

Vincent Munoz:

I think what we need to do is explain how our principles of free speech, free inquiry, will help serve the cause of justice.

Betty Friendan:

The First Amendment, the constitutional freedom of speech and freedom of conscience that is the bulwark of our democracy.

Bettina Apthekar:

There was a passion in what was being said, affirming what people considered a sacred constitutional right, freedom of speech and freedom of association.

Michelle Deutchman:

From the UC National Center for Free Speech and Civic Engagement, this is SpeechMatters, a podcast about expression, engagement, and democratic learning in higher education. I'm Michelle Deutchman, the Center's Executive Director and your host.

As colleges and universities navigate the fallout from the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, we've had a front-row seat to how expression can detrimentally impact individuals, groups, and the campus climate at large. Words, chants, posters, and other speech are sowing division on campus. Many students, staff, and faculty feel isolated, hurt, and afraid. Given this, I've been spending a lot of time thinking about how we will rebuild and repair from this moment. What tools do we have at our disposal, and how do we learn to use them?

While considering these questions, I attended a session about restorative justice at a recent UC Campus Safety Symposium. Although restorative justice, RJ, as it's often referred to, is traditionally used as a way to respond to criminal acts, the session I attended showcased the benefits of using RJ in a higher education setting, at UC San Francisco in fact. I wanted to learn more, which is why I invited the director of the Office of Restorative Justice, Maria Jaochico, to be a guest on today's episode. I decided that our listeners and I could learn together, which is what we will do after we turn to Class Notes, a look at what is making headlines.

A lawsuit that was filed last year against UC Santa Cruz concerning their use of diversity statements in hiring was dismissed on standing grounds. In his lawsuit, John Haltigan, who holds a PhD in developmental psychology, said he would've applied to a position at UC Santa Cruz, but for the requirement of a statement regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion. He argued that requiring him to include this statement violated his First Amendment rights and claim that the requirements served is a "functional loyalty oath."

When dismissing the case, the federal court judge explained that Mr. Haltigan did not have standing to sue, given that he never actually applied for the job. This controversy is far from over, however, since the judge did not rule on the merits of the issue. We discussed this case and other controversies around the use of diversity statements in episode seven of season two, Courting Controversy: Upcoming Cases on Campus Speech, in case you missed it. Take a listen.

It has been exactly one month since Senate Bill 17, which bans DEI offices in Texas higher education institutions went into effect. The law bars public universities in the state from utilizing admissions or hiring and training practices based on race, ethnicity, gender identity, or sexual orientation. SB 17 requires proof of compliance in order for colleges and universities to access funding for the next fiscal year. While it is too soon to know the full effects of the bill, numerous DEI practitioners are leaving to

find jobs elsewhere, and many remain confused about the limits of the law, creating an atmosphere of uncertainty and anxiety.

This past month, the UC Regents considered a policy that would bar faculty and staff from posting political statements on university websites and other official online forums. The move comes after several departments across the university system posted statements regarding the Israel-Hamas war. Critics of the proposal argue that the move curtails academic freedom, that the policy's language is too ambiguous, and query how it will be enforced. At the end of a heated discussion about the proposal, the Regents moved to table a vote until March. We will continue to update you on this story. In the meantime, back to today's guest.

Maria Jaochico:

Oh, my gosh, I am feeling all sorts of nervousness, so I wonder if we could do a grounding together. Michelle.

Michelle Deutchman:

I think that sounds wonderful. I hope you're planning to lead it.

Maria Jaochico:

Yes, yes. It'll be interactive. I'll ask you a reflective question. All right, so I'll just ask you to sit comfortably, however you are, wherever you're at, just feeling the ground underneath you, just feet firmly on the floor. I could already feel that my heart is pumping fast, so just thinking about how we can slow down a bit so we can be present in the moment. If I could ask you to have your eyes closed, and take a breath in and out, no effort to control your breath, but just allow it to naturally go in and out.

And in this time, let's reflect on what our intentions are. I know I've been thinking a lot about this as I've prepared for the podcast, our intentions with each other in this hour.

Michelle Deutchman:

My intention is really twofold. It's a little bit selfish, in that I want to do some learning for myself, and I'm hoping generous of spirit in that I decided that, rather than just talk with you, that I could open up this conversation and this opportunity for learning to our listeners, and I'm very grateful to you for being willing to do that. Sometimes it's a little bit vulnerable, especially in an academic setting, to admit that you don't know something, but I'm just putting it out there. I don't know very much about restorative justice, and I feel like it's important that I know more.

Maria Jaochico:

Thank you, thank you. Well, how wonderful of a complimentary that is because my intentions was a gift of sharing, because this knowledge of restorative justice, while you welcomed me to join your podcast, it's not my knowledge to own. It certainly was taught to me, and I learned from so many people, and in the principles of RJ and reciprocity, this was part of sharing. You came here to learn, I came here to share, and in turn, learn as well on how that might be a tool for folks when in dialogue and conversations with one another, and I know that's important. Engagement is such an important thing for your center. Thank you.

Michelle Deutchman:

No, thank you. And, hopefully our listeners were able to take a moment in grounding and thinking about what you want to get from this episode. And, while you're reflecting on that, I'm going to take the liberty of telling you a little bit more about our esteemed guest, Maria Jaochico. She has worked at University of California San Francisco since 2016, and she now serves as the Director of UCSF's Office of Restorative Justice Practices. She earned her doctorate in higher education administration from the University of West Georgia, where her research focused on implementing restorative justice practices in graduate level education settings. She also holds a master of education in Student Affairs Administration from Clemson University and a BA from University of Georgia.

I first had the privilege of meeting Maria and being exposed to her phenomenal work when she received a VOICE Award from the Center in 2021. And at that time, and correct me if I'm wrong, Maria, UCSF's Office of Restorative Justice had not yet been born, but Maria was dedicated to infusing RJ principles into life at UCSF. And we reconnected this past November, and I'm grateful that she's willing to join us today to share how RJ can assist us in this very trying time and as we move forward. Thanks, Maria, and welcome to SpeechMatters.

Maria Jaochico:

Thank you, Michelle. Thank you for having me and for the warm welcome. Speaking of the VOICE Award, the grant money was our seed funding, as it helped us in the early beginnings. The grant supported two trainings for restorative justice facilitators. They volunteered to be facilitators to lead community-building circles and campus-wide healing circles to address national and global events that were impacting our community.

Before we continue, I wanted to note to listeners throughout the podcast, you'll hear me refer to restorative justice as RJ for sure. You'll also hear me say circle, which is a practice of coming together as a group. It's called a circle because participants are seated in a circle formation if we were meeting in person.

Michelle Deutchman:

Okay, terrific. And we're going to delve more into some of those practices, but usually, I like to start with people's origin stories a little bit. And I'm not going to ask you to tell us about your entire life, but maybe if you could share with us a little bit of your journey to RJ and those practices and how it came to be that that is the focus of your career.

Maria Jaochico:

I smile at this question. It happened accidentally, or perhaps one might even see it as destiny. What I mean by accidental is that I did not seek out a restorative justice position. As a matter of fact, these types of roles as a full-time position are few. If you recall the time around 2020 and 2022, at the height of the pandemic, and the United States is in this profound moment of national reckoning with its history of racial injustices, again, RJ circles became the vehicle for folks to come together and heal and build community. That's what I mean by accidental. It came at a time where it was very much a need of our community, and we met that need.

What I mean by perhaps one might see this as a destiny is that the principles of RJ were always present in my values. I think about my Lolo and Lola, which means grandparents in Tagalog, they taught me the value of kapwa. It's a Filipino word that describes being with others or a community committed to one another. A quick story about my grandparents, my Lolo and Lola created a neighborhood garden. They planted lots of vegetables at the vacant lot beside my childhood home, and they would gift vegetables

to the neighbors. A key principle of the value of kapwa, and similarly with restorative justice, is this concept of reciprocity. Community members are committed to one another. When my grandparents needed help around the house, it was our neighbors who would routinely stop by the house and check in on them.

The value of kapwa informs me daily of my interconnection with others, and lucky for me, the work that I do every day at UCSF and with my team aligns with the teachings of building a community that is committed to one another. At this time, I want to give a big shout-out to my team, UCSF's Restorative Justice Practices, Juri Sanchez, Edna Tamilo, Lindsay Berkowitz, and Ramsay Boly. Together, we do this work at UCSF, and really give thanks and gratitude to them to the commitment they have for UCSF.

Michelle Deutchman:

Thank you, and thank you for telling us that story about your grandparents. I think it's probably pretty unusual to have a livelihood where you actually get to embody and utilize the principles and values not only that you were raised with, but that you want to employ in your personal life. That's very inspiring.

I think we need to just do a little bit of table-setting before we get into some of the more challenging questions that I want to ask, and I think it would be helpful if you could, I know it's hard to give a primer in a short amount of time, but maybe take the listeners a little bit through the intentional process of what happens before you actually have an RJ circle, and maybe take an example and show us what that would look like as you move through the different processes.

Maria Jaochico:

The RJ definition that has resonated the most with me is from Dr. Fania Davis, a national voice for restorative justice and the co-founder of Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth. Fania Davis wrote a book on RJ called *The Little Book of Race and Restorative Justice*. In the book, she defines RJ as, "Restorative justice emphasizes bringing together everyone affected by wrongdoing to address needs and responsibilities and to heal the harm to relationships and community. Restorative justice is also a proactive relational strategy to create a culture of connectivity where all members of a community thrive and feel valued." This definition informs the approach we take to implementing RJ at UCSF.

Dr Davis's definition has two parts to RJ, a proactive approach and a responsive approach. Examples of a proactive approach are community-building circles during new student orientation or circles during team retreats to have an intentional dialogue to get to know one another and strengthen relationships. Examples of a responsive approach are restorative conversations to address relational harm. Let's say two individuals were in a conflict, and an altercation was witnessed by the team. Using a restorative justice framework means we would first want to identify individual and community needs, discuss the impact of the harm, before we even dive into problem-solving. Because, if we problem solve without getting curious about the needs and impact, then we're really just problem-solving from our own lived experience, our own lens. And what's important is understanding those are part of the community.

Often, I am asked, what is it that we are restoring? As a relational strategy, our work is to restore the respect, dignity, and care return back to all the individuals involved. That's to the person that was impacted, that's to the person that impacted the individual in the community, and that's also the community members that are part or have witnessed the event. What is important to note is that restorative justice is grounding in Indigenous ethos and teachings. Indigenous people and worldviews, as you know, are not homogenous. However, the values and knowledge of interconnectedness, that we are all connected with one another, are present in many cultures.

Restorative justice practice in the United States, in the criminal justice system, K through 12, higher education, workplace settings, has documented origins in Indigenous communities, example from First Nations people from Canada, the Maori people of New Zealand, communities in Sub-Saharan in West Africa. I share this to continue honoring RJ's Indigenous ethos and teachings, that these practices are borrowed practices and how do we continue to honor them in how we practice it now.

Michelle Deutchman:

I think that's great that we're having not just a discussion about what RJ looks like in this moment, which is our point of entry, but we're able to then move back to talk about its history and the history of how it's evolved.

Before we move on, I think I want to ask a question that I think I know the answer to, but I want to make sure our listeners do, which is about this idea of voluntariness. And I think it's important to make sure people understand that this is a voluntary practice. Is that accurate? I think there's a lot of myths about restorative justice. Nobody is making anybody be part of an RJ circle.

Maria Jaochico:

Yes, matter of fact, we call it an invitation, that we're inviting you in that conversation. That's how voluntary it is, and when the invitation is given, people are allowed to say no, like an RSVP, no, yes, maybe, or that you've changed your mind later. It's not a fixed time, because healing takes time, and wanting to engage in a conversation that's asking for vulnerability takes time. It may start with a no, and then the invitation is always there, but what you're naming here is that it can't be mandated or mandatory. Yes.

Michelle Deutchman:

And then another follow-up is I'm thinking about, in higher education institutions, they're hierarchically structured, and I'm imagining that health-related specialties are like that too. And so one of my questions is how do you give an invitation without there being power dynamics or pressure? Or maybe you can't. Maybe you acknowledge them. I guess I'm asking you, yeah, what do you do?

Maria Jaochico:

Yes, we do have to acknowledge that power dynamics and those hierarchy exists. That's often what possibly impacted and informed the conflict to begin with. We name that. We don't shy away from that conversation. We name it and say, "How did the power dynamics play in the conflict? What happened there?", get really curious of the positionality of people and how that might have contributed to the conflict or the incident, whatever it was.

And so I'm curious, tell me more about what that might mean for you in terms of the hierarchy. That's a great question and I want to make sure that your intentions, I'm answering.

Michelle Deutchman:

No, you did. I think one of the things I think a lot about is I deal with speech and expression, and oftentimes, the speech is protected, which means the hard work isn't about how the law helps us. The hard work is how, as a community, do we respond to really ugly, hateful, and demeaning speech. And one thing that some universities have put into place are bias response teams, so where people report that they feel harmed or hurt by speech, and then the university might try to create a response, whether it's just reaching out one-on-one, whether it might be some kind of community town hall or

engagement, or it might be inviting in the person who shared the words that were hurtful in for a conversation. And, in this case, a lot of times, it's administrators and students.

And so there's been some lawsuits where people have said, "You can't really expect anybody to come in for a voluntary conversation if they're administrators." And I have personally mixed feelings about that, because I feel like, while I acknowledge those power dynamics, I also feel like, to me, it seems like that's part of the responsibility of an educational institution is to say to people, "We're not here to punish you, but we just want to make sure you understand the impact of your expression." And so I think I was thinking about that and how you might get around that, given that you do have a director position in the university.

Maria Jaochico:

Thank you. I think, when I was listening in your storytelling and examples that you brought in, what comes to mind is what shifts in the restorative justice practices. I'll introduce a new term, a restorative mindset shift from a punitive mindset. That's what we're working a lot at UCSF, the shift from this punitive mindset of what was the violation, who was harmed, what law and guidelines were violated, who did it, and what are their punishment? The mindset shift is being curious about what happened in that dynamic between us. What was the impact on you and others? What is needed so that we can come back together and work together? And so that conversation first needs to happen with folks who were impacted.

Another tenet of restorative justice is centering the needs of the impacted party and getting really curious about what is the unmet needs and what is needed in that conversation. We're doing a lot of prep work. This is a first draft thought, in my mind. I've thought about this a lot, so I want to say it was almost like fourth draft, but this concept of the skills, the skill sets, that's needed in debate and discussion and how is that different of discussions where we're talking about harm? We're using the skills that we're learning in classrooms about influencing and debating, or skill sets in conference rooms about getting the other side to understand you and flip their thoughts. We're using that skill set to have discussions where it's really about emotions and feelings and being understood and heard and seen.

We're almost intellectualizing emotions, in a way, but that's not where it lives. Our emotions don't live in our intellect. It lives in our bodies. It lives in our lived experience. It lives in how I was feeling at the time when the incident happened, or whatever it is that you want to ... it's an example in your mind, but those are different skill sets, or different tools to have, empathetic listening or discussion where we're present. And so what I mean by that is there is a lot of pre-work that needs to happen first before asking folks to invite them in a conversation, because trust needs to be built first way before we start talking about, "When you did that, that impacted me."

Michelle Deutchman:

I think that's such an important point to be emphasized, because it's something that had struck me when I heard you present in November, is this idea of how much time and preparation goes into it. I think, in our society, we're so used to instant gratification, the ding, the text, hearing from people right away, that it's important to realize that that's not what this is, and I think that even might be a misunderstanding. I can imagine people being like, "Oh, okay, and then we're all just going to go and sit in a circle," and it's like, "No, that's the end, or close to the end." And I want to ask you if you can maybe touch on some of the other types of myths that you think people might carry around about RJ and how it works.

Maria Jaochico:

I'll continue on with what you've just said. There is a misconception that sitting in circles is only to talk about feelings. I'm going to ask you to do a reflection. You don't have to share out, Michelle, it's just in your mind. Think about a time when you caused a harm, your behavior impacted your relationship with them, and you want that relationship to be repaired. Your instinct might first be to apologize to say, "I'm sorry." Where does that live? That "I'm sorry" lives in your body. You just want it out. You just want the ick feeling to be out of your body, so you say, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry."

Now, asking you to switch, think about a time when someone harmed you, their behavior impacted your relationship with them, and that trust was lost. The last thing you want to hear anyone saying to you is, "I'm sorry I've upset you," or worse, "I'm sorry you were upset." You don't want to hear an apology that doesn't acknowledge the root of the harm you experienced, which was, here, the loss of trust. Let me have you think about these hypothetical people talking to one another. Where would you start? Do you start at the harm? "I'm sorry I've upset you," and then now you're having to defend, "Actually, no, I wasn't upset. This is what I was feeling." Often that is where we start.

And so restorative justice is more than talking about the feeling in that moment, upset, "No, I'm not upset," and defending that feeling. It gives people tools to engage in a conversation to, one, face a harm they caused, to take accountability for the impact of their actions. It gives people tools to communicate the harm they experienced in a way that centers their unmet needs and hopes for what it takes to feel restored. Not everyone is readily equipped to have these dialogues, but we're asking folks to say, "Hey, this really important topic is at the forefront of everyone's mind. Everyone is in different points of the continuum. Let's have a discussion about each of our points."

Michelle Deutchman:

I hope it's okay to jump in. I definitely felt like what really resonated with me was this idea of accountability, and that an apology where someone, at least for me, is accountable for their actions, that feels very different than not. And I strive to do some of this in parenting, which is like, look, I have a preteen daughter, and there's a lot of apologizing about tone and respect. And what we're trying to inculcate is that it's not enough just to say sorry, how do we get to the root of why did you say it that way? What's going on? How can we maybe try to do it differently? And it's really hard because I'm probably not that well-equipped, and she certainly isn't well-equipped, and so I'm hoping that by trying to role model some of these ways of talking about things, because I can see how an apology in society, it's very overused, I think. Anyway. Okay.

Maria Jaochico:

Yeah. Oh, I could be on a soapbox with the word, "I'm sorry." It could even be you nudge someone, you say, "I'm sorry." I was like, "Well, no, I was in your way. Why would you say sorry to me?"

Michelle Deutchman:

Well, that's another conversation, especially about, I'm always telling my colleagues at work, especially women, that we're trained to say, "I'm sorry" all the time. That's a whole different thing. Okay.

Maria Jaochico:

Yeah. But with what you're saying about your daughter is where does that live? You care about your daughter, so you want to say, "That, I didn't mean to do that." And so taking it a step further for accountability is asking yourself, "Well, what am I apologizing for? Do I know enough? Do I know enough information? And, if I don't, I need to be curious about that because how would I know ..."

Accountability is knowing what you'll do differently after that, "I'm sorry." I'm going to slow down and say that again. Accountability is knowing what you're doing after you've said, "I'm sorry." It's knowing, "I'm sorry. I was going from one thing to the next," whatever it may be. It's understanding what behavior has changed after the apology. And so we got to slow down.

Michelle Deutchman:

Well, and we're in this very fast-moving society, so even slowing down is a challenge. You mentioned Dr. Davis, and I actually had a quote from her in one of these questions that I want to share and see about your response, which is that, "Justice is a healing ground, not a battleground," which is so beautiful, especially in the moment we're in right now, where, to me, everything feels like a battleground, not just physically, but in terms of you're either with us or against us. You're pro, you're con. And I'm wondering what steps do you take to ensure that the RJ process is implemented in a way that doesn't introduce further harm to any of the participating parties?

Maria Jaochico:

I'm curious, what does that quote mean to you? "Justice is a healing ground, not a battleground," what does that mean to you?

Michelle Deutchman:

I don't know that I'm ready to say what it means to me. I can just say that it changes my conception a little bit. And, when I think of justice, certainly in the legal sense, when I think of social justice warriors, there's this idea that it's a big fight, and that's a lot of how it's been framed. And I'll be honest, I haven't really processed what this other conception of justice would mean.

Maria Jaochico:

Well, you're at a great point to start to think about that, even the way you frame that. Here's another quote I'll give you from Fania Davis, that we love in our team, and that speaks to what your early musings of the quote you shared, "We do justice with people and not to them." The with is so important. And, if we do justice with people, then, to me, it's bringing folks in the discussion, "How did the community fail you? How did we allow for this event to happen in our environment? What can we do to help you so it doesn't happen again?" That's the with part. The to, to them, is our sanction rubric. It's the, "If you did this, then this is what happens to you. If you do this, this is what happens." The justice with people is asking, "What's needed? What's needed for repair, for restoration, so that you feel restored, your respect, dignity, and care is returned back to you?"

Part of your question was what do we do to ensure that we don't further harm folks? One of the ways we ensure that we don't introduce further harm is we do a lot of pre-work before bringing parties together. I was hearing that that is what resonated with you in the presentation had in November. And that's an important part is that we assess the readiness of folks before bringing folks together so that folks are really clear what it is that is an unmet need, and then, also, the other party taking accountability. We also set clear expectations and create group agreements on how folks will engage with one another in the circle. That's the justice with people, the participants. Whether it's community-building circles or restorative conversations, we start with really being clear, "What are our agreements with one another?"

Now imagine every committee, every classroom, every group and team you're in, even if you have a team and then a subcommittee and a subcommittee of the subcommittee, and each of those groups

have different group dynamics, and we're just using each of our individual's expectations and applying it to one another and hope for the best. Imagine if we created group agreements in each of those communities we're in and saying, "How are we going to be with one another? How will we engage with one another?" We really take time on ensuring that.

And, also, I think about that this concept of healing takes time. We don't rush folks to have their restorative conversation before they're ready. It definitely takes time. Sometimes we do pre-meetings and all of the pre-meeting work, and it'll take three to five months before we ever come together, because the harm didn't happen overnight, so how are we going to address situations of emotional impact in a week? Matter of fact, when folks say the sense of urgency, I slow down even more. Urgency is a symptom, to me, that, "Ooh, we are rushing. This is a performative act. We're not ready to come together," and that signals possibilities of harm that might happen. We definitely take the slowing down seriously.

Michelle Deutchman:

I have so many follow-ups, but a follow-up to that, because I can imagine people in the university system saying, "We don't have time for that. Students graduate. They go on to different classes. How can we scale this? It's not going to work," and I'm wondering what you say to those people.

Maria Jaochico:

Right. There's a balance. You're going to have folks that say, "We don't have time for that." And then you find group of folks, faculty making decisions of, "The harm happened in my classroom, then the restoration happens in my classroom time." They took three hours, three times, of their classroom to address the harm that happened in their classroom. That was important enough because that was learning. It aligned with the objectives of the classroom.

My point here is, yes, there is this institution and organization that values productivity and urgency. That is what we know of of higher education institutions, the big turnover of community, like you mentioned, graduating. But if we're using those same tools that are harming us again and again and again, at what point do you say, "Enough. That's not working," right? And it could be that, wait, let's take time and orientation to orient folks to the values of the institution and how folks have a sense of belonging by getting to know one another. That takes time, but that taking time allows for folks to get to know one another before the harm happens. Imagine your first conversation with your hall mate being the harm itself. My favorite question to that, when folks say it takes too much time and community-building is not important, my question to folks is, "How do you repair a relationship where there wasn't one to begin with?"

Michelle Deutchman:

And I'm just going to jump in and say what you just said, I think, is something that has been coming up all the time in this moment, where I'm being asked all the time, "Well, how do we get these groups of students, pro-Palestinian, pro-Israel, Muslim, Jewish, to sit down in dialogue?" And my thought is, "This is not a moment to be having people sit down. You had to have done the work a long time ago." And it goes back to what you said in the beginning, it seems to me, about the proactive and the reactive approach. The more you invest in the proactive approach, hopefully, the less time you have to spend investing in the reactive approach, and it's just about getting people to see the value of that investment.

And I think one of the things I'm imagining people might be thinking who are listening to this, and I know that it's something I have thought about your work, and about you and your expertise, is like, "Well, I

can't do this because I'm not an expert. I haven't been schooled in these principles and these ideas." And so one of my questions for you is what do you say to someone who really wants to bring some of the RJ principles into their classroom or their office or their relationships as a way to break it down so that it doesn't feel like it's all or nothing, you're either the director of the office or you're just like, "Forget it, I can't do it."

Maria Jaochico:

I love the framing of that because that is what folks who are trained in RJ think about. They're trained elsewhere, they come back to their institutions and say, "Where do I start? It's all or nothing. It's either we do all the things Maria just named or nothing at all," and I say, "No, that's not where we started." We started in the middle of pandemic because folks were like, "I'm isolated by the team I saw every day from 8:00 to 5:00, and now we're in Zoom boxes." And so I started doing community-building circles, meaning invitation of Zoom for one hour, and folks from different teams came together even and talked about how really difficult this was.

Michelle Deutchman:

There's some comfort in my hearing that what you're saying is that the people who are trained also feel like that. I guess my follow-up would be, if you were going to give a tangible something that each person might think about doing who listens to help them ground themselves just a little bit, or a little bit more, in RJ, what are some of those things that might be? I know, for me, it's going to read Dr. Davis's book that you mentioned. That's going to be a small step. What are some other steps, especially, I would say, I think the majority of our listeners are probably in administrative roles like yours?

Maria Jaochico:

Yeah. It's important to share early beginnings because, to your point, it may feel overwhelmingly impossible for folks to turn over from this mindset to be a more restorative mindset. I could understand how overwhelming that could be, because we live that. We live that currently. I'm reminded that the theme of the VOICE Initiative was breaking barriers and addressing barriers that harm a community, and still that's needed today, and that was a 2021 theme. UCSF did that by first training facilitators to facilitate community-building circles, and that was intentional. That was an intentional first start, using a proactive community-building work even before we were ever prepared to offer responsive approaches like a restorative circle, because, certainly, folks were like, "Can we do a restorative circle?" and I said, "We're not ready."

I was doing it outside of my full-time role when I was in student life. And so it was really bringing in more folks in our community who have similar thoughts. It's bringing in colleagues who were doing community-building already and utilizing a restorative justice framework to name the importance of community-building. The way I talk about restorative justice is that it's not that it's something separate from us. I think that's the most important thing that I would share with anyone who's thinking about implementation into their institution is don't talk about RJ as if it's separated from what your institution is already doing. There's already beautiful work being done in universities and institutions about community-building and restoration, and it's about putting a framework into that and naming and connecting each of those initiatives together.

With that shift of mindset, it's about exercising the muscle of empathetically listening and vulnerability of sharing stories. It's really providing this opportunity again and again. And even our faculty engaging in circles, they were like, "Oh, that was different." That's what I hear a lot, "That felt different. That felt different and new," a different way of dialogue, but still getting to a place of intentionally learning about

one another. An example of this is holding a circle for a department to ask the community members what support is needed to feel comfortable and safe engaging in difficult conversations. Start there. Don't start with a difficult conversation. Start with what is needed. What do we first need to do for you to feel comfortable? And maybe what your community shares is, "Well, first I need to get to know one of you. What are your values?" Then that's your first start. Have a circle that just shares values, and exercise that muscle so that it prepares you then to have those, what you're saying, engaging in difficult conversations.

I do suggest picking up the book, *The Little Book of Race and Restorative Justice*. We give this book to all of our facilitators. Chapter two is my most favorite, which it talks about this notion of interconnectedness. It really grounds you outside of just the practice, but the mindset shift on it. One tangible thing that each individual can do is practice slowing down. That could mean doing a grounding exercise or a breathing activity before jumping into meetings after meetings.

Administrators that are listening, I imagine your day, 8:00 AM, budget call; 9:00 PM one-on-one conversation with your team; there's a, yeah, 10:00 AM meeting with a student; 11:00, meeting with another colleague; 12:00, maybe you have lunch; 1:00, you have a meeting about an initiative. How crazy is that day, shifting from one type of topic to the next? And by the time you're in your 2:00 meeting that requires your full presence and conversations of impact and harm, your head space is still in your 8:00 AM meeting. How do we arrive and actually be present in each of our meetings so that we're not juggling many emotions at a time, when what is in front of us is what it's calling us to respond to?

Michelle Deutchman:

Well, maybe this is a silly example, but remember when all the Zoom structure meetings changed so that there was supposed to be five minutes in between? And my experience has been that, most often, people end up not honoring that, myself included. But I'm thinking to myself, "What if I really did say, 'This meeting actually is supposed to end at 12:55?'" And then I actually tried to use some of that time to recalibrate, not just run to the restroom, get a glass of water, inhale some food, but to actually do something like we did at the beginning. How might my day be different? And you know what? I will endeavor to do that and then I can report back to you.

Maria Jaochico:

Will you let me know?

Michelle Deutchman:

I will let you know.

Maria Jaochico:

Good, good.

Michelle Deutchman:

Definitely. My instinct is that we could keep talking for another 45 minutes, 45 hours, but I can't keep you on forever. And I think this is just the beginning of, hopefully, the journey for lots of people, and I know it's part of my own journey that I'm going on. I think what I would love to end on is ... I'm a little hesitant to use the word success, because I'm not sure that everything has a measure of success. But,

given that we are in a success-oriented environment, I think my question for you is what does that look like in RJ?

Maria Jaochico:

We are certainly interested in understanding long-term impact. We talked about data and metrics, and we are working on how we might measure the impact of RJ. If you are an RJ practitioner listening to this podcast, or a researcher that studies long-term impact of initiatives and programs, please reach out to me. Let's bring our minds together on this. But I'll share short-term successes, and we've got plenty to celebrate. Success is our chancellor and his leadership cabinet participating in a community-building circle. Success is a big shout-out to Dr. D'Anne Duncan, who's the Assistant Dean for Diversity and Learner Success in the Graduate Division at UCSF. She has led the establishing and coordinating of community-building circles for doctoral graduate students.

Success is this year marking its fifth year of welcoming our students in their first months, and sometimes their second day. First day is administrative orientation. Second day is community-building circle with their faculty director and administrator. Success is training over 100-plus facilitators, from physicians, nurses, campus leaders, staff, faculty, and our students, and this number grows every year. They use the skill set of circle facilitation with their teams, classrooms, committees, home life. I love that one of our faculty used it in their committee that they led, and they did grounding, community-building activity, and community agreements before they started the work that they were doing together, and it allowed them to level-set and get to know one another and it helped the work with students and other faculty almost more seamless because they had a foundation to work off of.

I love that it's being used informally in spaces and not just the formalized circle practice. It's wonderful that it's being integrated in those ways. That's what success look like. Start small, start in spaces you control, and it just blooms from there, because you're offering something different.

Michelle Deutchman:

That is such a hopeful note to end on. And I think, unfortunately, sometimes I feel like hope is in short supply these days, and it feels doable, at least to start, and I think that's so important. And I cannot tell you how grateful I am that you are willing to share yourself and your story and your expertise with our listeners, and my mind is already percolating about ways that maybe we can partner going forward. And so I just want to, again, share my gratitude with you.

Maria Jaochico:

Thank you. Thank you.

Michelle Deutchman:

In case you missed it, the Center is now accepting applications for our 2024-2025 class of fellows. Please visit our website at freespeechcenter.universityofcalifornia.edu for more information. Applications are due by Friday, March 15th.

Tune in next month for a conversation with ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge Executive Director Jennifer Domagal-Goldman on student voting trends as we barrel towards the 2024 presidential election. Talk to you next month.