



ARTISTRY IN
PRACTICE



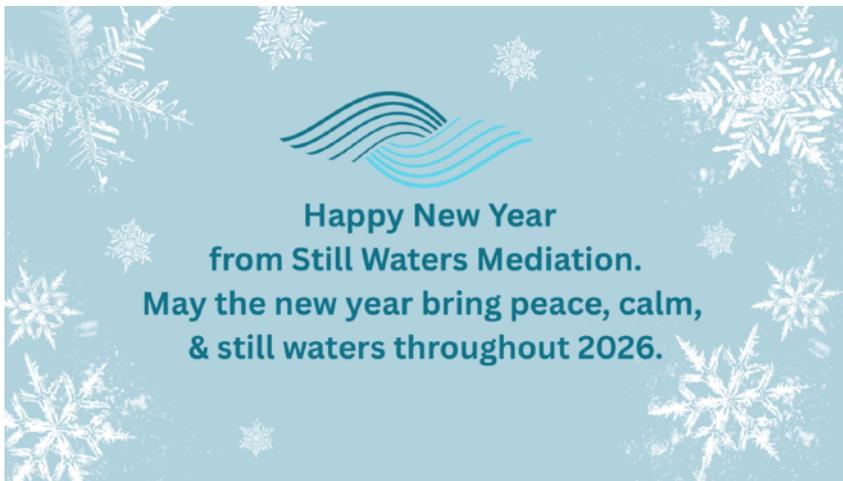
SAVE THE DATES



UPCOMING PODCAST
EPISODE

Still Waters Mediation

Newsletter



Artistry in Practice: Intentions to Carry Into the New Year

As a new year begins, many of us take time to reflect on how we want to show up in our work, our relationships, and the challenges we know will come. While reading *Perspectives on Conflict* by Professor Ken Fox of Hamline University, I came across a framework that immediately resonated. In his book, Professor Fox references Michael Lang and Alison Taylor's concept of artistry in practice from *The Making of a Mediator: Developing Artistry in Practice*. Although the framework is rooted in mediation, the ideas feel relevant far beyond the mediation room.

Lang and Taylor describe artistry not as an innate talent, but as a way of practicing that develops over time through experience, reflection, and intentional learning. They identify six hallmarks of artistry in practice. While originally written for mediators, these hallmarks offer useful intentions for anyone navigating complexity, uncertainty, emotion, or conflict in the year ahead.

Attention to detail

At its core, attention to detail is about being fully present. In mediation, this means noticing what is said and unsaid, verbal and nonverbal cues, emotional shifts, and relational dynamics. As a New Year intention, attention to detail reminds us of the value of slowing down, listening carefully, and responding with intention rather than habit.

Upcoming Events

Saturday, January 10

Normandale Center
Second Saturday for Caregivers
Presentation: "When Grief Boils Over"

<https://www.normandalecenter.org/events>

Tuesday, February 10

Empowered Endings Foundation
Presentation: "The Value of Mediation for Families Facing End-of-Life Disputes"

<https://community.empoweredendings.org/>

Tuesday, February 17

Cerenity Marian, St. Paul
Presentation: "Peace of Mind Planning: How to Talk with Your Family About Your Estate Plan"
(see flyer on page 3)

Tuesday, April 21

Minnesota Network of Hospice & Palliative Care (MNHPC)
Conference

Presentation: "Bridging the Divide: Mediation Skills for Supporting Families in Disputes at the End of Life"

<https://www.mnhpc.com/>

Curiosity

Curiosity is central to effective mediation, and it is just as valuable in everyday life. It invites genuine interest in other perspectives and helps us avoid quick assumptions. Carrying curiosity into 2026 can help us stay open, even when conversations feel familiar or disagreements feel well worn.

Exploration and discovery

Conflict often narrows our thinking and pushes us toward quick conclusions. This hallmark encourages us to pause and leave room for exploration. In mediation, that space allows new options to emerge. In other areas of life, it can open the door to insights we might not have seen if we rushed to resolution.

Developing and testing formulations

Lang and Taylor emphasize holding our interpretations lightly. For mediators, this means forming working understandings of what might be happening while staying open to being wrong. As a broader intention, this supports humility and flexibility, reminding us that our first take is rarely the whole story.

Interpreting with resilience and flexibility

Mediation rarely unfolds in a straight line, and neither does life. Strong emotions, setbacks, and unexpected turns are part of most meaningful processes. Resilience helps us stay engaged when things get hard, while flexibility allows us to adjust without losing our footing.

Maintaining patience and vision

In mediation, progress often happens in small steps. This hallmark reflects the balance between patience and purpose. Applied more broadly, it reminds us that meaningful change takes time and that steady movement forward is often more realistic than quick results.

Together, these six hallmarks offer a thoughtful set of intentions for the year ahead. Whether in mediation, caregiving, leadership, family life, or everyday relationships, they invite reflection not just on what we do, but on how we show up when things feel complex or emotionally charged. Artistry in practice, as Lang and Taylor describe and as Professor Fox highlights, is an ongoing commitment to learning, reflection, and intentional presence. These hallmarks offer a helpful way to think about how we want to show up in 2026.

Fox, Ken. *Perspectives on Conflict*. Hamline University Press, 2024.

Lang, Michael D., and Alison T. Taylor. *The Making of a Mediator: Developing Artistry in Practice*. Jossey-Bass, 2000.



The Sandwich Generation Pod is a smart, funny, and deeply human podcast about life in the middle—caring for both young children and aging parents. Hosted by two women living it in real-time, Robyn and Eliesa bring raw honesty, real advice, hopefully some levity to every episode.

Season 1 is fully out with episodes that cover Power of Attorney, Moving a loved one, The Finances, Help if you think your parent has Alzheimer's and Self Care...or lack thereof! We also have a [special holiday episode](#) for those of us in The Sandwich Generation - a survival guide, if you will. 'Tis the season! Still Waters Mediation is thrilled to be a guest on the upcoming Season 2 where we will be diving into the topic of 'Difficult Parents'. Stay tuned in the new year for more information!

You can find the podcast on [Apple](#), [Spotify](#) or directly on thesandwichgenerationpod.com. You can also follow along on [Instagram](#) and Subscribe to our community on [Substack](#).



PEACE OF MIND PLANNING SEMINAR: How to Talk with Your Family About Your Estate Plan

TUESDAY, FEB. 17 | 2 P.M.

Cerenity Marian | Parkview Room
200 Earl Street, St. Paul, MN 55106



PRESENTED BY:

Dustin Cesarek
North Star Legacy Law, PLLC

Molly Darsow,
Still Waters Mediation, LLC



Join us for a conversation about creating harmony around your estate plan. We will discuss the roles required to implement your plan, real-life scenarios within the planning process that can create contention among your loved ones, and how to engage in meaningful conversations to minimize potential conflict and preserve relationships among those affected by your plan.

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For more info or to RSVP,
scan the QR code or contact
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