

Mediator Insights: The Power of Presence

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Never underestimate the power of being present. This is true in all interactions and particularly true in mediation. In mediation, often the power of presence can unblock the pathway to resolution.

To illustrate, let's consider Cori Doerrfeld's *The Rabbit Listened*.

Taylor has a box of building blocks. Taylor works hard and builds an amazing, special and expansive structure. Then, whoosh, a flock of birds knocks it down. Taylor is devastated.

The chicken is the first to notice. The chicken runs over and says let's talk about it, but Taylor didn't feel like talking.

Next, the bear comes and says let's shout and roar about it, but Taylor didn't feel like it.

Then the elephant comes and says let's remember exactly how it was so we can rebuild it, but Taylor doesn't want to remember.

Others follow. The hyena wants to laugh about it. The ostrich wants to hide and pretend it didn't happen. The kangaroo wants to throw it all away. The snake wants to knock down someone else's structure.

But Taylor didn't want to do any of these things, so they all left. And Taylor was alone.

Then, very quietly, a rabbit came. The rabbit didn't say anything. The rabbit sat next to Taylor. The rabbit waited. And waited. They sat in silence.

Then Taylor began to talk, then shout, then remember, then laugh, then work through all of the other suggestions. The rabbit sat with Taylor the whole time.



Then, having worked through all of these emotions and options, Taylor announced with excitement it was time to build again. And it would be amazing.

Do you know what the rabbit did to help Taylor move forward and find the path to resolution for Taylor's problem?

The rabbit was present. Sometimes what we need most is for someone to simply be present while we process our emotions and our options. Being present is often the key to unblocking pathways to resolution in mediation.

Author's Note: As a mediator, I am a "forever student" always seeking new ways to help people find a path to resolution in mediation. As a parent, I have spent a gazillion hours reading books to my children. Oftentimes, these books teach me new ways to approach conflict resolution. In this case, Cori Doerrfeld's "The Rabbit Listened" inspired this post.

Disclaimer: Nothing contained herein constitutes legal advice nor does anything contained herein create a professional relationship.