

Improving Mediators' Decision-Making by Becoming Conscious of the Unconscious
Cognitive Considerations for Reflection to Attain Social-Psychological Goals

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“You miss things...I was watching the tape and critiquing what I had done. Sometimes I remembered...but I didn't always... a lot of what I do is totally intuitive.”

A mediator's response to a video of her mediation in a lab study in a Stimulated Recall Session- a session immediately following the mediation in which mediators observed the videotape of the mediation session s/he had just led to enable them to share their thoughts (Kressel et al., 2012; Peleg-Baker et al., 2012).

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Abstract**Improving Mediators' Decision-Making by Becoming Conscious of the Unconscious**
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In this paper I argue that mediators should consciously focus on improving unconscious, intuitive decisions for the benefit of attaining a wider range of social-psychological goals. *Drawing on abundant research on decision-making, expertise and cognitive processing, I propose in this paper that automatic intuitive decisions are likely to dominate mediators' decisions. Mediators operate in dynamic, fast-paced and often uncertain circumstances. In such rapid and complex contexts, they are required to skillfully address parties' wide range of goals, including important emotional and social-psychological, which have been typically overlooked. I suggest several forces in the field of mediation that might account for the insufficient attention given to such goals. Considering the unconscious automatic nature of mediators' decisions, I raise the question of whether and how mediators could improve the quality of their automatic intuitive judgments, especially those concerned with social-psychological goals. I review the formation and mental processing underpinning unconscious automatic decisions, and propose that learning processes and conscious activities play a decisive role in shaping these decisions. Two necessary conditions for evaluating the quality intuitive judgments are proposed: an environment that provides constant exposure to regularly repeated cues and sufficient opportunities for learning the environment. I close by advancing systematic reflection as learning tools for continuously developing mediators' domain schema and subsequently, improving the quality of their automatic judgments.*

INTRODUCTION

Mediators operate in *dynamic and fast-paced* environment in which they are constantly dealing with novel and often unpredicted complex social situations. Such environment is expressed in a great diversity of conflicts and a variety of clients, dynamic and uncertain circumstances, and intense emotions. Mediators are expected to support the parties, occasionally their families and other companions too, while at the same time, master their practice and expertise. Beyond trying to accomplish tangible goals, mediators and negotiators are interested in addressing a wide array of social-psychological issues, including parties' feelings about themselves, relational matters, and process related goals (Curhan, Elfenbein, & Xu, 2006). Despite the integral nature of these goals in the craft of mediation, those goals are often overlooked in the study and practice of mediation (Bush & Folger, 1994; Monk & Winslade, 2001; Charkoudian, Ritis, Buck & Wilson, 2009; Picard, 2000; Peleg-Baker, 2012; Peleg-Baker et al., 2012).

I propose several influences for the low attention given to social-psychological goals (Peleg-Baker, 2012; 2012b):

1. ***Complex understanding of mediation practice is lacking.*** Mediation is an emerging profession with no agreed-upon criteria to assess mediators' expertise. Mediation literature is abundant but fragmented, covering topics such as the advantages of using mediation, mediation conditions and contextual influences, strategies, tactics, and styles (Wall & Chan-Serafin, 2010; Kressel, 2006; Pruitt, 2012). Still lacking is a comprehensive understanding of the wide array of mediation goals and the mental processing underpinning mediators' decision-making. As mediation becomes widely accepted and expertise more in demand, a deeper, more complex understanding of its practice beyond reaching agreements, is vital. Practice is usually not derived from evidence-based inquiry, and though mediation is a dynamic field of practice and research, social-psychological research on mediation has dwindled considerably in the

last 10 years (Pruitt, 2012). I was able to find only three studies (Conlon, Moon, & Ng, 2002; Kressel & Gadlin, 2009; Kressel, et al., 2012).

2. ***Mediators automatically focus on agreement making.*** As experts' decisions are dominated by unconscious activity, and are likely to be automatic and *intuitive*, especially under pressure and in uncertain environments (Simon, 1992; Bodenhausen & Todd, 2010; Deutsch, & Strack, 2010; Evans, 2011), mediators' decisions typically made in fast-paced and dynamic contexts are no different. Furthermore, conflict resolution and mediation researchers and practitioners have been traditionally focusing on tangible objective outcomes, e.g., mutually satisfactory solutions or agreement making (Kressel, 2009). Therefore, agreement making may automatically capture mediators' attention and result in overlooking other important goals.
3. ***The naïve mediator might not be fully aware of subtle psychological dimensions.*** Mediators might not be sufficiently aware of and or able to deal with implicit human dynamics, complex emotions, social psychological issues and psychological biases involved in the relational process of mediation. Typically as their secondary profession, mediators might lack the expertise or sufficient psychological background to effectively address complex social-psychological issues and their emotional implications.
4. ***Insufficient ongoing learning.*** Though ongoing learning is crucial for addressing multidimensional issues, particularly complex emotional and social-psychological aspects, formal mediation training is limited to basic 40 hours of certificate program (e.g., Hedeem, Raines, & Barton, 2010; Kressel, Henderson, Reich & Cohen, 2012).

Taken together, mediation expertise is not well established, particularly regarding the attainment of social-psychological goals. Considering the automaticity of mediators' intuitive decisions, a critical question is whether and in what ways mediators could improve the quality of these judgments, especially those related to social-psychological goals. I address this question

in the following sections, but first, I will examine the importance of social- psychological goals in mediation.

Going Beyond Tangible Goals

Mediation is a process in which an acceptable third party, without any power to prescribe solutions, assists parties to negotiate their differences (Kressel & Pruitt, 1989; Wall, Stark, & Standifer, 2001). As a relatively new profession, there is no firm understanding or agreement among scholars on its goals. Similar to negotiation, mediation scholars have been traditionally focusing on tangible objective outcomes, e.g., agreement making (Charkoudian et al., 2009; Kressel, 2009). Yet, mediators and negotiators often express great interest in pursuing a wide range of social psychological goals, beyond tangible ones, such as parties' feelings about themselves, relational matters, and process related concerns (Bush & Folger, 1994; Picard, 2000; Monk & Winslade, 2001; Curhan et al., 2006; Charkoudian et al., 2009; Elfenbein, Curhan, & Anger, 2010; Peleg-Baker, 2012; Peleg-Baker et al., 2012). However, such goals have been relatively neglected (Bush & Folger, 1994; Curhan et al., 2006; Charkoudian et al., 2009; Elfenbein et al., 2010; Peleg-Baker, 2012; Peleg-Baker et al., 2012).

As mediation becomes widely accepted and expertise more in demand, a deeper, more complex understanding of its practice beyond reaching agreements, is vital. Mediation *styles* provide mediators with explicit *top-down* guiding principles and offer them direction in a fast-paced and complex process of mediation, but it is still restricted in explaining mediators' thinking processes and decisions made. Moreover, literature on styles is typically dichotomous-- facilitative versus evaluative (Riskin, 1996), problem solving versus transformative (Bush & Folger, 1994) and others (Silbey, & Merry, 1986; Kolb, 1994; Monk & Winslade, 2001). Such dichotomous framework along with emphasis on agreements has inhibited a comprehensive understanding of the social-psychological challenges mediators face and ways to deal with them.

Though negotiating differences may appear to involve mainly the exchange of tangible goods and services, it also leaves a significant emotional and psychological mark on the parties. Scholars have been challenging the rationalist assumption underlying the study of mediation and negotiation as economically driven processes (Thompson, 1990; Curhan et al., 2006). Thompson proposed two types of negotiation outcomes: economic--the explicit terms or products such as an agreement or division of resources, and social psychological, based on social perception and include three aspects--perceptions of the situation, of the other party, and of oneself (Thompson, 1990). In four studies, Curhan and associates (2006) explored the range of social psychological outcomes valued subjectively as consequences of negotiations. They provided an open-ended opportunity to widely diverse populations to express their subjective valuable outcomes and rate the importance of their business and personal negotiations. Using a variety of inductive and deductive methods, valuable outcomes were systematically identified and classified into a four factors comprehensive framework--the Subjective Value Inventory (SVI): negotiators' perceptions of tangible, the self, process, and relationship outcomes. Intriguingly, though participants mentioned objective tangible outcomes, such as agreements more frequently than other goals, these outcomes importance ratings were not higher than social psychological outcomes such as relationship quality, face saving, fairness, listening, and positive emotions. Additionally, one in five participants did not mention any tangible outcomes at all. Furthermore, in a sequel 2-round negotiation study, negotiators' social psychological outcomes in the first negotiation were a better predictor than objective outcomes of both the desire to negotiate again with the same counterpart, as well as of the objective outcome in the second negotiation (Elfenbein et al., 2010). These findings point out the significant role of social-psychological outcomes in negotiators' eyes.

New approaches to mediation emerging in the mid 1990's reinforced the necessity to address relational and developmental goals (e.g., Bush & Folger, 1994; Monk & Winslade, 2001). Moreover, self-reports present mediators' eclectic aspiration to attain various goals

including psychological and relational, and the use of diverse styles (Picard, 2000; Charkoudian et al., 2009; Kressel et al., 2012; Peleg-Baker, 2012; Peleg-Baker et al., 2012). For example, in an exploratory study of mediators-instructors (Picard, 2000), three patterns of styles were identified: pragmatic settlement/ problem (25%); socioemotional, humanistic, and relational (21%); and mixed-pragmatic & socio-emotional (54%). Although many mediators wish to move beyond a single style and to attain diverse socioemotional goals, observational studies show that most still focus on agreements while relatively neglecting other goals when managing the process (e.g., Kruk, 1998; Charkoudian et al., 2009). Equally, mediation lab studies revealed that most mediators focused on agreements while overlooking other goals as psychological, developmental or relational, which they explicitly presented as important in pre-mediation statements and in interviews (Kressel, et al., 2012; Peleg-Baker, et al., 2012). To conclude, negotiators and mediators have broader range of goals than typically considered. Recognizing and learning to handle social-psychological aspects is likely to improve mediators' intuitive judgments when dealing with such dynamics, and their overall mediation expertise.

The Automaticity of Mediators' Decisions

As noted, observing mediators' work reveals the automaticity of decisions about when and how to intervene. In lab studies, mediators were observed to often make fast intuitive decisions regardless of what was considered by observers adaptive or appropriate (Kressel, et al., 2012; Peleg-Baker et al., 2012). One mediator described: *"you miss things...I was watching the tape and critiquing what I had done. Sometimes I remembered...but I didn't always... a lot of what I do is totally intuitive."* Evidence for automatic, unconscious processes has been rapidly growing in everyday life (Jacoby, Lindsay, & Toth, 1992; Bargh & Chartrand, 1999; Westen, 1999), and in decision-making (Simon, 1992; Bodenhausen & Todd, 2010). Though efficient for adaptive behavior, some can be futile being prone to systematic biases and flaws (Nisbett, & Ross, 1980), especially in uncertain stressful settings (Tversky, & Kahneman, 1974; Kahneman,

Slovic & Tversky, 1982; Kahneman, & Klein, 2009), as in the context of mediation.

Experts are often unaware of their implicit cognitive model, which drives their behavior (Simon, 1992). Implicit social cognition studies indicate that a multitude of mental sub-processes are part of most behaviors without the individual being aware of them (Deutsch, & Strack, 2010), and that implicit attitudes, beliefs, and stereotypes shape behavior, which sometimes negates peoples' intentions (Wilson, Lindsey, & Schooler, 2000; Deutsch & Strack, 2006). Similarly, intuitive, automatic responses are likely to play a key role in shaping mediators' judgments. Moreover, salient mediation goals such as agreement making are likely to become automated (Bodenhausen & Todd, 2010).

Automatic intuitive judgments are by their nature unconscious, fast, and involve an associative match (Simon, 1992). Simon described intuitive decisions as "analyses frozen into habits and the capacity for rapid response through recognition" (Simon, 1992: 139). Though many intuitive judgments are proficient and successful, it is not the case for all decisions of such type. More problematic, people often have no way to know the origin of their intuitive judgments and whether they are faulty or skilled (Kahneman, & Klein, 2009). People also incline to overestimate their ability to make accurate judgments (Carroll, Sweeny, & Shepperd, 2006), and are often overconfident even though their decisions are lacking (Kruger, & Dunning, 1999). Additionally, it has been claimed that *pseudo experts*, experts who have acquired expertise in other domains but lack adequate relevant domain knowledge, might experience an illusion of validity: overconfidence in dealing with issues they might have little aptitude for ((Kahneman, & Klein, 2009). Similarly, Mediators in lab studies still expressed high confidence and satisfaction with their work despite neglecting and failing to realize their important social-psychological goals ((Kressel, et al., 2012; Peleg-Baker et al., 2012). Furthermore, lawyers-mediators in these lab studies expressed high confidence and overestimated their mediation abilities. Though they had ample knowledge of disputes' legal aspects, they seemed to have weak familiarity with latent psychological subtleties and relational dynamics. A critical question, therefore, is whether and

how mediators could increase the quality of their intuitive automatic judgments, especially those concerning social-psychological goals.

The Quality of Automatic Decisions Relies on Consciousness Learning

Although automatic decisions appear involuntary and ostensibly uncontrollable, they are not made in vacuum. Many stem from specific experiences that determine their quality (Dreyfus, & Dreyfus, 1986; Bodenhausen & Todd, 2010). They are learned and conscious activity is key in shaping them. The claim that consciousness is fully in charge of directing and controlling behavior has been under much criticism since Freud; some even doubt whether conscious thought is useful at all (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999; Nisbett & Wilson, 1977; Bos, Dijksterhuis, & Baaren, 2008; Wegner, 2002). Critiques are often based on the assumption that the functions of consciousness are to enhance sensory input from the external environment, stimulate awareness of internal processes, and to directly control behavior (Baumeister & Masicampo, 2010). Instead, consciousness may process information the brain already has, and indirectly contribute to the control of behavior (Baumeister & Masicampo, 2010; Baumeister, Masicampo, Vohs, 2011). Hence, the unique advantage of the conscious processes may lie beyond the immediate action. They support reconstructing and reshaping decisions, stimulate thinking especially through interactions with others while considering their views, learn from past experiences, and generate other future decisions options.

Evidence for conscious causation of behavior is robust, though, often indirect and delayed, and contingent upon an interplay with unconscious processes (Baumeister et al., 2011). Causality between intentions and behavior is more likely to be attained by having specific plan, such as, "If X happens, then I will do Y" (Gollwitzer, 1999). Awareness of a link between an expected cue (X) and a wanted behavior (Y) causes the behavior to be performed automatically (Brandstatter, Lengfelder, & Gollwitzer, 2001). Moreover, simulating possible plans and connecting them with outcomes is critical to change future response (Gollwitzer &

Sheeran, 2006). Research on skills' acquisition reveals that skills begin explicitly with declarative knowledge, and ends with procedural, often automatic knowledge (Anderson, 1982; Dreyfus, & Dreyfus, 1986; Reber, 1989). The more repeated the deliberate process, the more components of the decision-making become automated (Charness et al., 2005).

Initial conscious processing is a necessary premise for high quality intuitive judgments (Hogarth, 2001). Learning is the input to automatic decisions and defines their quality. Most notably, expertise literature shows that expert performance does not merely reflect prolonged experience but rather, it relies on the quality of the experience or on *deliberate practice* that involves intense cognitive endeavor and on-going concentration on improving specific expertise aspects to ensure experts' development and superior performance (Ericsson & Lehmann, 1996; Ericsson & Towne, 2010).

It is suggested that the secure way to assess the probable accuracy of intuitive judgment is by considering the *validity* of the environment in which the decision was made as well as the decision maker history of opportunities to learn the rules and regularities of that environment (Kahneman, & Klein, 2009). *High-validity* environments are necessary for developing skilled automatic intuitions by offering valid cues on the nature of the situation. Such environments enable constant exposure to regularly recurring cues (Hertwig, Hoffrage, & Martingnon, 1999). They have relatively steady relationships between cues and resulting outcomes. For example, medicine is considered a field of relatively high validity while political advisors operate in low-validity environments. The other necessary condition for developing high quality intuitive judgments is creating sufficient opportunities for learning the environment. It is necessary to learn domain regularities and relevant cues and practice necessary skills over a long period of time.

Mediation context validity is not guaranteed as cases and situations are highly diverse and not necessarily repeat themselves. Mediation may be defined as an *ill-structured* knowledge domain whereby cases may be complex and different from others (Ross, Phillips,

Klein, & Cohn, 2005). However, expertise can improve by systematically learning repetitive behavioral and emotional cues that the *naïve mediator* might not be fully aware of or may not have sufficient knowledge or skills to effectively handle, as with the case of social psychological cues. Yet, formal mediation training is limited to basic 40 hours of certificate program, and constant training is not highly established among certified mediators. Therefore, mediators' awareness to their own dispositions and other social-psychological biases and barriers is lacking.

So far I discussed the intuitive nature of mediators' judgments in the rapid and uncertain circumstances of mediation. I also suggested that in such context there is relative lack of attention paid to social-psychological goals in spite of their perceived importance by negotiators and mediators. Two necessary conditions for skilled intuitive decisions were introduced: an environment that provides constant exposure to regularly repeated cues and creating sufficient opportunities for learning the environment.

In the next section I discuss possible processes for increasing the validity of the mediation context through repetitive learning relevant social-psychological cues and domain regularities.

Systematic Reflection

Given the nature of the mediation environment and the mediator's significant role in addressing multiple emotional and social-psychological issues, it is important for mediators to employ intensive learning tools to nurture their cognitive and behavioral flexibility (Peleg-Baker, 2012a). An essential tool for developing such flexibility is the capacity for self- reflection.

Reflection is a form of a conscious learning process. I propose it as a thorough procedure to be employed on a basis to increase mediators' awareness to their decisions, particularly their unconscious automatic responses to social-psychological aspects of conflict.

Consciousness is a cognitive activity characterized by awareness,¹ attention, information gathering, and reflection (Louis & Sutton, 1991). Two forms of consciousness are proposed: 1. Phenomenal awareness, considered the lower level of consciousness, describing feelings, sensations, and orienting to the present moment. 2. Ability to reason, reflect on one's experiences, and have a sense of self, especially one that extends beyond the current moment (Baumeister & Masicampo, 2010). The latter is suggested here.

Reflection has been well established as a critical element of experiential learning generally (Dewey, 1938; Schön, 1983), and in conflict resolution and mediation particularly (Kressel, 1997; Lang & Taylor, 2000; McGuire & Inlow, 2005; Marsick, Sauquet, & Yorks, 2006; Peleg-Baker, 2012; Peleg-Baker, 2012a; Peleg-Baker et al., 2012). It entails conscious processing of individuals' own experience to increase awareness, thus their ability to learn from it and change behavior (Hullfish & Smith, 1961), and to integrate new concepts and experiences into existing knowledge structures (Gray, 2007). The benefits of reflection for improving practice are theoretically recognized in diverse domains such as organizational management (Weick, 1995; Daudelin, 1996), medicine (Bishop, 2007; Mann, Gordon, & MacLeod, 2009; Aukes, et al., 2007) and education (Ohlsson, 1996; Edwards, 1998; Mayer, 2004; Moreno & Mayer, 2005).

Though the mechanisms by which reflection minimizes flaws in diagnosis are still unclear, Mamede and colleagues showed in a series of studies that reflection reduces diagnostic errors, and improves clinical reasoning (Mamede, Schmidt, & Rikers, 2006; Mamede, et al., 2010; 2012; 2012a). Doctors improved immediate diagnostic accuracy of complex cases by going through reflection. Reflection was structured by asking participants to suggest a diagnosis for a case, list findings in the case that support their diagnosis or oppose it, then findings expected to be present but were not described in the case, and alternative diagnoses, assuming their initial diagnosis would prove to be incorrect. Participants followed the same

¹ "Consciousness." Merriam-Webster. www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/consciousness.

procedure for each alternative diagnosis, and then ranked them in order of likelihood, and selected the most accurate diagnosis. Interestingly, medical students needed time to benefit from reflection, and only when diagnosing simple cases. Their learning became apparent only a week after, which is in line with studies showing that the effect of elaboration or deep cognitive processing on learning emerge only after some delay (Woods, Brooks, & Norman, 2007). Reasons could be exhaustion due to high cognitive load during learning, initial confusion given the copious details considered, or simple domain schema with low knowledge. Students in reflection condition outperformed those in non-reflection conditions in diagnosing novel future cases rather than in immediate cases diagnosis (Mamede et al., 2012a).

As in mediation, operating in an environment of time constraints, clinicians' reasoning is highly automatic, and arises early in the clinical encounter, thus prone to biases and errors particularly in complex, unfamiliar or new cases (Mamede et al., 2010; 2012a). After elaborate cognitive processing, the quality of illness scripts (mental representations) and performance seem to improve. Reflection may support expanding as well as restructuring schema, which is likely to result in competent diagnostic and automatic decisions (Mamede, et al., 2010; 2012; 2012a).

Consistent with expertise literature, advising that competent performance stems from domain complex schema, doctors develop complex illness scripts that comprises of the link among symptoms and diseases, and the conditions under which an illness may develop. The richer their scripts, the more accurate the immediate diagnosis. The mechanisms producing incorrect intuitions may operate in the lack of skill (Kahneman, & Klein, 2009). Thus, when individuals have a skilled response to a task, they are likely to use it. Generating diagnosis relies on pattern recognition by matching symptoms to previous instances (Mamede, et al., 2010). Illness scripts and prior experiences are therefore key to arrive at skillful automatic match. The positive effect of reflection may occur since it explicitly focuses attention on specific aspects, which may lead to richer mental models and diagnosis competence. It may activate

additional relevant knowledge and foster integration and reorganization of preexisting knowledge (Mamede, et al., 2010).

Israeli soldiers demonstrated richer mental models and improved performance in navigation exercises after conducting after-event reviews (AER) of failed events (detecting errors by comparing performance versus the intended action), and failed and successful events (adding successful experiences analysis). Improvement was greater in the latter group (Ellis & Davidi, 2005). AER gave soldiers a systematic learning opportunity to contemplate on their performance. Anseel et al. found that reflection combined with feedback rather than reflection or feedback alone improves employee performance on a web-based work simulation (Anseel, Lievens, & Schollaert, 2009). They conclude that combining reflection and goal-setting instructions, looking back on past behavior by guided reflection and looking forward to future behavior by setting goals may be particularly strong interventions. Comparing effects of different reflection types on learning--alone, with a helper, and peer group, Daudelin (1996) found that the first two were more significant perhaps because in "helper" and "alone" conditions subjects responded to specific questions, whereas reflection in the peer group was unstructured. Reflection is recommended to be systematic, to be used to formulate and to test hypotheses, and done with a facilitator and in groups (Kressel, 2006; Peleg-Baker, 2012).

These studies emphasize the decisive role of domain schema in determining the quality of experts' automatic judgments. Systematic reflective processing supports developing as well as restructuring domain schema's complexity. When individuals engage in focused and repetitive learning over long periods of time they form complex domain schema and competencies that are likely to override the tendency to flawed intuitive judgments (Kahneman & Klein, 2009; Peleg-Baker, 2012b; 2012c; 2014). Expert schemas have been shown to be more complex than novice schemas; they also include a greater number of attributes, which are better connected as well (Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Rousseau, 2001). Complex schemas serve experts in multiple ways such as enhanced domain-relevant memory skills, problem solving and

decision-making effectiveness, and skilled intuitive decisions (Chase & Simon, 1973; Ericsson & Lehmann, 1996; Dane, 2010). Simple schemas of low domain knowledge are likely to result in inclination to generate inaccurate and low quality automatic judgments (Tversky, & Kahneman, 1974; Kahneman et al., 1982). They tend to be shallow and insufficient for processing complex environmental stimuli (Weick, 1995; Kahneman & Klein, 2009).

IMPLICATIONS FOR MEDIATORS

Mediators, who typically operate in a dynamic, volatile and fast-paced environment, continuously make immediate decisions that are unconscious and intuitive. Such decisions lack awareness to inducing cues and explicit assessment of their validity. Decisions are likely to be bypassed by powerful, often rigid, automatic responses, which could be efficient but biased and flawed. While mediators are frequently interested in addressing a wide range of the parties' goals, particularly social-psychological, mediators characteristically and routinely center on tangible goals such as agreement making.

To attain a broader spectrum of frequently disregarded social-psychological outcomes, mediators must become cognitively skilled in two ways: First, it is essential to recognize the unconscious automatic nature of their decisions. In other words, to better understand mental dynamics such as the formation of unconscious automatic decisions, their interaction with conscious processes, and the possibilities to gain control over their quality. Second, the inherent contextual complexity mediators work in, requires to systematically employ tools that provide them with repetitive learning opportunities to advance particular mediation goals such as social-psychological. Drawing on research from various fields including psychology, organizational management, decision-making and education, I propose *systematic cognitive reflection*. As an intense conscious cognitive process, it will enable mediators to deepen and extend their domain schema, and consequently advance quality decisions while minimizing flawed judgments, especially in dealing with multifaceted emotional issues and social-

psychological goals.

It is important to emphasize that a potent reflection must be based on systematic, structured, and goal-setting instructions. A detailed *reflective protocol* can be highly useful for such a task (Peleg-Baker, 2012). Relying on the negotiators 4-factor framework (Curhan et al., 2006), a protocol that I developed contains 4 sections :one addresses tangible goals and three focus on social-psychological goals that include: *process related considerations, parties' perception of self, and relational issues*. Similarly to the structured reflection conditions used in medicine and management studies, mediators are encouraged to follow a structured and systematic reflective procedure in post-mediation reflection. The reflective process is composed of responding to specific questions in which mediators analyze their goal attainment, intended goals versus actual actions, examples of behaviors that promoted or inhibited each goal, and prospective useful behaviors for dealing with each goal in future mediations. It is recommended to follow the same systematic format of questioning for each of the four sections (Peleg-Baker, 2012).

For learning purposes, systematic and structured reflective framework is preferable to general debriefing that is typically composed of general questions. The latter could be counter-productive as it can lead learners in different directions without adequate examination of specific decisions. General typical questions such as 'Do you think the clients were satisfied with the process?' or 'What was challenging about the case?' are too ambiguous and insufficiently systematic to result in effective learning. A major principle of reflection is to compare between intentions and outcomes. By consciously examining their self-experiences and systematically clarifying intentions versus outcomes, mediators are able to gradually improve goals' attainment, particularly unattended social-psychological ones.

As Dewey argued decades ago (1938), learning occurs when people repeatedly interpret their experiences, develop insights, and then revise their actions to meet their goals, which result in new *habits*. Cognitive reflective processes are likely to support a more effective and

flexible interplay between conscious and unconscious processes, allowing the latter to become consciously accessible. When a reflective process is continuous and persistent, complex domain-relevant schema is formed along with new skills that should override the proclivity toward unfitting intuitive judgments. Consequently, many sequential consequences such as self-inferences, transformation, and behavioral correction, become feasible.

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