Mediation Center Hosts Session
On Recommended Reading for Mediators

The Northern Virginia Mediation Service's "Monday Nite Forum" recently held a program for mediators to discuss their favorite books and writings on mediation-related topics – not just "how-to" material, but also fiction, science, biography and other items that folks found nourishing and instructive for them *in their roles as mediators.*

Tracey Pilkerton and John Settle, who led the program, say participants were enthusiastic about it, and they plan to offer it again. The cascading effect of the conversation was remarkable – one book idea suggested others, which in turn suggested more! The list below barely scratches the surface, and should be considered the first rough draft of what may develop. The community also is considering establishing a regular "book club" for folks to discuss a particular book related to mediation.

The list of items collected from the session is attached with a note about why each was deemed valuable. Readers who have other favorites are encouraged to share them by responding here, and we will send the information to Tracey and John, who plan to grow this list.

***Influencer: The Power to Change Anything,* by Kerry Patterson *et al.* --** understanding how people influence others and create constructive change. There is an accompanying video.

***Bringing Peace Into The Room,* edited by Daniel Bowling and David Hoffman --** a collection of provocative and practical essays on all aspects of mediation.

***The Butter Battle Book,* by Doctor Seuss** – illustrates aspects of competitive human behavior and intolerance.

***Inner Tennis*, by Timothy Galway** – sports-enhancing performance manual recently reborn as a management text. Covers the idea of a person's "self-talk," especially when things aren't going well.

Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking and ***Tipping Point,* by Malcolm Gladwell** – two books on how people give meaning to thin slices of behavior, the value of our innate knowledge and intuition, and how ideas grow in acceptance. Among other things, Gladwell examines how behaviors and messages "spread just like viruses" and he discusses a typology of personalities who enable the spread.

***What We Keep,* by Elizabeth Berg** – novel on an intergenerational dispute involving perceptions and misunderstandings of events between mother and daughters. Story also touches on the power of truth, forgiveness, and understanding.

***Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most,* by Douglas Stone *et al.* --** analyzes difficult conversations in terms of three components: learning what happened,

developing an understanding of the feelings around the issue, and identifying personal stakes in the outcome. Practical, "how-to" advice.

***Games Girls Play,* by Caroline Silby --** less about girls and more about performance enhancement in sports and in life; discusses coping differently with things you can and can't control, communication, and other subjects.

***Ripples from Peace Lake: Essays for Mediators and Peacemakers,* by Eric Galton** -- provocative short essays from a thoughtful and experienced mediator – "every essay is a delight."

***The Happiness Hypothesis,* by Jonathan Haidt** – a synthesis of psychology, religion, philosophy and sociology, bearing on self-understanding and creation of personal meaning.

Crucial Conversations,* by Kerry Patterson *et al. – tools for holding conversations when the stakes are high. Provides a dialogue model for understanding how people react when safety is at risk (flight/fight) and how, once safety is restored, to engage in meaningful dialogue.

***Kiss, Bow, and Shake Hands: How to Do Business in Sixty Countries,* by Terri Morrison and Wayne Conaway** – deals with cultural difference and the ethics of being sensitive to those differences.

***Who Moved My Cheese,* by Spenser Johnson** – short book on people's reaction to change and how it is tied to their perceptions and beliefs about the nature of change.

***Language and the Pursuit of Happiness,* by Chalmers Brothers** – shows how people create meaning through the language they speak and how they listen. Provides tools and techniques for using language more purposefully.

***House of Sand and Fog,* by Andre DuBus** – what happens when people are locked in their positions and when emotions take over. Great for reflecting on openings that could potentially shift parties from their positions to interests and what happens when people engage in meaningful dialogue.

***Quiet Leadership,* by David Rock –** contains an excellent chapter on active listening and the importance of being succinct.

Legislative History of the Administrative Dispute Resolution Act of 1996 (P.L.104-320). Senate Report 104-245 (3/27/96) to accompany S.1224; House Report 104-597 (5/29/96) to accompany HR 2977; House Conference Report 104-841 (9/25/96) to accompany HR 2977; Congressional Record Volume 142 (1996) – Sept 25, , Sept 27, Sept 30, and Oct 4. Interesting discussion of the intersection of ADR, public policy, and politics.

***The Negotiator's Field book*, edited by Andrea Schneider & Christopher Honeyman** – a compendium of eighty articles by mediators, academics, researchers and others on all aspects of how people negotiate (in mediation and elsewhere).

***Creative Problem Solver's Handbook for Negotiators and Mediators, Volumes 1 & 2,* by John W. Cooley –** the title says it all.

***Digging to America,* by Anne Tyler –** all of Tyler's sixteen books are valuable for their display of the subtle nuances of human communication and miscommunication; this one adds the overlay of complex interactions between couples with culturally-mixed marriages and foreign-born adopted children.

***Long Day's Journey into Night,* by Eugene O'Neill** – a literature classic recommended for its sophisticated examination of the human heart and interactions with others.

***Emotional Intelligence*, by Daniel Goleman** – a primer on understanding the important differences between "brainpower" (IQ) and emotional competency and awareness.

***Bleak House*, by Charles Dickens** – a classic which displays the damage done by uncontrolled litigation, in addition to an examination of human character.

***Plain Truth,* by Jodi Picoult** – a novel which explores the difficulties people have in understanding each other across different cultures. Well-drawn and richly-nuanced characters, and also explores how lawyers think.

***He Said, She Said*, by Deborah Tannen** – this and other books by Tannen explore gender differences in communication, as well as general communication problems such as, *e.g.*, that others' perceptions of the content and emotional tone of what you say may not match what you thought you were expressing. *See also* books by **Carol Gilligan** on, *e.g.*, different value systems of women and men.

No Future Without Forgiveness, and other books by **Desmond Tutu** which contain valuable lessons on, *e.g.*, creativity in peace-building, listening, and healing.

The Promise of Mediation, by Robert Bush and Joseph Folger – the 1994 classic which is a basic primer on transformative mediation.

Getting to Yes and ***Getting Past No --*** Fisher's and Ury's books from the Harvard Project on Negotiation which are central to the "interest-based" approach to resolving conflict.

***On Apology,* by Aaron Lazare –** a theoretical and practical analysis of apology and how to deal with both the need to get, and to give, acknowledgment.

***John Adams,* by David McCullough** – how "the colossus of independence" struggled with many years of great adversity here and abroad.