



BEING RELATIONAL

KEYNOTES | BOOK | WORKSHOPS

I Can Relate!

The monthly missalette on Relational Practice
Louise Phipps Senft

New beginnings...

Introducing and Welcoming Relational Advocacy, Part 1

The choice to Be Relational™ or to be transactional is the fundamental question posed in *Being Relational: The Seven Ways to Quality Interaction & Lasting Change*, and is perhaps the most piercing question for each of us to ask ourselves about our practices and about our lives as we embark on this new year. New years seem to provide us with a most exquisite lens that can both look back and look forward, like no other time in the year. So, let's all pause together and look hard at the question for each of us, How will I choose to practice, in the day to day, in the moment to moment? Can I commit to choosing more times than not to Be Relational? This means I will need to let go of pushing so hard to maximize my self interest that I push others away, or take advantage of them, or harm them. I know you don't mean to do this but we all do to one degree or another from time to time. Some do it as a way of life. Can you instead soften that and instead do something different?— something equally good for you and also good for others.

Ask yourself: Will I choose to move towards others in ways that are open and curious even though we have disagreements? Will I make space to hear points of view other than my own, and to take them in, to welcome them, as a way of deepening my own view, or even possibly changing or expanding my view? Will I make choices to see others, even my opponents, as full human beings beyond merely the persona that is presented on the narrow issue in the narrow window of time that we have to see others in our practices? Am I capable of nurturing my own self-awareness and moral impulse to interact with others as neither a victim *nor* a victimizer? After all, we are all hard-wired to be in connection with others *and* something greater than just our individual interests. Relational choices can be woven into your practice whether you are the underdog or the champion, the neutral or the very partial, in what I call **Relational Advocacy**.

If you are interested at all in looking at these kinds of questions, whether for the first time, or in a new way, you are peering through *the relational lens* to inform your practice, and to inform your advocacy. It can mark a new beginning of a new year of being relational, or at least, *more* relational, each time you wake up to making more relational choices that are good for both yourself and for others. It requires an awareness of when we are on autopilot, just going through the routine

of our practices. It requires an acknowledgment of how often that is! But with this knowledge and awareness, we literally wake up and can be both strong and compassionate. They are not mutually exclusive ways of thinking, feeling and acting. They go in tandem with each other. A practice informed by both *self and other* choices for self and other outcomes is a practice that can have wider reach and impact in ways that are good for all, well beyond who wins and loses.

Your ADR, Dispute Resolution and or litigation practice is awaiting your choice: will you be more relational or will you continue to be transactional in 2019? Happy New Year! Happy New Beginnings.

Sending love

Louise Phipps Senft is Chair of the Relational Practices Task Force and author of the best-seller, *Being Relational: The Seven Ways to Quality Interaction and Lasting Change* (HCI 2015). She is the founder of Baltimore Mediation (1993), is a Distinguished Fellow of the International Academy of Mediators with a practice in catastrophic injury and medical reorganizations, complex business, divorce, and trust and estate conflict. She is a nationally recognized trainer in relational theory and practice and transformative mediation.