



Jackie Katounas is Edmund Rice Justice Trust's principle facilitator in post-sentencing Restorative Justice conferences. Jackie was one of a number of keynote speakers invited to contribute to a day inspired by the memory, life, work and values of Celia Lashlie.

Jackie shared aspects of her life's journey, the impact of early childhood, unrecognized trauma, views from the 'inside out' (time in prison), significant moments which led to healing and personal transformation and the inspirational ways Jackie has co led the restorative justice movement especially in New Zealand but recognized internationally.

We are grateful to Jackie for generously sharing this narrative, her personal story publicly and hope that it respectfully touches and inspires readers as it has done in other forums for a number of years.

- Cathy Harrision

When the Damage is Done

I didn't meet Ces in prison and there's a big part of me that's pleased about that as I would have met my match I'm sure. I met Ces at a PFNZ conference I felt like I'd known her all my life, we clicked. I didn't know her well but I love all that she had to say and I support her legacy in wanting better for the women who need support.

My story is not much different from other women who have been to prison. Our paths may have been different but our journeys are the same. I came from a typical family in the 50's, the youngest of 3 with a stay at home Mum, and my Dad was in the fire brigade. My life changed dramatically when my Dad killed himself in our family home. I was 11 years old.

The adults in my life made bad decisions in handling me and any potential trauma. I was sent to school on the day of his funeral and I was supposed to act as if nothing had happened. I had seen my Fathers dead blue body lying in our kitchen – how

could I forget that image let alone process that as 11 year old.

This unaddressed childhood trauma led me down a path of self - destruction. At 12 years of age I was in my first state institution, my experiences in state care led to more trauma. I was 16 when I first experienced prison, and over the next 30 years I managed almost 12 years prison and 138 criminal convictions.



Nothing ever changed for me in prison – it was part and parcel of my life and it became comfortable. Where do you go when the damage is done? What do I do and where do I begin? It took an encounter with one of my victims to change my life. This encounter triggered my passion for RJ.

In 1996/7 I trained to be a RJ Facilitator and was a founding member of HBRJ. The journey to get here was not an easy one, but I have had some amazing support along the way.

My former boss Kim Workman has been a mentor and has been my biggest champion on and off the battlefield. I piloted the first RJ service into a NZ prison back in 1998/99. Kim was then the director of PFNZ, he later employed me as National RJ services manager. We went on to grow a very successful RJ service running RJ programs into 14 prisons. We facilitated over 200 RJ conferences in that time. Kim and I were also joint recipients in an international award for our contribution to RJ globally.

However the road was never smooth. We lost our funding in 2010 and all the RJ programs in prisons stopped. I am baffled as to why this funding stopped although I do have my suspicions!

[For the full article click here](#)

"A little bit of mercy makes the world less cold and more just." - Pope Francis

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