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**Police Officers as Peace Officers:**

**A Philosophical and Theoretical Examination of Policing from a Peacemaking Approach**

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**Abstract**

Policing has evolved considerably over time and there have been significant changes in the past 200 years. As such, the mission of police has evolved as well and has mirrored changes in society. Policing has been categorized into various phases, typically referred to as the Political Entrenchment phase, the Reform Efforts, the Professional phase, and the Public and Community Relations phase. Within these phases, the focus of the police mission has changed from providing social service and assistance, law enforcement, police-community relations, and security. Furthermore, the dominant conceptualization of police as crime-fighters has influenced the conceptualization of police, police-community relations, and job-related stress. The purpose of this paper is to explore how peacemaking can facilitate a better understanding of the role of police for citizens, officers, and students who study criminal justice. Peacemaking is a way of thinking and acting that emphasizes “mercy and compassion” within processes and outcomes for the criminal justice system. Three major themes of peacemaking are connectedness, care, and mindfulness. We believe that a peacemaking approach could help officers develop the interpersonal skills and critical and dynamic thinking they will need to be more successful on the streets. Peacemaking also could help strengthen police-community relations and help the public better understand the roles and functions of police. Stories that exemplify the peacemaking approach to policing are provided and discussed.

## Introduction

American policing has experienced significant changes in the past 200 years. More importantly, the changes in American policing have mirrored changes in society as social evolution has required the police institution to respond to political, economic, social, and cultural influences over time. In its early inception, police focused their efforts on maintaining order and providing service to communities. Later their attention shifted to fighting crime and law enforcement, which was accompanied by the advancement of science and technology to create a “professional” police force that was detached from the communities they policed. The current approach attempts to balance law enforcement, order maintenance, and service; however, many of the historical concerns from citizens remain (Gaines & Kappeler, 2011).

Many of our institutions, and our perceptions of these institutions, are so deeply entrenched in our minds and culture that we are often unaware of how our perceptions influence the functioning of social institutions. Citizens, new police recruits, and students of criminal justice often carry preconceived notions about policing that shapes their understanding and expectations for the role of police in society. For example, most believe that much of police work involves fighting crime and battling evil as opposed to the more relatively mundane pursuit of providing civil service. Additionally, citizens expect police to provide safety and security in a way that does not violate their privacy and freedoms. A shift to a peacemaking philosophy and approach for policing could help alter the public expectations and conceptualizations of police in the United States.

The purpose of this paper is to explore how peacemaking can facilitate a better understanding of the role of police for citizens, officers, and students who study criminal justice. We begin with a discussion about the different phases of policing and the shift in focus as policing has moved through these phases. Next, we discuss the peacemaking philosophy and how it can be applied within the policing profession. Then we discuss the major areas in policing that could benefit from a peacemaking approach. Finally, we provide examples of police interactions that exemplify peacemaking and offer suggestions about how peacemaking could be integrated into the policing mission.

## The Policing Mission

The evolution of American policing is attributed to the development of civilian policing in England and the rise of the state, in America, as a political organization (Archbold, 2013; Gaines & Kappeler, 2011). American policing has undergone many phases, typically categorized as the Political Entrenchment phase, the Reform Efforts phase, the Professional phase, and the Public and Community Relations phase. Within these various phases, the police mission, and the focus and efforts of individual officers, has shifted over time to emphasize social service and assistance, law enforcement, police and community relations, and security. These various stages are described below.

During the Political Entrenchment phase, police aimed to provide social service and assistance; however, it was generally offered as an extension of political influence and corruption. Politicians controlled the organization of police departments, the appointment of officers and supervisors, and often decided who was arrested and which laws were enforced (Bartollas & Hahn, 1999; Dunham & Alpert, 2009). Although the police department was responsible for enforcing the city’s laws, politicians soon realized they could garner more political support, and favor, by providing social assistance. Consequently, the police became a resource that was easy to exploit for political gain; bribery and corruption became commonplace as officers began to understand their role as an extension of political corruption in this type of system. Predictably, the widespread corruption and political influence during the Political Entrenchment phase encouraged increased efforts to reform the police institution.

Reform efforts typically took one of three forms: investigative commissions, police administrative reform, and general police reform (Archbold, 2013; Walker & Katz, 2008). Investigative commissions were formed and financed by private donations or community groups and focused on suspected incidents of police corruption. In addition, general police reform resulted from citizen pressure to address mismanagement and corruption in local and state government and this pressure was often achieved through investigative commissions. More importantly, police administrative reform was initiated by an increase in the number of conscientious and caring police executives who wanted to improve the quality of law enforcement services to the public and also disliked the control that politicians exerted over the police institution.

The reform efforts pushed the police into the Professional phase where a focus on law enforcement and crime fighting emerged as the primary mission (Dunham & Alpert, 2009; Walker & Katz, 2008). The passage of the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment, or the Volstead Act, and the Depression Era of the 1930s were significant social changes that assisted this transformation. Police and community relations became strained as the Volstead Act, or Prohibition, required the police to enforce laws that were opposed by many citizens and officers. The Depression of the 1930s had a similar effect as widespread unemployment, bank failures, property foreclosures, poverty, and homelessness created a desperate time for many Americans and left few alternatives to crime for many to survive. Despite these struggles, police officers were pressured to focus on law enforcement and it was during this era that crime fighting became more important than order maintenance or the provision of services. Police agencies adopted a military organizational model and focused on criminal apprehension and became less concerned with interpersonal relationships with community members. The unintended consequence of this new focus was the evolution of citizens' expectations about the mission of the police institution and the role of police officers.

The increased momentum of the civil rights movement, the riots during the 1960s, the feelings of poverty and helplessness, and general civil discord led many to believe the police institution was ill-equipped to deal with a changing society. As a result of the increasing civil strife, the government created the *Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act* in 1968, which provided a substantial increase in resources for both local and state police agencies, delivering more equipment, training, and programs. In addition to reducing crime, the new focus would also emphasize the development of programs to improve police and community relations. Over time, this new focus would evolve into community policing. Community policing is an overarching philosophy that combines problem-oriented policing with community-oriented policing and is intended to focus on both problem-solving and community partnerships (Archbold, 2013; Gaines & Kappeler, 2011; Walker & Katz, 2008). This phase of policing evolved throughout the 1980s and 1990s and would acknowledge the importance of police-community relationships in addition to the law enforcement perspective and focus.

Community policing became recognized institutionally with the *Violent Crime and Law Enforcement Act of 1994*, which provided significant funding to community policing programs and initiatives. A variety of programs were implemented under the auspices of community policing as the focus was toward building better relationships with community members, crime prevention, and also law enforcement. Programs included neighborhood meetings, neighborhood newsletters, citizen academies, police athletic leagues, curfew enforcement, code enforcement, enforcement of public intoxication and vagrancy laws, and eviction programs aimed at drug users and traffickers. Despite the continued focus on law enforcement, community policing represented a significant attempt to shift the focus of policing away from the professional model and back to building relationships in communities.

The terrorist events of 9/11 marked the beginning of a new phase of policing, one that would focus on security, or homeland security. Given the underground nature of terrorist activity and the reliance on citizen information to solve crimes and defend against terrorism, the police institution remains dependent on police community relations to function. However, this approach has the capacity to foster a sense of distrust between police and community members as it implies the police mission functions more as a partnership with the federal government than as a partnership with the community. In addition, this approach lends itself to violations of the law in certain instances that are thought to promote safety and security on a larger scale. Perhaps a more viable option is peacemaking policing, or policing from a peacemaking philosophy and approach, where a sense of connectedness, care, and mindfulness can emerge to provide a better relationship between police and community members and a more operative policing mission.

### Peacemaking Philosophy

Peacemaking is not a perspective; rather, it is a way of thinking and acting (Dodson, Bush, & Braswell, 2012). The foundation of peacemaking criminology stems from ancient wisdom traditions such as Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Native American. Peacemaking emphasizes the importance of compassion, forgiveness, restitution, reconciliation, spiritual healing, and restoration (Braswell, Fuller, & Lozoff, 2001). The major concepts, or themes, of peacemaking are connectedness, care, and mindfulness. The theme of connectedness stresses that we are intimately connected and bonded to each other and our environment, rather than isolated and separate from one another (Braswell, McCarthy, & McCarthy, 2012). Connectedness promotes the idea that our actions have consequences for us, individually, and for others, even if we are unable to see the outcomes of those actions. This becomes especially important when considering the various roles and functions that police officers are responsible for within their profession.

Care, or caring, refers to a feminine approach to relationships and concern for others (Noddings, 1986). A feminine ethic of care emphasizes a nurturing concern for others and is grounded in receptivity, relatedness, and responsiveness. In contrast, the masculine approach to relationships and concern for others emphasizes rules, laws, and principles and is more detached than the feminine perspective. Obviously, rules and laws are necessary for a civilized society to function; however, there must also be consideration for others and how these rules and laws impact various societal groups. The theme of caring is specifically concerned with limiting the potential for discrimination, which is especially important given the cultural differences and various belief systems that exist in our society. This is particularly important for policing as officers are often accused of engaging in discrimination.

Mindfulness, or awareness, encourages us to consider the needs of others in addition to our personal desires and sense of self. This theme reminds us to pay attention and consider the impact our decisions have for ourselves and others. Mindfulness can encourage police personnel to examine not only citizens' lawful or unlawful behaviors, but also the behaviors of police agencies and professionals as well.

In addition to the themes of peacemaking, there are four different archetypes that inherently exist within our human nature and can assist with the adoption of a peacemaking model for policing. Arrien (1993) delineates the four archetypes as the Warrior, the Healer, the Visionary, and the Teacher. The Warrior archetype encourages us to "show up, or choose to be present" (Arrien, 1993, p. 7). This archetype suggests that police officers must be present in the moment and active participants when interacting with civilians. Citizens sometimes feel as though police officers are not taking their complaints seriously or feel as though the officer perceives the matter as insignificant. The Warrior archetype invites officers to access their inherent leadership skills and treat every personal issue or call as if it were the most important issue of the day; there are no "garbage calls." Officers also are encouraged to exit the cruiser as often as possible, walk around, and get to know the citizens in the community. Police officers could get to know the business owners, kids, parents, and others in the community in a capacity that is different from enforcing the law or providing service. In doing so, police officers can help to foster connectedness in the community.

The Healer is the second archetype described by Arrien (1993). This archetype extends the Warrior archetype of showing up into paying attention. In the context of the Healer, paying attention refers to police officers listening empathically to citizens to better understand the feelings, concerns, and interests of those they are serving. Many citizens harbor negative attitudes and feelings about police officers and feel as though the police simply do not care about the obstacles and challenges they face. At times, citizens want to feel as though they are being listened to, even if the police cannot resolve a situation. Essentially, there are times when we want to tell our story and feel that others are empathetic.

The third archetype described by Arrien (1993) is the Visionary. This archetype stresses that we tell the truth, without blame or judgment. Although some aspects of policing require deception, such as deceptive interrogation, the police institution could be more honest about the paradoxical nature of truthfulness within the profession. For example, many people have come to understand that when an officer says to be truthful it is to acquire additional information with which to support the decision to arrest. This is necessary, to an extent, but also further damages the police-community relationship considering the current approach to policing that focuses on arresting and punishing offenders. Police officers could also refrain from sitting in judgment, or acting as "judge, jury, and executioner" and police administrators could encourage their officers to impartially investigate criminal matters and to avoid the manipulation of the facts or evidence of a case.

The Teacher is the final archetype described by Arrien (1993) and encourages us to be open to outcomes, but not to be attached to them. Police officers may experience low morale and stress when the outcome of a particular case does not go as expected or desired. For example, officers may feel defeated when they fail to apprehend a suspect, save a victim, win a case in court, or any other type of outcome where the officer perceives an injustice or failure has occurred. The Teacher archetype reminds officers that they are one small part of the justice system and if they have done all they can do, then they can feel good about

themselves at the end of the day. In addition, officer must learn that things will not always go the way they hoped or planned and they must have the strength to embrace disappointment because, in the police profession, they will encounter it frequently.

Given the current state of policing and what is required for the police mission to succeed, we argue that policing could benefit from a peacemaking focus, where the primary mission would be to foster a sense of connectedness, care, and mindfulness within and between police officers and citizens. We believe the current approach to policing allows a few major areas of policing to impact the overall effectiveness of the policing mission and these could be alleviated with a different way of thinking about the police mission and the role of the police officer. The overall mission appears to be centered on finding a balance between providing safety and security while also creating and nurturing relationships with citizens. We believe peacemaking can assist in this overall mission. Below we discuss a few of the major areas of policing and also discuss how a peacemaking approach could be beneficial. Then we provide examples of how peacemaking is already at work and how it might be expanded.

### **Major Areas of Policing**

There are a few major areas of policing that impede the overall mission of providing safety and security and fostering relationships within the community. These areas are the conceptualization of police, police and community relations, and job related stress. Furthermore, the interrelated nature of these issues compounds their effects and, ultimately, limits the ability of police to successfully achieve either goal within their mission. A peacemaking philosophy and approach can help address these areas of concern.

#### *Conceptualization of Police*

As previously discussed, the conceptualization of the police institution and the mission of police have evolved over time, which has altered the expected roles and functions for police officers. Despite the changes over time, the emphasis on law enforcement that emerged during the professional phase has continued to protrude through whatever mission and approach has come after. The manner in which police are conceptualized is important as it will influence expectations for police from both citizens and officers and will also impact police and community relations and job related stress.

The law enforcement, or crime-fighting, image dominates the public face of policing. Obviously, law enforcement is an important part of the job and cannot be eliminated. However, police officers are routinely engaged in activities other than enforcing the law. In fact, it is estimated that 80% of a patrol officer's time is devoted to activities other than enforcing the law (Lab, Williams, Holcomb, Burek, King, & Buerger, 2011). Again, this does not mean that law enforcement, or crime-fighting, is not important; although, it may create an inaccurate or limited impression of the police institution and its officers and also create unrealistic expectations for police from both officers and citizens.

It is important to identify the various roles of police to gain a better perspective or understanding of how they function. Roles refer to basic social positions that carry with them certain expectations; they can be very specific or rather vague and are often associated with social institutions, such as the police. In broad terms, police officers have three major roles within police work: law enforcement, order maintenance, and service. In reality, because of the wide range of activities and services provided by police, officers are expected and trained to be generalists, meaning they are trained to respond to a variety of events and incidents in addition to crime.

Although the police are the primary means by which the law is imposed, and only the police have a general mandate to use force for the common good, most incidents are resolved through other means, such as mediation, referral, or the mere threat of arrest (Lab et al., 2011). Furthermore, in some disputes, police officers have no legal authority and serve only as referees or "caseworkers." In fact, those who call for police interventions do not necessarily expect officers to make arrests, as long as order is restored. Contrary to the crime-fighting image, police officers interact with victims of crime as much, or more, as they interact with offenders. Thus, much of what a police officer does is more akin to social work. Consider that social work is defined as a professional and academic discipline that seeks to improve the quality of life and subjective well-being of individuals, groups, and communities through research, policy, community organizing, crisis

intervention, and teaching. In addition, social workers assist those affected by social disadvantages such as poverty, mental and physical illness or disability, and social injustice, including violations of their civil liberties and constitutional rights. Aside from specific responsibilities for enforcing the law, this sounds very similar to the mission of police. According to Miller and Braswell (2002), a major aspect of police work requires officers to deal with a variety of interpersonal situations as the most frequent request for police services is for crisis intervention calls.

Students and citizens “who expect exciting careers in law enforcement are likely to find that much of their time is devoted to helping people cope with life, occasionally resolving low-level problems, and building interpersonal relationships with community members” (Lab et al., 2011, p. 49). Furthermore, “the police are likely to deal with crimes committed by people who are drunk, depressed, mentally ill, or simply overwhelmed by life stresses” as opposed to evil super-villains or “mastermind” criminals (p. 47). As such, police officers frequently describe their work as “long hours of sheer boredom, punctuated by moments of sheer terror” (p. 48).

Primarily, citizens expect police to keep them safe and secure by reducing and preventing crime, which is very difficult to do given the protections and civil liberties afforded by the U.S. Constitution. This has ultimately led to an expectation that police officers be proactive in fighting crime. Furthermore, some citizens believe that police are incapable of preventing crime, when, ironically, the police are inherently designed to react to crime. This underlying tension ultimately stems from the narrow conceptualization of police officers and the police mission.

#### *Police and Community Relations*

Police community relations have always been a concern for the police institution; although, the manner in which those relationships operated was a product of the social environment. Ultimately, building relationships with community members is a vital component of police work as police rely on citizen complaints to become aware of and resolve most situations.

The defining structural characteristic of law enforcement in the United States is decentralization. Decentralization allows each agency to operate with discretion inside the parameters of law and also allows each agency to serve the particular needs of their community. Historically, the emphasis on community control, or decentralization, has persisted for two reasons. First, citizens have been fearful of granting the government too much control over their lives, especially to the police since they have the power to arrest and detain citizens. This fear ultimately stems from governmental abuse of power from the colonial era. Second, American citizens believe that local problems are best solved by people intimately familiar with the issues and their causes.

The need for police-community relations has been reinforced through the various phases of policing. As discussed earlier, the focus of the police mission during the Political Entrenchment phase was social service and assistance, but was inevitably clouded by political corruption. The need for police-community relations was reinforced during the Reform Efforts and the Professional phases of policing as civil disobedience, organized crime, and general distrust with policing eroded any semblance of a relationship between police and community members. The Public and Community Relations phase of American policing, highlighted by Community Policing initiatives, included a concerted effort to rebuild police-community relations; however, the 9/11 terrorist attacks reintroduced tension into the relationship.

The current relationship between police and community is strained at best and, often, antagonistic. The basic structure is set up for police and communities to have a relationship. Similar to a bad romantic relationship, both sides bear some of the responsibility for the current state of affairs and both sides must put in work to make the relationship better. Unlike a bad romantic relationship, there is no exiting the relationship by one party or the other – both sides are “stuck” in this relationship.

Consider that some citizens believe the police are incapable of performing their professional responsibilities and often lob insults that describe police as lazy, overweight, incompetent, and forever searching for free donuts and coffee. Not to be outdone, the police tend to categorize citizens into three basic categories: the suspicious, the assholes, and the know-nothings (Crank, 2004; Van Maanen, 1978). The suspicious are those who police believe they should pay attention to and are suspected to participate in criminal activities. The assholes are those who question the authority of the police and, in our current climate, are likely those who record police activities in an attempt to portray their lack of professionalism. The know-nothings are individuals who do not fit into either of the other two categories; they are not suspicious and do not question authority. In addition, they are not police officers and as a result, they cannot understand the true nature of policing or the role of police officers. The inherently coercive nature of policing will undoubtedly create hurdles to overcome in the effort to build relationships as will the “Blue Wall of Silence” and the police subculture. However, peacemaking can help police to overcome these barriers. Peacemaking allows for a

better relationship between police and community members and can provide avenues for healing this relationship.

#### *Job Related Stress*

Job related stress is another important concern for the police institution. Obviously, stress can impact morale, job satisfaction, and overall job performance. More importantly, the issue of job related stress is intertwined with the previous issues discussed. In other words, the conceptualization of police officers and police-community relations can impact job related stress and job related stress also impacts police-community relations and the conceptualization of police.

Consider the socialization of police officers through various phases of their career (Braswell, McCarthy, & McCarthy, 2012). The first stage is the choice of the career. Individuals choose police work for various reasons, such as the perceived non-routine or flexibility of the job, the opportunity to work outside and be active, the absence of direct supervision, and the exciting nature of the unknown elements of policing. The profession is also perceived as being socially significant and provides opportunities to help people and their communities. During this stage, new police recruits and those who desire a job in policing view the profession very positively. The second stage is referred to as the introduction. At this stage, the new recruit's optimism and uncritical view begins to fade and the officer's values and attitudes begin to change. The recruit begins to see the agency as an instrument of control, concerned primarily with predictability, stability, and efficiency. Rather than helping people and their communities, the shift in focus is toward a bureaucracy that is considered highly formal, mechanical, and often arbitrary in its approach.

The third stage of socialization is set up by the first two stages. The third stage, referred to as encounter, is where new recruits learn the specifics of policing, or the value system that guides the particular agency they are attempting to join. The primary method for adopting the values of an agency is through the Field Training Officer (FTO). The FTO will evaluate the new recruit's ability to resolve situations in a manner that is acceptable to the FTO. As the individual officer's disposition moves further away from where it was when the choice of occupation was made, the new recruit begins to enter the fourth and final stage of socialization – metamorphosis. During this stage, the officer begins to adopt the social and psychological conceptualization of police officer, or “cop.” This conceptualization is marred by the cynicism, sense of abandonment, and disenchantment the new recruit now has for the occupation, which will also impact the officer's ability to enforce a police mission that emphasizes police-community relations.

In addition to the stress officers experience from the socialization process, there is the stress that evolves inherently from the conflicting nature of criminal justice. Herbert Packer (1968) created two models to describe the processes and outcomes of the criminal justice system: the “crime control model” and the “due process model.” The crime control model is focused on the quick and efficient apprehension and processing of offenders. This model assumes that suspects are guilty of the charges against them and seeks to process cases as quickly as possible, often referred to as assembly-line justice. In contrast, the due process model emphasizes individual rights and freedoms over the apprehension of offenders and assumes that most suspects are innocent of the charges brought against them.

The reality for police is that these two competing models create an interesting dilemma for police that results in constant criticism from those they have chosen to serve. For example, even if police are doing everything possible to keep communities safe, crime will exist and could increase. When this happens, proponents of the crime control model criticize the police institution's ability to fight crime. However, if the police engage in behavior that questions the violation of a citizen's rights or liberties, then those who favor due process become very critical of the police mission. Although both models are at work to varying degrees within the criminal justice system, the police receive constant criticism for an extremely difficult job. In the end, the police have a very difficult, if not impossible, task of trying to control and prevent crime while maintaining citizens' constitutional rights and civil liberties.

#### **Police Officers as Peace Officers**

Most states use the term “peace officer” to describe individuals who have police powers. Peace officers are primarily responsible for order maintenance or keeping the peace, but how peace officers go about keeping the peace is discretionary. The police peacekeeping function does not presuppose that the police operate under a peacemaking philosophy. On the contrary, most police agencies operate under a warmaking model that encourages coercion, intimidation, and, often, violence. The downside of the war model is that it perpetuates distrust, fear, and insecurity among the public and significantly undermines the ability of the police to do their jobs effectively (Pepinsky, 1995). Peacemaking criminologists reject the warmaking philosophy as unjust, violent, and destructive (Fuller, 1998; Pepinsky and Quinney, 1991; Sullivan, 2008).

Contrary to warmaking, peacemaking challenges us to exercise care, connectedness, and mindfulness in our daily lives and in our personal interactions with others. Advocates of peacemaking claim that it may be more appropriate for dealing with, not only criminal behavior, but other societal ills such drug addiction, mental illness, sexism, racism, poverty, and homelessness (Fuller, 1998; Pepinsky, 2000). If police agencies adopted a peacemaking perspective, our criminal justice system would look radically different. We would see a system that is more humane and just, and one that entertains the “possibility of compassion and mercy within the framework of justice” (Braswell & Gold, 2008, p. 27).

There is no denying that news stories are replete with examples of police officers who act unethically and/or violate the public trust. As a result, many have the perception that police officers do more harm than good. The media undoubtedly influences community perceptions because news outlets disproportionately cover negative stories. News cameras seldom capture police officers engaged in good deeds, and cellphone footage almost never portrays police officers in a positive light. It is unfortunate that reporters and citizens are not as zealous about catching police officers doing the right thing. We argue that there are police officers who do act ethically and their actions reflect a peacemaking philosophy.

Throughout the United States, there are stories that give us a glimpse of what policing would look like if police operated under a peacemaking philosophy and these stories showcase police officers who saw someone in need and made an effort to help. New York Police Department Officer Lawrence DePrimo, for example, made headlines when a female tourist photographed him giving boots to a homeless man. When asked why he did it, he stated, “It was freezing out and you could see the blisters on this man’s feet. I had two pairs of socks and I was still cold” (Goodman, 2012, p. A22). In a similar incident, Corporal Jeremy Walsh of the Odessa Police Department gave his boots and a bottle of water to a homeless man. Walsh said he knew the homeless man, Anthony, and that the man had a history of frostbite on his feet and he was not wearing shoes. Walsh commented later that giving Anthony the boots was “...the right thing to do. I had something that someone else needed that I didn’t need” (Sakoda, 2014, p. 1). Covey (1989) claims that, “To know and not do is really not to know” (p. 12). Both of these police officers knew how the cold temperatures could affect these homeless men and they decided to act.

Officer Charles Ziegler with the Winston-Salem Police Department was working an off-duty job as a church security officer when he spotted a woman and a small child walking in the pouring, freezing rain. He said he had seen the woman and her daughter walking in the neighborhood on many occasions and he did not want them out in the cold. In an interview, Ziegler said later he did not attribute his good deed to being a police officer rather his actions were the result of his roles as a husband and father. He approached the woman and said, “Get in the car, there’s no reason for you and your baby to be out here.” He added, “You see someone and you just help them” (Jeneault, 2013, p. 1).

A Florida law enforcement officer recently made national headlines when she decided to exercise compassion toward a woman who was caught shoplifting. Jessica Robles stated she was motivated to steal groceries because her three children were hungry and she had no food in her home. Robles lost her job and had no way to pay for the groceries. She walked out of a supermarket with \$300 worth of groceries without paying, but was detained by a loss prevention officer. Miami-Dade Officer Vicki Thomas arrived to investigate and she ran a records check on Robles and discovered that the woman had no significant criminal history. As Thomas learned more about Robles’s circumstances, Thomas felt that taking her to jail was not going to solve the problem and she felt compelled to help Robles. Thomas made the decision to purchase groceries for Robles and her family. Thomas stated, “I could relate. I was a single mom and, without the help of my family, that could have been me” (CNN Staff, 2013, p. 1).

As a mother, Thomas was mindful of the pain and difficulty of trying to provide for her children, which allowed her to understand Robles’s situation in a deeper way. Mindfulness allows us to be more fully aware of the “bigger picture” in terms of the needs of others and helps us to explore a broader range of possibilities when presented with a problem. Because Thomas was mindful, she was able to choose a more compassionate resolution than arresting Robles. Thomas realized that putting Robles in jail would not address the central problem—the need to help three hungry children. Thomas said, “I needed to do my job, but I also needed to help her” (CNN Staff, 2013, p. 1).

In that moment, Thomas felt connected to a woman she had never met because they had a shared human experience. As we become more aware of how we are connected to all of what we are a part of, we will begin to see the importance of acting in more responsible ways. Peacemaking encourages us recognize our shared experiences as human beings and to avoid behaviors in which we create social barriers or labels that perpetuate isolation. Thomas made the decision to allow her shared experience with Robles to guide her response to the situation instead of judging Robles or her choices.



Thomas's one act of kindness and compassion also created a ripple effect of kindness in the community. After the story aired on local new channels, people all over south Florida called Thomas wanting to help. Thomas collected \$700 in donations to be spent on food at Walmart. The store said if there was any leftover money they would give the remainder to Robles to help her family pay bills. Robles even received a job offer for a customer service position from a man who saw her story on the news.

Two police officers in Portland, Oregon answered a "domestic violence" call that they resolved through kindness and compassion. Officers Rob Jackson and George Weseman heard what they believed to be a screaming woman inside a home. The officers found Margi Seburn inside the house crying. They soon discovered that the woman was crying, not because she was a domestic violence victim, but a distraught mother. It was Christmas time and through tears Seburn explained that she could not afford to purchase food, toys, or a Christmas tree for her three young children. She said that she recently had moved to the Portland area and she had attempted to get help from several charities, but they all turned her away stating that she was too late to sign up for assistance. The officers offered her information about additional organizations that might be able to help her and her children. Jackson and Weseman left and discussed how their words seemed "empty and hollow" and that was when they decided to "do a Christmas mission" (Ashton, 2013, p. 1).

Word of Jackson and Weseman's mission snowballed into many acts of kindness that day. First, the officers explained the situation to their sergeant and he gave them the green light to help Seburn's family. Weseman put out a precinct-wide message on his mobile computer asking if other officers wanted to help. Donation pledges poured in from area officers and a dispatcher suggested that Jackson and Weseman might be able to obtain toys for the children from the Portland Fire Bureau's Toy-n-Joy Makers program. The dispatcher called ahead of their arrival and the volunteers helped the officers select gifts for the children.

Jackson and Weseman picked up food from the Portland Police Bureau Sunshine Division and made arrangements to deliver Christmas dinner to Seburn and her children. The officers also purchased a small tree complete with decorations, Christmas stockings filled with candy, wrapping paper and tape. They even purchased a gift card for Seburn so she would be able to get something for herself.

Jackson and Weseman returned to Seburn's home and made their Christmas delivery. Seburn's said her tears of sorrow and frustration turned to tears of joy when she realized what the officers had done for her family. When the officers were asked what motivated them to help this family, they stated that they "both had a soft spot for kids" and they could identify with Seburn's anguish as a parent (Ashton, 2013, p. 1). The officers stepped in to care for Seburn's children when she could not. Their actions personify the adage, "It takes a village to raise a child." In other words, it takes more than one person to teach our children important life lessons. Through their actions, these two officers taught Seburn's children that kindness and compassion may come from the most unexpected place. Indirectly, the officers also taught her children the value of paying attention to the circumstances of others, and when possible, reaching out to help them.

One of the authors, Kimberly Dodson, served as a law enforcement officer for a little over a decade. Dodson had many interactions with the public and she also had the opportunity to choose peacemaking resolutions. In one such instance, dispatch sent her to back up two emergency medical technicians (EMT) who were attempting to transport a mentally ill man to the hospital for a psychiatric evaluation. When she arrived, the two male EMTs seemed less than impressed that the dispatcher had sent a female deputy. One of the EMTs snidely remarked, "You're the backup they sent?" Dodson quipped back, "Yep, I'm the one with the badge and the gun." It was clear by the looks on their faces that the EMTs did not appreciate her remark.

Although the EMTs were not convinced she could handle the situation, they explained that the man was refusing transport to the hospital. The man was sitting in a recliner and, although he was seated, he appeared to be rather tall and muscular. He had a baby face that seemed to be at odds with his physical size. The young man's mother explained she had an emergency court order to have her son committed to the hospital for a mental evaluation. She confided in Dodson that she was afraid the men would hurt her son. Before she could speak with the man, a male deputy, "Bryant" arrived on the scene. Bryant spoke briefly with the EMTs and handed his Oakley sunglasses to Dodson as he quickly brushed past her and said, "Hold these. I've got this!"

Bryant yelled at the man and warned him that, "You will get in the ambulance one way or another!" The man refused but he looked at Dodson and whispered, "You're not going to let them hurt me are you?" She replied softly, "No, I'm not." Knowing that things were about to escalate, Dodson turned to Bryant and said, "Hey, let me talk to him." She handed him back his sunglasses and walked a little closer to the man. Dodson smiled and calmly stated, "Hi. My name is Kim. What's your name?" He said, "Robert." "Well, Robert it's good to meet you. Your mom called us because she is very worried about you. I'm here today to take you to the hospital, not to jail. Do you understand that?" Dodson replied. Robert smiled and nodded "Yes." She

continued, "What can I do so that you'll go to the hospital with us today?" He glanced down at his shoes momentarily then looked up and in a child-like voice asked, "Can you tie my shoes?"

Many may have thought this was a strange and unreasonable request, after all, tying shoes is not taught in the police academy or spelled out in departmental standard operating procedures. Dodson was entertaining the idea when Bryant gave Dodson a disapproving look and in a firm voice he said, "Don't do it." She ignored him. She smiled at Robert and bent down and tied his shoes. From her kneeling position, she looked up at him and said, "Okay, you're all set." He smiled and replied, "Thank you ma'am. You're the only one who's been nice to me today." With that, he got up and calmly walked to the ambulance and the EMTs transported him to the hospital.

Of course, the situation could have gone horribly wrong because she put herself in a vulnerable position. Robert could have kicked her in the face. He could have attempted to physically overpower her or grab her gun. Yet, in that moment, Dodson made a judgment call that Robert was more like a child than his physical size might suggest. She also saw Robert through the lens of a mother and, as a result, she acted with the care and concern that we would expect a mother to exhibit.

According to Nel Noddings (1986), our response to those we interact with should be guided by a feminist ethic of care—similar to the care a mother has for her children. Care-focused feminism encourages receptivity, relatedness, and responsiveness in human interactions. In other words, we must recognize and be attentive to the needs of others if we are to respond in ethical ways (Gilligan, 1982). However, Noddings observes that most of human interactions stem from a masculine approach to ethics. The masculine approach focuses on "justice" and is less concerned with relational ethics. Therefore, from this perspective, human interactions should be directed by analysis and rationalization. Individuals who possess these characteristics tend to categorize human interactions into rigid dichotomies. For example, interactions can be categorized into one of two categories, such as right or wrong, just or unjust, and fair and unfair (Myers & Chiang, 1993).

The masculine approach is clearly the dominant philosophy driving the police mission. Padavic and Prokos (2002), for example, found that in addition to the formal curriculum, which includes the policies, practices, and procedures of being a police officer, police academies taught a "hidden curriculum." The hidden curriculum referred to the implicit lessons instructors taught to students that were outside the explicit curriculum. In the police academy, instructors explicitly stated that policing was a gender-neutral profession; however, the implicit lessons reinforced the notion that masculinity was synonymous with what it means to be a police officer. Padavic and Prokos (2002) found feminine perspectives were not only rejected, but ridiculed by male recruits and instructors. A feminine or maternalistic ethic of care is not exclusive to females. To the contrary, Noddings (1986) points out that maternalistic care is an innate characteristic in all human beings. In other words, feminine, in this context, refers to the psychological traits of masculinity and femininity that reside in each of us. Over time we learn to ignore this characteristic or choose not to cultivate it, which is unfortunate because it could fundamentally change the way we choose to respond to those we encounter.

Bryant and Dodson's interactions with Robert juxtapose the feminine and masculine ethical approaches. Bryant viewed Robert's refusal to comply as "wrong." Thus, Bryant used the threat of physical force to gain Robert's compliance, which is consistent with the coercive nature of the masculine approach. Dodson, on the other hand, defused the situation by showing a maternalistic care and concern for Robert in an effort to gain his compliance and to avoid the need for physical force. If police officers were able to internalize the feminine ethic of care, they might be more inclined to view themselves as peace officers and act accordingly. In the situation discussed above, a peace officer would seek a peaceful resolution first and only resort to physical force if absolutely necessary.

It is clear that police officers undoubtedly touch the lives of those they serve for better or worse. Sometimes one small act of kindness can leave a lasting legacy of love. On August 6, 2011, a video camera captured San Diego Officer Jeremy Henwood's final act of kindness. A thirteen-year-old boy, Daveon Scott was at McDonald's and he was short on cash. He approached Officer Henwood and asked him to borrow ten cents to buy cookies. Instead of giving him the money, Officer Henwood purchased the cookies for Daveon. They engaged in a brief conversation in which Henwood asked the boy what he wanted to be when he grew up. Daveon replied that he wanted to be an NBA star. Henwood told him that it "takes hard work" but to keep working toward his goals (Hood & Young, 2011, p. 1). The entire exchange between the two lasted only a few seconds. Moments after leaving McDonald's, Officer Henwood was shot and killed.

In a recent interview, Daveon admitted that prior to this encounter he did not have a high opinion of police officers. He stated that negative media coverage shaped his perceptions of police officers, but that Henwood's kindness and encouragement helped him to view police officers in a more positive light. Henwood's words also inspired Daveon to work hard and do more to help others. Henwood could have ignored Daveon or declined to help him, and that negative interaction would have reinforced Daveon's unfavorable perceptions of

the police. Instead Henwood's final act of kindness turned a brief chance meeting into a powerful transformative moment.

### Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to explore how a peacemaking philosophy and approach could prove beneficial to policing as a profession. A peacemaking approach could help better prepare officers for a job that requires interpersonal skills and critical and dynamic thinking. Peacemaking could also help strengthen police-community relations and help the public better understand the roles and functions of police.

Both the police and the community could benefit from a peacemaking approach. Themes of connectedness, care, and mindfulness could help to broaden the conceptualization of police, improve police-community relations, and decrease job related stress for police officers and general frustration with the criminal justice system for citizens. Police officers are encouraged to show up, pay attention, tell the truth, and not get attached to outcomes.

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