

REVENGE & FORGIVENESS

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FORGIVENESS

"Agh, forgiveness?" you say. Anything but that? But you know in your heart that someday, sometime, it will come to that. It may not come until the deathbed time, but it will come. Consider this: Many people have trouble with forgiveness because they have been taught that it is a singular act to be completed in one sitting. That is not so. Forgiveness has many layers, many seasons"

The important part of forgiveness is to begin and to continue. “ Clarissa Pinkola Estes

REASONS FOR REVENGE

The reasons for revenge are:

- To seek fairness.
- To overcome shame through aggressive action.
- To teach the perpetrator a lesson.
- To give in to reactivity.

THE PROBLEM WITH REVENGE

What does not work in revenge:

- ⦿ Revenge wounds the victim by hardening their ego/psyche & turns hurt and anger into coldness.
- ⦿ Violent action supports a culture of violence, repeating the perpetrator's behaviour.
- ⦿ Violent action ignores the humanity of the perpetrator.

WHY FORGIVENESS

What works with forgiveness:-

- ⦿ Forgiveness allows healing, melting the hurt reaction held in ego/psyche.
- ⦿ Forgiveness erases humiliation and replaces it with pride.
- ⦿ Forgiveness sees the perpetrator as a fellow victim.

WHY FORGIVENESS

- ◉ Forgiveness allows empathy and thus self forgiveness.
- ◉ Forgiveness, if shared, can help the perpetrator take responsibility.
- ◉ Forgiveness strengthens the victim morally and emotionally.

CONCILIATORY GESTURES & MEDIATION

In mediation, conciliatory gestures often happen in incremental ways because a client may need to test out their reception, that is testing out how the other person receives the gesture of conciliation.

Mediators need to be aware of the depth of the intention in the "hand held out " gesture and not over-gauge the level of healing as a result of the gesture.

CONCILIATORY GESTURES

Conciliatory Gestures are:

- ⦿ Really listening to the others point of view.
- ⦿ Taking responsibility.
- ⦿ Expressing motivations, issues and concerns that contributed to the events that led to the dispute.

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CONCILIATORY GESTURES

- ◉ Recognizing the legitimacy of the other persons perspective.
- ◉ Expressions of regret.
- ◉ Apologizing.
- ◉ Saying sorry

CONCILIATORY GESTURES

- ◉ Accepting honest feedback.
- ◉ Being empathic to another.
- ◉ Promises of different behaviour for the future.
- ◉ Being clear about accepting the wrongness of the behaviour that created offence.

CONCILIATORY GESTURES

- When a conciliatory gesture is made the mediator can reflect what has been said, underlying the meaning of the words used.
- Then the mediator must take the important step to check out the significance of the gesture with the one who is in the offended against position. Does this gesture matter?

CONCILIATORY GESTURES

- If the gesture does not have meaning for the other client, the mediator should let it go.
- If the gesture has meaning for the other client then this can be a step towards cooperation, softening negotiations and the relationship between them.

REVENGE FORGIVENESS & MEDIATION

- Mediation clients are sometimes acting out of revenge.
- While a client's need for revenge comes from being hurt or rejected, the mediator should act to maintain "face" for the person seeking revenge.
- If their behaviour is affecting the mediation process then the mediator can caucus with them and ask how they feel about what has happened between them and the other client.

REVENGE FORGIVENESS & MEDIATION

In caucus the mediator:

- ◉ Asks the client how they are feeling about what has happened.
- ◉ Asks the client where is the feeling related to what has happened in their body.
- ◉ Asks the client do they want to continue to have this feeling.

REVENGE FORGIVENESS & MEDIATION

In caucus the mediator:

- ◉ Asks the client if they want to let this feeling go.
- ◉ Asks what they would like to feel, for example they might say “peace”.
- ◉ Tells them that this is the first step to letting this feeling go and that now they are moving towards the feeling they wish, for example, “peace”.

APOLOGY FORGIVENESS & MEDIATION

- ◉ Mediation clients can make an apology, sometimes within minutes of arriving in the room.
- ◉ This is usually dismissed by the other party.
- ◉ Why do you think that this apology would be dismissed?

APOLOGY

- ⦿ A full apology from a perpetrator has to feel to the victim that the person making the apology has truly heard and understood what they have done.
- ⦿ They need to match the level of their hurt to the level of the **risk** they take in the conciliatory words or apology.

APOLOGY

- ⦿ The person apologising needs to make themselves vulnerable in what they say or their apology may be perceived as an empty gesture.
- ⦿ The mediator can facilitate the process of apology, treating an early apology lightly, that is, not giving it much attention.

APOLOGY

- ◉ The mediator then helps the victim tell of their experience and express their upset.
- ◉ The mediator caucuses with both parties, especially the one saying sorry, asking him/her what is their intention in making this apology and how can they say the words to effect what they intend.

APOLOGY

- ◉ In caucus the mediator:
- ◉ Coaches the person saying sorry to say the words they need to make their apology meaningful. They can then make their apology in the joint session.
- ◉ The mediator can also caucus with the other party, asking them if they want to carry the hurt they received, or let it go.

REFERENCE

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