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NEUTRAL NEWS YOU CAN USE

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Getting to Yes We Can: What the Presidential Election means for dispute resolution

Twenty-seven years since the publication of *Getting to Yes*, (Fisher & Ury 1981), we have a President-elect whose campaign was based on the slogan of “*Yes We Can.*” Several lessons about dispute resolution that emerged from this unprecedented American election come right from the pages of *Getting to Yes*, a book that must have made an impression on Barack Obama when he was a student at Harvard. First, “separate the people from the problem.” Obama attacked policy, not people, frustrating some who said he did not fight back hard enough when he was personally attacked. Ultimately, however, the electorate favored a positive message over the negative. Second, Obama emphasized objective standards and evidence to support his policies, not gut instinct or stubborn certitude alone. Third, Obama’s decision-making strategy is based on generating a variety of possibilities before deciding what to do. As he said in his acceptance speech, “I will listen to you, especially when we disagree.” Finally, both candidates demonstrated the importance of personal narrative: telling the people over and over again, who they are and where they came from – personal stories so compelling that together they got over 117 million people to close the deal with an exercise of the precious right to vote. Let all who are interested in dispute resolution learn from the campaign how to get to yes.

Ruth Raisfeld provides alternative dispute resolution services including mediation, arbitration, workplace investigations and training. She can be contacted through her website at www.rdradr.com or at rdradr@optonline.net or 914.722.6006. This newsletter is for informational and promotional purposes and does not constitute legal advice or establish an attorney-client relationship. If you wish to unsubscribe to this newsletter, please contact Ruth. ATTORNEY ADVERTISING