



Heartland Mediators Association

Newsletter for Midwest Mediators

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P.O. Box 14971
Lenexa, KS 66285
913-956-7620

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Deborah.medlock@jocogov.org

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HMAOrganization@everestkc.net

President's Message:

Respect Can't Be Overvalued

I have had the opportunity to work with so many wonderful mediators throughout my career; I learn so much from each of you/them, and from the clients I work with.

In dealing with other mediators, especially when training or working with those newest to our field to achieve their co-mediations, a frequent question is: "How do we increase our skills?" Even my friends will ask: "What does it take to be a mediator?"

At first glance, it's an easy answer. We all need good, basic communication skills. We should listen,

listen, listen and do this often! To really listen can be very challenging. Listening well means actively attending to what is said and not said; what is meant and what is hinted at.

In listening well, we pay attention to what people want to reveal and what they may be hiding or even unaware of in themselves. It is best practice to make sure all of our clients feel heard and understood.

Basic respect is something that can not be overvalued; all humans crave to be respected and understood.

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Bill Eddy To Offer Insight at Regional Conference

Mediators, attorneys, social workers, and almost everyone else could benefit from attendance at HMA's Regional Conference April 16-17.

Bill Eddy is presenting for two days at the 2015 Biennial Heartland Regional Conference of Mediators at KU Edwards Campus, BEST Conference Center in Overland Park. You may register on-line at the link below.

2015 Biennial Heartland Four-State Regional Conference of Mediators is being hosted by HMA in partnership with Association of Missouri Mediators, Iowa Association of Mediators and Nebraska Mediation Association. Major sponsors include Collaborative Divorce Professionals of Greater Kansas City.

The conference has been approved for 12 KS CME Hours; 14 KS CLE Hours; 14.1 MO CLE Hours; 11.45 Social Work Hours and 11.5 Nebraska CME hours with 2.0 hours of Unresolved Parental Conflict.

Cost of the Full Conference for members is \$145 through March 31; \$185 for non-members; \$75 for full-time students.

"Approaches for the HIGHEST CONFLICT DISPUTES" with Bill Eddy, LCSW, JD, CFLS begins with registration at 11 a.m. followed with the workshops at noon in the BEST Conference Center at the University of Kansas, Overland Park.

William A. ("Bill") Eddy is a lawyer, therapist and mediator, and the President of the High Conflict Institute based in San Diego, California. He provides training on the subject of high-conflict personalities to lawyers,

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President's Message

Listening, Questions Important Factors

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We also need to ask good questions. I have many times both heard and said that you know you have asked a good question if the other person has to think about the answer; not because you were confusing but because giving a response requires some thought and consideration.

A good mediator will help people question their own thinking and find deeper thoughts and answers than they were originally aware of.

A good mediator also possesses the ability to accept the rights of others to make their own choices, no matter how wrong we believe they may be. We do well to remember that we never have all of the information, and we don't live the outcome.

All of us could go on and make additions to the list. New mediators have so much to juggle. What are the steps of the mediation process: Where are we in that process? What is each party saying and what do they really mean? What is the listening party thinking; what are they getting ready to say? What is the body language of each telling us? Oh, and don't forget, what am I supposed to say?

Once you gain true comfort with the process and have honed your communication skills, you begin to also develop a good "gut instinct." It's that knowingness that we get without having to really think about it. Increasingly, I describe my mediation style not as facilitative (which it is) but as intuitive. If it seems it will work, it's what I do.

I have come to believe that there is at least one more ingredient needed. Lately I have been hearing a lot about "Authenticity". We need be comfortable in our own skin. We need to know and be okay with who we really are, including our strengths and our shortcomings.

Trying to wear a mask, pretending to be someone we are not, while at the same time juggling all of these important skills is a daunting task and we generally don't end up juggling all that well. Something will seem off or fake, and clients will pick up on it.

If, instead of pretending to be better than we are, we accepted ourselves (assuming we have all the right skills in place to begin with), we would be more comfortable and so would the clients. When we can let go of the need to hold a false self out to others, we

can be more present and attuned to the people in the room who matter – our clients.

Several years ago I told a colleague that it was helpful for my clients in mediation when I made mistakes. Because then I could model appropriate behaviors when it happens. I have been known to once or twice (while in a hurry) write a parenting agreement with the wrong children's names, or, I may have (on a couple of occasions) double booked time with parents and have had too many clients in the waiting room at the same time. When these things happen, I first completely own my error.

Too often, people seem afraid of admitting their mistakes. I offer an explanation, when appropriate, and make clear it is NOT to excuse, but to acknowledge that because I am fully human, I do make mistakes.

Secondly, I do all I can to make amends. I will bend over backward to accommodate when it is necessary to reschedule; I will stay late and do all I can to minimize the need of a client to miss work again to meet with me. I am also lucky enough to work with a great team and can sometimes find a teammate to cover for me when I blow it.

Thirdly, and perhaps most important, I move forward with the expectation that everyone involved will understand that we all make mistakes and that's okay. It makes interactions too difficult when grudges are held and there is not forgiveness or acceptance. I act as if forgiveness will happen and it generally does.

Finally, I will often point out to the clients that while it is easy for them to forgive me, a stranger, it seems more challenging for them to forgive each other. They hold each other to a higher standard in many ways, with unrealistic expectations.

Even if I don't make an obvious mistake (and I do try to limit those), in all interactions with my clients, I attempt to be myself; my best self, but still, myself. Whenever possible, if we can normalize the range of human errors, emotions and interactions, especially in the face of conflict, it can work well to encourage clients to feel more comfortable.

Deborah Medlock, Court Services in Johnson County, completes her year as President of HMA in April.

Bill Eddy to Bring Expertise to Regional Meeting

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mediators, judges, mental health professionals and others. In more than 25 states, several provinces in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, France and Sweden, he has offered his expertise.

He obtained his law degree in 1992 from the University of San Diego, a Master of Social Work degree in 1981 from San Diego State University, and a Bachelor's degree in Psychology in 1970 from Case Western Reserve University.

This two-day training will focus on acquiring an understanding of high conflict behavior and personalities and learning and practicing advanced skills for managing high conflict behavior.

The training will include lecture, demonstrations and practice exercises so mediators and others may gain methods to calm upset clients, reduce their resistance to problem solving, and then help to focus them on managing and resolving their conflicts.

Bill Eddy, a renowned California lawyer and mediator, will share his methods and then orchestrate and lead role play demonstration exercises that will allow attorneys, attorney/mediators, mediators, and social workers to utilize these new skills in a series of role play practice sessions.

High conflict disputes are increasing in every setting of society, including more legal disputes large and small. They often involve one or more individuals with a pattern of high conflict behavior, characterized by: all-or-nothing thinking, unmanaged emotions, extreme behavior, preoccupation with blaming others, prolonged, unresolved conflict, drawing in many other people, and draining energy, time and resources.

Yet, these disputes can be effectively managed by understanding high conflict behavior and using a specific set of conflict resolution skills when working with these high conflict clients.

"Bill Eddy has had a profound impact on my work," said Ronnie Beach, HMA member and mediator. "Dealing with cases in small claims court, working with families or working with elders; this training may have helped me the most."

"We all deal with people that have unique personalities or challenging traits. He will help you understand them better and be more effective in working with these individuals."

Jim Shaul, JD, had the pleasure of attending a "Mediating with High Conflict Personalities" seminar in

the spring of 2011 at the Erickson Mediation Institute in Minneapolis and found it quite worth the drive up north. Bill Eddy presented for two days and the material presented was very helpful and important.

The venue was smaller (50ish) which allowed for audience interaction and discussion. Bill was very approachable and worked quite well answering questions and responding to issues. He was unassuming and down to earth, being quite willing to interact with specific case scenarios and problems.

Bill's material is top notch and very important for the mediation practitioner to know and understand. It was presented professionally, warmly, and with clarity. I would, without hesitation, drive several hours and cross states to hear him again!

Heavy Appetizers and networking from 4:15 pm will open the evening Thursday that continues at 5:15-7:15 pm.

Registrations open at 8-8:30am Friday with training beginning at 9 am with Applying the Learning: Coaching for BIFF Responses; Structuring the Mediation From the Start; Steps 1, 2, 3; and a Full Mediation.

At midday Friday there will be a lunch and the HMA Annual meeting at 12:15 am.

Workshops will begin again at 1:30 pm and adjourn at 4:15 pm.

Information on Eddy may be found at www.HighConflictInstitute.com/blog or www.HighConflictInstitute.com, www.NewWays4Families.com, or www.BIFFResponse.com

2015 Conference Pricing will be \$175 after April 1, 2015 for members and \$215 for non-members. Students may attend for \$75 with their fulltime student ID.

For attending just One Day attendees may choose either Thursday or Friday for Members, \$95 before April 1 and \$125 afterwards; non members \$135 before April 1 and \$165 afterwards; Students \$50.

Conference hotel is Hawthorne Suites Executive Village, 11400 College Blvd., Overland Park, KS 913-344-8100. Heartland Mediators Association has a group rate.

For questions contact Heartland Mediators Association, Janet Lhuillier (Lu-will-yer), P.O. Box 14971, Lenexa, KS 66285, O#:913-956-7620, Fax#: 913-825-3243, HMAOrganization@everestkc.net, www.heartlandmediators.org.

Please "like" us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/807030262661633/>

HMA Seeking Award Nominations

HMA is requesting nominations from its members so the HMA Board of Directors may select award winners to be announced at the 2015 Heartland Annual Luncheon April 17 at the Biennial Heartland Regional Conference of Mediators at KU Edwards Campus, BEST Center in Overland Park, KS April 16-17.

Please write a paragraph explaining to the HMA Board of Directors why the individual is being nominated. You may email or fax the names of nominees including an explanation of why the individual is being nominated to HMAOrganization@everestkc.net or fax to 913-825-3243.

All nominations must be received by March 1, 2015. The HMA Board of Directors will review all nominations for the award. The award will be presented at the HMA 2015 Annual Meeting Friday, April 17.

Please review this link to see who has already received these awards: <http://www.heartlandmediators.org/awards/>

Current HMA Board of Directors cannot be nominated for an award.

HMA Award Descriptions:

The President's Award: Heartland Mediators Association annually gives The President's Award, which honors individuals or agencies (government, business, media) that have contributed significantly this past year by increasing public awareness pertaining to conflict resolution. The focus of this award is to recognize a non-HMA member in the region encom-

passing the Heartland membership.

Acorn Award: Heartland Mediators Association recognizes a HMA member for their extensive contribution to the field of mediation and to the association.

School for the Peer Mediation Award: Heartland Mediators Association seeks nominations from Kansas and Missouri schools to receive the organization's Peer Mediation Awards. The nominees may be schools in grades Kindergarten through grade 12 that have active peer mediation programs. Heartland is interested in identifying schools that have implemented peer mediation as a means of resolving conflicts between its students. More fundamentally we are interested in schools providing a practical educational mediation experience for their students. These programs provide hands on opportunities for student mediators and students in conflict as well as others in the student body to experience or learn of the benefits of alternative dispute resolution. Heartland Mediators Association is also interested in helping schools establish and maintain mediation programs.

Margaret 'Peg' Nichols Volunteer of the Year Award: The volunteer of the year award includes non-HMA members as well as HMA members. The HMA Board of Directors believe they wanted to include all the many fantastic mediation volunteers in our area. The winner of the award will receive a free HMA membership for 2015-2016.

HMA Always Looking for Good People

Not many people have been as lucky as I have to have found not one but two or three life directions that bring me many pleasures.

I'm shedding one that has been with me for more than a decade. I will miss being a member of the Board of Directors of HMA.

I have done the newsletter more than seven of those years and early on I was Secretary then last year President of this fine organization.

If you might be interested in getting to know and working for the improvement of the profession of alternative dispute resolution, Heartland Mediators Association is the place to be.

HMA is entering its 26th year and it could become the driving force in creating an atmosphere of ethical improvement and standards.

I am taking my leave with this edition of the newsletter so others might step in and work their

magic with HMA. It has long been run by volunteers and it is a great place to learn and network.

The guidance and leadership, that the Board has an opportunity to promote, might change the profession and even bring it to higher levels than it is today.

Alternative dispute resolution is actually the way disputes should be resolved with arbitration or litigation as the last resort.

Just wondering, but might our world be more balanced, if we worked more toward consensus rather than alternative.

Linda Laird, Burlingame, is a court approved mediator working in the Douglas County Mediation Program, Lawrence, and RG Mediation, Manhattan.