



BIO: Molly K. Olson

Qualifications and Disclosure of Education, Background, Experience

Professional Services:

- *Conflict Resolution* - using mediation for rebuilding, repairing, and reconciliation of relationships
- *Organizational Facilitator and Trainer* – teaching communication and conflict resolution skills that build trust, loyalty, and respect
- *Divorce Mediation* - pre-divorce, mediating the divorce settlement agreement, and post-divorce issues
 - *As a mediator with special training in conflict resolution, my process is much more amicable than most*
 - *I am one of the most cost effective mediators, with a sliding fee scale*
- *Parenting Time Expeditor and ENE* (early neutral evaluation) - limited circumstances
- *Parenting Coach* – observations and/or coaching with focus on communication and interpersonal connections and interpersonal communication effectiveness
- *Case Consultant* – when the one party will not mediate, and the other wants to improve their skills and would like assistance navigating the process

Education/Training: *Involved in family law issues since March 2000.*

- B.A. Communications and Religion
 - Concordia College, Moorhead, MN, 1982
- MBC, Masters in Business Communication
 - University of St Thomas, St Paul, MN, 1992 (graduate) 1994 (completed final paper)
- Certified Trainer, Leader Effectiveness Training (L.E.T.)
 - Gordon Training International, 1999 – trained and qualified to teach 3 day class
 - Focus: Improving interpersonal relationships; Conflict resolution; Effective communication skills; Building trust, loyalty, and respect; Finding a mutually satisfying win-win solution – building better collaborative work and personal relationships to achieve win-win outcomes
 - Same course authored by and is in the same core principles and basis of and applied to Parent Effectiveness Training
- Qualified Mentor and Mentoring Trainer
 - Workforce Development, Job Training Center, 2002
- Participants in Guardian ad Litem Training – completed 37 hours - (never practiced GAL work)
 - Training Course, Ramsey County
- Qualifying Class taken for Early Neutral Evaluator (ENE) – (ENE trained, but not practicing)
 - Hennepin County Family Court Services, 2004
- Parenting Time Expeditor – (only practice PTE work on a limited basis)
- Qualified Family/Divorce Client-Centered Mediator
 - MN Supreme Court Qualified Mediation Course, 2004
 - Required Course – Understanding Domestic Abuse, 2005
 - ADR/Rule 114 Roster, Supreme Court of Minnesota, 2005
 - Up-to-date for all required ADR/Rule 114 Roster CEU's

Professional Involvement: Conflict Resolution Minnesota, member

Personal Background - Why I went into mediation: After over 5 years of counseling individually and as a couple, my divorce was handled in a relatively amicable fashion in 1990. Because the conflict was minimized, it was easier to get on with my life, free of anger, bitterness, or ongoing hostility. I divorced with the hope and expectation that things might work out and someday we might get back together. That didn't happen. My ex-husband died of cancer several years after we were divorced. When I started my non-profit (CPR) I saw in many cases how attorney's and subsequent litigation can often destroy what little is left of fragile relationships. To me, this practice seemed counter productive to a healthy future for either party. I learned that mediation is a more positive alternative to litigation; because, litigation is an acrimonious process where it's all about one side winning at the other's expense. And, the litigation process feeds on people's anger rather than try heal the anger. The litigation process forces each party to "say" every bad "thought" they've ever had about the other party. That is not conducive to a mutually respectful outcome. Mediation is typically far less costly and provides better results and faster resolution than litigation. The communication skills that I have taught individuals in the corporate setting, and the mediation training I received, share consistent principles to build and rebuild strong relationships. I enjoy helping others gain new skills and hope for the future, whether together or apart.

Community Involvement: Founder and Volunteer Executive Director for the Center for Parental Responsibility (CPR), a non-profit. Host of CPR-TV – show for the family law reform community. Details available at www.cpr-mn.org. Project Mission: to remove the obstacles that prevent both parents from being fully and equally involved in the lives of their children. Primary audience: fit parents (mothers or fathers) who have been or fear they will be arbitrarily unnecessarily restricted access to their children without just cause; and other affected family members (grandparents, etc). Additionally, co-founder, Leading Women for Shared Parenting.

Commitment to Neutrality: The very purpose of mediation is to provide for you an atmosphere of neutrality, to help you find your own solutions. My mediation is client focused, relationship focused, with authentic, open, and honest communication and effective listening between each parents being at the core of the process.

The mediator is a neutral third party who helps to:

- facilitate a fair and collaborative process, including respectful dialogue to help ensure a win-win solution
- ensure each person feels heard and understood and neither person(s) needs are overlooked
- uncover what is really important and preserve that for each party in a mutually satisfying way
- create an outcome that produces a solution for change, where each person's needs are met with mutual satisfaction
- honors the needs of each party and ensures an atmosphere of dignity and respect for all involved in the conflict
- sustain meaningful dialogue that results in new, creative, ideas, options, possibilities, and solutions that neither party previously thought possible, but perhaps hoped for

A mediator does not:

- take sides
- decide who is right and who is wrong
- make decisions for you

Personal Relevant Background:

Married 1981. Divorced 1990. No children. After 17 years of not being married, I married again in 2007. I remain married today. I have a step-daughter and step-son-in-law, and 3 nephews.

Personal Bias: For those never married or soon to be divorced parents *with children*, my personal bias must be fully disclosed. My personal bias is that no matter how broken the relationship between two parents, and no matter what the failures or perceived failures of any one parent, children need, and usually want, both parents equally. Typically they don't love one parent more or less than the other. This is consistent with the social science research regarding best outcomes for children. Children don't want to and should not be put in a position where they take sides. I am a supporter of equal shared parenting, or in the alternative, maximizing time with each parent as is possible with the unique circumstances of each family. This assumes each parent is fit and healthy, with no untreated substance abuse, untreated mental health issues, or domestic violence that impairs parenting or puts children in jeopardy. And, absent a legal and criminal finding of abuse, harm, neglect or abandonment, supported by evidence. The U.S. Supreme Court has determined the parent-child relationship is a fundamental right protected by the Constitution,* with each parent taking individual responsibility for the child when they are in their care. When children look in the mirror, they see half their dad and half their mom. If one parent is minimized, it is common for the child to feel partly minimized, and they often carry this into adulthood.

Former Chief Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court shares these views, see:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VrnRN0rKdbk>

This personal bias of mine does not get in the way of mediation because *you determine what is best for your unique needs and individual family situation*, not the mediator. Because each situation is different, I set aside my personal bias and help facilitate an agreement that you make, to do whatever it is that you both decide together and agree on. This mediation process and outcome is completely yours to decide. The mediator makes no decisions for you. The mediator facilitates productive dialogue that helps to guide and ensure win-win solutions.

* F.A.I.R. Solutions does not and is not providing legal advice.