

11 Golden Relationship Guidelines for Mediation

1. It is assumed that, either:

- (a) you **both** truly wish to improve your relationship, or
- (b) at least one of you is unsure about whether or not to continue in the relationship, but is willing to put in the effort to improve it, before making a decision.

If not, then go no further!!

To make this work for you both, you both must **offer TRUST**. That means:

- **accepting each other's comments & requests** as being given in **good faith**, &
- **making your comments & requests** **honestly, reasonably, and in good faith**.

2. **Relationship problems are only rarely the fault of just one person.** Consequently you **MUST** accept that acts (& reactions) or omissions on **your** part might have contributed to the relationship problem, even if only minimally.

(a) *If you can not accept that, ... **then go no further!!***

(b) If you can, then you must accept that **you** will also have to make changes.

But remember, by changing the way you react **to** others,
you will actually begin to elicit change **in** others.

3. Be as **honest** as you can, while respecting the fragility of your relationship – be thoughtful, careful & tactful about what you say, so as to minimize hurt feelings.

4. **Speak** and **listen** respectfully – one at a time, be attentive & avoid interrupting.

5. **Avoid accusations** – make statements of fact, as you perceive them. But remember that there are three sides to every story!

6. Give **respectful consideration** to the other's comments – never be dismissive!

7. Remember that different people often **perceive the same thing quite differently**, and you may have difficulty understanding each other's perspective, concerns, frustrations, position or reasoning. If you can't empathize, at least be patient & accepting.

And remember too that women really do come from Venus and men from Mars!

8. Remember & use the *Magic Question*:

“What can I do to improve or to make things better?”

9. **If you get really upset** during the meeting, just ask for some ‘cool down time’. **Only agree to tasks, conditions, goals or changes** that you are truly willing to accept, & are honestly willing to work towards, together, and as a team.

10. If a ‘Talk Toy’ is used during meetings, share it equally & only talk if you are the one holding it. { *This is often used in Group & Family mediation situations.* }

11. Accept the guidance (& sometimes the intervention) of your therapist.