

## PREPARATION FOR A MEDIATION

### 1. GOALS

Make a list of what you would like to accomplish during this mediation. Common examples of goals are:

- "I want to say everything I'm feeling and be heard."
- "I want to figure out where we get stuck when we fight, and what to do about it."
- "I want to negotiate new agreements about child-care and money."

### 2. "JAGGED" (HELD) FEELINGS

Write down the things your partner has done that have evoked a negative response from you: angered you, hurt your feelings, scared you, and so on. Be as specific as you can, using examples and following this form:

When you did \_\_\_\_\_, I felt \_\_\_\_\_.  
(specific behavior) (feelings)

Some examples are:

- "Last week while we were fighting, when you slammed your hand down on the kitchen table, I felt scared, and later angry."
- "When you said you'd renew the car insurance and then didn't, I felt irritated."
- "When you honk the horn in the car while I'm still getting ready to leave the house, the way you did this morning coming here, I feel really mad and hurt."

**PLEASE be careful that the words you use to describe feelings are simple and nonjudgmental.** It is not all right to say, for example, "When you said you'd renew the car insurance and then didn't, I felt you were irresponsible and incompetent." **Irresponsible** and **incompetent** are not words that describe feelings. They are opinions, and judgmental ones at that. Interestingly, words in English for feelings, devoid of judgments, are scarce. **Angry, sad, hurt, and scared**, and some variations on those themes, are the safest.

Write down all the "jagged feelings" you can remember without concern for which event is more important than another.

Write down things you have already said only if you still have strong feelings about them, and/or don't really feel understood.

Look at this part of the homework as an opportunity to get whatever is upsetting you down on paper. If you like, after your list of "jagged feelings" is complete, mark the ones that are the most important to you and that you want to be sure to get out on the table.

### 3. CHANGES

Make a list of things you ideally need to be happy in this relationship. Be as specific as you can. If you have any non-negotiable demands, be sure to note them.



This homework is a work sheet for your use only. Please prepare it on your own, without consulting each other. It is important that each person come to the mediation with his or her independent thoughts in order so that clear agreements between different points of view can be negotiated. *Be sure to bring your homework with you to the mediation.*

Mediations commonly take three to four hours. I ask that you refrain from using alcohol or drugs before coming to a mediation, since the work requires a clear mind and maximum energy.

I often work with the assistance of an apprentice. If you have any concerns about another person's presence, please let me know before the mediation date.

Please call me if you have any questions or need any help preparing.

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