



The Sustainable Knowledge Model of Norm-Educating Mediation

Mediation is based on two building blocks: **Dialogue and Negotiation.**

Dialogue is a form of communication in which participants work towards collaboration and understanding. Expressions of difference are viewed within a context of achieving a fuller vision of the whole. Dialogue is based on five principles:

- ❖ Listen with respect, to all equally
- ❖ Bring assumptions into the open
- ❖ Suspend judgment and reaction
- ❖ Speak for yourself truthfully
- ❖ Expand the inquiry/ Ask questions

Dialogue is an important element in negotiation. When conflicts arise regarding decision making, dialogue establishes the foundation on which productive negotiation can take place.

Negotiation is used when dialogue and collaboration break down. When disputes emerge and individual rights and interests are in conflict, both sides must be able to clearly articulate their wants and needs. Successful negotiators seek solutions that meet the legitimate interests of each side. Lasting solutions are ones which resolve conflicting needs and consider all those who will be affected. Many of us have been raised to believe it is selfish or impolite to ask for what we want and need. In the work environment we may recognize that these inhibitions should be overcome, but in our personal relationships, the tool of negotiation is often overlooked.

Mediation is voluntary negotiation among the parties to a dispute, with the help of a neutral and impartial third party. **The Sustainable Knowledge Model of Norm-Educating Mediation** views the mediation process itself as a tool that gives parties the opportunity to practice negotiation skills that can be used in daily interactions. Norm-educating mediation is based on the theory that people make better decisions when they have all relevant information. Successful negotiation is based on these skills:

- Listening respectfully to all parties
- Asking for what you need: making a proposal
- Recognizing creative and destructive conflict
- Differentiating possibilities and realities
- Knowing your own bottom line

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