

12-1-2001

ADR and spirituality

Shirli Kirschner

Recommended Citation

Kirschner, Shirli (2001) "ADR and spirituality," *ADR Bulletin*: Vol. 4: No. 6, Article 1.
Available at: <http://epublications.bond.edu.au/adr/vol4/iss6/1>

This Article is brought to you by [ePublications@bond](mailto:epublications@bond). It has been accepted for inclusion in ADR Bulletin by an authorized administrator of [ePublications@bond](mailto:epublications@bond). For more information, please contact [Bond University's Repository Coordinator](#).



The ADR Bulletin

The monthly newsletter on dispute resolution

Print Post Approved 255003-03417

contents

VOLUME 4 NUMBER 6

ADR and spirituality77

The heart of the matter: perspectives on resolving conflict from the Buddhist tradition78

Public statement from the Dalai Lama, September 200180

Mediation in Judaism — thoughts from a *ba'al teshuvah*81

The spirit of alternative dispute resolution84

Book review87

General Editor



Laurence Boule
*Professor of Law,
 Bond University, Queensland*

Special Issue Editor
Shirli Kirschner
*Resolve Advisors Pty Ltd,
 Sydney*

Information contained in this bulletin is current as at December 2001.

Editorial

ADR and spirituality

Shirli Kirschner

When the special issue on ADR and the cycle of life was completed (see volume 3 nos 5, 6, 8 and 9 of the ADR Bulletin) I had some interesting feedback. Some commentators indicated that it was pushing the boundaries of ADR; others said it was outside the range of experience that they considered as ADR.

One of my colleagues suggested that there was an element missing: spirituality. How does ADR and conflict resolution deal with, interact with and relate to the human search for meaning and religion? I started research on who could provide articles. The task was difficult and I shelved it. Then on 11 September 2001 America and the world watched in horror as the twin towers collapsed.

Amid the myriad personal and international responses to this event, I read a piece on the internet posted by the Dalai Lama. It is included in this issue. My immediate reaction was to resurrect this special issue. The diversity of views over what happens in the world, whether it be in Israel, Ireland or America, is profound. The responses are as individual and varied as the number of people discussing the particular event. This is a truism. What occurred to me as a powerful reminder is that, at its core, this is part of what appropriate dispute resolution sets out to achieve: harmony.

Everyone is seeing 'truth' from their own point of view. This is the foundation on which an understanding of conflict — and of working towards harmony — is built. Instead of asking if something is true or not, one could ask: 'from what point of view or from

what definition of consciousness is the statement true?'¹

From this perspective it is useful to explore the dimension of beliefs and spirituality. How do spirituality and belief influence our definition of truth, consciousness and our perception of events? To what extent do they set guidelines which influence how people live their lives? This special issue begins to touch on those questions.

From the first version of this issue I learned that discussing beliefs and ideologies is difficult in the abstract. Beliefs are better illustrated through personal stories. Dr Hilary Byrne-Armstrong, from the St James Ethics Centre, reflects on spirituality and shares her experiences of a mediation in which exploration and understanding of beliefs provide a transformative process in a family conflict. Kath Andersen looks at conflict management and dispute resolution strategies in Judaism and Ajahn Thanasanti, a Buddhist nun, gives her views on dispute resolution and spirituality in the Buddhist tradition.

I hope this is the beginning of a dialogue on how we as practitioners assist in integrating these views on spirituality into ADR. ●

Shirli Kirschner is a mediator, ADR trainer and consultant and director of Resolve Advisors, Sydney. She can be contacted at shirli@resolveadvisers.com.

Endnote

1. Palmer H *Living Deliberately* Star Edge International 1994.