

HOSPITALITY AT THE CENTER OF DISPUTE RESOLUTION

*Peter Block**

My intent here is to amplify and give voice to the transformative importance of the work described in three of the Articles being published in this edition of the *Cardozo Journal of Conflict Resolution*.¹ The Articles discuss restorative answers to this culture's dominant narrative of retribution. Each of these social innovations represents a form of hospitality, which is akin to the welcoming of strangers. The Articles form a strategy, in alliance with the alternative dispute resolution movement and addressing the violence against the self and others, which forms the headlines of our daily news consumption.

- Se Won Park is a member of the Red Hook Community Justice Center in Brooklyn. The goal of the Red Hook Community Justice Center is to build trust and cooperation between a judge's courtroom and a community's vulnerable citizens. The Justice Center is organized around the mission of creating a circle of support around an offender, in order to give them the best chance of regaining control of their lives and staying out of the judicial system. As opposed to other courtrooms, where an offender will often be treated as a stranger, a hallmark of the Red Hook Community Justice Center is that the judge instead *welcomes* the individual into the restorative justice process. This process focuses on the gifts and possibilities of the "other." This is a sharp contrast to the "three strikes and you're out" model.
- Payton Silket reports on a Citizens' Panel organized in Michigan, which was charged with making policy recommendations on how to effectively manage the COVID-19 pandemic. What was revolutionary about the Panel was

* Peter Block is an author and citizen of Cincinnati.

¹ See Se Won Park, *Every Reasonable Chance Plus Two: How the Red Hook Community Justice Center Bridges the Gap Between the Community and the Justice System*, 23 *CARDOZO J. CONFLICT RESOL.* 575 (2022); Payton Silket & Cheryl L. Epps, *From Conflict to Co-Creation: Three Powerful Stories of Transformational Change*, 23 *CARDOZO J. CONFLICT RESOL.* 599 (2022); Jeff Thompson et al., *Increasing Crisis Hostage Negotiator Effectiveness: Embracing Awe and Other Resilience Practices*, 23 *CARDOZO J. CONFLICT RESOL.* 615 (2022).

the effort made to bring strangers together and deliberate on these policy recommendations. The Panel was comprised of people that crossed over many different types of divides: class, politics, age, geography, and points of view on the COVID-19 pandemic, among others. The panelists demonstrated that claims of Americans being divided as a nation are simply social constructs that are promoted by the various sectors of society that have an interest in promoting division. However, it is not who we, as a people, truly are. Beyond the charged campaign rhetoric and explosive news headlines, if we commit to hearing and understanding one another, it will not take long to discover that we all share common concerns and interests. All it takes is a different kind of convening. This Article is also important because Silket is part of a group that puts “faith” in its name, a group that portrays a faith community that seeks to foster healing outside the boundaries of its own beliefs and property lines.

- Jeff Thompson is twenty-four years into a policing career. Through his work, Thompson brings the insights of self-awareness and psychiatry into the New York City Police Department. There are few jobs more demanding and stressful—and that are the target of more public activism—than that of a police officer. We all have opinions about how policing should change. Thompson’s work focuses on how officers can better manage their own emotional and relational well-being. This provides a sense of consciousness and self-awareness where it is most needed. It is especially important today because we, as citizens, have outsourced to public servants a responsibility for our safety—something that we can often best produce for ourselves. Indeed, *insourcing* our safety would serve as a bold act of self-determination. And yet, it would only require that our neighbors no longer be strangers—that they would instead be partners in constructing our sense of well-being.

The larger context of these three powerful Articles is the value of building trust and cooperation in our communities. This is often called social capital. This community building work has been helping reclaim the humanity of those with which we are working from the grip of the command-and-control world that surrounds us. We can only be grateful to those who are putting in these efforts.