

# ADR Skill of the Month

## “Direct – Honest – Respectful”

Successful communication and effective Alternative Dispute Resolution is an art more than a science, so good ideas can come in many forms and from many sources. From the start I have emphasized that good ADR is not about me but rather about building a culture throughout the SELPA. One of the ways we’ve been accomplishing this is via our Southwest SELPA Alternative Dispute Resolution Skill Recognition Award.

The award is an opportunity for our distinct community to spotlight an individual who has a tool (technique) that has been successful in preventing conflict situations – or for positively working through them. Accordingly, the credit for this Skill of the Month goes to Principal Pat Corwin of Ridgecrest Intermediate School in the Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District. I don’t otherwise know Mr. Corwin, as he was nominated by a colleague. Nonetheless I gladly get to learn from him and will add his skill to my “tool kit.” I hope many of you will do the same.

We all know that “three little words” can mean a lot. That’s certainly true of Pat Corwin’s potent professional mantra: “Direct – Honest – Respectful” which he has posted in his school’s meeting room. Those are watchwords to live by on any campus or district, don’t you think?

Of course it may take time and care to build the trust and safety necessary for us to be **direct** and maybe even **honest**... although being **respectful** is a worthy approach right from the start. Before being direct, consider the perspective(s) of those you are engaging (see the previous Skill of the Month about *Understanding Interests*) and make sure you’ve taken time to ask questions (another previous Skill) and to actively listen (yes, another previous Skill.) For that matter, a refresher on the Skill about “*I*” Messages could be useful here too. Directness and honesty frequently work best after groundwork!

I am not sure how Pat Corwin instills and leads the culture of “Direct-Honest-Respectful” at his school but obviously his nomination for the ADR award suggests that he is doing it wonderfully. Congratulations, Mr. Corwin and thank you for allowing the Southwest SELPA community to learn from you.

**Marc Purchin, Director of ADR Services**

### Suggested Tips on Practicing This Skill

1. Review and practice some of the aforementioned previous Skill of the Month topics. You’ll find them at [www.swselpa.org](http://www.swselpa.org).
2. Think of a tough situation and make a list of ways you can address it by being more “Direct – Honest – Respectful.”

**Nominating someone for the Alternative Dispute Resolution Award is as easy as 1-2-3.** Remember, we all learn from each other and it’s a great feeling to be recognized. So, either through the website or by e-mailing me, simply provide: **1)** The name of the person to be recognized; **2)** That person’s district/school; **3)** A brief description of the situation and the techniques/tools effectively used by this person.

Southwest SELPA

Alternative Dispute  
Resolution Services  
(ADR)

- Mediation
- Training
- Coaching
- Facilitation

November 2010

For more information or  
to utilize ADR services,  
contact:

**Marc Purchin**  
**SW\_adr@lcoe.edu**

**310.546.1834 x 229**  
310-202-1155 Home Office

[www.swselpa.org](http://www.swselpa.org)