

# David Barrett

Mon, 10/12 12:34AM • 49:39

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, mediation, mediator, conversation, bit, conflict, coaching, busier, psychometric assessment, important, difficult, happening, business, person, LinkedIn, feel, manage, moment, talk, deal

## SPEAKERS

Nadine Powrie, David Barrett

### **Nadine Powrie** 00:01

Welcome to my #Leadingthecoachingchange podcast where my mission is to help you master difficult work conversations so that you become a confident and courageous communicator in the workplace. Leading the coaching change is here to show you how to use your talents in the best way and finding your unique communication strengths. Let's start having more courageous conversations today. And before I start my podcast today, I just want to share with you something that I saw on Instagram that resonated with me. Now, last week, I was just flicking through my Instagram, and I saw an interview with Richard Branson and Simon Sinek. And Richard Branson asked Simon Sinek if you were starting a business right now, what problem would you be setting out to solve and why? And interestingly, Simon Sinek said, the difficult conversation, he said, How to have a difficult conversation. And the way that he went on to explain why he thought that having a difficult conversation and having the skills to have a difficult discussion was the problem that he would be setting out to solve right now resonated with me because I have designed an online licensed training program on managing difficult conversations. And I've always thought that with what's happening around the world, and moving from face to face to online and doing lots of zooms and Skype conferences, this is something that is really, talking about the difficult conversation is difficult because people aren't used to eating. People are finding natives are certainly seeing that the screen is almost another barrier that has been added to the difficulty of talking to people about something that's not going very well. So the importance of investing in developing skills such as crisis or negotiation, conflict management, and peacemaking skills can't be underestimated. So that is why I've developed my licensed training on managing difficult conversations. So if you want to know more about it, please visit my website [www.nadinepowrie.com](http://www.nadinepowrie.com) and have a look at my online license training. Seventeen modules are available 24 hours a day, and I want to mention something that one client asked me this week because he said to me, you're not talking enough about the 60-minute monthly hot seat that you do. So I just want to say briefly that yes, this is a one hour a month, that's your group because it's a cohort of 10 people that can be on the hot seat, your group get to spend an hour with me, and we look at questions that you may have. We look at sharing ideas and best practice and, you know, celebrating wins. And we also do role plays, we map out those difficult conversations, and we go through those business simulations. So I'm delighted that I've shared that with you. And now on to my podcast with my guest for today. I'm happy to welcome my special guest today. Dave Barrett, and good evening, Dave because it's five o'clock in the UK. Good evening.

**David Barrett** 03:59

Good evening. I'm so pleased to be here. It's such a welcome opportunity to talk about my favourite subject talking about myself.

**Nadine Powrie** 04:09

Dave, I'm delighted that you accepted to be my guest today. And we connected on LinkedIn because actually, we should declare that we've never met. And we didn't know each other until about a week ago. Did we?

**David Barrett** 04:23

know that's right. But that's the power of LinkedIn, isn't it?

**Nadine Powrie** 04:26

It is, it is. And as I was looking at your profile, I always try to see what I have in common with people because I don't believe in coincidence, and we've got a few things in common. So number one you live the North-East in near Durham and I used to live in Newcastle. So I know I know the area pretty well. And you've been a school governor, and I've been a headteacher. So we know about the world of education, and you are teaching at Northumbria University, which I know pretty well. You have a CIPD member like me?

**David Barrett** 05:03

Yeah, although again that was a while ago now.

**Nadine Powrie** 05:08

Yeah. And we are both a mediator, which is all about the focus of this conversation. So there we are, we have quite a lot in common. What else would you like to share about yourself?

**David Barrett** 05:25

I've been fortunate; I feel quite lucky. I've had quite a good life, and I started as an engineer did fine, OK, I didn't really like that, and then moved into the world of conservation and conservation is a great thing to do. And I did that for a long time, but it's full of conflict. Yeah. So I kind cut my teeth with competition in the world of conservation and realized that I enjoy working with people who conflict and trying to help people out in that situation, because by the time you're talking to people, as a mediator, you know, people are often in a tough place, and you can help them. So I think that's, that's how I kind of got into it. By accident, as I believe most things happen by accident.

**Nadine Powrie** 06:14

So you've been, you've been a mediator for how many years,

**David Barrett** 06:18

my first bit of training was probably in 1994. And I kind of did stuff internally for the organization that I was working for. And then I started to fly solo in 2008. And, and then that's ramped up since I got my full qualification. And I've been working hard at it now for probably about eight or nine years. I do

everything from, you know, one to one stuff. So coaching people who conflict with another colleague, so we're not meeting the other colleague, I'll talk to someone about how to deal with their colleague, right through to a piece of work I'm doing at the moment, which is a review of probably 100 or so people that we're working with at the moment, to resolve something that's not great. So, you know, it can be right across that range. And I also have a team of people that work with me as well, on occasions, I'm working with three other people at the moment on this big, more significant piece of work. So it's quite lovely to have the range. And I think that's the thing that people don't realize about mediation, that it's it, you kind of got this feeling that you're sitting between people who are arguing, but that's, that's just one part of it. I mean, the other stuff that I do is I do training as well. And that's something that I enjoy. I'm not a qualified trainer in mediation, but I do lots of training in, you know, how to have conversations, difficult conversations, how to deal with violence, aggression. Because often as a mediator, you're with people who are getting upset. They're positively charged kind of conversations, and you learn a lot about people and how to handle people. So I do quite a lot of training and coaching with managers and leaders on how to deal with difficult people.

**Nadine Powrie** 08:16

It's interesting, isn't it? Because, I mean, I was explaining to quite a few friends that have just qualified as a mediator. And they said to me, Well, actually, mediator and coaching go well together, because you should have coaching first. You should train people to manage difficult conversation or conflicts so that it doesn't end up going into mediation; people seem to think that we can break the circle, the vicious circle of if you've had coaching if you've been trained. Then you should not go into mediation, because you should be able to deal with things and yet, deal well with it.

**David Barrett** 08:56

Yeah. And I think I think that's an exciting point. Because it's that, I think, for what I find a lot is, you know, if you're a dinner or a party or something, and you tell people what you do, oh, gosh, I couldn't do that. That must be well, how people are interested, but they always kind of qualify that with 'Oh I couldn't do that'. But actually, often the conflict is never aimed at you unless you mess it up. And sometimes it is, but on the whole, it's always at the people. So you're, you're in this place where you're facilitating a conversation. And I think when I think about coaching, and I feel about mediating, they're actually the same skill set. And I think the primary skill that one has to have as a coach can listen to people and ask the right questions. And that's precisely the same in mediation. If you're doing your job well as a mediator, you're saying as little as possible, and that's similar in coaching, isn't it? If you're talking a lot in the coaching relationship and probably is not the most remarkable thing. So I think there are similar skill sets. And it is about facilitating other people to be able to have the conversation that they need to have with a colleague. And I often think in a coaching relationship, and we're working with people's level of belief about something that they need to address. And it's precisely the same in mediation, that you've got someone there who believes that they cannot get on with the person that you're trying to help them have the conversation with. So I feel an essential part of mediators is kind of helping people believe and have the confidence that they can actually have the conversation that they need to have with, with the person that they're having difficulty with. So I think coaching and mediation and very, very similar,

**Nadine Powrie** 10:51

Yeah, I agree with you, I was doing a mediation observation, actually, this week. And I was analyzing all the questions that that very experienced, experienced, a mediator was asking to see the evolution of the conversation that led to an agreement at the end, you know, so when there was dissonance at its best, then it became peaceful. And it was, I think I could I call that, you know, the distance to travel to some extent, you have to reduce the gap so that there is nothing at the end, and people are in agreement. And I think this can only happen if we as a mediator are asking the best possible questions and saying little, and it's a skill, it's an art it's a skill that not many people have.

**David Barrett** 11:50

yeah, I agree. I think I think the other bit to it, is we're very focused on what's happening in the conversation. It's. Actually, I spend a lot of time before the conversation, thinking about and preparing people to have the conversation. Because if I often think with, you know, what I would call professional mediation. So it's very different in family-type work. And I have a colleague who I worked with quite regularly who's a specialist family mediator, and there's quite a different sort of, I mean, the principles are the same environment. But I think with professional mediation, there's sometimes quite a bit of pressure on you to move through the process quickly, because there's, you know, your company's got to pay for you. So, and I think the problem is that quite often people is that what I call people's level of readiness to have the conversation they need to have, and sometimes they need a lot of help before they're even ready to have a chat. And I think in that early stages, particularly, I think you're also making an assessment, whether they're ready, whether mediation is actually the right process for them. Because sometimes it isn't, and I think some people are not, and not just don't want to be there. But they've said yes because they feel they have to say yes. As quickly clocking on to that, so I think we talked earlier about coaching, mediation being very similar. I think another aspect that's similar is, is sometimes you have to challenge your client to see the things that maybe they don't want to see. And it's the same in mediation, you know, with empathy, of course, but you, you have to call out what you're seeing. And that might be that someone's not willing or not able or doesn't want to for various reasons to be there. But they're not ready to accept that. Yeah. So I think I think that's quite important. So it's not all about what happens in the two way or three way; however, many way conversations. It's what you do before, I think, and I think, frankly, mediation is a process that is very, very straightforward. Yeah. And that process is very important in giving people confidence and comfort. But again, I think as you become more skilled at it, you feel much more able to move away from that, and kind of go with what's happening in the room or what people are saying, and depending on, you know, what's kind of happening, I think, mix and match. But certainly in the early stages, when I was learning, I definitely would have this kind of thinking like, Oh my god, what am I going to do now?

**Nadine Powrie** 14:40

Do you specialize in any types of mediation

**David Barrett** 14:46

not anything specifically. But I tend to probably do quite a lot of stuff in academic organizations and also in NHS I've done quite a lot of work. I'm doing I do a little bit of what I would call small business work. But primarily, it's bigger. I have a couple of big clients that I do which big charities, which is my background. I think the thing about charities, which is interesting, there's a lot of passion for charities. Yeah, sometimes that passion can get a little bit misdirected. So, you know, and people can get end up

getting a bit cross with each other. So, that's very interesting. And I enjoy that. And, and it's just nice to be able to see, you know, people often by the time that you're working with and are miserable. So the fact that you can make them feel unmiserable is really, really rewarding, really improve somebody's day, if it goes well.

**Nadine Powrie** 15:50

What made you decide to specialize in resolving conflict.

**David Barrett** 16:00

I guess it was my, my original background as a conservationist, I used to have to deal with some pretty unpleasant stuff. So quite a lot of my job was on nature reserves and managing nature reserves. And people kind of have this idea that a nature reserve is a peaceful place with, you know, solitude, and you walk around looking at birds and wildlife. Unfortunately, there's a little bit of that, but quite a lot of it is not like that. And one of the jobs is, is patrolling for trespass, and, you know, people shooting, and things like that. And I found that I could do that without getting upset. And people could be pretty horrible to me, and I could see their perspective, and I could chat with them. And that kind of just, I just realized at that point that probably I've got a bit of a nap for not getting fed up with people when they're angry with me. And I think you have to be ready for people to be pretty horrible to you at times. And I think it's, and I say this a lot to people is that I feel what I can really what's really benefited me and my life as a whole, is there's always two sides to every story. And it what has been fascinating and has really brought this to the front for me. And it's, and it's changed my life actually as a mediator is really affected the rest of my life. No matter how terrible something is, and how awful one person is proclaiming the other person is, there is always two sides to the story. What I find amazing is that you know, you can have two people talking about exactly the same thing, exactly the same, yet they see it completely differently. And that's often at the root of it is how people process information, make decisions about things, decide things work through things, that brain works in a completely different way. And they just don't see that. And see these kinds of sort of psychological patterns at work all the time in these different relationships. And I think it was quite good fun is you can often say something to someone if you spot one of these patterns. So one that I see a lot is what I called 'fast and slow'. So you have a person that is very quick, very energetic, very decisive. Come on, come on, come on, come on. And then the other person is 'hang on a minute, I just, I would like to think about this'. Yeah, I'd like to reflect on this. Well, I need to read through what you're talking about. That kind of thing. And those two types of individuals, when they get together can actually drive each other nuts. So you know, it's observing these different patterns. And it's a very simple process. If you just kind of point that out to people, it's like a light bulb's come on, you know, there's a lot of psychometric assessments that kind of do these things. But I think, as a mediator, because you're seeing people in these places, you can kind of spot those patterns quite easily, I think.

**Nadine Powrie** 19:18

I think there is a lot of I mean; certainly, when I was a headteacher, I could see a lot of people making assumptions and perception as well. Perception is fascinating. Because, you know, one person might perceive something to be in a particular way. And another see it in a completely different way; it's a bit like the yin and the yang. It's like, wow, you know, and sometimes it's not about being right or wrong. Actually, there is no right or wrong sometimes. And it depends on the situation. And that's why what I

find quite fascinating about putting people together and making them come towards an agreement or something they can look at it, in a more harmonious way. You know, I think you use the word harmony on your LinkedIn. Header, don't you? Yeah. I that was a word that I've quite liked, but I'm not sure about it on my LinkedIn page, I might have to change it. Yeah, I think I think a word that is important in mediation is, his courage. Yeah. And I think I call it the five types of courage. And I talk to people that I'm working with about the five types of courage. So the first one is, you have to be able to show up. Actually, you have to be brave enough to show up, which sounds odd. But you know, that's quite a thing for people to actually show up and talk to someone that they don't like or don't want to talk to be open and honest about how they feel that's a really difficult thing for people to do. The second one is to speak once you've shown up, hmm, got to say something. So that's pretty tough, I think. And then there's, this almost gets incrementally tougher as we go through each, each one of the five courages. So the next one is to listen to what the other person is saying. And if people are not prepared to listen, then you know, you're kind of dead in the water, really, then you're not going to get very far. And then I think, finally, the sort of last two is open to a different perspective. And then, the last one is actually to change your behaviour,

**David Barrett** 21:48

And get getting people through that journey from, you know, showing up to changing their behaviour with their colleague is, is what I call the five types of courage. All of those things when people are in a difficult place, and very hard for them. I guess the thing that I've learned most is that you have to be very, very patient with people, you know, and it can seem pretty difficult for them, and what they're kind of often what they're, what they're not getting on with, or what they're struggling to get on with each other with over is something quite small, quite often. Yeah, you could even be something like a greeting, you know, whether you say hello to somebody in the morning or not. But that's a proxy for something much bigger. You know, and I mean, in my experience, Nadine, it comes down to one of three things, you know, so where whatever they walk in the door with, it will come down to one of these. Generally, they don't feel listened to don't feel valued, or they feel that they're being treated unfairly. There'll be one of those for them or a combination of their own. So and that sits right at the bottom of it. And there's a sense of relief for people because I often think what happens in a mediation certainly in the one to one discussion is you're you sit, and you act as a lightning conductor, to start with, so you know, there's all this stuff coming out, and you have to be very careful, and help them unpack that before you can move into space where you're helping them think about, well, so, you know, how has this happened? You know, or, you know, what, what the reasons you think things are not going well, but you can, you can, you can spend quite a lot of time helping people just unwind before they're ready to speak. And I think that's where the patience comes in. You know, if you go in too early with stuff, it doesn't work.

**Nadine Powrie** 23:57

Interestingly, you mentioned listening, because, I mean, for me, it's listening without interrupting. Because when you put two people together, sometimes, they're not going to be listening, listening to what is said, they're just going to talk over or deny what's being said, you know, respond immediately. So, and the good thing about mediation is that you set the rules at the beginning. So you know, usually, you do share with people that we are listening, we're taking it, in turn, to listen to each other. And I think for some people, this is quite challenging. The emotion is very wrong. And they disagree with what's

being said, and they want to respond straight away. So it's a very, very high emotional moment for people.

**David Barrett** 24:50

Yeah, but I think it's important that the process is there to protect them, but you also don't want the process to get in the way. I think part of conflict resolution is for people to. So I mean, the underlying conflict is what we're trying to do is that the person reveals something that the other person didn't really realize or didn't know about. And that that kind of changes, and often is something quite small. Yeah, that they reveal. But that can only come out sometimes when they're really angry. And I think I was originally used to be quite strict about letting people have their turn. But I'm less worried about that. Now, I think, I think it's an important part of the dynamic, you know, so if people are speaking over each other, then that's not so much of a problem, as long as and there's a really important point here. Is, is the conversation moving forward? Or is it, is it stuck. And that for me is when I change or when I would intervene or remind them. So if we're going back around and round whereas sometimes that kind of not arguing but you know, quite frankly, exchange are people can be really valuable in terms of releasing tension and releasing the emotion and something popping out, which is actually very, very important. So you don't kind of want to stifle that. And that's a really hard judgement, I think, as a mediator, do I, do I intervene? Or don't I?

**Nadine Powrie** 26:32

Yeah, I mean, I think you're right. I think if you if you are experienced with mediation, I think that it's almost natural to let things happen and to let people talk. Because, yes, there is what we've been taught you and me by the book. So this is what you should be doing. And then there is the reality of things because actually, we're dealing with human beings who have high emotions, and who have things to say to each other. And, and the danger is to interrupt them in the flow, that was actually the solution could lie. Because you just need, you just need one to say something that's that critical moment that changes everything, actually.

27:16

Yeah, you're absolutely right. And I think it comes down to another aspect, which is similar to coaching, actually, interestingly, which is trust. Yeah, that they, they have to trust you as the mediator, that you're going to, you're going to, you're there to help them both walk, taking sides. And that sounds obvious in away. But I think that's a really important part of the early stages of mediation is for me to build trust with the people I'm working with, so they feel safe, and that they, even if things are difficult, they still feel that I'm there and I can intervene in the right way. So if I'm left, so they've trusted me, if I if I'm letting go of something and letting them carry on, they'll trust me that that's the right thing for that moment. Rather than thinking about the process, I think

**Nadine Powrie** 28:08

it's interesting what you're saying, because, I mean, mediation doesn't last forever. Usually, it's a very specific period of time, isn't it? And quite short, a day, two days. How? How can do you build trust? What's your trick to build trust in such a short amount of time?

**David Barrett** 28:31

We've already talked about actually, which is listening. I think just being empathetic, and Jeff, and I think this takes practice to be genuinely impartial. Because, you know, if we're really honest with ourselves, you know, you can meet someone, and you're not sure about it. And I think that's where supervision is really important to have a brilliant supervisor. She's wonderful, and a lot of our supervision conversations are about how I am affected by people that I work with. And, and I think that's, that's a critical part of this type of environment because it's so emotional. And you know, I've had situations and mediations, particularly the project I'm working on at the moment is big. You know, where there's a lot of people we're dealing with, you know, you can feel very upset on people's behalf. But that doesn't equip you and enable you to work with people properly, and you have to be able to shut those things down and stay in the right space. So I think staying in the right space, being upfront about what you can and can't do. So. Absolutely scrupulous about every communication right before we know even the setting the meeting are straightforward, clear. People can understand that they can ask them questions, they can be how they want to be, and that feels safe for them. So I think that's how I kind of manage it really, that every communication is effective or is an opportunity to build trust. That's how I see it.

**Nadine Powrie** 30:08

On your LinkedIn profile, you have a website called a 'turning moment'. I'm a linguist. So I examine words under the microscope. And I think it's a really lovely, lovely two words, what made you choose turning moment for your website?

**David Barrett** 30:27

Right? Well, I could, I could come up with some fancy explanation. But I'm not going to do. I'm going to tell you the truth. OK. OK, I struggled to find the name of my business. And I don't think it's on my shelf anymore. But when I had an engineering book, which is all about different types of mechanical engineering, I studied, and there's a physical property called a 'turning moment'. OK, which is a force that is used for turning charks. And I was just scanning through these different terms. And I saw our turning moment, that's a great name for my business. And then it and it's got a feel to you. I think

**Nadine Powrie** 31:14

it does, it does. Because in conversations, for me, the turning moment is the moment where both parties are starting to come closer and starting to be more in harmony. So I was thinking I was making some assumptions trying to work out has he been inspired by what's been happening in the world of coaching or mediation? It's quite interesting. Actually, you've taken that from engineering and, very specific. Yeah, I like that. I wasn't expecting that. I have to say,

**David Barrett** 31:55

Yeah, I haven't paid a specialist, thousands of pounds to come up with my name, put it that way.

**Nadine Powrie** 32:03

That's fine. I am my business doesn't have a name. It's just me. So that's, that's OK. We are who we are. We need to talk about COVID. Because obviously, you know, we're under the middle of COVID. And I, I'd like to ask you, what could we change from you as a mediator?

**David Barrett** 32:25

I think there are a few things actually. I think the first thing is I'm much busier. OK, which is a sign, isn't it? An unfortunate sign for people actually. And, and I think the other thing that is really made a difference to me, which is something that I feel passionate about is the climate, that actually the transition to moving online has been accelerated, we would have had to have done it at some point. Yeah. But it's, it's really enabled people to embrace that, I think, and I think really recognize what is possible through a video link. And I was a remote manager, what I you know, I used to manage stuff remotely, we used to do a lot of business on the telephone, and then we got VC because we were a conservation organization. And so I've done quite a lot of stuff on VC for many years. But I think people can be quite surprised that you can do, quite serious heavyweight conflict resolution, through a video conference, in my opinion, is it's probably easier in away. Because people feel that little bit safer. Because they're not actually together, I think quite often I talked about that courage to show up, you know, be in the room with somebody that you're struggling with. Whereas on VC, they can always just switch it off. Currently, it's a bit easier. So I found it actually more effective in some ways. I think sometimes it can be more difficult. Because sometimes you can get what's called a walk-out, where somebody's so upset, they walk out the room. Now, if I'm there with them, I can kind of go out with them and have a chat, and we can talk about it, and we can have a break. So I have to think about how I manage that in the virtual environment. So WhatsApp has come to my rescue there. I've set up a little WhatsApp kind of backup process. So if somebody does go offline, for any reason I can then speak we haven't a part of my contract is to pick up with them through WhatsApp. I've got that one to one contact if I need it. So that's kind of changed things quite for me as well. But I think overall, and it's had it's been very difficult for the family as it has been for many families. But in terms of my professional life, I think it's made a massive difference because I don't travel now like I used to, I used to spend a lot, you know, three, four, sometimes five nights away from home every week, travelling, doing work, whereas now, I haven't been anywhere since March. And I've, and my work has got busier. And it's been great to be able to develop, you know, an online business really which I would describe my business as it is now, I do most work online. So that's been very positive, despite the downsides, which are very obvious for many people. That has been very, very, very good.

**Nadine Powrie** 35:35

You know, when you say that you you've been busier. Right? Is that because there were issues that were bubbling before COVID? And it all came out with COVID? Or is it as a direct consequence of the kind of, during and post COVID? Things that are happening because of COVID? Because of your law, because of the fact that people are not in the organization? I mean, what how would you define how would you explain that that business where is it coming from?

**David Barrett** 36:11

I think I think there are two parts. I mean, initially, it was quiet, like it was very long in the first part of the lockdown, but then it was picked up quite quickly, but I think it might be temporary, but it's the other thing temporary business, but I think I generally think probably people are feeling a little bit more pressurized, quite a lot more stressed. So I think there's more going on, and some of the work that I'm doing has probably been triggered by COVID. I should imagine. There's always been stuff there. But I would imagine COVID is kind of pressurized it enough to allow then it to burst out.

**Nadine Powrie** 36:53

Yeah, yeah, I I would agree with you. I mean, I I am aware that people don't like dealing with conflict, they tend to hope that it's going to sort itself out on its own. I think COVID has massively tested that, because, people being remote has certainly done that I've been working with me have made things worse. Because it's testing communication, it's testing trust, and it's testing a lot of values that we will have. And it's also testing the values of the organization as well because you've got many organizations, we've done lovely values when you come in, and actually, in reality, they don't really exist. And people don't even know what they mean. And people are in, in a conflict that is completely contradicting the values of the organization's

**David Barrett** 37:49

I mean, it's interesting, I didn't actually hear the article this morning, my wife just related to me. So I might have got the wrong end of the stick completely. But I think this is part of it, which is societal values as well. Yeah. This piece of research was looking at the words that are used in pop songs. And earlier, you know, a few years back it was 'we, us and our', and now it's 'me, I and my'. So is this kind of transition, I think in a society that people are probably a little bit more focused on self rather. I think COVID is made us think a bit more about others. And, and I think that's quite interesting in sort of Eastern countries, you know, Asia, that they're more able to collaborate, which is probably why they've been able to be a bit more successful than maybe we are in the West. So we're a bit more polarized about things.

**Nadine Powrie** 38:49

Yeah, I agree. You just mentioned research, what research do you use, and to support your work.

**David Barrett** 38:59

Mainly, I do loads and loads of reading, as you can probably see on my shelves, yes. Yes. My Guru handbook actually a book I use a lot because it's pretty, pretty useful. One is this one, 'The Mediator's Handbook'. It's a simple, effective thing that I have in my briefcase or on my desk because it's got everything you need in there. And as I said to you earlier, in some respect, mediation is quite straightforward. The bit that makes it difficult is understanding how you plug into the different types of people that you've got in front of you. And that's where I spend a lot of my focus and effort is actually understanding personality, and different types of people, so I can learn ways of just connecting with people really, and just being friendly isn't good enough. You know, you have to have something more than just being friendly and supportive and caring. Sometimes it requires quite difficult, challenging conversations and so learning to be flexible as well. So, I spend a lot of time reading about psychology and personality, particularly. I think that's a really important study that you have to do as a mediator.

**Nadine Powrie** 40:27

Do you do psychometric tests?

**David Barrett** 40:37

Yeah, I'm qualified. I'm registered with the British Psychological Society to do. So psychometric tests and I do use them. But I feel in them, and I think they're more valuable in specific contexts. The danger with them is that they can become a distraction. And can actually stop people having the conversation

and they need to have. So I think it is about that early assessment of who you've got in front of you. So some people would find psychometric assessment, very, very valuable way of framing their conversation. And I've used it in a couple of situations, but I think so when I, what I also found, though, is it's gone wrong, because I've used a psychometric assessment. It hasn't allowed the people actually to connect. Now I'm more experienced, I, I'm more choosy about when I use psychometric assessments. And some of them, frankly, are quite complex. All the time that you're spending with the client, getting them to a point where they can actually understand what it means in terms of how they're getting on with it, their colleague, rather than actually if we just had the conversation. So I mean, I'm a great fan of MBTI. But it's incredibly complicated.

**Nadine Powrie** 42:18

and do you use your intuition as well?

**David Barrett** 42:22

Yeah, yeah. So I'm an INFP in MBTI type. But I think if you were to ask most people, what are your four letters, they even if they've done the course, three or four times they can't remember what they are? So, you know, that's, that's quite useful in the right context, but I think insights is something that's a very good, good, because it's simple, and people can identify with the car. But again, sometimes it can have division. Oh, you're blue, and I'm red. Yes. It's not particularly helpful. Suppose we're trying to move through something. Sometimes it is, sometimes it isn't. So I think I'm just careful about when I use them, but I don't dismiss them. I think they're great, you know, but they need the right context. And I think there's one particular assessment, and I use a DISC assessment. That's very good because it's quick and easy. And it can accelerate a process. So if you've got more senior people who are not particularly patient and want to get on with things, that can be quite helpful.

**Nadine Powrie** 43:29

That's great. What do you find most rewarding as a mediator?

**David Barrett** 43:35

It's pretty straightforward, really, that, you know, you've got to the end of an afternoon or a morning, and you know, people have walked in at the beginning of that, that morning or afternoon feeling really worried feeling really scared. And they've, they've not even able to be able to sit near each other. And by the end of that, that meeting, there, you can see the relief on the face that they've actually worked. I was what the problem is. They might not be getting on as best friends but the relief, you can see the whole body language changes. They've worked through it. The worst time as a mediator is when someone walks away and never comes back because you feel a failure. No, you're probably not that probably would have happened, but you just can't. But the person just feels that they can stay with it. That's challenging. So that's the best it can be the best and the worst of times, I think.

**Nadine Powrie** 44:36

yeah, yeah. And how do you manage differences of opinions?

**David Barrett** 44:43

I think it depends on what it is. A technique that I use quite a lot is just saying out loud; what I'm seeing. So I'm not commenting on what I see here is two people that when they talk One is talking over the other, and the other one is raising their voice. And that is causing a problem. I don't know what you think, guys, but that's what I'm seeing. So I'm just very, very politely and clearly explaining what I'm seeing.

**Nadine Powrie** 45:17

And does it work?

**David Barrett** 45:18

Yeah, it can do. Yeah, it can. So I think you have to be flexible. Another technique that I might use is just to stop the whole thing, split people up, and go and have a chat. Yeah. So there's, you know, it's kind of mixing and matching. And, you know, mediation can be, I think often people think you come into the room, you're in the room, and you're chatting, bla bla, bla, bla, bla bla. But actually, it can be particularly with very, very tough, and it can be very what I call starts stopped. So you know, you'll do 15 minutes, and it's kind of going a bit wobbly, so you stop everything, take people outside can't be without having a bit of a chat. Cue people up, get their head straight, bring him back in. And that's what takes the time. But it is about allowing the person to have space where they can process what's being said. And I think what's really powerful is when the people are together, you can actually see the dynamic. And your job as a mediator is to get them to the point where they can see the dynamic. And as a coach, often you're in this position, weigh and see exactly what the person needs to do. Yes. But you can't tell them no.

**Nadine Powrie** 46:37

Yeah, yeah, it's enough, isn't it?

46:40

Yeah, it's the art of as my mother would say, of keeping you trap shut.

**Nadine Powrie** 46:46

And you I mean, obviously, you've been in business for a number of years. What legacy do you have? Did you want to have as a mediator?

**David Barrett** 46:55

That's a great question. I guess I would like to be known, the legacy I would like to leave is that the people I've worked with have felt that that's really helped them. It's really made a difference in their lives. And I think that that's the first bit. But the other bit that's really important to me is that they're kind of able to pass on the habit, you know, I think often conflict is a real opportunity to learn about yourself. If people can do that, and be different and pass that on to others, and that that's a great thing to do for people, I think.

**Nadine Powrie** 47:39

So Dave, if, if people want to contact you because they really like listening to what you've said today on the podcast, what do they do? How can they? How can they get in touch?

**David Barrett** 47:50

LinkedIn is probably the best way at the moment because my website is not up and running; that was a COVID mistake and decided to take it down while COVID was ongoing because we thought that'd be a really quiet time to get it or get a new website out and read it. And then, of course, it's gone very busy. And the website stayed as a landing page with not very much on it. OK, do you like to see the sea?

**Nadine Powrie** 48:15

I love it. I think it's very calming. Actually, I was looking at it wondering, and I was just actually waiting for something to happen because I can't look at the sea for more than one minute. I mean, it's very nice and very calming. So I saw it was about Zen meditation for me for a few minutes. And then I realized, of course, that she was it was being built so that it's very nice. I like the colours. And yeah, I'll think about how we might use that, then that's really helpful feedback

**David Barrett** 48:49

So LinkedIn, or just, so the web page is set up to take, you know, people to get in touch. So that's www.turningmoment.co.uk. OK, they found on LinkedIn. Just look me up. And I'll get back to people. I don't always get back to people straight away. Apologies. But I will get back to you.

**Nadine Powrie** 49:11

So you did get back to me very quickly. It was like a few hours, right. Yeah. You're good. Thanks. Thanks. So thanks so much, Dave, for you know, it's been a pleasure meeting you and talking about mediation and coaching, and you know what my passion is about. So it's great to meet people who are thinking in the same way. So thank you so much, Dave. Thanks.

**David Barrett** 49:36

Take care.