A long time ago, far far away ... 

Using Narrative Ideas in Conflict Resolution

Barbara McCulloch-2017
Why are Narrative Ideas Important in Conflict Resolution?

As humans, we search for meaning and relationships.

We live on the tight rope balancing our competing needs for Autonomy and Belonging.
Hanoi Traffic-
A metaphor for the role of the mediator?
Preparation

Loosening Up
Awareness of breath
Opening the heart
Clearing the mind
Gathering energy
Balance-awareness of breath
Remembering Values
Walking forwards and backwards
WHLC
Compassion
How do we Make Sense of Things?

Joining Dots Exercise
The Truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth

“A string of facts, however well attested, will not correct or dislodge a powerful story. The only response the facts are likely to provoke is is indignation. People often angrily deny facts that clash with a narrative truth established in their minds. The only thing that can displace a story is a story. Those who tell the stories run the world.”

George Monbiot, Journalist in The Guardian Weekly, 22-28 September 2017
The Power of the Dominant Story and the Dominant Discourse

- The power of “normal”
- Always/ Never
- Victims and Villains
- Seducing the Rescuer
- Melodrama as a Closed Story
- Resisting Fatalism
- Micro-gressions
Letter Writing Instead of Note Taking-
Opening up the dominant story
What to do if you want better answers

Ask better questions
Baggage
Letting Go of Baggage Questions

• How long has Baggage been holding you in its grasp?
• What do you get from being held captive by it?
• What stops you from escaping the grasp of Baggage?
• If you were going to make an escape plan, what would your plan be like?
• Who would you enlist to help you escape?
Beware the single story

https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en
Asking Ourselves:

• What is the relevant dominant discourse?

• Why is it important to know?

• What can we do to avoid the single story trap?

• Parables and fairy tales
Negotiating with Eels
Mediator Hope-why is it important?

Hope is not a topic

It’s not a theory

It’s a talent
The power of meaning

Stories matter.

We are composed of our stories.

Human hearts are made up of the words we put into them.
Creating Better Endings to Conflict Narratives
The Last Word

“The narrative we help our clients to build has to be simple and intelligible..... It should resonate with deep needs and desires. It should explain the mess and the means by which we might escape it. And, because there is nothing to be gained from spreading falsehoods, it must be firmly grounded in their reality.”

Adapted from George Monbiot, Guardian Weekly, 22-29 September 2017