

Struggling With Whether to Start Mediation? — A Worksheet

There's no wrong way to fill this out, and no one's reading it but you — unless you choose to bring it to a consultation. Part of you might already lean one way. Part of you might have real doubts. Both can be true at once.

This worksheet is private. There is no way for Laura, or anyone else, to see what you type here — nothing is transmitted or saved anywhere online. If you'd like to keep your answers, print this page or save your own copy as a PDF before you close the window. Otherwise, whatever you type here disappears when you're done.

1. Name what's true right now

What's happening that's made you even look at this page?

If nothing changes, what does six months from now probably look like?

2. The honest ledger

There's no “correct” number of items in either column. Some people fill the left side quickly and struggle with the right. Others are the opposite. Both are normal.

Reasons this might be worth exploring

Reasons to stay unsure, wait, or say no

3. Look back at your own words

The words we use without thinking often carry more truth than the sentences we plan out. A “should” can quietly mean someone else's voice, not yours. A “but” can mean you've already decided which side of a thought to believe, even if you haven't said so out loud. Reading your own words back can show you something you already know but haven't quite heard yet.

Read back what you just wrote above, and try this:

- Circle every “and.” Those are the places you're holding two true things at once, without picking a winner.
- Underline “but,” “though,” “although,” or “while.” Those often quietly discount whatever came right before them.

- Put a box around “should” or “have to.” That’s often someone else’s voice, not necessarily yours.
- Put a star next to “want” or “would like.” That’s closer to your own reasons.

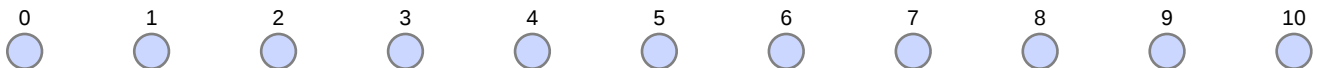
There’s no right pattern here — this isn’t a test of how ready you are. It’s just a way of seeing your own thinking more clearly.

What did you notice, once you looked back?

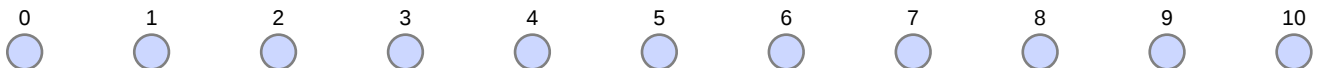
4. Two honest numbers

On a scale of 0–10, how important does resolving this feel to you right now?

0 = not important at all — 10 = as important as anything in my life



On a scale of 0–10, how confident are you that mediation specifically — versus doing nothing, versus a lawyer-led process — is the right fit for your situation?



If your two numbers are far apart — say, importance is high but confidence is low — that’s not a contradiction. That’s exactly what ambivalence looks like, and it’s worth naming out loud, even just to yourself.

Why that number and not a lower one?

What would need to be true for that number to go up by even one point?

5. Where does this leave you?

Read the three descriptions below. You don’t have to match one exactly — just notice which sounds closest to where you actually are right now.

“I still feel stuck, and I’m not sure why.”

That’s real information, not a failure to figure this out on your own. Some people find it helps to think this through out loud with a neutral person — a consultation with a mediator, a session with a coach, or a conversation with a therapist can all do that, depending on what kind of “stuck” it is. You don’t have to know which one before you reach out.

☐ This sounds closest to me.

“I think I’m leaning somewhere, but I’m not fully sure.”

That’s a reasonable place to be before deciding anything. Bringing this worksheet to a consultation — yours or anyone’s — can help you think out loud about what’s still unclear, without committing you to a path.

☐ This sounds closest to me.

“Honestly, reading this back, I think I already know my answer.”

If that's true, the next right step isn't more reflection — it's whatever the smallest concrete action is that matches what you already know. A call. A conversation with your co-parent or partner. Scheduling something. You don't need permission to act on what you already know.

☐ This sounds closest to me.

Whichever one sounds like you, that's the right place to start from — not the one that sounds most impressive.

6. If you're still unsure

That's allowed. If you're carrying worries you haven't said out loud — about being judged, about what you're agreeing to, about whether the other person can be trusted in this process — that's common, and it doesn't mean something is wrong with your situation.

Whatever you choose, it's yours to choose.