

## **The Value of Reframing in Conflict Resolution**

I use reframing in my practice to help us see situations in a different light and from a different perspective. It is a technique that can help us see conflict in a less painful and negative way. It also helps us avoid honest misunderstandings or wrong assumptions. In addition, it allows us to clarify the issue(s) and to elicit true intentions which can highlight similar goals to help us collaborate in resolving a conflict. In most cases, resolving the conflict is a main component of conflict management. Another component is about maintaining respectful and good relationships.

As a mediator, I frequently rely on reframing to help the parties achieve a mutually beneficial resolution.

I admit that reframing is not always easy. When we have been hurt or offended, emotions can run high, challenging our ability to think clearly and behave productively to reframe the issue and see a different perspective. Yet, that may be the best strategy to facilitate resolution. All parties need to see the anger or the hurt being felt. We tend to feel better after demonstrating emotion. It is important not to minimize the pain or anger felt. The other party can also benefit in seeing such emotions expressed and hopefully demonstrate acknowledgement and empathy.

There are several ways to display our emotions, but only a few ways to help increase the chances of a mutually beneficial resolution.

One is to make sure that the other person's behavior and actions are interpreted the way that person intends. We may have assumed incorrectly jumping to an unfounded conclusion. If that is not the case, calmly and clearly communicate the disappointment or frustration. It is important to let the party know *how* their actions or behavior affects you including how upset they made you feel.

A second one is to avoid putting labels on people. Instead, concentrate on their action and behavior and avoid calling them inconsiderate or selfish. You can reframe and state how their behavior was selfish or inconsiderate. If applicable, let them know how you appreciated a previous action on their part you found selfless and considerate. This will give them a better frame of reference.

Lastly, suggest that you discuss the issue further because you may have ideas that will help you both move forward. Advocate for collaboration now that the other party knows how you feel.

Wishing you the best of success in reframing when faced with a conflict or a challenging situation.

My warm regards, Eliane