born. They know the song of that child. When that child later on in life perhaps harms someone or does something that is out of balance, the tribe comes together. They just naturally know that they have to come together.

They sing that song back to the child or the youth or to the young adult or whoever they maybe at whatever stage in their life. It's always knows that they have a special song that they come in with and it's known by everybody.

Philip: Beautiful, beautiful. You know what, that reminds me of Azim Khamisa saying the boy, Tony, who shot his son he's like it was a failure of society that a 14 year old boy was in the situation and what you just described that a community coming together and singing a song of a person. It's really powerful. That's really powerful.

Molly: Our society in western culture in the United States is fragmented. I think we all know that. We have our single family housing units. We have sub-pockets I'm sure where there's a more felt sense of community and reliability and a sense that you can trust your neighbors perhaps to as some cultures do the neighbor down the street or in the tribe is going to know where your kid is at all times.

But it's just not like that for the most part here in America or it hasn't been. I think we all really hunger for that and we know at some level that's where we really are human. We really are authentic human beings together in that space.

We've failed our youths with zero tolerance policies. We don't know. We have great people within all of these systems doing everything they can. They're pulling their hair out. They go home stressed. They're trying to give their whole lives to help our youths feel empowered and to remember their songs so to speak and yet the whole system of punishment and of seeing that that's the only way, that's the only answer is to put them away. That that's actually going to work is a complete oxymoron and really a joke that we're addressing right now in this moment.

Philip: Okay. So you're seeing more and more Restorative Justice on the Rise. Do you think it's in part in response to the needs that are not being met or just say in your words? Why is it on the rise?

**[0:45:00]**

Molly: I believe it's on the rise in perfect timing with the exact match up of a prison industrial complex and a punishment system gone completely out of control in the sense that a lot of it is profit-motivated by companies like correction

corporations of America, by the GO group who just recently tried to buy naming rights to a football stadium in Florida, by phone and telecommunication companies who are relying on beds being filled in these prisons.

We're relying on systems that are not community based. We think that throwing people away or at least the old system was primarily motivated by as Azim so beautifully relayed in one of our interviews, by that patriarchal king system. He says it more eloquently than I do, but in 1973 here in the United States we knew that prisons created criminals and that we needed to drive away from making more of them and yet somehow the profit motivation got in the mix and it went wild.

Not only the profit motivation, but also the elephant in the room so to speak of the fact that we still have a new Jim Crow in place, I mean we have a new Jim Crow in place. We have stigmatization of those who are meek in our society such as the mentally ill.

One out of every four has at least a low grade struggle with mental illness and they're thrown in prison. They're not getting the services they need. So the rise is happening because ultimately, we, as a humanity here in the United States and worldwide we know that this isn't right.

So somehow in the sense of just like with the Occupy Movement, the better angles of those selves, of these movements, the Arab Spring, it's all about bringing back the truth.

I mean we look back to the Charter 77 and Václav Havel in the Czech Republic or the now Czech Republic and the fact that we want truth. We want to live authentically and as humans together and give each other a sure shot at being accountable, but also having the right to feel love and empowered in our lives in this short life that we have.

So I just feel like there's just this great response here especially in the Western world and it's in legislation. Do you want me to talk a little bit about legislation?

Philip: Yeah, just some successes and also the cost-effectiveness.

Molly: Yeah. There was a D.A. I'll just say there was a D.A. here in Colorado recently that, you know, he's working within the system obviously and he said, "Restorative Justice isn't just a flash in the pan solution. It's not just another pie in the sky thing. It actually saves you time. It saves you money and it has jaw-dropping proof in its success both in satisfaction rates with everyone involved."

Here in Colorado in the Longmont area, it's 96% satisfaction rate for everyone involved, that's including victims. It also was showing 10% recidivism and drum roll for this. That's compared to 60 to 70% recidivism nationwide. That means one out of ten people who are offending are doing it again as compared to six to seven out of ten. That's a huge drop and that's because of the systems that have been implemented within the police department, within the community, within the schools.

Philip: Say more about as it becomes a community process. Say a little bit more about that because it really kind of breaks down the punitive paradigm where it's just enforcement, crime, put away. Just say a little bit more about how you see --

Molly: Right. On a real practical level, community members can be a part of a restorative process by becoming a representative of the community if they so choose meaning that they would actually sit as if you were in a courtroom perhaps as a jury member, but rather you are a representative.

**[0:50:14]**

It's not a direct comparison between a jury member, but certainly it has perhaps that same kind of place in a way that you're contributing and even more so because you have a voice as a member of the directly affected community and that you're providing also a neutral presence within that process for there to be a regaining of balance, for there to be agreements made on paper.

For example, in a youth process in Longmont, Officer Greg Ruprecht and Captain Mike Butler who was actually on this series this summer. It was a pleasure to talk to him, was outlining how that process works and that the victim and the offender if the victim is willing, a lot of times they are.

If they're not, there's other ways that these processes can be created without the victim's participation. So that needs to be known for sure. That this isn't about forgiveness either, but that the community member can sit in on a process not just as an observer and as an occasional decider, but as an active participant towards that restoration and the restoration plan.

A lot of times that restoration plan might even look like how to repair the building that was vandalized so that the youth that vandalized the building would do community service directly with that building's organization. Then that gives them the ability to all see the cause and effect of what happens when one act causes another thing and then it's a whole chain.

The community also, I want to say one other thing about community. We all are in this. So we all have a right and a responsibility if we feel like we're unhappy

with what's happening in our justice system and in our communities. We can build relationships with our school directors, with our staff at our schools, the D.A., the victim's advocates, the judges, the folks who are in the police department.

A lot of them will want to have conversations with us and simply just discuss what's working and what's not. From there, those relationships become really valuable to expressing a process suggestion once conflict occurs because naturally it's going to. It's a part of our lives.

Philip: Molly, we've got just a few more minutes here. Where do you see Restorative Justice going in the next few years? What do you see happening?

Molly: Well, I can only see it growing exponentially even more because we're seeing as I'd mentioned earlier. We've seen a huge pilot project passed here. A law has now been passed in Colorado called "The Restorative Justice Pilot Project."

We're seeing one being championed by Senator Jaime Eldridge in Massachusetts that hopefully we'll get safe passage here shortly. We're seeing other legislation in Florida and in many other states nationwide.

Dr. Sandra Pavelka was a guest on this series this summer who could speak even more deeply to the specifics, but we see it popping up in the most unexpected places because of the fact that even people within the system, you know.

Department of Corrections officials, people who are leaders in the field who are at the head of entire state departments are calling for something more. They know that they don't have the services for the mentally ill. They know that they don't have what it takes to really, truly rehabilitate.

They know that when someone tops out of a sentence that that person is just basically thrown back out into society with a real stigmatized record that's not going to get them where they need to go.

So there's a felt awareness not only in our citizenry, but also within the existing system. So it really is about building these relationships. They're happening right now as we speak.

Howard Zehr and his Zehr Institute are doing some great webinars that are going to be happening again this fall that are involving community conversations and video conferences. There are people all across this country.

**[0:55:12]**

Sujatha Baliga over at the National Council on Crime and Delinquency and based out of Oakland did a case recently where she helped to create conditions to present a pre-sentencing restorative process for a violent murder crime and it was published in the New York Times.

So we're really seeing in the media too reception of the fact. It's reported far and wide right now. A lot of these things that are bridging on heinous that are happening within the old system that need to be addressed. They are burning and flaming and we need to address them in a very urgent way. The good news is that we're doing that.

On a national level, we have just seen the implementation of a national organization for Restorative Justice. So it's only going to be moving forward and I envision schools implementing it nationwide. I imagine there being responses within our prisons.

There's already so much great work happening towards that right now. So I could say a lot more.

Philip: Beautiful, Molly. I think you can. I just love the passion and I love this conversation where we've gone through your journey and now you're just like you're serving so much by helping raise awareness about Restorative Justice and then be the resource and weaving together the bigger story. It's really about a new narrative of justice that's emerging.

Molly: Let's not make the mistake about thinking that this is a forced process. Please, let's remember this is about respect and compassion for everyone involved. It's not about forcing anybody to change their belief or their needs or their process.

So there are going to be victims even in my mother's case that are going to choose not to respond to the invitation to dialog and that's their right. We should respect everybody's rights to whatever process they have here while keeping in mind we have an opportunity.

Philip: Okay, great. Molly, we only have just a couple minutes here. Is it safe to say that Restorative Justice Process beyond serving people is really just further your own viewing process?

Molly: Absolutely. I can say too that again when we think about Restorative Justice Processes for ourselves, things are not always as they appear. You may think that you need to talk with everybody involved and that that's how it's only going to work, but actually in my own process and in my own experience the fact is that I was able to come to a place of acceptance and deep understanding and forgiveness of the fact that it may not look like what I thought it needed to come

to a level of knowing that we can with our friends and our allies, with our teachers, with our communities, we can form our own restorative processes.

In fact, those create ripples that we may not be able to understand or see, but none the less are doing very powerful work towards restoring balance.

Philip: Beautiful. Beautiful, beautiful. I just so honor you. I mean, you carry so much integrity and heart and doing this work now it's part of Peace Alliance and it's reaching many people. Just really honor and thank you for your heroine's journey and how you're serving. Just thank you.

Molly, can you also let people know how they can access the archive. There's one from the Summer of Peace, but there's a bigger archive and also how can people support this work because I mean I know that you initially started by financially supporting it then have some resources brought into the Peace Alliance.

How can people support the Restorative Justice series?

Molly: Well, we always are so grateful to those who believe in financially supporting this work. They can do that by going to the [peacealliance.org](http://peacealliance.org) and tag your donation. You'll see there's a donate button. Tag your donation for Restorative Justice or Restorative Justice on the Rise.

**[1:00:19]**

You can access all of the archives. We're right now in the midst of updating our website at [peacealliance.org](http://peacealliance.org), Restorative Justice tab. You can see a sneak preview of the comprehensive archives at [restorativejusticeontherise.com](http://restorativejusticeontherise.com).

You can also access the archives at [dopeace.us](http://dopeace.us). So there's quite a few ways to get access. You can also feel free to email me. I'm really open and interested in hearing from you if you'd like to communicate directly that way at [molly@peacealliance.org](mailto:molly@peacealliance.org).

Philip: Beautiful. First of all, I encourage everyone to interest in Restorative Justice. Contact Molly. Go to the archive. It's such an incredible resource and then if you're inspired and have means of whatever's appropriate for you to support this work.

Molly, let me just say again thank you, thank you, thank you and really appreciate you being here to tell us about the story behind Restorative Justice on the Rise.

Molly: Well, thank you for this space of sharing and thank you to all of you out there as we move forward.

Philip: Wonderful. For our people who've been with us, our friends around the world celebrating with us in the Summer of Peace. We are now moving into the International Day of Peace this Saturday, September 21<sup>st</sup>. The emails we've been sending out, the catalyst e-zine from The Shift Network has lots and lots and lots of ways that people can participate or share what you're doing.

For people who've been listening to the Spirituality and Peace series that culminates with Be the Peace. So we definitely encourage you to check that out, Be the Peace. That series is going to be culminating in three synchronized global meditations.

You can find out more about that on [bethepeace.com](http://bethepeace.com). Also the email that went out this morning and that emails going to go out Saturday has lots of information about how you can call in and join that.

It's going to be a different call in number, different web links. So definitely join that and many others, Peace Day TV with our global broadcast. There are so many ways to participate and be part of this global community. It's amazing to think at this time in humanity, we can now have global celebrations and see what people are doing around the world and share and come together.

Restorative Justice on the Rise and there is a way that peace rise around the world from inner to international. So wherever you are in the world whether it's morning, afternoon, evening or night, thank you so much for being with us and peace be with you and peace prevail on earth.

**[1:03:28] End of Audio**

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