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Peter Linn, Esq.

"The Mediator Who Won't Let a Case Drift": A Conversation with Peter Linn

By Katy Jones

Some mediators treat each case as a discrete event—a day on the calendar, a file to be worked through.

Peter Linn is not that mediator. With more than 25 years in litigation and over 500 mediations, he approaches each matter not as a one-day session, but as a problem to be solved—thoroughly, persistently, and, if necessary, long after everyone else has gone home.

What follows is a conversation with Linn about the instincts he carried from trial practice, the anatomy of impasse, and why he refuses to let a case drift.

Q: You've described your practice as focused on difficult cases. What draws you to those?

Linn: Most litigation is messy. It's a mix of disputed facts, legal challenges, procedural hurdles, and often personalities that don't make resolution easy.

That's what I enjoy—unwinding that mess. Breaking it down into parts, looking at both the details and the big picture, and then reverse-engineering a path forward.

Q: What does your preparation look like before a mediation?

Linn: Preparation is critical. About a week before the session, I connect with the parties to understand the facts, the key disputes, and any legal or procedural issues that could affect decision-making.

But just as important is understanding the people involved. Are there personality conflicts? Is there an emotional component that could get in the way? That work allows me to walk into the mediation already thinking about solutions.

"Those pre-mediation calls let me hit the ground running—and strategize in advance."

Q: Impasse is inevitable in many cases. How do you approach it?

Linn: Impasses are expected—you have to plan for them. When I prepare, I'm thinking about where the sticking points are likely to be and what fallback options might look like. Sometimes I pause the mediation to resolve a key issue. Other times, you pivot and redefine what an acceptable outcome looks like.

"Impasses are common… the key is having a plan for when they happen."

Q: Your approach is often described as "results-oriented." What does that mean in practice?

Linn: There are people who are focused on the process, and people who are focused on the

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outcome. I'm firmly in the latter camp.
The process matters—but only if it leads somewhere. My goal is to move the case toward resolution, whether that happens in the session or afterward.

Q: You've said mediation doesn't end when the session does. Can you elaborate?

Linn: I was raised with the idea that if you start something, you finish it. That applies here. A mediation isn't over just because the day ends.

If the case doesn't settle, I stay involved. I follow up, keep the dialogue going, and work with the parties to move things forward.

Q: What do you see as the mediator's role in helping parties evaluate their case?

Linn: Litigators are advocates—it's their job to focus on the strengths of their position. But sometimes that means losing sight of how the case looks from the outside.

My role is to be a sounding board—to test theories, challenge assumptions, and offer perspective on how a case might actually be received.

Q: What motivates you most in this work?

Linn: Helping people find a way out of prolonged, difficult litigation. These cases can be financially and emotionally draining.

If I can help the parties get to a resolution—something practical, something they can live with—that's the goal.

In a field that often oscillates between posturing and patience, Peter Linn lands squarely in the space where movement happens. His approach is neither performative nor passive—it is deliberate, strategic, and anchored in the belief that even the most entrenched disputes can be unwound with the right combination of preparation, perspective, and persistence. For Linn, resolution isn't a moment; it's a process he's committed to seeing through—right up to the point where the parties, at last, are ready to meet it.

Contact:

Kathleen Emma
kathleenteam@adrservices.com
(510) 466-6630

www.peterlinnadr.com