

THINGS YOU CAN DO TO

GET WHAT YOU WANT THROUGH MEDIATION

1. Recognize the futility of arguing.

You can't change the other's perspective [overall viewpoint about life's issues], interests [hopes, wants, needs, fears], and values [standards for making decisions] by *arguing* about them. Instead, listen for what you can *learn* about them. Then you can negotiate an agreement that meets *your own* perspectives, interests, and values – *and* that the other will accept.

2. Recognize your own process needs and respect those of the other.

Each party needs to go through his/her own way of stating the issues, expressing needs, and evaluating options. You will get what you want/need easier if you don't interfere with the process needs of the other. Make it *safe* for the other to say what needs to be said.

3. Speak only for yourself. Use "I" statements.

When the other party is present, avoid saying what (you believe) the other party thinks, feels, wants, or needs.

4. Avoid language about the other that is critical, judgmental, accusatory, blaming, sarcastic, or inflammatory.

To understand the value of this, just ask yourself how well *you* respond to that type of language.

5. Commit to the fullest development of choices and alternatives.

Good ideas can come from anywhere. The source is not important. Your self interest is served by contributing – and encouraging the other to contribute – to the creation of the widest possible range of choices.

6. Just say "No."

This process is entirely voluntary. Each of you is in control of the outcome by having the right to say "no" to anything that is not acceptable.

7. Take responsibility for your feelings, your interests, and your choices.

Holding another person responsible for how you feel, what you need, and what you choose serves only to make you dependent on that other person. By taking responsibility for your own feelings, needs, and choices you take control over your life.

8. Be effective.

Can you think of any better word to characterize the way you want to be in this process than "*effective*"? One need not cooperate because it is "the right thing to do." Cooperation works because it is the most *effective* way to achieve your maximum self-interest. Emotions may compel you to show your anger, hurt, pain, distrust, or contempt for the other, but at least be aware of how (in)effective such conduct may be in achieving your goals. Measure the value of anything you do in this process by asking whether it is *effective* in advancing your desired goals. Allow the mediator to tell you when something isn't effective for you.