

# Change the Quality of Your Interaction with Others

*Conflict mediators Louise Phipps Senft and William Senft outline a comprehensive approach to being relational, not transactional, when dealing with people*

## *Being Relational* by Louise Phipps Senft & William Senft

### What is it?

For many people, interactions are automatic. In *Being Relational*, conflict mediators Louise Phipps Senft and William Senft ask people to take a step back and evaluate their approach to interacting and dealing with others: Are you relational? Or merely transactional?

Living in an increasingly crowded and hyper-connected world calls us to evolve as a species in ways that never before have been necessary—in the ways we relate to each other as fellow inhabitants of Earth. The Senfts say, “Every interaction is a negotiation. The critical issue for us as a species is *how* we negotiate, *how* we connect, *how* we relate. The premise of *Being Relational* is that how we negotiate, and more importantly, who we are as we negotiate life with others, is at the root of our desperate realities and our conflicts large and small.”

Written from over twenty years of experience in mediating conflict, *Being Relational* is a collection of teachings that focuses on what happens in human interaction. It is inspired by the experience of thousands of people for whom the Senfts have mediated, and that of the executives and community leaders who have attended Baltimore Mediation's conflict transformation trainings.

In the book, the Senfts outline seven ways of being relational: being engaged, being centered, being grounded, being clear, being generous, being humble and being kind. Together these constitute the full spectrum of attitudes and methods needed to increase well-being and create lasting positive change for individuals, their families, their workplaces and for the planet.

### Whom is it for?

*Being Relational* is written for the individual, particularly those in a leadership role: CEOs, corporate executives, human resource managers, community leaders, civilian peacekeepers, sports coaches, church ministers, and parents. It also applies to anyone looking to improve the quality of their interactions — those going through a divorce, dealing with a difficult boss or employee, parents looking to improve relationships with children, siblings resolving an estate settlement, and more.



# BEING RELATIONAL

The Seven Ways  
to Quality Interaction  
& Lasting Change

Louise Phipps Senft  
William Senft

## BOOK DETAILS

[www.beingrelational.com](http://www.beingrelational.com)

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## How is it different?

Rather than inventing a radically new idea about what happens in human interaction, the Senfts have provided a synthesis of proven ideas and practices already out there, rooted in teachings from many sources—conflict transformation, negotiation ethics, neuroscience, multiple faith traditions, and numerous self-improvement and business leadership books. *Being Relational* organizes these ideas into a comprehensive approach that readers can draw upon and use, check in on and grow into, as a way of being in relation to others.

In mediating thousands of cases, the Senfts have encountered extreme situations where the threat of violence is real, where the use of power and intimidation is not subtle but explicit, and where rational thought is trampled beneath powerful emotion and mental instability. They bring a unique perspective on how people relate to each other and how they find their way through very difficult times.

## Why is it important?

Interaction with other people is constant in our daily experience—via phone, email, face-to-face, letter, press release, media reports, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, YouTube, and so on. It takes place on many levels: person-to-person (one-to-one), person-to-group, group-to-group, political party-to-political party, government-to-government.

We are living in a time of turmoil between religious groups, greater political polarization, greater gaps between the haves and have-nots, greater divisions within families, more adversarial divorces, and escalating conflict in our homes and on the streets of our cities. Improvement in our ways of interaction is not only a hope and dream for the future, but an urgent need now.

## Who wrote it?

Married for more than 30 years and in the business of conflict transformation together for more than 20, **Louise Phipps Senft** and **William Senft** are a uniquely creative and energetic couple. They are business and law professors, mediators, lawyers, entrepreneurs, parents of five children, and in William's case, youth sports coach and clergy. In their 20+ years of experience at their firm Baltimore Mediation, they have gained a unique perspective on the ways that leaders and others manage conflict, experience conflict, manage themselves in conflict, solve problems, build relationships, and make their way in the world.

They are the founders of the nonprofit ORANS: The Campaign for Relational Leadership and the ORANS Institute for Relational Leadership for corporate executives of Fortune 500 companies, which were created for the purpose of influencing the quality of engagement on personal and civic issues and developing leaders who will transform stressful interactions with quality dialogue to create lasting positive change in their daily negotiations, organizations, families, and communities.



**by Louise Phipps Senft  
& William Senft**

## Story ideas/key messages

- 7 Ways of Being Relational in Our Daily Transactions, whether it's with a family member, a colleague at work, or the person who cuts in front of us in the grocery store line
- 4 Steps to Dealing with Conflict in the Office/Boardroom
- What Good Leadership Looks Like in the Midst of Intractable Conflict
- Don't Stand Up to a Bully, Sit Down with Him/Her: Using transformative mediation to address bullying
- How the American System Takes a Transactional Approach: a power-based approach that emphasizes maximizing gain/profits and creates a perceived reality of scarcity
- Reaching Across the Aisle: How you can be relational with those who have opposing political views
- All Lives Matter: Changing the interaction between police and residents

## Advance praise for *Being Relational*

"*Being Relational* brings us back to the basics, but with tremendous nuance, outlining a series of simple, yet profound, principles that will most certainly lead you to greater success."

—James A.C. Kennedy, CEO, T. Rowe Price

"Whether it's in politics, business, or simply interacting with our next-door neighbors, we're good at expressing our own views and not so good at hearing—and considering—somebody else's perspective. We have many contacts but few real interactive relationships. The result is division and conflict. This marvelous book identifies clear, effective steps that will make our relationships better and in the process lead to better outcomes for us all individually and collectively. I highly recommend it."

—Former Congressman Mickey Edwards (OK) and Vice President of the Aspen Institute

"In our fast-paced, digitally connected world, Louise and William remind us of the importance of personal interaction at the human level. Using the tools offered in *Being Relational* I've seen a marked improvement in my interactions with others both in business and at home, and am introducing the concept to my teams."

—Dan Taylor, Director of Global Display, Google

"Human nature will seem less complicated after you put this book down."

—Bob Kerrey, managing director, Allen and Company, and former U.S. Senator and 35th Governor of Nebraska

"Invaluable information . . . In a world where we are all expected to compete and become 'winners,' it is a relief to hear a message that, in order for any one of us to truly win, we will need to listen to each other and to care about each other to do it."

—Pat Sekaquaptewa, Justice, Hopi Appellate Court, and assistant professor, Department of Alaska Native Studies & Rural Development, University of Alaska Fairbanks

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