



Dr. Rachel Goldberg

*Life is Short; Work It Out ...*

# Fight Satisfaction!

By Dr. Rachel Goldberg

*Maggie is proud to introduce a new column by Dr. Rachel Goldberg of Salisbury University. Dr. Goldberg is a trained mediator and an expert in Alternative Dispute Resolution.*

Are you in a fight with someone? You know what you want! Satisfaction! You want to win, to flatten those \*\*&^%\$!~, right? Well, surprise! Research actually shows that people are much more satisfied with their families, friends, churches, and communities, if they work things out together. I know, I know – this idiot is making your life miserable and those lunatic researchers are all suggesting you hold hands and sing Kumbaya??!!

Think about it this way. You're hungry and the vending machine has a chocolate bar and a turkey sandwich. Well, the chocolate gives you a quick sugar high, but you crash in twenty minutes. The sandwich is less exciting, but it'll fuel you for hours and helps you build for whatever you do next. Same with fighting. If you flatten the other person, you feel great and go home feeling like a winner. But they go home angry and wanting revenge. You see, *they* thought you were the idiot making *their* lives miserable. If you'd lost, you'd feel cheated and angry and want to get even, right? Well, if you are neighbors with this person, or family, or co-workers, or need to deal with them again someday, then the re-

sult of that chocolate bar fight is another conflict waiting to happen. So, just like the chocolate bar, it leads to short term satisfaction, but is rotten for the long run.

So, where's the turkey? There is a process called mediation that will give you more satisfaction in the long run. If you sit down with a trained mediator they help you start communicating well, getting good information (how many fights have you been in where you found out something afterwards that changed everything?), and help you come up with solutions everyone can live with. It's less fun than flattening them, but the effort of working it out "costs" less out of your life, what with time lost, frustration, and disrupted lives, than an endless cycle of fighting and pain. Mediators help you come up with your own solutions; no one is going to tell you what to do. And researchers say that if people come up with their own solutions they are more likely to follow through and do what they promise to do.

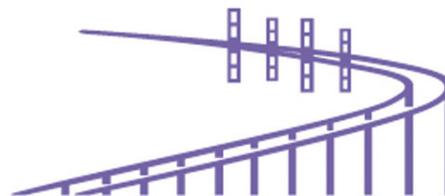
Every county in Maryland has access to mediation centers. The association that works with them all is Community Mediation Maryland. Check out their website to learn about mediation and find a

mediator in your area: [www.marylandmediation.org](http://www.marylandmediation.org). The Salisbury center is the Community Mediation Initiative (CMI) at the Center for Conflict Resolution on the campus of Salisbury University. CMI provides mediation at no cost to participants. Michele Ennis-Benn, Director of CMI, says, "Mediation is powerful because it lets people speak for themselves. We are committed, as mediators, to understanding without judging and to listening in a way that helps people break the chaos of conflict into manageable topics and come up with their own solutions, since they are the experts in their own lives." You can call CMI at 410-219-2873 or write to [conflict-resolution@salisbury.edu](mailto:conflict-resolution@salisbury.edu).

So, go for the turkey dinner. It'll make your life better in the long run.

.....

*Dr. Goldberg has been active in the field of Conflict Resolution for over 25 years. She is a specialist in cross-cultural work, religion and conflict, and has done interpersonal, intergroup, and organizational conflict resolution. She is an Assistant Professor at Salisbury University.*



COMMUNITY MEDIATION MARYLAND

*your conflict, your solutions*