Language as a Tool of Conflict Resolution
Selected Bibliography*


3. Lakhoff, George and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By.* Chicago. The University of Chicago Press. 1980. (One of the best and most readable books on the pervasive use and influence of metaphors in our daily life. May have to special order.)

4. Tannen, Deborah. *The Argument Culture: Moving from Debate to Dialogue.* New York. Random House. 1998. (Offers intriguing insight into how in our culture we approach almost everything as if it were a fight. A good, contemporary look at the two-sided orientation and its effect on us.)


7. Folger, Joseph P. and Tricia S. Jones, eds. *New Directions in Mediation: Communication Research and Perspectives.* Thousand Oaks. Sage Publications. 1994. (A compilation of essays dealing with a variety of communication topics in mediation. Fairly technical. May have to be ordered through the out-of-print services of Barnes & Noble or some other dealer.)


11. Thompson, George J. and Jerry B. Jenkins. *Verbal Judo: The Gentle Art of Persuasion.* New York. William Morrow. 1993. (Written by former police officer, this book is filled with anecdotal illustrations of how to defuse volatile situations. It doesn’t deal directly with conflict resolution in the formal sense, but it does provide insight into communication in adversarial situations. It contains a great definition-by-analogy of a mediator. It is worth quoting here in full:

   In 1972 an interesting experiment was done by a school of communication in the east. They took a toddler, barely verbal, to a safe spot near a busy intersection and told him to watch the cars. He was fascinated by the motion of the traffic, and for as long as it held his attention, they let him watch.

   Then he was asked, “What do you see?”

   The little boy said, naively but accurately, “Sometimes cars go this way and sometimes they go that way. They stop here; they go there.”

   The little boy was told, “That’s good. Now look up there.”

   Without hearing any more explanation, the boy noticed the traffic light and began to see it change colors. Within twenty minutes he was able to recognize order out of what had appeared disorder and make sense of what had appeared nonsense. He said, “Red, stop. Green, go. Yellow, I don’t know.”

   The point of the story for my purposes is that the person who pointed out the traffic light was a mediator. The great service of the mediator, whether it’s a psychologist helping you and your spouse live in harmony or a police officer working with somebody who refuses to get out of a car, is to help people see something new.

   Mediators do this by fulfilling one of the definitions of the Latin word *medius,* “one who goes between.” Effective mediators go between or across your experience, enabling you to see something in a new way. In short, they educate, making sense out of things by putting them in perspective. (Pages 121 & 122.)


*The books in this bibliography are listed in an order that reflects my view of their relative merit to the subject of “Language as a Tool of Conflict Resolution.”*