

## InterMEDIATE Step

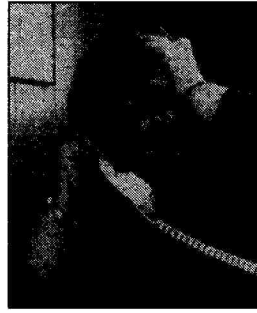
By *Deanie Kramer*

There is more than one way to settle a dispute . . . and hiring an attorney and running to court is not always the best solution. Today there are more alternative methods to reaching settlements than ever before. One way is through mediation.

About 90% of all legal cases are settled out of court. Most people do not want to go through the grief and embarrassment of airing their troubles in open court. They want to maintain their sanity, self esteem, privacy and dignity. They don't want to go through the expense and anguish of a lengthy court battle. The traditional legal process and adversarial approach to problem solving destroys rather than resolves.

Mediation is a non-adversarial approach to resolving conflict that encourages people to work cooperatively towards mutually acceptable solutions. The process of mediation emphasizes positive planning and helps people come to their own decisions about their own futures.

Mediation works. Mediation helps put the conflict behind you within days or weeks instead of years. Mediation is financially and



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emotionally less costly than hiring an attorney. Going to court can cost more than 20 times the mediation alternative and most disputes can be resolved within six hours.

Mediation is confidential and voluntary. Mediation gives you control. You are in charge of making

decisions that affect your life. Mediation participants report high satisfaction at a fraction of the cost. Mediation can facilitate settling disputes before, during and after litigation has started.

Mediation results in improved communication between the parties, high settlement rates, positive participant reviews, savings in time, money and acrimony. The primary goal of mediation is to facilitate the participants' realization of genuine and lasting change.

Mediation can help resolve civil and domestic disputes, employment matters, landlord-tenant disputes and most family law issues.

Take the intermediate step, think mediation, not litigation, think of the benefits!

*Deanie Kramer, Certified Paralegal and Mediator, is the President of Los Angeles based Divorce Resource. Her full service organization specializes in assisting individuals and families in most family law matters, resolving disputes, and helping guide them through the legal maze of the court system. (310) 441-7555.*

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