

# mediation with joe salama



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Tips On How To Resolve Conflicts Effectively, Part Six – June 28, 2010  
by Joe Salama

We naturally gravitate toward people who share the same interests as our own, and enjoy reading literature and watching TV personalities who echo our own beliefs. That is human nature. By the same token, when we develop a conflict with someone, we eventually become dismissive of their viewpoint until we stop listening altogether. This is the opposite of what we need to do to resolve the conflict.

Each party in an argument deserves an equal chance to be heard, even if they aren't the most powerful player at the table. Mediation allows the parties to level the playing field by giving all parties equal time and a fair opportunity to speak, with all parties taking turns, without interruption.

If you want someone to listen to you, especially in the heat of an argument, the most important thing is not the message, but the TONE you take, and the RESPECT you show in that tone. If you can show to the other person that you heard what they just told you just seconds before, you have a good chance of getting through to them.

People approach their problems as zero sum situations, where it is impossible for one party to gain without another party losing. This is not necessarily true. It is possible for all parties to gain at the same time if they cooperate and collaborate on a solution.

The types of people we affiliate ourselves with, both professionally and personally, directly shape our happiness levels, our outlook on life and, ultimately, our temperament. Surround yourselves with people who make you happy, not with people who create conflict in your life - directly or indirectly.

Apologies encourage settlement of disputes. But getting to the point of an actual apology can be hard work. The parties have to put their guns down, take a few steps back, and actually try to express their emotions to one another. This is not easy to do. But if an apology is offered and accepted, then a party is a lot less likely to want to "stick it" to the other side.

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