



## Justifying the Means *and* the End

### November Introduction

November is a spectacular month. It is the month we honor our Veterans, the month we officially say "thanks," and the month where it's okay to stand in line at 4am for a bargain on a DVD player.

Most importantly, November is one month closer to a new year. Thus, we all have a reason to stop and smell the flowers we tend to overlook. It's a chance to enjoy a mug of hot chocolate and reflect on the goals we have achieved, large or small. Whether it's cleaning out the garage or mending fences with a friend; we should all be thankful for what we've done and for the opportunities to come.



If you attain the result you were hoping for, let's say a new job or a higher salary, does it really matter how you achieved it? Many in the field of Conflict Resolution would argue that yes, the procedure is the integral part in any situation. "Process matters more than the outcome," wrote Ron Kraybill who believed that when you are entrenched in a conflict, not enough attention is given to the way in which a resolution is reached; too much focus rests on the solution. In other words, if you are too focused on the answer, you are not able to learn from the situation appropriately.

Author of *Preparing for Peace*, John Paul Lederach writes that the key to a successful mediation can be measured not in written form but by careful consideration to how the mediation transpired.



He writes that some in the ADR field believe a mediation is victorious if a signed agreement is the result even if the parties did not take away new lessons or better conflict resolution techniques: "There is a push toward solution and outcome that skips the discipline of creating an adequate and clear process for achieving an acceptable result." In essence, Lederach is pointing out that yes, a solution is great, but it's imperative to understand the way in which it was reached; it is only then that the parties can be fully empowered and truly benefit the most from mediation services. With that said, and to confuse us

even more, mediation critics have asserted that *too much* time has been spent studying and analyzing the peacemaking process.

So which is it? Should we make sure we understand each phase of an argument and put aside the pressure to reach a resolution or should we take the path of least resistance and be happy a settlement was achieved? Thankfully, Mohandas Gandhi decided to answer this one.

He realized the great paradox that existed between "process" and "outcome" and decided to formulate his own theory on which is more important. He looked at process and noted it was an integral part in the achievement of our goals—you can't take credit for a solution without understanding the effort

## 10 Reasons to be Thankful this November....

When it's your turn at the table to say what you are grateful for this year, you can always be thankful for these:

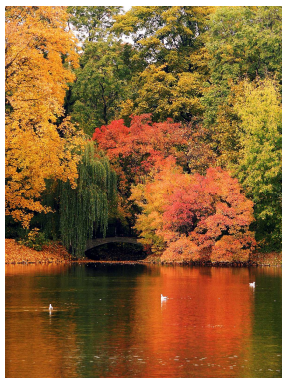
1. Warm apple cider (or chilled if you live in FL)
2. Cinnamon-scented everything
3. Leftover Halloween candy
4. Football, basketball, and hockey
5. Pumpkin-flavored everything
6. Warm socks
7. Cool mornings
8. Making your Christmas list for Santa
9. Leftover Halloween candy (yup, it's that good)
10. An extra hour of sleep!



## Justifying the Means *and* the End (continued)

that went into the achievement of the resolution. Yet, on the other hand, a solution and “restoration of a relationship” is an important confirmation that we are all living a truthful life. Gandhi believed that finding peace at the end of a conflict is the ultimate measure of a “sustainable outcome.” Therefore, being the great thinker that he was, Gandhi decided that a little bit of both isn’t so bad.

**Pay attention to the road. Notice the bumps along the way and how they may have formed. Study them so that when you traverse down it again, you won’t make the same missteps. And once you have reached the end and your celebrating the end of the journey, revel in the fact that you have come a long way and work hard to remain in that location.**



Lederach, J. (1995). *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures*. Syracuse University Press: Syracuse, NY.



### Even More Conflict Food for Thought

Here are a few more concepts to ponder over while the pies are baking and the turkey is roasting

1. **Conflicts do not “just happen” to people, people are active players in creating their conflict circumstances and the conflicting relationships they enter into.**
2. **Negotiation and mediation are helpful when two people understand that they cannot simply impose their will onto another and/or eliminate the other side’s position. They must work with each other to achieve their respective goals.**

