

Essential Inquiries for Pre-Session/Pre- Mediation

Content Adapted for Mediators from *The Secret To Getting Along (And Why It's Easier than You Think)* by Gabrielle Hartley, Esq.

The extent to which the YES method is utilized and the framing of the below inquiries issues will vary based on the nature of the conflict/ participant. However, in all cases, moving the parties to a framework open to possibilities is the best way to potentially reach a resolution.

To resolve any heated discussion, it's essential to introduce the parties to the idea that taking a step back is the best way forward. Framing it in this way will serve everyone to reconsider their positions without making anyone feel defensive. Defensiveness is the enemy of resolution.

Below are important questions for the practitioner to raise for the parties consider in pre-session. If you are a party to any conflict, these inquiries will also be helpful for you in all aspects of your life.

Part I: Your Role in the Conflict

1. Can this relationship be improved/ Conflict be resolved?
2. What destructive behavior patterns do you have that are interfering with resolution? Do you steamroll? Bury your head in the sand? Stir the pot? Catastrophize? Minimize?
3. What are the obstacles that prevent you from applying the changes that need to be made in order to improve your relationship?
4. From the other person's perspective, might there be things that you do or say that they might perceive negatively?

Part II: The Emotional Story

1. What actions or words trigger you in general? In this situation? When your emotions are running high, take notice: how do you act? How do you react?
2. How do you tackle problems that arise in your life? Do you tend to catastrophize or minimize?
3. When you conflict with another person, do you argue with them to get what you want, or do you engage in meaningful conversation to ensure an acceptable outcome for both parties?
4. Do you notice when you are being positional in your relationships?
5. How can you get to the core of what you need so that you can peacefully resolve your conflicts?
6. How does your inner narrative shape the way you see and think about this situation/ relationship?

Part III: Shelving Heated Conversations

1. Which of your boundaries can you soften? Do you have boundaries that need to be firmer? When do you have a hard time saying no? What can you do to take a break without causing the relationship to break down?
2. Can a resolution to this conflict be found by shelving?
3. Have you thought of ways to shelve: What activities, whether passive or active, do you find most enjoyable or relaxing? How often do you engage in these activities?
4. What actions or words by other people tend to put you on the defensive? How is that happening here?

Part IV: Yes, You Can Get Along

1. Visualize the ideal situation for this conflict. What does it look like? What does it *feel* like?
2. How in tune are you with your feelings? Are you able to verbalize them and describe them - even just to yourself?
3. What is the positive affirmation or mantra that you need in order to re-center and encourage yourself resolve this heated situation?
4. How committed are you to finding the just-right balance to find a solution to this conflict, and how important is it *for your well-being* to restore balance (maintain the relationship)?