



Mediation Musings: Ideas

by Sara Barnes

This month I ask you to get out your reading glasses and absorb some new ideas from various authors. I'd like to introduce you to writers who are expanding knowledge in the field of conflict resolution and connected topics. Happy reading!

“7 Amazing Facts about Emotions — What Science Reveals about the Way You Feel” by Michael Miller and Alexandra Tanon Olsso. Gaining strong background knowledge about emotions is crucial for all conflict resolvers. “Understanding how emotions work empowers you to navigate them more effectively. Emotions aren’t just fleeting moods or problems that get in our way. They are powerful biological signals that flow constantly between our brains and bodies, collecting data and regulating us; helping guide us through important decisions, meaningful relationships, and life’s complexities.” The article includes links to Plutchik’s wheel of emotions, a favorite graphic to explain the complexity of ourselves as emotional beings. [Read the article here.](#)

“3 Types of Conflict and How to Address Them” By [Katie Shonk](#)

Shonk writes about workplace conflict; the ideas can be applied in many life areas. “In particular, three types of conflict are common in organizations: task conflict, relationship conflict, and value conflict. Although open communication, collaboration, and respect will go a long way toward [conflict management](#), the three types of conflict can also benefit from targeted [conflict-resolution tactics](#).” Read her suggestions [and the article here](#). And here’s another by Shonk about [dealing with difficult customers](#).

“Disagree Better” by Tammy Lenski

Lenski suggests our conflict mindset impedes our ability to come to agreement. She suggests we might benefit from a reframe of how we think about disputes: “The answer isn’t to try to agree more or disagree less. It’s to stop treating disagreement as a liability and start treating it as an asset. It’s to disagree better.... Skilled disagreement has two main components: building tolerance for disagreement and developing the language, habits, and approaches for responding effectively.” [Here’s the article](#). Here’s another article by Lenski, about having a [stress-free new year](#).“

10 Things Great Bosses Do Everyday” by Travis Bradberry

Bradberry’s expertise is in emotional intelligences. As he talks about “bad” and “good” bosses (not my favorite designations) he creates a helpful list about us all with tips of how to work together. “Great bosses change us for the better. They see more in us than we see in ourselves, and they help us learn to see it too. They dream big and show us all the great things we can accomplish.” Dreaming big and being optimistic about others is a great way to prevent conflict whether you are a boss or not. You can replace the word “boss” with “friend” or “neighbor” or “family member,” and the suggestions work just as well. [Here’s the article.](#)

“How to Give Feedback That Motivates” by Leapsome

“The secret to giving great feedback is to realize that the whole point of effective feedback is to start an open conversation and help the person grow.” I appreciate the idea of growth as a goal behind this step-by-step guide. Most people feel uncomfortable with feedback—both receiving and offering. These suggestions make sense to me. It’s always helpful to have a process to follow when you are undertaking something that seems risky. Take a look [at the article here.](#)

“‘Flock and Fix: Proposed Additions to ‘Fight, Flight, Freeze and Fawn’” by Kenneth Cloke

Most people are familiar with the adrenaline-laced reactions to danger and stress. Cloke, who has been in the U.S. mediation world for most of its history, posits a new and optimistic way to frame these reactions. “A significant advantage for conflict resolvers, coaches, and therapists of adding “flock” as a fifth response and “fix” as a sixth is that, of all these responses to danger and conflict, only the last two enable hostile parties to evolve to higher order collaborative, mediative, and transformational responses that do not simply attack, escape, avoid, or mimic perceived aggression, but are potentially able to transform, transcend, and overcome it.” Read Cloke’s [article here.](#) Cloke has written and videoed prolifically; I have link to a list of his [work here.](#)

Conclusion

My mom used to cut out articles from the paper and give them to me; sometimes I didn’t understand the purpose, and maybe I have replicated that experience here for you. If these articles don’t strike your fancy, take a look on mediate.com and or on LinkedIn. Those are the two main places where I get my mediation and conflict resolution articles. The conflict-resolution world is a vast one, with many new ideas coming along all the time—take a look and keep adding to your own knowledge. We are never done learning, and I love reading a new idea that I never thought of—it keeps my brain nimble. I hope you find the same for you.