



Atlantic Book Review

Mediation Survivor's Handbook by Peg Nichols

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Not listed

Non-Fiction

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Rating: 4 Stars.

I've never been to mediation, but if I have to go or want to go, I'm prepared now that I've read *Mediation Survivors Handbook* by Peg Nichols. The title says it all: this book wants to prepare you for mediation, whatever your specific situation is. It's a quick read with eleven short chapters, and that's good, because chances are, the reader is going to be picking this book up after they've been assigned to go to mediation by a court or if they're thinking about going on a voluntary basis.

Organization is critical in handbooks and this one comes through. The eleven chapters are well-organized and always convey an attitude of wanting to help you survive something that's not really so bad after all. I admit that I thought mediation would be a nightmare, but after reading the book, it sounds like finding an experienced mediator, getting the appropriate documents written up, and staying calm is most of the journey. Of course, the author tells you that it's all about your specific situation.

The book covers everything from divorce mediation, victim/offender mediation, and even mediation for school children. It discusses how to act, what to say, how much it will all cost (you might be surprised), and confidentiality practices among mediators in various parts of the country (again, you might just be surprised).

Definitions are provided in sidebars for scary terms like impasse, caucus, and civil dispute resolution. "Roadmaps" are given along the way to let you know how far along you've come, how much further you've got to go, and just to give you a break from the legal jargon. The author even includes a checklist near the end. If you're getting ready for mediation, do yourself a huge favor and pick up a copy of this handbook.

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