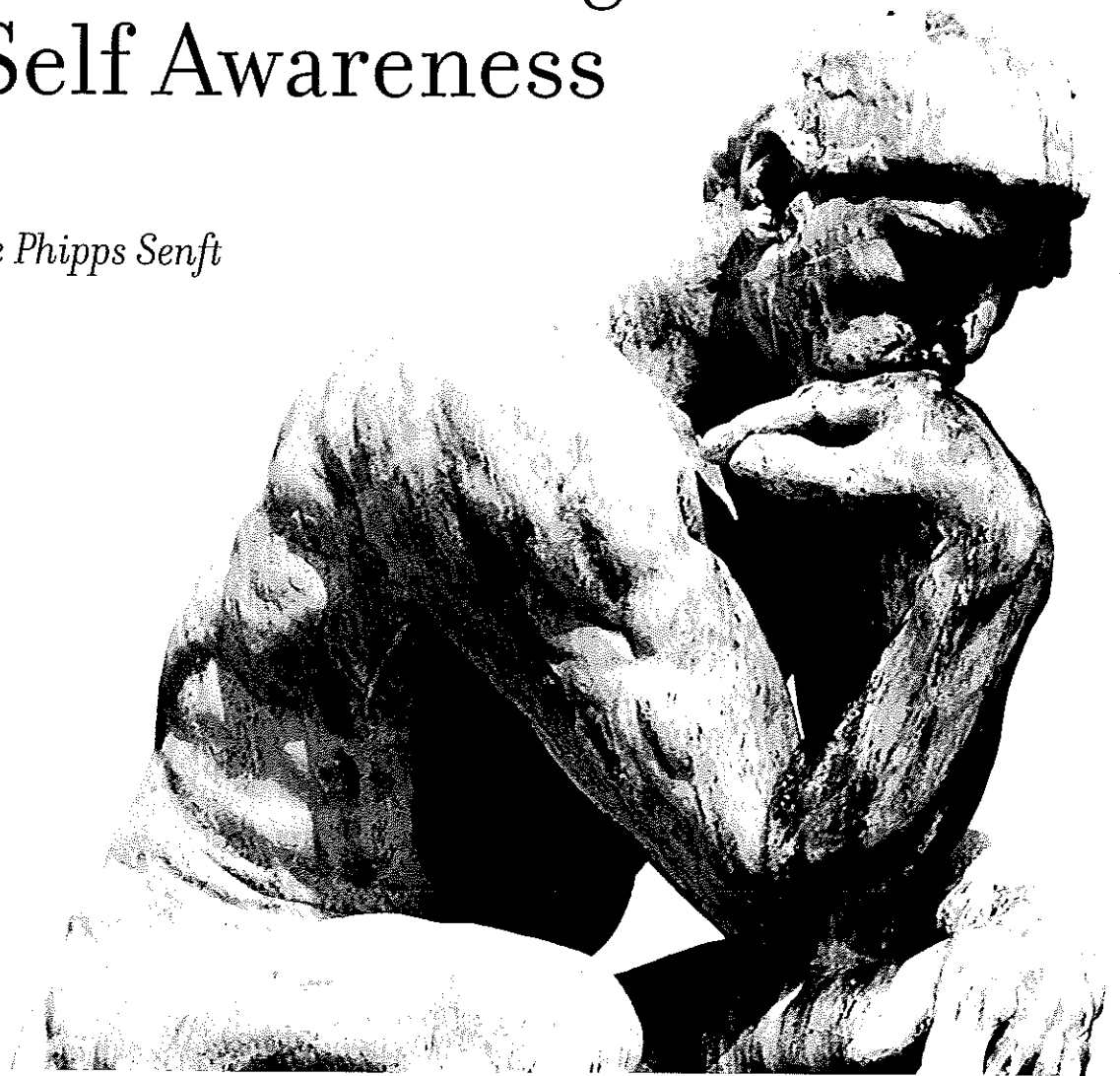


The Interrelationship of Ethics, Emotional Intelligence and Self Awareness

By Louise Phipps Senft



To practice ethically, mediators must learn about and appreciate what the various standards of practice mean within their preferred practice framework (i.e., transformative, facilitative, evaluative, narrative, etc.). But a substantive knowledge of various codes of ethics and standards of practice is only half of the equation. A mediator with a brilliant intellect may remain emotionally distant from the parties and unable to understand the nuances of their interaction. Mediators need emotional intelligence, and a good deal of it, to breathe life and application into cognitively understood ethical standards.

Our Intelligence Quotient (IQ) depends on our cognitive

capacity to acquire, learn, understand and retain knowledge. In his seminal book *Emotional Intelligence* (Bantam Books, 1995), Daniel Goleman expands the accepted notions of what it means to be “intelligent” and places emotions—emotional intelligence, or EQ—at the center of our aptitudes. The five basic domains of EQ are (1) knowing one’s emotions; (2) managing emotions; (3) motivating oneself; (4) recognizing emotions in others; and (5) handling relationships. As Goleman explains, emotional intelligence is “being able, for example, to rein in emotional impulse, to read another’s innermost feelings, and to handle relationships smoothly.” Being confident, curious, intentional, self-controlled

and engaged are key ingredients of emotional intelligence.

In mediation practice, it is a mediator's EQ that sees and hears the subtle cues of uncertainty. It is a mediator's EQ that senses when one party feels misunderstood or has not fully spoken or has information to disclose. The mediator's EQ knows the language of apology other than the words "I'm sorry," perceives suspicion, and senses a party's growing openness to a previously unexplored idea or option. A good mediator will use his or her EQ to recognize where there is misunderstanding and provide opportunities for clarification and fuller understanding. It is a mediator's EQ that provides that exquisite sense of timing, knowing when, and when not, to intervene in unfolding conflict. Unfortunately, the development of a strong EQ is what is missing in the training and development of many mediators.

To strengthen their cognitive knowledge, mediators can study various standards of practice for mediator conduct and participate in ethics and standards of practice trainings, discussion groups and simulations. In order to expand their emotional knowledge, mediators have to work on becoming more self-aware. Although neither taught nor practiced in most mediation trainings, self-awareness is the cornerstone of a mediator's ability to stay on track ethically.

As Goleman notes, emotions that simmer beneath the threshold of awareness can have a powerful impact on how we perceive and react, even though we have no idea they are at work. Self-awareness allows us to be aware of the emotions that stimulate our impulses, enhancing our ability to decide appropriately what to do with such impulses. As mediators, if we do not develop self-awareness of our emotions, we will be at the mercy of our impulses. Many of our impulses regarding conflict are to defend, to fix, to tell, to advise, to overlook, or to avoid. An ethical mediation practice calls for mediators in many ways to set aside these directive impulses—in other words, to intervene counterintuitively. Mediators need to remain aware of their own ongoing impulses, own up to them, and then purposefully set them aside and choose a different response that promotes self-determination for the parties and, by extension, quality of practice.

Learning about habitual (unconscious) reactivity and monitoring oneself is a good start in fostering self-awareness and controlling directive impulses. The concept of the Inner Observer, which is thousands of years old and found in many religious traditions, is helpful in learning how to monitor oneself. The Inner Observer is internal and notices where thoughts

go, what distractions come up, how the body reacts. Another aspect of "knowing thyself" is to understand our own personality type and, using the Inner Observer, notice the narrowness of our own personality lens on life. Some people have an impulse to control the process or to control the people, or both; others feel the impulse to aid or rescue the perceived underdog; some want to merge with all viewpoints; and still others get carried away with generating multitudes of choices. Self-awareness provides us with the ability to be not just impartial, but multi-partial to all parties in the mediation.

Becoming more aware of our personal leanings towards and biases against certain ideas, experiences and people is also crucial to developing self-awareness. We all have such biases colored by our life experiences. It is not always necessary to decide if they are good or bad. The important thing is to be *aware* of them.

Self-observation and self-awareness never become habitual—they have to be constantly worked at through self-disciplined practice.

Likewise, every mediator's learning, training, development and competence is an ongoing process, lasting years and decades, with ongoing enhancement through mediator trainings and a regular reflective mediation practice. Any evaluations of mediator competency must include consideration of the mediators' self-reported mediation orientation and their reasoning for why they do what they do. Ideally, our training and evaluation experiences will also include attention to our EQ and capacity for self-awareness.

The opportunity and challenge for the rapidly growing mediation field is to assure that people who hold themselves out to the public as practicing mediators practice both competently and ethically. The time has come to protect the consumer, increase public confidence in mediation, and challenge mediators to uphold a higher quality of practice. Mediation standards of practice should support and require that mediators be able to demonstrate over time both cognitive understanding and emotional intelligence in performance-based assessments. ☪



Louise Phipps Senft offers mediation services and conflict transformation skills training for families, businesses and employers through her work with the Baltimore Mediation Center. She was voted "Baltimore's Best Mediator" by Baltimore Magazine in 2002, and named one of Maryland's Top 100 Women for the year 2004 by The Daily Record.

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Home/Work

Rhoads finds men and women travel to the beat of a different drum

Sigmund Freud asked, "What do women want?" Steven E. Rhoads answers, "Most women want most of all a loving husband and children."

In his new book, "Taking Sex Differences Seriously," Rhoads, a professor of politics who has taught public policy at the University for more than 30 years, argues that the women's movement has ignored essential biological differences between men and women in its push for equality. He believes the result has been to drive women into the workplace when many would rather be at home.

"Women and men both make terrific doctors and lawyers, but women are far superior as nurturers of young children," said Rhoads. "Our

whelmed by the job/family balancing act and more likely to have thought about dropping off the tenure track.

"Women have and should have far more career opportunities than they had in the '50s, but our psychological predispositions do not keep up with the times," Rhoads said. "In fact, mothers are rarely happy working 50-hour weeks with a 1-year-old at home. It's far easier for men to just put their parental side on hold when they are at work."

Since the late 20th century, he believes, women are less likely to get what they want out of relationships. Many men prefer the unencumbered sex fostered by the sexual revolution, according to Rhoads, while women, who typically engage in sex to share emotions and love, get little pleasure from casual encounters.

Rhoads offers policy prescriptions that run counter to the past four decades of cultural trends and federal legislation. His suggestions range from making competitive cheerleading a sport to downgrading the access of fathers to paid parental leave at universities. He decries the impact of Title IX on high school and collegiate sports, believing it has reduced men's

opportunities to play sports when they need them to tame aggressive impulses and bond with other men in ways that women do not.

The author builds his case on evidence such as:

- Studies from the 1920s to the 1990s show that in the preschool years, girls are more interested in dance and boys in rough-and-tumble play. These differences begin to appear before the age of 2.

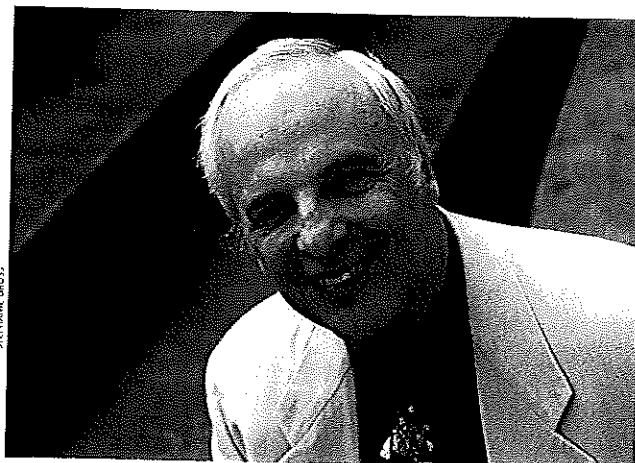
- At puberty, when estrogen levels soar, there is a "marked rise" in the female preference for cooperation over competition and an "increasing gender gap" in participation in competitive sports.

- A 1997 Pew Research Center survey found that 93 percent of mothers regard their children as a source of happiness all or most of the time and 90 percent say the same about their marriage. But only 60 percent of working women find their careers a source of happiness all or most of the time.

Rhoads believes that public officials should consider differences between men and women in three basic areas—sex, nurturing and aggression or competitiveness—when contemplating changes in public policy.

Charlotte Crystal

Steven Rhoads surveyed tenure-track faculty with young children to learn how men and women view their work as professionals and as parents.



STEPHANIE CROSS

We can work it out

Senft's mediation style stresses perspective and understanding

It may be true that to err is human and to forgive divine. But to sit down and resolve a conflict between two parties doesn't always require an act of divine intervention—sometimes it just takes a neutral



Louise Phipps Senft

third party. Or so the work of Louise Phipps Senft (Psychology '83) seems to prove.

Voted Baltimore's Best Mediator by Baltimore magazine, Senft, an attorney, founded the Baltimore Mediation Center in 1993. Since then, she has provided both mediation services and training to thousands of individuals in family, employment, business, board, church, university and government settings.

Her approach to mediation and conflict resolution is far from traditional. Senft believes the key to resolving conflicts, whether between individuals or corporate entities, is for those involved to have the opportunity to understand the other party's point of view. This others-consciousness, which she calls a "relational worldview," is at the heart of the transformative framework approach to mediation that

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Read more at www.sexdifferences.net.

national survey of young professors with kids under 2 shows that women like child care much more than their male peers do."

His survey of 184 tenure-track assistant professors who had children under the age of 2 found that female academics performed all of 25 child care tasks, such as changing diapers or playing with the child, far more often than the males did, even though the group as a whole professed to value equal gender roles in parental duties. Women liked doing 24 of the tasks more than the men did—16 tasks much more.

The survey also found, not surprisingly, that women were more likely to feel over-

Senft

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she and other scholars have developed.

Where traditional mediation aims chiefly to solve problems and settle disputes, the transformative framework approach focuses on the quality of the dialogue. The process involves building the strength of the participants and giving them the chance to see the situation as a whole rather than from one perspective. The conflict usually resolves as a natural by-product. Merely "fixing" the problem is never the mediator's goal.

"All of human conflict is more about the conflicting, rather than the conflict itself," Senft said. Mediators can tend to "focus too much on the problem and instead need to be focusing on the quality of the interaction" between the parties involved.

Her work has received national recognition. Senft was selected as part of the first nationally certified mediation training team for the United States Postal Service REDRESS Program for equal employment and discrimination complaints and other workplace disputes. She has trained tens of thousands of labor and management representatives across the country.

This interest in training bodes well for the future of conflict resolution, and Senft believes attitudes in general are shifting. "People are getting much more sophisticated in their approach to conflict and mediation. They're not waiting until they're in crises—they're asking for intervention earlier."

Heather Ferngren Morton
(MA, English '00)

Two Brothers

Sneed builds a foundation for a Brazilian slum

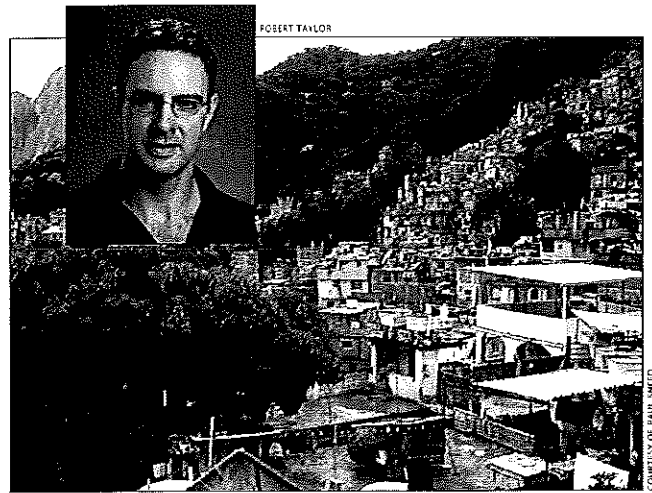
Paul Sneed admits the Brazilian slum of Rocinha first caught his attention in the summer of 1990 because it seemed an ominous, forbidden place. Tucked tightly into a hillside near the beaches of Rio de Janeiro, it loomed above the street corner where Sneed, then a Virginia undergraduate studying abroad, caught the bus each day near his host family's seaside mansion.

"It had a really bad reputation," he remembered.

Soon, though, Sneed (Political and Social Thought '92) began reading a book about the favelas, as Brazil's slums are called. He learned that the reality of life in Rocinha was "a lot different than the things I was hearing or seeing on the news or hearing from my middle-class friends at the university. And so I was intrigued."

Sneed spent more and more of his time in the favela, growing to love the people, the openness and the culture he found there. In the 14 years since that initial experience, Brazil has become a second country for the Arlington, Va., native. Now an assistant professor of Portuguese at the University of Oklahoma, he is the founder and president of the Two Brothers Foundation, a six-year-old nongovernmental organization that brings together a small band of local and international volunteers to focus on community development in Rocinha, especially for young people.

The work is not easy. Many local residents are eager to embrace the foundation's



ROBERT TAYLOR

COURTESY OF PAUL SNEED

Tucked into a Brazilian hillside, Rocinha captured Paul Sneed's imagination. Now his Two Brothers Foundation is working to make a better life for the people there.

efforts, but poverty and violence—though not the sum total of favela life, Sneed says—present huge problems.

Soldiers for the drug traffickers who run Rocinha "are on my street, carrying machine guns and hand grenades," says Sneed, who has lived in Rocinha, off and on, for a total of about five years. "There are some times where we have to jump on the floor because a gun battle breaks out and there's tracer bullets flying by my window."

For most of its existence, Two Brothers has held classes for children and adults at night in rented space at a local preschool, but in April, the foundation had to scale back its operations for safety reasons after the favela was overrun for three days by a battle between rival gangs.

"There's people there that work very hard, study, try to go to college, try to set up businesses," Sneed explained. "They try to do things as if they're living in a civil society, and yet you've got an urban guerrilla force which is at war with a police force and other urban guerrilla forces, and sometimes the stamp of violence [is] kind of imposed over the whole situation. It makes things difficult."

As an organization with fewer than 20 staff members, Two Brothers can do little to alter Rocinha's political climate. What they can do is surmount these challenges whenever possible and improve the lives of individual people. And Sneed says he sees progress. Soon the foundation will move into a permanent space procured through negotiation with a local Baptist church. Funds are being raised to give Rocinha's 120,000 residents their first library. Eventually, Sneed hopes, the foundation will be able to fulfill its stated mission of facilitating a cultural exchange program whereby low-income youths from Brazil and the U.S. do service projects in each others' countries.

It all goes back to the "Two Brothers" name, Sneed said.

Read about the foundation and its work at www.2bros.org.

The title associates the foundation with the nearby mountains of the same name, but also "the idea of fraternity and the international community—that we're essentially brothers and sisters working together to make the world a better place."

Jim Reedy (English '01)