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Mediation Matters

This issue of *The Scrivener* pays homage to the art of mediation and the artists themselves, the mediators.

Mediate, as defined by *Oxford*:

To intervene between people in a dispute to bring about an agreement or reconciliation, e.g., Wilson attempted to mediate between the powers to end the war.

Then an active practising Notary for 15 years, I had perceived myself and my role as a dictating mediator. Whether dealing with a somewhat anxious vendor, stressed-out purchaser, or a borrower of large sums of money, I felt competent in assisting my clients in their various journeys by offering my opinion as if it were their own.

Albeit somewhat stressful, I especially enjoyed the challenge surrounding complex transactions where an issue was in dispute—perceived or otherwise—and I could smooth the waters.

I prided myself on knowing what the problem was, telling my solution to everyone concerned, then standing back to admire my handiwork.

Then about seven years ago, I had the privilege and pleasure of participating in the first-ever mediation training provided to members of The Society of

I must admit that my mediation training has made me a better Notary.

Notaries Public. My world was opened to mediation and alternate dispute resolution, which changed the manner in which I now practise.



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From studying mediation with UBC's Sharon Sutherland, our Cover Story personality, I soon discovered I had been trying to "fix the problem" by lending my expertise, offering an opinion, and managing my clients' files.

Some of the valuable lessons I learned from mediation are that when a situation involves dispute, I must:

- take the time to listen;
- take direction from the people involved; and



- have them conclude or reconcile their situation to their satisfaction, not necessarily my own.

That education changed my perception. I saw I could have more empathy for my clients and their needs.

Sharon lead us through "mock mediations"; we role-played in controlled mediation situations under the watchful eye of our respective coaches.

Mediation, like the practice of a BC Notary or any other professional, is something that gets better with repetition." Those who are good at it become great, as athletes do, when they draw upon past experiences and analyze their performance to hone their skills.

I have come to appreciate the role of the mediator. I look upon them as artists. Every mediation is unique, as is every painting. A great mediator realizes that mediations take on different characteristics and need different approaches at various times.

I must admit that my mediation training has made me a better Notary. I listen and empathize while reiterating my clients' particular concerns. Although I tend to lead with my advice, I realize—now more than ever—that ultimately the clients must make the decisions on issues. After all, they will be living with the results that those decisions create. ▲