



# INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

Fulfilling the Promise of Mediation

## About Transformative Practice

How transformative practitioners understand conflict and people, informs and guides our practice. The Transformative Approach defines conflict as a crisis in human interaction; a transformative practitioner's interventions provide help in overcoming this crisis and restoring constructive interaction.

Transformative practitioners understand that:

Conflict often causes people to feel:

- Weak, unsettled, confused, fearful, unsure
- Self-absorbed, self-protective, defensive, suspicious, incapable of stepping outside of their own patterns

When conflict is productive, it has the potential for:

- Empowerment: People grow calmer, clearer, more confident, more decisive, and regain a sense of strength.
- Recognition: People voluntarily become more open, attentive, and responsive to the situation of another, thereby expanding their perspective to include an appreciation for the other person's situation.

Transformative Practitioners hold a relational worldview, where people are understood as having individual identities yet existing in relation to others. A relational worldview entails a need to consider the inevitable tension that exists between advancing one's own needs and allowing or assisting others to meet their needs.



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When one has a relational worldview, beliefs about people include:

- People are capable of making decisions for themselves
- People are capable of looking beyond themselves
- People have a unique reality

When a person is viewed as capable and unique, the mediator (intervener) supports the person's thinking and decision making and does not supplant the individual's own authority to think and make decisions.

When the above three purposes clearly influence how mediation is practiced, mediation demonstrates its unique role in society- a role that cannot be confused with any other roles. This uniqueness is evidenced by the mediator's commitment and ability to:

- Act without judgment of others
- Accept others' unique reality
- Be patient with the way others interact
- Be respectful and even comfortable with the way others interact
- Relinquish control
- Respect others' choices
- Strive to be supportive
- Be optimistic about others' capabilities

For more about Transformative Practice visit [www.transformativemediation.org](http://www.transformativemediation.org)