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Born to Mediate

By Lucy Moore



As an only child of warring parents, I began mediating at a very early age, probably before I can remember. Early on I was aware of being in the middle, where listening seemed to be my main job. Later, as I began to see and empathize with both my parents, I tried interpreting one to the other as best I could. I was beginning to appreciate the many shades of gray that I would later learn to love.

Lucy Moore has been a mediator, facilitator, consultant, and trainer since the late 1980s. Formerly a partner at the nonprofit Western Network, she is now the principal of Lucy Moore Associates, often working with multiple parties and multiple issues. Her focus has been natural resources and public-policy disputes, and her clients have included federal, state, and local agencies, tribal governments and communities, public-interest organizations, and industry. The subjects of the disputes have been wide-ranging, from water rights and air quality to mine reclamation and endangered species protection. With her strong background in Indian country, many of Moore's cases involve tribal interests and parties. Moore has mediated high-level federal disputes, facilitated large public meetings, trained EPA staff in "Dealing with Difficult People," and offered cross-cultural alliance building workshops with Hispanic and Native colleagues. In 2015, she received the Sharon Pickett Award from the Association for Conflict Resolution, granted to honor advancement of the cause of environmental protection through writing and the effective use of alternative dispute resolution. Moore's memoir, *Into the Canyon: Seven Years in Navajo Country* (2004), won Best Memoir from Women Writing the West. She is also the author of *Common Ground on Hostile Turf: Stories from an Environmental Mediator* (2013), in which she tells the stories of 10 of her most challenging cases.

As I aged and gained some verbal skills, I could offer sympathetic responses, and by 12, I was refining skills, sometimes using shuttle diplomacy. Did I like my mandatory career? No. I resented both parents for using me in this way. On the other hand, I did not protest, refuse, or resign. It was probably a survival mechanism, a way to find approval and love from both parents. In high school and college, my skills were honed so that friends unloaded their problems on me. I was the one who seemed to be able to explain or at least surmise why someone said that, felt that, acted like that. I could often suggest a way of wording a difficult message, dealing with a troubled relationship, or identifying the sticking point between two people. I never thought of this as mediation. It was just what I did, what I had always done.

I graduated from college in 1966, a time of turmoil, with more turmoil to come. I had no career plan, but I was drawn to the big issues that needed attention—poverty, civil rights, the Vietnam War. Our generation was ready to spring into action, via the Peace Corps, VISTA, War on Poverty, and Legal Services programs. As newlyweds, my husband and I headed for the Navajo Reservation, where he had an important role to play as the first attorney in one of the reservation towns, Chinle, Arizona. I, with my degree in modern English and French history and literature, had a less clear path.

It did not take long to realize that this corner of the country was tragically behind mainstream America in health, education, economic opportunity, and participation in the basics of democracy. Most painful of all was the systematic assimilation of Navajos into the White culture. Children as young as 6 were removed from their homes and put in government boarding schools, where they were forbidden to speak Navajo and lost all contact with the stories, traditions, and practices of their culture. Class pic-

tures from those days show very somber Indian children, with mainstream haircuts and clothes, staring out into this foreign world with sadness and confusion.

I approached this world full of idealism, energy, and compassion, ready to save everyone I encountered. I quickly learned, however, that no one needed to be saved, and certainly not by me. I responded with patience, watching and listening for opportunities to be useful. I was a Head Start teacher's aide and a school bus driver. I sold vehicle insurance to Navajos who were victimized by off-reservation dealers who charged triple the going rate. I helped start a daycare center, and finally I ran for justice of the peace and was elected to two terms. With jurisdiction over non-Navajos on the reservation, I handled traffic tickets, served as coroner, tried misdemeanor cases, and held preliminary hearings for felonies, all without a law degree. I also had jurisdiction over Navajos as well as non-Navajos for the purpose of registering voters, which I did by the hundreds, and marrying people, which I often did in my backyard, with dogs yowling and small children running around.

Being a justice of the peace as a 24-year-old was not something I planned, but it seemed oddly relevant given my early years as a mediator. And yet, fun as it was to bang my gavel on the hollow-core door that served as my desk, declare a scofflaw guilty, and collect \$100 on behalf of Apache County, I was uncomfortable coming down on one side or the other. There were too many sides, too many ways to look at the problem.

Those seven years were life-changing for me. I learned how to survive and then thrive in a foreign culture. I learned to be comfortable in my own (White) skin. I learned how to be helpful on their terms, not mine. Without protest, I sewed Joseph and Mary costumes for the Head Start Christmas pageant, I helped 5-year-olds make

paper Pilgrim hats and Indian headdresses to celebrate Thanksgiving, and I organized an Easter egg hunt on a freezing, windswept mesa top, where the grandmas shoved the kids aside to fill their flour sacks with needed supplies for the family. Where I could, I advocated for the inclusion and honoring of Navajo culture, and I formed relationships that have lasted more than 50 years. Chinle laid a foundation for my future work as a mediator and consultant in cross-cultural alliance-building.

In 1975, now a family of four, we left Navajoland and moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico. I was deeply, achingly homesick for the reservation. Although Santa Fe is a multicultural place with Hispanics, Native Americans, and Anglos, I missed Navajos, mutton stew, and fry bread, the endless horizon, the huge bowl of a sky, even the world-class mud in the winter and the unspeakable dust storms in the spring.

I told myself I would eventually melt back into the Anglo scene from which I had come, that this strange White world would soon not look so strange anymore. I knew this was true, and it made me sad. I was a different person, more aware of the world around me, and more willing to not have all the answers. I wanted to be sure I did not lose that part of myself that was forged in Chinle, that part that had learned how to survive and thrive in another culture.

I Become a Mediator, Officially

Wanting to stay connected to Indian country, I joined a nonprofit dedicated to empowering Indian communities legally and economically. Like me, John Folk-Williams, coincidentally a college classmate, had recently arrived in Santa Fe. We solicited proposals, evaluated projects, and advised foundations on what kinds of project would have the most impact. Eventually we formed our own nonprofit,

Western Network, and began researching water conflicts in the West, often involving tribes that were seeking ways to defend fast-disappearing water rights. I was on the phone all day, talking to people entangled in nasty, often years-long conflicts over water rights, management, and use. Of particular interest for me was Tucson, then embroiled in a huge battle for groundwater. As a rapidly growing city in the desert, it had no choice but to stick a straw into the aquifer and start sucking. The impact on neighbors was significant as the water level began to drop. The Papago Tribe (now Tohono O'odham Nation) was seriously affected and filed suit to defend their aboriginal water rights. Nearby pecan growers and mining operations joined the fray, and soon it was a multi-lawsuit, mudslinging mess.

As I talked to people over a period of months, I began to hear a hint of optimism. There was someone who stood in the middle, taking no side, listening to everyone and brokering agreements. Congressman Morris Udall was mediating the conflict in his district. I had a revelation. I wanted to be Morris Udall when I grew up. All those years of being in the middle—as an only child, as a friend, as a justice of the peace—finally made sense. I was a mediator.

By the early 1980s, visions of Morris Udall still dancing in my head, I had helped Western Network transition into a foundation-funded environmental conflict resolution firm. We saw the need for forums where parties in conflict over natural resources—tribes, Hispanic communities, federal, state, and local agencies, and others—could come together in a safe, facilitated setting. Here they could engage in dialogue, get to know each other, develop a bit of trust, and hopefully explore paths forward that focused on their common ground and shared needs, rather than on their painful history and the debilitating fears that drove them apart.

In an early effort to educate a state agency about the value of mediation, we offered our heavily subsidized services to the New Mexico Environment Department to conduct a regulatory negotiation. Weary of the usual way of developing regulations—promulgation followed by lawsuits—the agency was happy to have us pilot this new process that brought together all the parties likely to sue and anointed them as regulation drafters. This was how I came to be known, for a short time, as the Queen of Lust (Leaking Underground Storage Tanks, the subject of the mediated regulations). The agency was delighted, and we were elated, with the success of the process: regulations acceptable to all and not a single lawsuit.

Experience was our main teacher, and we learned critical lessons from each case. John and I had minimal training but were able to apprentice to some outstanding practitioners, including Ben Moya and Howard Bellman, who also served on our board. We benefitted enormously from other board members who brought a wealth of ideas, inspiration, and connections. Many thanks to Gail Bingham, Dick Trudell, Luis Torres, Craig Barnes, Chris Carlson, Lee Kapalowski, Fred Anderson, Roberto Chené, Oscar Rodriguez, and so many more.

Slowly we began to gain credibility as facilitation and mediation professionals in the Southwest, but we could not ignore growing criticism of our role from the very people we were trying to help. We may have seen ourselves as saviors, bringing our talent and our funding to help disempowered, struggling communities have a voice and take their place at the negotiating table where decisions impacting their lives were made. But through painful discussions with local land-based people, we began to understand the region's complexities and our lack of accountability to those we were serving. Like so many outsider do-gooders, we had waltzed into a new landscape, steeped in history

and conflict and laced with intricate relationships, with little knowledge of where we were. We raised substantial outside funding to pay ourselves to help local communities, whose members were themselves experts—about the natural resources, about their challenges and their needs—and had the capacity to deal with complex situations themselves. If we had taken the time to listen, learn, and build relationships, a valuable partnership might have ensued. As it was, we looked like one more carpetbagger.

We were *entremetidos*, those who get in between, who butt in where they are not wanted, they said. Why didn't we take our bags of money and go back where we came from? How dare we raise money "off the backs" of poor northern New Mexico communities? We used our Ivy League credibility with the Ford Foundation. It was easy for us to go "knock on that door." "Do you think that door would ever open for us?" they asked. If we at Western Network wanted to be useful, we would help them gain access to the big money, let them determine how best to spend it, and support them in their efforts however we could. We were defensive in the beginning, but these passionate voices were compelling, and we began to understand the truth in what they were saying. We were acting disrespectfully at least, and perhaps unethically at worst.

We learned to listen to that client community and become their allies, partnering with them on their priorities, and sharing leadership in project planning and implementation. We used our influence to bring major foundations to Santa Fe for a meeting with community leaders to air these grievances and help foundations understand the darker side of philanthropy in poor communities. The result was a multi-million dollar grant from several foundations to the New Mexico Community Foundation for grassroots projects. These lessons, painful as they were, were critical as my career developed. Listening to those on

the ground, those whose lives are impacted, and empowering them to take a role with other parties in the design of a process, for me became fundamental principles.

I also saw during this period examples of local leaders who brought people together and helped them find their own resolution to conflict. Happy as I was to call myself a mediator, I understood that there were certain situations where I needed to step aside. Since then, I have watched with admiration as those local leaders—sometimes secular, sometimes religious—work, often quietly behind the scenes, to make peace and heal old wounds. These are “cases” better handled by those intimate with the issues and known by the parties. Sometimes I have been asked to support local leaders by providing neutral facilitation of a difficult meeting, or by making a connection with a stakeholder or decision-maker, or by simply coaching. Playing this role is precious to me, and I know that it is based on my understanding of the landscape—geographical, political, cultural, economic, etc.—and the resulting trusting relationships.

By the 1990s, Western Network had weaned itself from foundation funding and shifted to a for-profit firm. Foundation funding was seductive, but those years had hurt our credibility with those we were trying to serve. We decided that if we indeed had something to offer those in conflict, they should be willing to pay for it and we should be able to make a living at it. Fee for services was a cleaner way to do business. We continued our work, but with a new commitment to accountability not only to clients but within our own organization as well. We took a critical look at our internal structure, and made a commitment to include as staff local New Mexicans who aspired to be part of the conflict resolution field. We mentored our talented secretary Rosemary Romero to become a mediator, replaced her with a young Navajo, and hired two other Native New

Mexicans, Aron Rael and Richard Pacheco, as interns. Our work life, internal and external, was enriched immensely by opening our doors to those representing the communities and cultures around us.

In 1999, unable to support our expanded staff, Western Network dissolved, each of us principals moving to private practice. I am still a solo practitioner, focusing on natural resources and public policy disputes. My mediation cases are usually multiparty, multi-issue, and include tribal or other traditional land-based interests. I also design and facilitate public processes of all kinds, including scoping processes for environmental impact statements, forest plan revisions, endangered species designations, and more.

A particularly satisfying part of my current practice is being part of a multicultural training team. With Hispanic and Native American colleagues, we respond to requests from agencies, nonprofits, and communities that are struggling to develop meaningful alliances with partners across a cultural divide. An environmental organization may find itself at odds with a traditional community that they see as a natural ally to combat development. A nonprofit board may have trouble soliciting board members or staff of color, although their mission relates directly to those communities. Given my years with the Navajo and my experience working with land-based communities, I am drawn to these cases, where I am part of a team that can bring the full landscape of multicultural dynamics to life. For me, those conflicts that are rooted in our identity, our shared history, our shared pain and responsibility are profound. If we can work through the trauma and see each other as humans engaged in struggle, we can develop a relationship, share fears and dreams, and perhaps find that elusive common ground. Although they are more dramatic in cross-cultural situations, these truths apply to every case for me.

My Brand of Mediation

Each of us is different. We come to conflict resolution for different reasons, on different paths, at different times. Unlike many colleagues, and most young practitioners entering the field, I did not go to graduate school. I learned from mentors, from life experiences, and from struggling in the trenches of conflict, developing a set of beliefs and practices that are mine.

My idea of the mediator role shifted radically during a long-weekend workshop with Gary Friedman, a lawyer and mediator from Mill Valley, California. Gary taught us to trust our instincts at the mediation table. He believed that contrary to much training of the day, the mediator is an active player in the room, not a neutral robot whose inner life has no place in the process. I learned from him to take my own temperature during the mediation. If I felt uneasy, anxious, distracted, bored, or a host of other emotions that I might scold my professional self for indulging in, I should see it as a barometer for what is happening in the room. Depending on the situation, I have learned to honor my emotions and even bring them into the conversation. If my mind is wandering or I am inexplicably anxious, I might say, “Let me interrupt for just a moment. I have to confess that I am not able to focus on this conversation. Maybe it’s just me, but I want to ask if anyone else is having the same trouble. Is there something that’s not being said here? Is something missing?” Almost always someone will echo my feeling and suggest that we need to shift gears and consider another angle, or back up and get back on track, or name the elephant in the room.

Gary also suggested that as mediators we enter a room with the hope that everyone, including ourselves, will be the “best version of themselves.” Just holding that image, he said, could nudge participants into a place where agreement was more possible. At first, this seemed wacky,

smacking of New Age thinking that had invaded Santa Fe. But I gave it a try, and although I can't say definitively that it works, it does put me in a good frame of mind for handling the group. With my newly opened mind, I even went so far as to adopt a method from Cesar Milan, the dog whisperer whose TV show focused on clients with naughty dogs. Cesar teaches the owners to take an attitude that is "calm and assertive." Yes, I have learned that entering a room of unruly humans with that commitment to be "calm and assertive" works wonders. For the most part, they settle down, alert, ready to work. . . waiting for a treat, I suppose.

I am grateful that my life experience has given me a credibility with Native Americans and other communities for whom land, water, and cultural rights are so crucial. I am eager to take a case involving these interests—often in conflict with agencies, industry, environmentalists, and more—and feel that this is where my talents are best used. I am proud of being able to manage a fair process, but I also am very aware of my deep affection for Indian country. Once, I was accused of being "pro-Indian" by non-Indian participants in a difficult case involving Bureau of Indian Affairs school operations. I realized that I had not extended my sensitivity to the non-Indians and that they had suffered deep pain and guilt as they listened to the trauma of their Indian counterparts. It was an important reminder to give everyone at the table attention, care, and sensitivity—regardless of race, ethnicity, age, or any of the other identifiers. Trauma is difficult for everyone.

There are certain cases where the parties may be traditionally on opposite sides but have the desire to work together and are willing to be vulnerable, even when in some shark-infested waters. They understand instinctively that the relationship is primary if the substantive work is to succeed. These cases are a dream for me. The head of the

New Mexico Office of the State Engineer, responsible for water rights in the state, came to me in the 1990s needing help in negotiating a water rights settlement with the Navajo Nation. “I think I need a wedding planner,” he began as I looked around nervously. “We are going to need to ‘get married’ in order to come to a good resolution, but I don’t know how to take the first step, how to approach my future in-laws.” With some trepidation, the bride’s and groom’s representatives came together to begin discussions. Four years later, a \$900 million settlement gave security to irrigators in the basin while providing badly needed water to underserved portions of the reservation. The vows were said, the cake was served, and smiles were seen all around.

And I am lucky to have another (unlikely) dream case. This one involves contamination of natural and cultural resources surrounding the Los Alamos National Laboratories (LANL) in northern New Mexico. Beginning in the 1940s and lasting decades, LANL developed, tested, and disposed of extremely toxic, hazardous, and radioactive materials, with serious impacts to soil, water, and sacred sites belonging to four Native American pueblos. Part of the Superfund Act calls for making the public or a tribe whole in cases through restoration, replacement, or, as a last resort, compensation for the damage. The process is painful for the pueblos, reducing their cultural resources and sacred sites to commodities, to be valued only monetarily. This conversation lies ahead in this multiyear process, but we are laying the groundwork with data-gathering and analysis and by nurturing trusting relationships among the parties.

Why do I look forward to these monthly meetings on this painful subject? Because those at our negotiating table have developed a level of trust and appreciation that is remarkable. Natural enemies—Department of Energy, LANL, four damaged pueblos, the US Forest Service, and

the state of New Mexico—work through difficult technical material and a host of challenging decisions: how much data is adequate for settlement talks? How will pueblo cultural data be gathered and kept confidential, safe from the grasp of the Freedom of Information Act? What projects will make up a settlement package, and how will the four pueblos share the benefits of those projects?

I marveled at a recent going-away party for the DOE representative at the table who was being transferred. He had been part of the group for many years and was well liked. As we broke up, a pueblo representative went over and gave him a big bear hug. “I’m going to miss you, bro,” he said, and they exchanged good-luck wishes. This group understands that they are all working for the same goal—a fair resolution that will bring some wholeness to the damaged pueblos. They know they are not personally responsible for the situation they are in, and they are grateful to share the negotiation table with committed, caring fellow human beings.

If this kind of case seems tailor-made for me, there are those with challenges that seem designed to drive me crazy. I have had a handful of cases where a righteous zealot blocked consensus, clearly participating in bad faith, never intending to give even an inch. Often arrogant and uninterested in the human beings they share the table with, they cannot tolerate even the smallest concession. I hate to admit it, but under these conditions, my all-encompassing, welcoming heart slams shut. I have pled with their higher-ups to replace these people, citing concern with bad faith, usually to no avail.

Challenging cases for me often involve a preponderance of data and reliance on science, to the point where there is no room for relationship-building, exploration of history, sharing of values and world views. These cases feel heartless to me, and my efforts to inject the non-

technical aspects are often met with skepticism and seen as a waste of precious time. I have learned to bring in that softer, human focus at the beginning, with a day or two of relationship-building before the participants leap into the technical morass. I am careful not to frustrate them with too much “Santa Fe woo-woo” (as I was accused of at one EPA training in Dallas) but ask them to spend some time learning about each other. Once they begin exchanging stories, they understand the value of this foundation, and the skepticism ends.

I have had a few cases that are just plain sad, so sad that I cry in the car on the way home, and when I get there, I make myself a stiff martini. Mt. Taylor, an elegant, gently sloping conical peak in central New Mexico, is a sacred mountain for six local tribes. But the Mining Act of 1872 gives anyone the right to explore and develop mineral resources, no matter the ownership or designation of the surface lands. After years of struggle, tribes won the Traditional Cultural Property designation for Mt. Taylor from the federal agency that protects important cultural sites and properties in the United States. The Mining Act, however, made the designation moot, and uranium companies applied for permits to drill on Forest Service lands on Mt. Taylor.

Section 106 of The Historic Preservation Act requires any federal agency to consult with tribes or others who may be impacted by a development proposal. But in this case, neither the tribes nor the agency had the power to deny the mining permit. They could negotiate only trivia, cajole, plead, pray for some considerations—avoid this spot where artifacts are found, drill farther away from this stream, move your access road a few yards to the south—but the company held all the cards. These sessions were painful for the tribes, who made it clear that by participating they were not condoning the mining but simply trying to make

the impact on them and their culture a little less severe. My belief in the power of relationships is tested in cases like this. The painful history of exploitation and the prospect of further degradation of what is sacred made it difficult for tribes to share a table with the mining company. At each meeting, I allowed them to speak of the seriousness of the loss and plead for consideration, and difficult as it was for the company representatives to listen, I saw them take it in and be moved. Friendships were unlikely to emerge, but respectful, meaningful exchanges happened, and company representatives made concessions to the tribes that they might not have made otherwise.

Exploring Principles

A case like the one above makes me face the difficult question: can or should a mediator be an agent for social change? Personally, I am an advocate for social change, but professionally, my responsibility is to create and maintain a fair process. I trust that with the right parties at the table, that fair process will produce an equitable outcome. But I am left with a tension between a yearning for a more just society and a commitment to mediator ethics that forbids any bias. My answer is to add a bit to the definition of “fair process.”

For me, to treat parties *equally* is often not enough. Some at the table may not have the capacity to participate effectively because of language or cultural barriers, inadequate financial resources, or lack of technical understanding of the issues. To treat them equally with corporate lawyers, environmental activists, and agency experts feels to me like abuse. We owe it to all our parties to be sure they have what they need to be fully engaged with a strong, clear voice. I see nothing biased in figuring out how to provide gas and daycare money, finding an interpreter, tutoring between meetings, or offering other assistance to

enable a participant to fully represent his or her interest. It may also mean holding meetings in locations and facilities that are culturally comfortable and taking field trips to see the impacted resources and better understand the community's situation. We may make adjustments to the agenda, spending extra time on introductions to focus on the importance of relationship and even beginning the meeting with a traditional prayer in a Native language. Interestingly, after dozens and dozens of meetings like this, never has a participant of a different faith complained and asked for equal time. There seems to be an understanding and even appreciation of this cultural practice as something offered on behalf of the group as a whole. Taking extra time for introductions can bring some objection, but usually all agree it is worth it in the long run. I see all these proactive steps as a way to make the dialogue more inclusive by empowering those voices inherently disadvantaged at a mainstream negotiating table. Those participants who are comfortable in the mainstream culture are not diminished in their power; they simply have more capable negotiators on the other side.

A footnote: The tables can be turned. I heard a tale of woe from a utility company executive. His mainstream, be-suited attorneys were completely thrown off their game when visiting a traditional Navajo community to negotiate a transmission line right-of-way. They arrived with a PowerPoint presentation to find the community had no electricity. The interpretation of their serious technical presentation into Navajo took forever and included moments of hilarious laughter. And, the kicker: they of course could not refuse the community's invitation to stay for lunch, which turned out to be a great (and slimy) delicacy: sheep intestine stew. The local community came out ahead on that negotiation.

Speaking of “tweaking” the core principles of mediation, I have a couple of suggestions. I would like to see a tenet that speaks to honoring and respecting the humanity in each other. One could argue that this is understood to be part of procedural fairness, but for me it deserves to stand alone. Procedural fairness speaks to a process that treats parties equally, with ground rules that seek order, civility, confidentiality, and good faith. I am left with a rather mechanical set of rules that ignores our vulnerability, our need for trusting relationships, our need to be connected, human to human, our capacity to take courageous steps toward resolving conflicts. I am not sure how to articulate this in a set of principles. Perhaps it could be an understanding or an assumption underlying our processes.

I would also like to see a core tenet relating to sustainability. Too often, we mediators put all the energy up front, and have nothing to offer in the way of implementation, sustainability, monitoring, follow-through, enforcement, and revisiting the mediated agreement. We are focused on the resolution of the conflict, and too often, once those signatures are on the dotted line, we breathe a sigh of relief, shake hands all around, wish the parties luck, and ride off into the sunset. The water rights settlement between the state of New Mexico and the Navajo Nation was ratified by necessary parties and funds were allocated by Congress, but persistent objections from non-Indians in the basin are working their way through lower courts. Ground has been broken on the major water project that was the key to the agreement, so practically the “wet” water will flow. The “paper” water rights are still being contested. I would have liked to continue my role with a mediation effort with the basin residents, who had not, by the way, been part of the state-tribal negotiated settlement. But there was no vehicle for this to happen.

Finally, what about the sustainability of our beloved profession? I would like to see in print a commitment to grow our field by recruiting and supporting those who share our passion for resolving conflict. Not every practitioner can or wants to add this to their job description, but to elevate the need in importance would help. I have always loved to mentor those who aspire to do this kind of work, especially those with limited access and connections. As the end of my career looms, and as my experience grows behind me, I am more committed to mentoring than ever. I find enormous enjoyment in connecting with those who are young, energetic, and passionate about the work. Mentees come to me in a variety of ways. They may have read my book and been intrigued by the stories I tell. We may meet at a conference, or through one of many webinars I give to graduate classes around the country. I engage the students, answering questions, learning about their passions, giving career advice, and telling particularly provocative stories from my career. It is so satisfying to spend time with their enthusiasm and curiosity, and they help clarify for me why I am a mediator.

To be in the middle is an honor for me. I always feel grateful that this diverse bunch of disputants has allowed me to stand there, trusting that I will manage the difficulties that lie ahead fairly and with sensitivity. I love the moments when I can defuse a dangerous moment, identify a roadblock, bring warring voices together, offer lightness or insight when needed most. I could not be happier with this career—the one I was born into, the one that Morris Udall showed me, the one that has given me so much to think about these past 35 years.