

*Class of 2006  
Parent – Teen  
Mediation Training*



Congratulations to the following people who completed the parent-teen mediation training this June:

Back row: Jeanne Bartlemay, Sharon Moon, Kevin Hall, Parisa Khallghi, Andrew Coover, Jon-Henry Kubej, Max Lutz, Toby Donner, Jill Sirikantraporn, Genevieve Hicks  
Middle row: Paige Spicer, Lizbeth Oralia Sanchez, Katie Nelson, Peter Cole, Clare Shin,  
Kneeling: Michelle Drews, Emily Power, Cathy Goldman, Erin Maclean, Mercy Joyce,  
Lying: Jesse Sieden



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*Update*

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## Be Careful: Ladders Can Be Shaky

By Regina Lyons

Several years ago, a dear friend of mine purchased her dream home: a remodeled farmhouse. The other three buildings on the old farm – the garage, stable and back stable – were also remodeled as homes, and were purchased at the same time. The four households became good neighbors and socialized regularly, until last year, when the older widow next door died unexpectedly. Now my friend has new neighbors.

“How’s it going with the new neighbors?” I asked recently. “They’re nice enough,” she said. “They’re polite when we see them, but they keep to themselves. One odd thing happened, though,” she continued on, “we had an evening get together, and in the middle of just visiting, the woman said to us, ‘Oh, you’ll all be getting a letter next week from the County about the addition we’re going to build – just so you’re not surprised’. My friend told me how shocked she was...what kind of neighbor does things *that* way, she wondered? She decided these weren’t the kind of people she wanted to have as neighbors, let alone invite into her home again. She resolved to have as little as possible to do with them in the future.

My friend had just climbed up the ladder of inference. (See box on page 2).

Simplified, the ladder of inference refers to the experience of:

1. choosing an observed behavior or action
2. interpreting/judging it based on the observer’s personal values
3. responding based on your interpretation/ judgment

As an example, imagine you are giving a presentation to your office colleagues. You are nervous and hoping you’ll be well received. About half way through, you happen to notice one man glance quickly at his watch (step 1). Your mind quickly interprets – he’s bored, or he

doesn’t like the material, or he’s timing me (step 2). You finish the presentation, and are asked to present a new topic at the next meeting. At the next presentation, you are ready with a shorter, livelier presentation, and you keep an eagle eye on the watch-watcher, looking for any disapproval (step 3). Sadly, you learn later at the coffee machine that the man has heart disease and must take medication every hour on the hour. Perhaps that might explain his glance at his watch?

We all run up the ladder at times. You may judge the lady who just ‘cut you off’ on the highway as a crazy idiot – but perhaps she is rushing to a hospital on an emergency matter. Or how about the waiter who seemingly ignored your request for a new table at a restaurant? He just doesn’t want to be bothered, you think. Until you notice his hearing aid when he brings your water.

But when it comes to relationships with neighbors, the ladder of inference can create real problems. In my friend’s case, she chose her neighbor’s comment about the soon-to-arrive county letter, out of all of the other interactions she had had with the neighbor. Next, she used her own values to interpret and judge the neighbor: the neighbor doesn’t care what we think because if she cared, she would have shown us the plans prior to filing with the County. Furthermore, being a good neighbor is far more important than any addition to a house. Why have a great house if you’ve alienated the neighbors? And finally, she decided to cut any communications with the neighbor, as a result of attributing the earlier assessment she had made of the neighbor.

I encouraged her to talk with her neighbor about the situation. She did. They got a much clearer sense of each other, and have become closer, integrating the newcomer into the more established micro neighborhood. It turns out my friend’s neighbor’s primary value is privacy, with a secondary value of community. My friend, as you

have no doubt guessed, primarily values community, and thinks secondarily about privacy. Both of their actions and reactions reflect their primary values. After talking, they understand each other better, and have decided to get all four of the households together to talk about the best way for everyone to handle additions and remodeling projects. They're going to do it during a progressive dinner, including tours and plans for each house as they dine.

For neighbors, and for all relationships, talking, questioning and sharing information are the keys to stepping off of the ladder, and onto solid ground.

### An as-fond-as-they-come Farewell

from Regina Lyons to the BNMP Volunteers

*Shaky Ladders* is my final article for the BNMP newsletter as staff, as I have recently resigned my position as Program Co-Manager. As summer blossoms, I will be in the luxurious position of spending more time with my family, and for that, I am very grateful.

But leaving turns out to be bittersweet. The bite comes from the thought of leaving such a great group of people here at the program. For six years, it has been my privilege to have worked closely with all of you. I have learned a tremendous amount from you, and it has been a singular pleasure to watch new volunteers engage in the struggle of stretching themselves, and in time, mature into seasoned mediators.

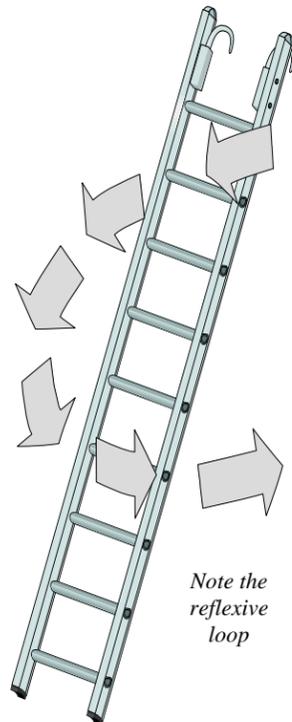
Your work has resulted in an outstanding reputation for the program amongst city staff. Regularly, Andrew and I hear about how our mediators made a difference in a neighborhood or in a relationship that had been very troubled. More and more, our referrals come from within the city. This is due to the your excellence, and the services you provide.

For all of your time, energy, and learning that you have shared with me, I thank you. Ann McBroom always said that the door to the BNMP is a revolving one, with no exit. I'm banking on that, and I hope our paths will continue to cross!



### The Ladder of Inference

- I take actions based on my beliefs
- I adopt beliefs about the world
- I draw conclusions
- I make assumptions based on the meanings I added
- I add meanings
- I select data from what I observe
- I observe the world



Adapted from: The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook, Peter Senge, et al., eds.

### Book Group Corner:

*Influence*, by Robert Cialdini



By Andrew Kidde

Armed with a wealth of social psychology research and his own investigation into marketing and sales departments, Cialdini presents a theory of influence. Cialdini says there are six "weapons of influence:" reciprocation, commitment and consistency, social proof, liking, authority and scarcity. He makes a convincing case of the power of these tools, and explores some of the ethical issues that are raised by the use of them. But the best thing about this book is the fascinating anecdotes: for instance, one about how G. Gordon Liddy convinced the Nixon White house to pursue the reckless Watergate project (despite the fact that they had pretty sure victory before them), another about how the toy industry manipulates parents into buying more toys and ruthlessly breaks the hearts of little kids across the country in the process.

Our book group is on summer break. We will start next fall with a planning meeting about what we will read next, how often we meet, etc. **All are welcome!** Look for an announcement in the next newsletter.

### Parent—Teen Update

By  
Cathy Goldman

I just completed the parent-teen 2006 mediation training. What a great group of 5 adults and 15 teens! As the participants walked in on the first day, the room filled with energetic and enthusiastic people. I knew it was going to be a great group! They learned the skills quickly and contributed their knowledge and insights in a thoughtful and respectful manner. What a wonderful experience for me as the lead trainer. Thanks to all who participated. I am excited to get you all started in the program.

AND, I felt so supported by my training team of teens and adults who helped coach, present and demonstrate the critical skills of mediation. You are all great role models of the process. THANK YOU!

Watch for e-mails of observation opportunities and enjoy the summer.

### The Pope and Rabbi Moise climb theological ladders

*Thanks to Jack Mahler for passing this one on!*

Several centuries ago, the Pope decreed that all the Jews had to convert or leave Italy. There was a huge outcry from the Jewish community, so the Pope offered a deal. He would have a religious debate with the leader of the Jewish community. If the Jews won, they could stay in Italy, if the Pope won, they would have to leave.

The Jewish people met and picked an aged but wise Rabbi Moische to represent them in the debate. However, as Moische spoke no Italian and the Pope spoke no Yiddish, they all agreed that it would be a "silent" debate.

On the chosen day, the Pope and Rabbi Moische sat opposite each other for a full minute before the Pope raised his hand and showed three fingers. Rabbi Moische looked back and raised one finger. Next, the Pope waved his finger around his head. Rabbi Moische pointed to the ground where he sat. The Pope then brought out a communion wafer and a chalice of wine. Rabbi Moische pulled out an apple. With that, the Pope stood up and declared that he was beaten, that Rabbi Moische was too clever, and that the Jews could stay.

Later, the Cardinals met with the Pope, asking what had happened. The Pope said, "First, I held up three fingers to represent the Trinity. He responded by holding up one finger to remind me that there is still only one God common to both our beliefs. Then, I waved my finger to show him that God was all around us. He responded by pointing to the ground to show that God was also right here with us. I pulled out the wine and wafer to show that God absolves us of all our sins. He pulled out an apple to remind me of the original sin. He had me beaten and I could not continue."

Meanwhile the Jewish community were gathered around Rabbi Moische. "How did you win the debate?" they asked. "I haven't a clue," said Moische. "First he said to me that we had three days to get out of Italy, so I gave him the finger. Then he tells me that the whole country would be cleared of Jews and I said to him, we're staying right here."

"And then what?" asked a woman. "Who knows?" said Moische, "He took out his lunch, so I took out mine."

**No in-services or trainings for summer! Have fun...swim and play. Watch for in-service announcements in our September newsletter.**

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City of Bellevue website: <http://www.ci.bellevue.wa.us>  
(Look for the Mediation Program under "Neighborhood Information")