



# A Thousand Doors: Only Those in Conflict Know Which One Will Lead Them Out

by James Dykeman | Jun 20, 2023 | Blog



The role of a mediator in conflict resolution is to facilitate productive communication and guide parties toward finding mutually acceptable solutions. Understanding-based mediators avoid telling people what to do, opting for non-directive techniques that empower the parties involved. This approach recognizes the transformative potential of giving individuals the power themselves, allowing them to shape the outcome

[Privacy](#) - [Terms](#)

of their conflict resolution process. The understanding-based model is rooted in the belief that individuals can understand their needs and interests better than anyone else. By refraining from imposing solutions, mediators create an environment that encourages active participation and ownership from the parties. This approach recognizes that the parties are the experts in their own lives, experiences, and perspectives.

Mediators who resist the urge to provide solutions or advice foster trust and respect from parties while creating an environment where concerns, motivations, and underlying interests can be deeply understood while actively listening and empathizing with the parties. This approach allows mediators to guide the conversation toward uncovering common ground, exploring potential options, and jointly developing creative solutions. This creates a space for open dialogue where all parties can freely express their thoughts, concerns, and needs, leading to a flow of information that promotes understanding, empathy, and the development of creative solutions that address the underlying interests of all involved.

One of the primary benefits of non-directive techniques in mediation is the promotion of self-determination. By allowing the parties to engage in the decision-making process actively, they regain a sense of control and autonomy over the outcome. This empowerment is crucial for transforming the dynamics of the conflict, as it shifts the focus from a win-lose mentality to a collaborative problem-solving approach.

Additionally, non-directive techniques encourage active communication between the parties and also have the potential to uncover underlying issues that may not be immediately apparent. By allowing parties to express themselves freely, mediators create a safe space for emotions, concerns, and unaddressed needs to surface. This more profound understanding of the root causes of the conflict enables the parties to

address not only the symptoms but also the underlying issues, leading to more sustainable and transformative resolutions.

By giving power to the parties, mediators enable them to develop their problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills. By jointly exploring options and evaluating potential solutions, parties can independently enhance their ability to handle future conflicts. This empowerment contributes to resolving the current conflict and equips individuals with valuable skills for their personal and professional lives.

Join Catherine Conner and Ivan Alter on **July 11, 2023**, to learn why taking a consistently non-coercive approach, the steps to implement this process, and the challenges of moving away from giving solutions to a place of encouraging them to be identified and implemented by the parties in conflict.

## Recent Posts

A Thousand Doors: Only Those in Conflict Know Which One Will Lead Them Out

Inside Out: How Conflict Professionals Can Use Self-Reflection to Help Their Clients

Presenting the Center for Understanding in Conflict

Beyond the Surface of Restorative Practices: Building a Culture of Equity, Connection, and Healing by Marisol Rerucha

The Human Network: How Your Social Position Determines Your Power, Beliefs, and Behaviors, by Matthew O. Jackson



## CALIFORNIA

829 Sonoma Avenue  
Santa Rosa, CA 95404  
707.582.5186

## NEW YORK

271 North Avenue  
Suite 812  
New Rochelle, NY 10801  
844.242.3428

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Website Terms of Service](#)



© 1983 - 2023 The Center for Understanding in Conflict is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation.