THE SECRET MAJORITY

Family Mediaton

Understanding the Process, What to Expect, & How We Can Support You

THE SECRET MAJORITY

Welcome

Separation and family change can feel so overwhelming, really uncertain, and emotionally exhausting.

Mediation offers a structured and supportive space to help you move forward and reduced conflict.

This booklet explains:

What mediation is (and isn't)
The step-by-step process
What makes our approach different
The services we offer to support you

Our aim is to help you feel informed, safe, and prepared before you begin.



Meet Our Mediator

Dr Nina Francis

Academic Psychologist, Coach & Family Mediator

I'm Nina, Founder of The Secret Majority and an academic psychologist coach and Resolution-trained "All Issues" mediator working towards accreditation.

Through mediation I support people to reach agreements on issues including arrangements for children and financial matters.

I'm particularly interested in what sits underneath our decisions; our emotions, experiences, and the meaning we make of what's happening, often without realising it. These can have a powerful impact during separation, when communication and decision-making can feel especially difficult.

My approach is calm and integrity led. I combine psychological insight with emotional understanding to help people feel clearer, more understood, and supported as they move through change.



nina@thesecretmajority.co.uk

What is Family Mediation?

Family mediation is a voluntary process that helps separating couples discuss and make decisions about the arrangements that need to be put in place for their future. This often includes matters relating to children, finances, and practical arrangements following separation.



Mediation is focused on resolution and on helping you both look forward, rather than remaining stuck in conflict or the past. It provides a structured space where difficult conversations can take place with support, clarity, and balance.

Importantly, decisions are never imposed. Neither of you can be compelled to agree to anything. Instead, you are encouraged to explore options, discuss ideas, and find arrangements that work for your specific situation.

Above all, mediation is about helping you both to hear each other, better understand what is driving each person's needs and requests, and work towards reaching practical, workable agreements. Because when this is the focus, you are supported in making decisions that minimise the impact of separation on your children and help create stability and security for them moving forward.

There are different models of mediation, and one or more may be appropriate depending on your circumstances. It can be helpful to explore these options with your solicitor or with your chosen mediator so that the approach best fits your unique needs.

Mediators do not give legal advice or make decisions for you. However, they can provide legal information, explain options others have considered, and offer neutral guidance and signposting to help you make informed choices.

Types of Mediation?

Traditional

One mediator works with a couple/the participants in person or virtually. We all sit together and explore the areas that both of you want to discuss.

Solicitor Inclusive

Each person has their lawyer, or third-party professionals with them. The professional can have as much or little involvement in the discussion as fees right for that person.

Hybrid

This model is particularly suitable for complex or high-conflict cases. The mediator can hold confidences and can only share what is permitted. Lawyer can attend to support clients.

Shuttle

Usually in cases where it is not appropriate for parties to mediate face-to-face. They will be in separate rooms (in person or virtually), and the mediator will move between them.

Child-Inclusive Mediation

Where possible and agreed, the mediator or another agreed and suitable professional will meet with the children to better understand their experience, wishes and feelings. And, with permission, and feedback to the parents.

Co-Mediation

Two mediators working together as a team, often with different backgrounds to complement each other i.e. therapeutic or financial.

What can you expect?

Before we start

We offer a free 30-minute introductory call with each of you. Here we can answer any questions about the process itself or about getting started. It is important you both speak to the proposed mediators so you get a 'feel' for whether they are a 'good fit' for you both.

Step 1 – MIAM (Mediation Information Assessment Meeting)

This is an initial meeting between each person individually and the mediator. This is a confidential meeting where the mediator will explain the mediation process together with other non-court dispute resolution options. We will also explore your circumstances and what you'd like to achieve from mediation and determine whether mediation is suitable. It's a safe space to ask questions and consider mediation before committing to moving forward.

Step 2 – Joint mediation sessions

The number of mediation sessions is unique to each couple, and so the process is flexible. However, the mediation process usually takes between 3-6 sessions. Mediation sessions are booked for 2 hours. If your session finishes earlier, the cost of any unused time will be credited towards your next session or refunded if it is your final session.

Step 3 – Reaching decisions

Reaching decisions is an important part of the mediation process. Mediation supports you in exploring options, discussing what matters most to each of you, and working towards practical, workable agreements that feel manageable and realistic for the future. The focus is on finding solutions that help you move forward, rather than remaining stuck in past conflict.

Step 4 - Next steps

Once agreements have been reached in mediation, you may choose to formalise them legally. Your mediator can prepare a written summary of the proposals discussed, which can then be taken to a solicitor for independent legal advice and, if appropriate, made legally binding through the court.

Questions

Is mediation a legal requirement?

In many cases, yes. Before applying to court for decisions about finances or child arrangements, you are usually expected to attend a Mediation Information and Assessment Meeting (MIAM).

Do we need to get along to start mediation?

No. Many couples come to mediation when communication feels difficult or has broken down completely.

What happens if we can't agree?

Mediation helps you explore options and understand each other's perspectives more clearly. While not every situation leads to full agreement, many couples find they are able to make more progress than they expected. If agreement isn't possible, you can still pursue other routes, including legal advice or court.

Can mediation work if communication is very difficult?

Yes. In fact, this is often when mediation is most helpful.
The process provides structure, pacing, and support to help manage difficult conversations. Where needed, sessions can be adapted—for example, using shuttle mediation, where you are in separate spaces.

Do we still need a solicitor?

Mediation and legal advice often work alongside each other.
You may choose to seek legal advice during or after mediation, particularly when formalising any agreements.

What can mediation help us decide?

Mediation can support decisions around:

- Finances (property, savings, debts)
- Child arrangements
- Ongoing financial support
- Living arrangements
- Communication and co-parenting



Questions

Will the mediator take sides?

No. The mediator is neutral and does not take sides or make decisions for you. Their role is to support both of you equally, helping create a space where constructive conversations and fair decisions can take place.

What if there is a power imbalance between us?

This is something we carefully assess at the beginning.
Mediation can be adapted to support balance—for example, through pacing, structure, or shuttle mediation. In some cases, mediation may not be appropriate, and alternative support will be discussed.

Is mediation suitable in cases of domestic abuse?

Safety is always the priority.
Mediation is not suitable in all situations involving abuse or coercion. This is something explored carefully during the initial meeting, and if mediation isn't appropriate, you will be supported to consider other options.

What happens after mediation?

If you reach agreements, these can be written up clearly.
You may then choose to take them to a solicitor to be made legally binding.
Some couples feel reassured simply having a clear, shared understanding to move forward.

Why choose mediation instead of court?

Mediation allows you to:

- Stay in control of decisions
- Reduce conflict and stress
- Move forward more quickly
- Find solutions tailored to your lives

Court processes can be longer, more expensive, and decisions are made by a judge rather than by you.



What Makes Our Approach Different

Mediation is not just a process—it is a human experience.

Our approach integrates current psychological knowledge, innovative communication stratergies, and emotional understanding to support better outcomes.

Psychology-Informed Practice

We understand that separation is not only legal—it is emotional, relational, and often identity-shifting.

We work with:

- Emotional responses and triggers
- Decision-making under stress
- Patterns of communication
- The impact of uncertainty and loss

Emotionally Intelligent Mediation

We do not ignore emotion—we work with it safely and constructively.
This helps:

- Reduce escalation and reactivity
- Improve clarity in decision-making
- Support calmer communication
- Create space for better long-term agreements

Human-Centred Support

We recognise that this is not just a legal process—it is a life transition.
We bring:

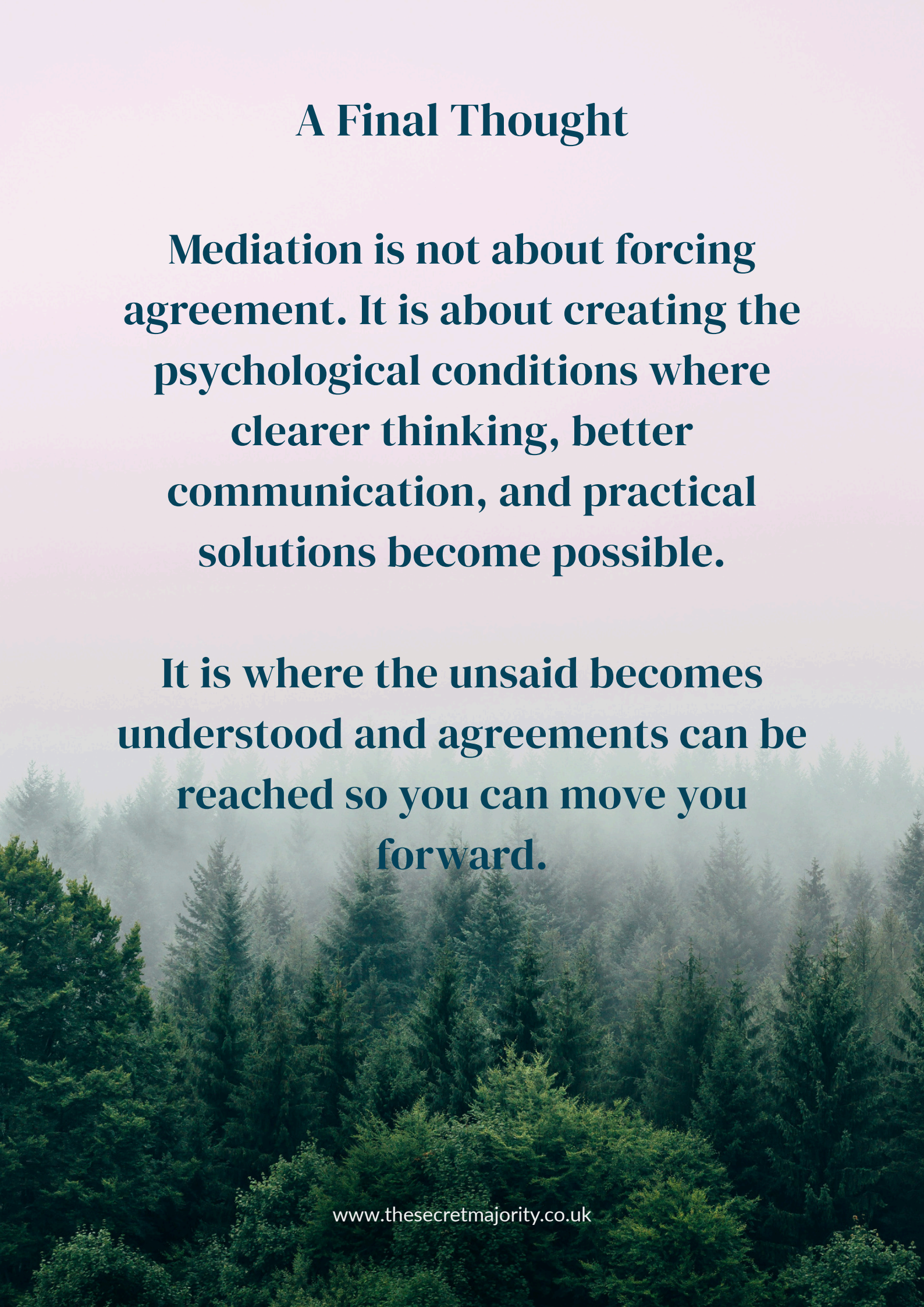
- Calm structure
- Compassion without bias
- Clear communication
- Grounded, practical guidance

www.thesecretmajority.co.uk

A Final Thought

Mediation is not about forcing agreement. It is about creating the psychological conditions where clearer thinking, better communication, and practical solutions become possible.

It is where the unsaid becomes understood and agreements can be reached so you can move you forward.



CONTACT US



THE SECRET MAJORITY

resolution associate

www.thesecretmajority.co.uk

nina@thesecretmajority.co.uk