

Seven Steps to Successful Mediation:

- 1. Write out your intention in positive terms. Set forth the fact that your wish is to reach an amicable, mutually supportive agreement. Write out with some specificity your positive intentions.**
- 2. Plan your agenda carefully. Make sure you've listed on your agenda all of the issues, items and areas that you wish to discuss and consider. That should be done before the meeting takes place.**
- 3. At the meeting, ask the mediator for permission to read your intention. Read it carefully, slowly, and look into the eyes of your spouse as you're reading your intention.**
- 4. Listen carefully and take notes. Listen for content, listen for nuance, listen for strategy, listen for clues, listen for facts. Mediation is an opportunity to gather facts and gather information. You want to make sure that you're in the right conversation, which is in the future, talking about ReSolution and Settlement. If you're in judgment, condemnation, and accusation, you're in the wrong conversation. Don't interrupt -- when you talk, you lose. When you answer, you lose. Listen and take notes and wait for your opportunity to respond. When you do, speak quietly, carefully and deliberately. Keep your voice gentle.**
- 5. When given your opportunity, ask open-ended questions designed to settle the matter. Such as: What is the best way to do this? How can we approach this? What would happen if we considered this? Avoid closed questions that can only be answered "yes" or "no". Ask questions that require facts, details, information and substance. Use this opportunity to see where you are in the process and what the underlying interests are of all concerned.**
- 6. Work on underlying interests, not positions. Set disagreements aside for a later time. If you continue to work on agreements, you are moving toward resolution and concessions.**
- 7. You will start momentum in the right direction. You will move forward. If it gets hot, stop, take a brief recess, go outside, and do some deep breathing exercises. It will make all the difference in the world.**