

Key Points from “Navigating Family Tensions: Lessons from Mediation”, Episode #128 of Co-creating Peace

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Intention

“The Holidays” can be loaded with emotion, family discord, and conflict. These challenges can disrupt a time intended for celebration, love, and friendship. There are lessons from mediation which may be helpful.

The Approach

- ❖ To add to your own awareness of what could be happening.
- ❖ To offer additional ways to interact with others.
- ❖ To reach out, offer connection, and provide an opportunity for something good to happen.

Lesson One – Don’t Mediate Your Family

- ❖ You have a conflict of interest: Simply by being a family member, you are involved.
- ❖ You may be over your head – family conflicts over the holidays can be deeply rooted, complex, and extremely difficult to work with.
- ❖ You may be better off lying low, riding it out, and finding pleasure in those moments where peace & joy may be found.

Lesson Two – What is in the Water

- ❖ What you can see - Presence, Behavior, Interactions
- ❖ What you bring – Your Inner World, Your history, Your Behavior, Your Inner Reactions
- ❖ What you see of others - Presence, Behavior, Interactions
- ❖ What you cannot see of others – Their Inner World, History, Inner Reactions
- ❖ A group of people is often blind to each other – You only truly know your own world.
- ❖ Do not be fooled by how people appear.
- ❖ Everyone may feel uncomfortable and unsafe.

Lesson Three – How to Navigate

- ❖ Assume nothing about what is happening for another.
- ❖ When an opening appears, reach out.
- ❖ With interest, empathy, and wanting to understand, inquire.
- ❖ With authenticity, no judgment, and acceptance.
- ❖ Offer an opportunity for them to experience feeling heard.
- ❖ Offer, rather than negativity, openness.

Lesson Four – Listening to Connect

1. Observe what might be important for the person.
2. Ask the person to tell you about it.
3. Say what you heard.
4. Ask if you got it right, missed something, or got something wrong.
5. Ask the person to tell you more about it.

Lesson Five – What Mediators Have Learned

- ❖ When people experience being heard, their inner world may shift.
 - ❖ When people experience your interest in them, their defensiveness may lessen.
 - ❖ When people feel safe and accepted, they may become more open.
 - ❖ When people become more open minded, they may be better able to listen and to think more flexibly.
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- *Maybe when people feel the environment is friendlier, even with just you, their presence, behavior, and interactions may shift.*
 - *May not work, but there is no way to know without trying.*
 - *Who knows? A door may open. Something good might happen.*

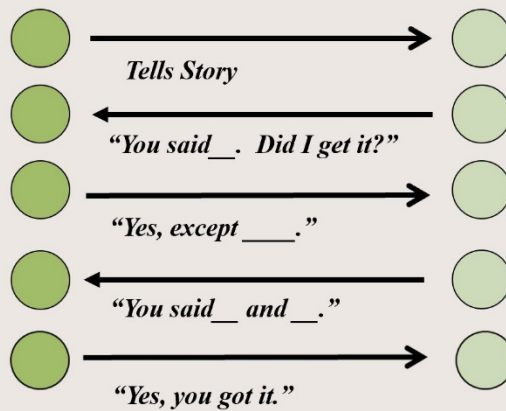
An Illustration from a Mediation Training

Note: Even though you're not trying to mediate your family conflict, using mediation tools such as the one below, can help increase understanding and lay a foundation for peace and resolution.

Looping

Participant

Mediator



Repeat – *"Could you tell me more about your story?"*