



How Mediation Skills Can Bring Peace After The Election Results At Work And In Our Communities

Regardless of who you are supporting during election season, it's inevitable that you'll hear, see, or experience the increased emotionality brought about by our current political climate, especially during the holiday season.

Understanding that emotions — both good and bad — will be high, it's important to know how to keep the peace.

These conversations are challenging and they can be even more challenging when people look to you to play the role of unofficial mediator.

Mediation has been favored as a way to resolve disputes in the U.S. since the Civil Rights Movement, and today, it has played a vital, behind the scenes role in some of our most controversial political issues such as the Black Lives Matter Movement, Row v. Wade, LGBTQ+ rights, and immigration.

Even if you're not a trained mediator, you can still recruit the skills of mediation to be a peacemaker in your home, your community, and your workplace.

If you want to become a successful everyday mediator, there are a couple of things you should understand and implement into your practice.

Clearly identify the desired goal of the conversation.

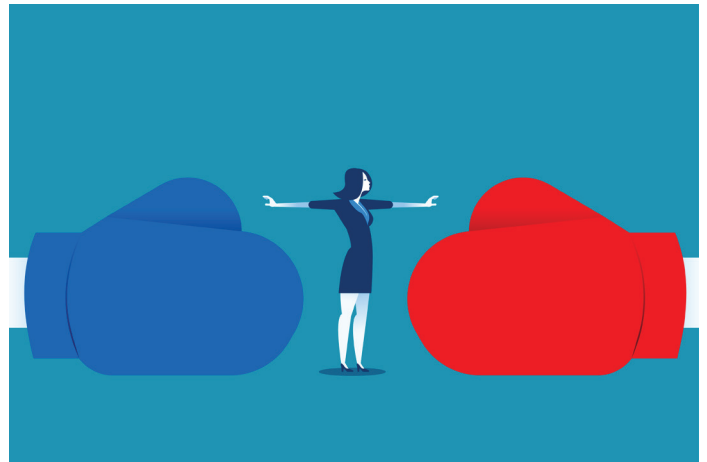
In most of these disputes, parties just want the conversation to end with a peaceful solution where the relationship remains intact. In fact, oftentimes, this is the only real goal.

Making sure the parties understand that the primary, shared goal is to work out a solution that both sides can live with will help the conversation from becoming too sidetracked. Don't always assume that they're always looking for something

more substantive.

A successful mediator pushes to direct the conversation toward progress without taking sides.

It's easy to get wrapped up in our own emotions and opinions. However, these emotions and opinions should be set aside while mediating because you're there to address the emotional needs of others, not your own. Interjecting with your personal opinions and emotions can lead to diminished credibility.



This is why it's extremely important to maintain neutrality and be impartial, fair, and unbiased. You don't have the responsibility to advocate for one side or the other, but you do have the responsibility to help the parties move forward.

Address the emotions of others early and often.

Although you should be putting your own emotions aside, you should strive to address, acknowledge, and validate the other parties' emotions. It's inevitable that one, if not all sides, will have strong

emotions during a dispute. So, it's important to address these emotions early and often, to make sure they are being managed and discussed appropriately.

If emotions are not managed appropriately, they have the potential to destroy any progress that you would have achieved, otherwise. Addressing emotions early and often will help keep the conversation on track and centralized on finding a solution.

A simple approach for doing this is called compassionate curiosity. All you need to do is acknowledge and validate emotions, get curious with compassion, and then refocus them on what's important through joint problem solving. This simple framework will help you keep the conversation going in a productive and positive direction.

Mediate early on, before things get too bad.

Starting the mediation process early will always be in your favor. The longer a passionate conversation goes on without a neutral mediator, the more unlikely the parties will be to cooperate and find common ground. So, if you witness a conversation in need of mediation or are asked to mediate, act quickly. Incentivize the parties to come to the table by speaking of positive change and outcomes by the act of resolving the conflict.

Understand the driving force of the parties.

In community conflict, people are seeking change. They care about their local community and want what's best for the community to progress and move forward. Most commonly, people come from a place of good intention. In the heat of a negotiation, it's easy to get sidetracked. This is why it's important to identify, speak on, and remind the parties of this common need and goal.

It's understandable that the election result will drive all sorts of emotions and conversations. Whether you are pleased by the end result or not, it's important to understand this: A majority of Americans want what is best for this country. So, we should assume the best of intentions.

It's important to have and to help facilitate healthy and constructive conversations. You can do this by helping to positively progress the conversation,

hearing out the needs and wants of the parties, and remaining respectful of differing opinions.

Having and helping others have healthy, meaningful, and constructive conversations is the key to progress, innovation, and the creation of strong, peaceful communities.