

# Tamar Meeks

## Two **Golden** Rules

By Dan Baldwin

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"I want to be able to give people the time and the attention they need to feel good about the resolution," says Tamar Meeks of Tamar Meeks Mediation.

Meeks earned a bachelor's degree in social work from Texas Christian University, graduating with honors, she earned her Juris Doctor from Southern Methodist University School of Law. After graduating from law school she did primarily insurance defense for 12 years. She switched to plaintiffs' work and then moved into mediating. She started her own law firm in 2000.

Her career includes trial work from both sides, which has provided invaluable experience and knowledge for serving her current mediation clients.

"I always thought I'd be good at mediation because of both parts of my personality – the trial lawyer and the counselor in me from the social work days. It always seemed to me it would be a good fit. I feel like a lot of what I do employs my counseling skills," she says.

Meeks' professional philosophy is shaped by two principles. "Two things guide me. Always integrity. It's like they always say, do the right thing even when nobody is watching. And the Golden rule. Treat people the way you want to be treated."

Education is an important element of her client service. She educates the involved parties, emphasizing the greater control they have with mediation compared to other stages of litigation. "I tell them what they will be allowed to talk about at trial and what they won't, who could possibly be sitting on that jury, and so on. I think by the end of mediation we've reached a resolution they can be happy with and feel good about as opposed to going to trial."

Meeks says that mediators often say that at the end of the day a successful mediation is when no one leaves happy. The defendant will have to pay more money and the plaintiff will have to accept less money than they want just to get the mediation done.

"I hate that philosophy. I've been mediating 17 years and I've

never said that. I don't believe that. At the end of the mediation everyone should feel pretty good about it. In all honesty, I believe that most people are pretty happy when the case gets settled and they're headed out the door. They feel like they've done as well as they can, that it's been fair, however they want to define it. I don't think people leave disgusted and turned off by the process. I feel once I lead them through an educational process about litigation that ultimately they do feel pretty good," she says.

Meeks measures success partly by what she calls, "the long goodbye" at the door. "When clients leave, but stop to shake hands and visit at the door, they're not leaving with negative emotional baggage or bad feelings. They feel good enough to linger as they leave and that's another sign of success to me."

Meeks is originally from Indianapolis, Indiana. After coming to Texas for college, she stayed to make the state her home. She and her husband, Evan, have two daughters, ages sixteen and eighteen. Meeks enjoys the outdoors and athletics, especially golf and biking. She enjoys travelling with her family, including an annual trip to Seaside, Florida. She looks forward to many trips to Boulder, Colorado during the next four years where her daughter will be attending college. "I enjoy everything having to do with homes, including gardening, watching HGTV, decorating and shopping for real estate," she says

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