

Comments by Attorneys and Law Professors:

I'm absolutely stunned by the power of the non-defensive process Sharon teaches. What amazes me is not just the incredible success, but also the speed and directness. The potential to actually have a constructive and respectful conversation over an issue that could easily push anyone's buttons is amazing.

—*Arlene Kostant, Attorney and Mediator, San Francisco, CA; Negotiation Instructor, UC San Francisco, Hastings Law School & UC Berkeley Boalt Law School*

The *Powerful Non-Defensive Communication* process has been invaluable to me in my work as an attorney and mediator. It allows me both to utilize and to model non-defensive communication methods with parties who are in the midst of conflict or are unable to communicate effectively. The formats for non-defensive questions have been particularly helpful, as they allow me to move beyond a party's position to find the true interests that lie behind it, without creating defensiveness. In turn, this helps the parties to feel that they have been thoroughly heard, creating more potential for the resolution of conflict. Sharon Ellison's book, and her technique, should be studied by attorneys and mediators everywhere.

—*Emily Doskow, attorney and mediator, Panelist for the U.S. District Court Alternative Dispute Resolution Panel*

I think that your model and hypothetical examples were most helpful in understanding these new concepts for communication. You presented your material clearly and beautifully. The way you demonstrated how to better communicate before the group was masterful. Your love of the material and patience in working through conceptual glitches was much appreciated. I find the application to the field of law intriguing.

—*Carson Bowler, Attorney, Portland, OR*

I consider you a treasure, as does each and every legal professional I have spoken with regarding your work and the manner in which you

present it. In the highly complex and emotional area of family law in which we work, relearning the manner in which we deal with one another is nothing short of extraordinary. I formerly thought of myself as a professional who had good self-awareness and excellent non-defensive communication skills. After reading your book, listening to your tapes and attending several workshops that you have offered, I am now acutely aware of how much better my communication can be in my professional and personal life. My clients have commented on the manner in which I deal with difficult situations and difficult communications.

—*Suzan Barrie Aiken, Attorney, Mediator, Mill Valley, Past President, IACP*

My professional life has changed dramatically since the day I discovered Sharon Ellison's theory of Powerful Non-defensive Communication. Non-defensive communication skills have enhanced my effectiveness as a lawyer, mediator, and as a law professor who teaches counseling and negotiation to law students. Although I prided myself on being a problem-solver and collaborator, with both my clients and counterpart lawyers, I found myself shifting into defensive modes more than I liked, especially when I felt most strongly. I struggled to understand how and why I was undermining myself, and what to do about it. When I met Sharon, heard her lay out her theory, and watched her demonstrate her approach, I was amazed at how many answers clicked for me. The theory and the practice of PNDC gave me a clarity, control, and a new mindset that had eluded me in the past.

—*Carolyn Kass, Associate Professor; Director of the Legal Clinic; Co-Director, Center for Dispute Resolution; and Director of the Family and Juvenile Law Concentration; Quinnipiac University,*

After seeing you in action and learning more about the non-defensive communication process you teach, I believe it is the most powerful and effective communication technique I have seen.

—*Maureen A. Tighe, Attorney, U.S. Department of Justice*

Powerful, Non-Defensive Communication can significantly improve how we, as lawyers, practice law. Law schools historically have not taught communication skills. Likewise, there has been little in the way of high quality continuing legal education on the subject of communication.

Only a very small percentage of cases make it to the courtroom. In my experience, most of the lawyer's time is spent in verbal interactions - with clients, opposing counsel, witnesses, etc., in person, on the phone, in settlement negotiations, depositions and interviews. This communication, regardless of the setting, tends to be adversarial and defensive, which I have found is often counterproductive to achieving an early, acceptable resolution to the client's legal matters. This causes many people to lose faith in our justice system, and foster criticism.

There is a better way of doing it, one which can assist the lawyer in representing clients better. With skill in communicating non-defensively, I believe that lawyers would be in a unique position to model appropriate conflict resolution skills to clients and others with whom we come into contact with in our work. I believe that Sharon's workshop can provide lawyers, judges, mediators, and arbitrators with a highly effective approach to communicating with power, dignity and integrity in our professional and personal lives.

—*Laura Parrish, attorney, Past President of the Lane County Bar Association, Eugene, OR*

I first encountered Sharon and her teachings in 2006 and I can still remember the silence of the audience being pierced by little astounded gasps as the profundity of what she was talking about became evident. It was in many ways, for myself and what I believe to be the overwhelming majority of the audience, a "eureka!" or "a-ha!" moment wherein one comes to realize that one has been unconsciously acting in the world in a way that is so counter-productive and unnecessarily harmful - and more importantly - that within grasp is an awareness and a set of techniques whereby one can act in the world in a way congruent and harmonious with our highest intentioned selves, as attorneys and as human beings.

From that introduction to Sharon and her work, I have had a hunger for more exposure and familiarity with her material (her books and CDs) and participated in a full-day workshop with her at the Toronto Forum in 2007. I continue to marvel at the simplicity and beauty of her words, . . . and I continue to strive to take it all, literally, to heart."

—*Chris Arnold, Collaborative Lawyer and Mediator, Past-President, Ontario Collaborative Law Federation, Adjunct Professor, University of Ottawa Faculty of Law*

I have experienced Sharon Ellison's PNDC presentations both in a brief workshop at a national conference and at a full-day seminar she presented to our group in Chicago a few months later. Her presentations were riveting, powerful, and effective. Her voice, her manner, her inclusiveness and her approach helped each participant to understand the importance and the effect of PNDC on personal communication experiences as well as professional ones. I try to utilize Sharon's methods whenever possible and have found it has made a profound difference in how I approach problem conversations professionally and personally. As an adjunct professor teaching a law school seminar on Alternative Dispute Resolution, I require my students to first read and then discuss "Taking the War out of our Words," so that they will be receptive to the paradigm shift necessary to fully understand ADR. Sharon Ellison has my utmost respect and admiration. I would unhesitatingly recommend any program she offers to any group who may have the privilege of attending it.

—*Sandra M. Rosenbloom, Attorney at Law, Northfield, IL*