The Art of Not Destroying: Mediation, Meditation, and Medication as Practices of Peace

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100600184

Received: 28 May 2026; Accepted: 03 June 2026; Published: 19 June 2026

ABSTRACT

This paper offers a theoretical and interpretive analysis of the relationship between mediation, meditation, and medication, understood as three distinct practices united by a common prudential framework: intervening in a fracture without dominating, hardening, or aggravating it. Mediation is considered primarily in civil and commercial contexts, where it functions as a procedure for preventing, managing, and resolving disputes, grounded in party self-determination, decision-making responsibility, and, in its facilitative form, interest-based negotiation techniques. Meditation is examined as a discipline of the practitioner's presence, with particular reference to aikido as founded by Ueshiba Morihei, the ki-aikido of Tohei Koichi, and the pedagogical developments of Giuseppe Ruglioni. Medication and wound care are taken as paradigms of prudent intervention through the principle of *primum non nocere*, galenic formulation, pharmaceutical regulation, and the example of compounded cannabis-based preparations for medical use.

The thesis advanced is deliberately limited. Mediating, meditating, and medicating do not constitute a single disciplinary paradigm, nor should legal conflict be spiritualized or medicalized. Rather, they are treated as analogous practices under the profile of responsible intervention: listening before acting, calibrating tools, respecting vulnerability, avoiding secondary harm, monitoring effects, and fostering concrete conditions for rebalancing. The paper also links this perspective to the concept of Positive Peace developed by the Institute for Economics and Peace and promoted, including through its partnership with Rotary International, as a systemic framework for conflict prevention and for the development of the social, institutional, and economic conditions that make peace sustainable.

Keywords: civil and commercial mediation; interest-based negotiation; transformative mediation; aikido; ki-aikido; misogi; mindfulness; galenics; medical cannabis; primum non nocere; Positive Peace; Institute for Economics and Peace; Rotary International; Global Peace Index.

INTRODUCTION

Mediation, meditation, and medication belong, at least in appearance, to three separate domains. Mediation refers to the prevention and resolution of disputes; meditation involves the discipline of attention, breathing, and self-control; medication and wound care belong to the language of remedy, dosage, and prudent treatment. However, if considered not in terms of their phonetic proximity but in terms of their anthropological function, these three practices share a common structure: all address a rupture, and all raise the question of the extent and appropriateness of intervention.

In mediation, the fracture concerns the relationship between people, businesses, groups, or institutions. In meditation, the fracture concerns the subject themselves, often torn between impulse and discernment, reaction and awareness, aggression and presence. In medication and wound care, the fracture is more immediately physical: a wound, an injury, a suffering that requires protection, cleansing, dosage, monitoring, and time. In each case, intervention is necessary, but it can become harmful if carried out without competence, proportion, and prudence.

This fact takes on particular significance for legal practitioners involved in the prevention, management, and resolution of civil and commercial disputes. In litigation between economic, professional, or contractual parties, the conflict is never merely an abstract divergence of claims. It involves expectations, trust, reputation, relationship continuity, transaction costs, perceptions of fairness, and risk assessments. Civil and commercial mediation situates the dispute in this intermediate space: it does not deny the law, but prevents the law from being used solely as a language of offense; it does not replace adjudication, but allows the parties to weigh adjudication against other possibilities for regulating the relationship.

The available literature does not currently offer a systematic and unified treatment of the triad "mediation, meditation, and medication". There are, however, contiguous theoretical nuclei: studies on mediation and interest-based negotiation; literature on mindfulness applied to mediator neutrality; reflections on aikido as an art of non-destructive conflict transformation; the do no harm doctrine in conflict management and peacebuilding; and pharmacological and regulatory sources on galenic preparation and compounded cannabis-based preparations for medical use. This contribution, therefore, does not aim to reconstruct an already established school but to propose a theoretical framework useful for interpreting these three practices as tools for concrete peace.

Method, Scope, and Limits of the Study

The work is theoretical and interpretive, not empirical. No original data, interviews, questionnaires, or experimental results are presented. The study consists of a reasoned comparison of sources from different fields: the theory of mediation, negotiation, and conflict transformation; the philosophy and practice of aikido; reflection on the mediator's inner presence; the medical humanities and medical ethics; the galenic pharmacopeia; the regulation of medical cannabis; and studies on Positive Peace.

Although the study does not rely on empirical data in the strict sense, it is not detached from professional practice. It is informed by the author's situated experience as a civil and commercial mediator, as a practitioner of meditation and Ki-Aikido, and as a trainer in mediation courses for civilian and military personnel operating in contexts related to galenic production and the processing of cannabis for therapeutic purposes. The author's membership in Rotary International and service as a Rotary Positive Peace Activator also provide a practical vantage point on the relationship among mediation, conflict prevention, and the broader institutional framework of Positive Peace.

This professional background does not function as evidence capable of replacing empirical validation. Rather, it explains the origin and practical orientation of the inquiry. The article should therefore be read as a practice-informed theoretical essay: its analogies are not derived from statistical measurement or fieldwork, but from the reflective comparison of different domains of intervention in which prudence, calibration, non-reactivity, and harm prevention play a central role.

The primary scope is that of civil and commercial mediation. This choice does not imply that the proposed analogies cannot also be relevant in family, criminal, community, or international mediation; it simply means that the primary vantage point is that of the legal practitioner called upon to handle disputes between autonomous parties, often assisted by attorneys, engaged in economic or contractual relationships, and interested not only in the assertion of a right but also in risk management and the preservation, where possible, of a useful relationship.

A first limitation must be clarified. The analogy between mediation and medical treatment does not authorize the transformation of the mediator into a therapist. Conflict is not a pathology, and the mediator is not a doctor. The healthcare metaphor serves, rather, to highlight the responsibility of the intervention. Just as in treating a wound, so too in managing a dispute, one must assess timing, dosage, the risk of side effects, and the ability of the person involved to participate in their own recovery.

A second limitation concerns meditation and aikido. It is not claimed that the practice of meditation or martial arts automatically makes a mediator better. It is argued, more cautiously, that certain practices of presence, breathing, and self-control may offer the conflict practitioner a discipline of non-reactivity. In this sense, aikido,

ki-aikido, and misogi are not treated here as esoteric or decorative objects, but as an experiential lexicon useful for describing a professional competence: the ability to remain centered in the presence of others 'aggression.

A third limitation concerns the risk of metaphorical overextension. The analogies proposed in this paper are heuristic rather than ontological. They do not imply that conflict is a disease, that mediation is a clinical treatment, or that spiritual practices can replace legal, procedural, and ethical training. Their function is more limited: to illuminate the prudential structure of intervention in situations of vulnerability.

Civil and Commercial Mediation as a Legal Practice of Relation

Civil and commercial mediation can be defined as a procedure in which an impartial third party, lacking the power to decide, assists the parties in seeking a voluntary agreement. This definition, traditionally accepted in international literature, retains its utility because it distinguishes mediation from adjudication and arbitration: the judge decides, the arbitrator decides, the mediator facilitates a decision-making process by others. (1)

This structural fact is decisive. In mediation, the power remains with the parties. The mediator does not assign blame or determine right and wrong, does not definitively assign liability, and does not impose a solution. Instead, the mediator creates the conditions so that the parties can return to examining the problem in a sufficiently orderly, realistic, and non-purely reactive manner. Moore describes the mediator precisely as a third party who controls the process, not the outcome, and who helps the participants identify viable negotiation options without supplanting their self-determination. (2)

In civil and commercial contexts, this characteristic takes on particular significance. A dispute between two companies over a breach of contract can be treated as a simple claim for payment, but it may also reveal more complex issues: delays in the supply chain, communication breakdowns, disagreements over technical specifications, liquidity issues, the need to preserve a supplier relationship, or, conversely, the need to exit it without further damage. A court ruling can determine who is right on a specific claim; mediation can explore what future arrangement is sustainable for both parties.

A practical example may clarify this point. Consider a dispute between a manufacturing supplier and a retail distributor concerning delayed deliveries, alleged defects, penalty clauses, and the possible termination of a long-standing supply agreement. A purely adjudicative approach would tend to isolate the legal questions: breach, causation, damages, and enforceability of penalties. A mediative approach may include those questions but also examine inventory pressures, reputational risks, future orders, cash-flow constraints, technical adjustments, and the possibility of a phased performance plan. In such a case, mediation does not replace legal assessment; it broadens the decision-making field by allowing the parties to compare the value of a legal victory with the value of relational, commercial, and operational continuity.

The doctrine of interest-based negotiation, developed within the Harvard Negotiation Project, offers a fundamental reference point here. The classic teachings of Fisher, Ury, and Patton encourage separating people from the problem, focusing on interests rather than positions, generating options before deciding, and seeking objective criteria. Applied to civil and commercial mediation, this approach allows the mediator to transform a distributive confrontation—"how much do I pay," "how much do I receive," "who is right"—into a broader process of clarifying the real interests. (3)

Mediation, however, is not a uniform model. In a previous contribution, Types of Mediations, I highlighted the plurality of mediative forms, which can also be distinguished by areas of intervention, the mediator's approach, and the time frame. This observation is essential: speaking of mediation in the singular risks obscuring a family of diverse practices, which may operate before, during, or after the outbreak of a dispute; in a preventive, managerial, or settlement capacity; with greater or lesser evaluative intensity; and in commercial, social, family, institutional, or international contexts. (4)

Complementarily, Riskin's grid allows us to interpret mediators 'orientations along two axes: on the one hand, the degree of facilitation or evaluation in the intervention; on the other, the narrower or broader definition of the problem. The value of this approach lies not only in the classification of professional styles but in the awareness

that every methodological choice affects the parties 'perceptions, their degree of autonomy, and the quality of the decision-making process. (5)

Within the framework proposed here, facilitative mediation appears to be the model most consistent with the idea of peace as the preservation of the relationship. This is not because it is always superior to other models, but because it best expresses the logic of non-substitutive intervention. The facilitative mediator does not prejudge the outcome, does not immediately formulate solutions, and does not turn the session into disguised counseling. The mediator helps the parties understand the problem, recognize their own and others 'interests, evaluate alternatives and risks, and develop realistic options.

This does not mean denying the usefulness of evaluative mediation, transformative mediation, court-connected mediation, or hybrid forms such as med-arb and arb-med. In some contexts, especially when the parties desire an assessment of litigation risk or a technical evaluation of the sustainability of their respective positions, a more evaluative approach can serve a useful purpose. However, from the perspective of relational peace, evaluative intervention must be handled with particular caution: if premature or poorly calibrated, it risks shifting the decision-making center from the parties to the mediator. (6)

The transformative model of Bush and Folger offers a further element to this reflection. It does not reduce the success of mediation to the conclusion of an agreement, but emphasizes the possibility that the parties may regain decision-making power and the capacity for mutual recognition. Empowerment and recognition thus become categories that are not merely psychological, but deeply legal-relational: they demonstrate that conflict is not merely a divergence of interests, but also a crisis in the ability to interact with the other without reducing them to an obstacle, a threat, or an enemy. (7)

Civil and commercial mediation, therefore, is not a lesser form of justice. It is a different procedural technology. Its function is not to replace the law, but to make a shared decision possible where an authoritative decision is not the only useful outcome, or is not the most rational outcome relative to the overall costs of the dispute.

Mediation, Collective Memory, and Historical Cases of Reconciliation

The analogy between mediation and peacebuilding cannot be understood solely through the lens of private disputes. It is also illuminated by historical experiences in which the fractured relationship is not between two parties, but between groups, peoples, institutions, and collective memories. These examples should not be confused with civil and commercial mediation in the technical sense; however, they help us understand the profound function of mediation as the construction of a space in which speech prevents the wound from becoming destiny.

These examples are not invoked as technical equivalents of civil or commercial mediation. They are better understood as functional analogies: institutional practices in which a third space is created to prevent the relationship from fracturing and being governed exclusively by violence, revenge, denial, or adjudicative finality. Their relevance is therefore conceptual, not procedural.

The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission represents, in this sense, a paradigmatic case. It was not mediation in the ordinary procedural sense, but constituted an institutional mechanism for listening, narration, recognition, and accountability, aimed at addressing human rights violations from the apartheid era without reducing the political transition to revenge or repression. Its value, for the topic at hand, does not lie in having definitively "resolved" the South African trauma, but in having offered a public space where truth, accountability, and reconciliation could be held together without coinciding. (8)

The South African experience shows that peace is not simply the silence of conflict. Tutu expressed this insight with particular force, insisting that there can be no future without some form of forgiveness; but forgiveness, in this perspective, is not the erasure of evil, but rather the possibility of naming it without remaining imprisoned by it. (9) Gibson's studies have highlighted, through an empirical approach, the complexity of this experience, showing how public truth can contribute to reconciliation but does not automatically produce it. (10)

The 1978 Camp David diplomacy also constitutes a significant example. The agreements between Egypt and Israel, signed under the leadership of Jimmy Carter, show that international mediation requires not only negotiating skills but also institutional patience, trust-building, and the ability to balance security interests, political recognition, and symbolic needs. (11) In Quandt's diplomatic account, the Middle East peace process appears as a sequence of attempts, failures, adjustments, and reopenings, far removed from an instantaneous or purely voluntaristic conception of peace. (12)

These cases allow us to draw an initial conclusion. Mediation is a practice of peace, not because it eliminates conflict, but because it prevents it from being left exclusively to force, revenge, delegitimization, or authoritative judgment. It creates a space in which the relationship, though wounded, can be reexamined, recounted, and, if possible, reconciled.

Meditation, Aikido, and Ki-Aikido: The Mediator's Presence

Mediation is not just about the parties. It is also about the mediator. The quality of the mediator's presence affects the quality of the process. A mediator eager to wrap things up, irritated by one party, intimidated by the conflict, seduced by their own solution, or concerned with appearing effective can alter the relational space they are meant to safeguard.

The literature on mindfulness applied to mediation has recognized this point. Evan M. Rock argues that cultivating mindfulness through meditation can strengthen the mediator's ability to maintain neutrality and impartiality. Neutrality, in this perspective, is not the absence of emotions, but the ability to recognize emotions, preferences, and biases before they translate into improper procedural conduct. (13)

A similar direction emerges in Gary Friedman's work on the self-reflection of conflict professionals. Leonard Riskin's preface to Inside Out references Adam Curle's poem Mediation/Meditation, in which the proximity between mediation and meditation is not reduced to a linguistic play on words but becomes a theoretical insight: meditation frees one from the automatism of habitual responses and negative emotions, allowing for more effective mediation. (14)

The reference to mindfulness must, however, be handled with rigor. Its introduction into the discourse of mediation cannot be reduced to a generic celebration of calm. Kabat-Zinn has shown that mindfulness, in the clinical and psychological context, involves deliberate attention, in the present moment and in a non-judgmental manner; Davidson and others have also studied the effects of meditation on brain and immune functions, albeit with the necessary caution to avoid undue extrapolations from psychophysiological data to the mediator's professional competence. (15) For the mediator, the point is not to adopt meditation as therapy, but as training in non-reactivity and in observing what happens inside and outside oneself.

The reference to aikido deepens this insight. Aikido, founded by Ueshiba Morihei, originated as a martial art but developed as a discipline of non-collision. It does not deny the attack, but it does not replicate it symmetrically. It does not seek the destruction of the opponent, but the neutralization of aggression through centering, movement, perception of the direction of energy, and the transformation of force into balance. (16)

In Ueshiba's thought, at least as received in the West in The Art of Peace, martial practice is not aimed at the annihilation of the other, but at the transformation of aggressive energy and the restoration of harmony. This idea, while belonging to a cultural horizon distinct from the legal one, offers the mediator a powerful metaphor: not to respond to an attack with a counterattack, but to receive it, recognize its direction, and transform it into information useful to the process. (17)

Koichi Tohei later developed a specific branch, ki-aikido or Shin Shin Toitsu Aikido, centered on the coordination of mind and body. The official history of the Ki Society notes that Tohei, weakened as a young man by pleurisy, practiced Zen meditation and misogi breathing methods intensively to strengthen his mind and body. This fact is significant because it allows us to connect aikido, meditation, and breathing not as separate elements, but as parts of a unified discipline of presence. (18)

Giuseppe Ruglioni, in Mind-Body Unification and Ki Aikido According to the Teachings of Master Koichi Tohei and in Aikido: Harmony and Relationship. The Art of Perception in a Practice of Peace develops this tradition from an educational and relational perspective. The book descriptions explicitly highlight the centrality of Ki practice, mind-body coordination, non-collision, and harmonization in relations with the external world. This lexicon is particularly useful for the mediator: conflict is not managed by opposing rigidity with rigidity, but by learning to perceive the direction, intensity, and point of balance of the interaction. (19)

Before the meeting, breathing practice can help the mediator distinguish between technical preparation and anxious anticipation. Preparing does not mean imagining the solution in advance, but creating the inner conditions to listen to what will happen. A simple exercise—stable posture, slow breathing, attention to the body's center, suspension of immediate judgment—can reduce the impulse to immediately classify the parties as reasonable or unreasonable, collaborative or hostile.

During the meeting, the logic of ki-aikido suggests not responding to an attack with a counterattack. If one party accuses the other or challenges the mediator, the professional response is not a narcissistic defense of one's role. Rather, it is a constructive diversion: "It seems to me that this point touches on a fundamental concern; can we try to clarify it?" Or: "Before determining who is right, it may be helpful to understand what harm you fear might be repeated?" In this way, the conflictual energy is not repressed but transformed into negotiation information.

After the meeting, the practice of presence allows the mediator to avoid unconsciously carrying the emotional residue of the conflict with them. Professional decontamination is part of the skill set. Just as a doctor must distinguish between providing care and becoming emotionally entangled in the patient's suffering, so too must the mediator distinguish between empathy and emotional fusion with the parties.

Misogi and the Purification of Presence

Misogi allows us to further clarify the preparatory dimension of meditation. In the Shinto tradition, it designates a purification practice, often linked to ablution in water, aimed at freeing the body and mind from what weighs them down. In the interpretation of the Itsuo Tsuda School, misogi is also a process of awakening, lightening, and return to life. (20)

Transposed into the context of mediation, misogi should not be understood as a ritual imitation, but as an operational metaphor. The mediator enters a room—physical or virtual—where others bring anger, fear, suspicion, distrust, and sometimes a desire for revenge. If the mediator enters, in turn, burdened by a need for control, preconceived judgments, or performance anxiety, they risk adding noise to the noise. Purification, in this sense, is not a religious concept but a professional discipline: removing whatever prevents one from listening.

This perspective allows us to connect meditation and mediation in a non-ornamental way. Meditation does not serve to make the mediator "serene" in a sentimental sense; it serves to make them available, present, and capable of not reacting automatically. It acts prior to the method, because it prepares the quality of the individual who will apply the method.

Training Implications: Mindfulness, Aikido, and Non-Harm in Mediation Practice

The practical implication of this argument is not that mediators should be required to practice aikido or adopt any particular spiritual discipline. Rather, mediation training may legitimately incorporate exercises derived from mindfulness, embodied awareness, and non-reactive communication, provided that they are translated into professional, secular, and ethically accountable skills. The point is not to import a martial or spiritual authority into mediation, but to train the mediator's capacity to remain present under pressure. (21)

Such training could include short pre-session centering routines; awareness of bodily tension during high-conflict exchanges; reflective journaling after mediation; supervised role plays in which mediators practice receiving aggressive statements without defensive escalation; and structured debriefing on moments in which the mediator felt pulled toward judgment, rescue, impatience, or premature settlement. These exercises would

not replace doctrinal knowledge, procedural rules, ethics, or negotiation techniques. They would complement them by strengthening the mediator's capacity to avoid reactive intervention.

In this sense, aikido functions less as a doctrine than as a pedagogical metaphor for non-collision. The relevant professional skill is not martial performance, but the capacity to receive pressure, avoid symmetrical escalation, and redirect communicative energy toward clarification, recognition, or option generation. The same holds for the do no harm principle: it should be operationalized through practical questions asked before and during mediation. Is this question likely to open dialogue or humiliate? Is this caucus necessary or likely to generate suspicion? Is this proposal timely or likely to displace the parties 'responsibility? Is the mediator doing more because the process needs it, or because the mediator is uncomfortable with uncertainty?

Medication as Calibrated Intervention: Galenics, Dosage, and Medical Cannabis

Medication and wound care introduce a rigorous metaphor into the discourse: the care of the wound does not coincide with healing, but creates favorable conditions for healing to occur. A wound does not close simply because someone orders it to. It requires cleaning, protection, time, control of the risk of infection, and monitoring of its progress. Even a relationship wounded by conflict requires something similar: not the imposition of peace, but the establishment of procedural conditions in which the parties can stop harming one another.

The principle of *primum non nocere* is essential here. Although not a literal phrase from the Hippocratic Oath in its commonly repeated form, it expresses a fundamental ethical criterion: before intervening, one must assess whether the intervention might cause harm greater than the expected benefit. Applied to mediation, this means that not every question is appropriate, not every joint session is useful, not every proposal is timely, and not every push toward an agreement is legitimate. (22)

The do no harm methodology, developed in the fields of humanitarian aid and peacebuilding, reinforces this perspective. Mary B. Anderson has shown how even interventions motivated by positive goals can, in conflict contexts, reinforce divisions, asymmetries, and hostilities. The lesson for the mediator is clear: a third party's intervention is never neutral simply because it is well-intentioned. It alters the landscape, generates expectations, and can either restore balance or create imbalance, open up dialogue, or lead to further closure. (23)

The most recent literature on conflict sensitivity confirms this approach, emphasizing that interventions in fragile contexts must be evaluated not only for their stated objectives but for the actual effects they produce on relationships, perceptions, incentives, and asymmetries. This applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to civil and commercial mediation as well: a poorly conducted procedure can exacerbate mistrust, entrench imbalances, produce superficial agreements, or strengthen the stronger party behind a rhetoric of consensus. (24)

Galenic science offers a second, even more concrete image. A drug is not just an active ingredient. It is formulation, dosage, route of administration, compatibility, and personalization. Galenic formulation consists of transforming an active substance into a medicinal form that is usable, stable, dosable, and appropriate for its therapeutic use. (25) Similarly, in mediation, tools are not effective in the abstract. Listening, caucus, joint session, reformulation, reality testing, proposal, verbalization, document exchange, and the presence of a technical consultant all depend on the moment, the context, and the vulnerability of the relationship.

The following example is not introduced for its pharmacological specificity, but for its methodological value. Medical cannabis is useful here because it shows how a socially charged and potentially beneficial remedy becomes professionally legitimate only through indication, prescription, dosage, monitoring, and regulation. The analogy with mediation lies in this structure of disciplined use, not in the substance itself.

The available scientific evidence, as summarised in the 2017 National Academies report and discussed by Abrams, indicates areas where cannabis and cannabinoids may have significant therapeutic effects, but always within a framework of indications, limits, dosage, monitoring of effects, and assessment of the benefit-to-risk ratio. (26) The scientific debate on cannabinoids, including the topic of the so-called entourage effect, confirms the complexity of pharmacological intervention: it is not enough simply to invoke a substance; one must

understand its composition, interactions, therapeutic window, side effects, methods of administration, and individual response. (27)

In the Italian context, cannabis-based compounded preparations may be prepared in pharmacies upon medical prescription and within a regulatory framework governing production, prescription, preparation, dispensing, monitoring, and control. The Ministerial Decree of 9 November 2015 regulated the national production of cannabis-based substances and preparations of plant origin, also identifying the role of the Military Pharmaceutical Chemical Plant in Florence. (28)

The SIFO literature on compounding preparations based on cannabis clearly highlights the importance of the prescription, traceability, proper preparation, the pharmacist's responsibility, documentation, and control. (29) Here too, the analogy with mediation does not concern the therapeutic effect of the substance, but the method: a potentially useful resource must be formulated, dosed, contextualized, and verified. A mediator's proposal can break a deadlock in negotiations, but it can also harden the parties 'positions; a caucus can foster free speech, but also generate suspicions of bias; a joint session can reestablish communication, but also lead to escalation.

The medical analogy should therefore be retained only at the level of method: indication, proportionality, dosage, monitoring, and awareness of adverse effects. Beyond that level, it would become misleading. Mediation does not cure persons; it structures a process in which parties may reduce harm, recover agency, and decide whether and how a relationship can still be preserved. Medication thus teaches mediation, a rule of restraint: do not do more simply because you can. The quality of the intervention is not measured by its intensity, but by its appropriateness.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Convergences, Gaps, and an Integrated Framework

The literature review allows us to identify four main strands.

The first is that of the theory and practice of mediation. Moore, Riskin, Bush, and Folger have provided fundamental tools for understanding, respectively, the mediation process, the mediator's orientations, and the transformative dimension of conflict. These references can be complemented by Lederach and Mayer, who place conflict transformation within a broader, intercultural, social, and systemic perspective. (30)

The second strand concerns mindfulness, meditation, and the mediator's presence. Rock, Friedman, Riskin, and the more recent contribution of Sankaravel and Shekher help us see mindfulness not as an accessory element, but as a possible condition of reflexive neutrality. (31) The broader psychological and clinical literature on mindfulness, from Kabat-Zinn to Davidson, should not be used to automatically infer professional effects, but offers theoretical support for the thesis that deliberate, non-judgmental attention can improve the practitioner's capacity for internal regulation. (32)

The third strand concerns aikido, ki-aikido, and non-destructive conflict transformation. Levine has dedicated a specific chapter to the relationship between aikido and mediation in the volume AiKiDô. The Trinity of Conflict Transformation, while Cunningham has proposed the concept of "Aikidation" in a professional context as a way to receive and transform an attack without becoming part of the problem. (33) From this perspective, Ruglioni offers a particularly useful bridge between the practice of Ki, harmonization, perception, and relationship.

The fourth strand concerns medical, pharmaceutical, and galenic ethics, as well as the principle of do no harm. Shmerling, Anderson, Schmeidl, EUPATI, the FDA, the National Academies, Abrams, Russo, Bernardini, and SIFO enable the construction of a paradigm of prudence in intervention. This paradigm does not medicalize mediation but offers it a lexicon of responsibility: dosing, prescribing, monitoring, avoiding side effects, and respecting vulnerability. (34)

The contribution of this work consists of linking these strands through the category of peace as preservation. Mediation acts on the relational fracture; meditation acts on the inner fracture; medication and wound care act

on the physical fracture. All three, however, share a common logic: to intervene in such a way that what is wounded is not further destroyed.

Critical Objections and Limits of the Interdisciplinary Analogy

The interdisciplinary framework proposed in this paper is vulnerable to three main objections. The first is the risk of over-metaphorisation. Mediation, meditation, and medication do not share the same epistemology, institutional setting, or professional accountability. Mediation is a legal and relational process; meditation is a contemplative or embodied discipline; medication is a biomedical and pharmaceutical intervention. Any analogy among them must therefore remain limited and functional.

The second objection concerns the possible spiritualization of mediation. If references to aikido, ki-aikido, or misogi were understood as importing spiritual authority into legal conflict resolution, they would be inappropriate. Mediation must remain secular, voluntary, procedurally fair, and accountable to professional standards. The relevance of these practices lies not in their metaphysical assumptions, but in the professional qualities they help describe: centering, non-reactivity, attention, and disciplined restraint.

The third objection concerns the possible medicalization of conflict. A dispute is not an illness, and parties are not patients. Medical language becomes problematic when it pathologizes disagreement or places the mediator in a quasi-therapeutic position. The concept of medication is therefore useful only as a metaphor of prudence. Its contribution is to remind mediators that intervention can produce side effects, that timing and dosage matter, and that doing less may sometimes be more responsible than doing more.

These objections correspond to broader critiques within conflict resolution scholarship. Menkel-Meadow, for example, has warned against overly optimistic or uncritical theories of conflict resolution, especially when consensual processes risk concealing structural inequalities, coercion, or injustice. (35) Such critiques are not external to the present argument; they are part of its discipline. The art of not destroying is not a theory of equivalence among disciplines. It is a theory of restraint across different practices of intervention.

From Relational Peace to Positive Peace: Mediation, Rotary International, and the Institute for Economics and Peace

The idea of peace as preservation, examined thus far in relation to the dispute, the mediator's inner presence, and the prudence of intervention, can be usefully expanded through the notion of Positive Peace. This step does not alter the framework of the contribution, but strengthens its scope: mediation is not merely a technique for resolving individual conflicts between two or more parties, but also a potential social infrastructure for the prevention, early management, and transformation of differences. From this perspective, the mediator does not intervene only when the relationship has already deteriorated; together with other institutional and community actors, they can contribute to building environments in which conflict is recognized before it escalates.

The concept of Positive Peace has been developed in a particularly systematic manner by the Institute for Economics and Peace. The IEP defines positive peace as the set of attitudes, institutions, and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies; it does not, therefore, coincide with the mere absence of violence, but with the presence of social, economic, cultural, and institutional conditions conducive to fostering resilience, trust, and cooperation. (36)

The Global Peace Index offers, in this context, the best-known empirical reference. Produced by the IEP since 2007, the GPI ranks 163 states and territories, representing 99.7 percent of the world's population, and measures peace through 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators, organized into three domains: internal social security, ongoing domestic and international conflicts, and militarisation. (37) Its utility, for the discussion proposed here, lies not so much in providing rankings as in reminding us that peace is also a measurable, comparable phenomenon linked to institutional and social factors. In other words, the GPI allows us to move from peace as a moral aspiration to peace as an object of diagnosis, prevention, and public policy.

It is in this context that the partnership between the Institute for Economics and Peace and Rotary International takes on significance. Since 2017, Rotary International and the IEP have established a strategic partnership based, on the one hand, on the Institute's empirical research on positive peace and, on the other, on Rotary's community roots around the world. This collaboration has led to the development of an international network of Positive Peace Activators, individuals committed to disseminating and applying the positive peace framework in educational and community settings. (38)

The eight pillars outlined in the IEP framework—well-functioning government, sound business environment, acceptance of the rights of others, good relations with neighbors, free flow of information, high levels of human capital, low levels of corruption, and equitable distribution of resources—help explain why mediation can also be viewed as a systemic tool. Not all of these pillars strictly belong to the field of civil and commercial mediation; however, each of them implies the ability to prevent or address disputes without immediately resorting to force, polarisation, or full delegation to authoritative judgment.

The policy implications are significant. If mediation is viewed through the lens of Positive Peace, it should not be confined to court-connected procedures activated after litigation has begun. It may also be embedded in institutional complaint systems, public procurement relationships, workplace governance, schools and universities, professional associations, community organizations, and local administrations. In each of these settings, mediation can operate as an early-warning and early-dialogue mechanism: a way to identify grievances before they become claims, claims before they become disputes, and disputes before they become crises.

From this perspective, mediation contributes to Positive Peace not by eliminating disagreement, but by increasing the institutional capacity to process disagreement constructively. Its value is preventive, educational, and systemic. It strengthens trust in procedures, reduces escalation costs, and supports a culture in which conflict is treated as information about relational stress rather than merely as a failure to be punished.

This approach is developed, with specific reference to the Asia-Pacific region, in a former contribution of mine, where I argued that mediation can be viewed not only as a tool for resolving disputes, even bitter ones, but as a means of creating social conditions in which conflicts are prevented, managed early on, diffused, and transformed in a way that fosters the peaceful development of human relations. (39)

The central point is the shift from mediation as a dispute resolution technique to mediation as a vehicle for fostering conditions for human growth and prosperity. This shift requires, on the one hand, an understanding of the most effective characteristics of mediation and the application of these in contexts where conflict has not yet erupted; on the other, an understanding of peace not merely as the absence of war or violence, but as a set of optimal conditions for human potential to develop. (40)

Within the framework of this essay, this perspective allows us to give mediation a dual dimension. At the micro level, it remains a prudent practice in relationships: it intervenes in concrete conflict, safeguards the possibility of dialogue, and prevents the breakdown of the relationship. At the macro level, it becomes an institutional and community culture: it helps organizations, businesses, public bodies, associations, and local communities to establish mechanisms for listening, prevention, and early resolution. In this sense, mediation is not merely a bandage for an already existing conflict, but also a form of institutional prevention: it does not eliminate divergence, but reduces the likelihood that divergence will escalate into violence, institutional deadlock, exclusion, or breakdown of trust.

Positive Peace, therefore, broadens the scope of mediation without distorting it. It shows that every specific dispute is also a symptom of a relational ecosystem. Where institutions function, information circulates, rights are recognized, resources are distributed more equitably, and corruption is contained; conflict does not disappear, but finds non-destructive channels of expression more easily. Mediation, situated within this framework, becomes a practice of peace maintenance: it not only resolves disputes but helps create the conditions so that disputes do not escalate into systemic crises.

CONCLUSIONS

The Art of Not Destroying as a Practice of Peace

The path taken so far allows us to trace mediation, meditation, and medication back to a common framework of prudent intervention. They do not coincide, do not belong to the same discipline, and must not be artificially conflated. Mediation remains a legal, relational, and negotiation-based practice; meditation is a discipline of presence, breath, and self-governance; and medication and wound care practices of remedy, protection, and proportionate administration. However, in each of them, a common ethical core is recognizable: to intervene without destroying what one intends to preserve.

This is why the principle of *primum non nocere*, though originating in medical language, can be adopted as a cross-cutting criterion. The mediator should not harm the relationship; the mediator should not harm their own inner integrity through impulsive reaction or identification with the conflict; the medical practitioner should not harm the wounded body through disproportionate, untimely, or inadequately calibrated intervention. In all three cases, competence is not manifested in the intensity of the action, but in its measure.

Civil and commercial mediation, in particular, clearly illustrates this logic. Conflict between private parties, businesses, professionals, or institutions is never merely a divergence of legal claims. It is also a breakdown in communication, trust, the perception of fairness, and the ability to rationally evaluate alternatives. Mediation intervenes in this intermediate space, where the law retains all its importance, but does not fully satisfy the parties 'needs. It allows the dispute to be transformed from a site of confrontation into a process of clarification, accountability, and possible reconciliation.

Meditation, aikido, and ki-aikido add a decisive dimension to this perspective: the peacefulness of the process also depends on the quality of the presence of the person conducting it. The mediator is not a neutral subject because they are devoid of emotions, biases, or preferences; they are neutral, or strive for neutrality, to the extent that they can recognize these inner movements and prevent them from becoming procedural interferences. Centering, breathing, listening to the body, and the ability not to meet rigidity with rigidity are not elements foreign to the mediator's professionalism. Rather, they constitute a silent but essential component.

Finally, the concept of wound care allows us to clarify the nature of the mediation process. A wound does not heal because it is compressed, rushed, or denied. It requires cleansing, protection, observation, time, and proportion. In the same way, a conflictual relationship is not repaired by the imposition of a superficial agreement, nor by pressure toward any solution whatsoever. It requires an appropriate process, a prudent use of techniques, a correct assessment of the moment, and constant attention to the effects of the intervention. The galenic metaphor is, in this regard, particularly fruitful: just as a medication must be formulated, dosed, and adapted to the patient, so too must mediation be structured according to the specific conflict, the parties involved, their capacity to listen, the level of trust, and the nature of the interests at stake.

An openness to Positive Peace allows us to extend this reflection beyond the individual conflict. A peaceful society is not merely one that possesses the tools to resolve disputes that have already erupted; it is a society that develops institutions, practices, and cultures capable of identifying differences early on, reducing polarisation, strengthening trust, and preventing dissent from turning into violence, exclusion, or definitive rupture. In this sense, mediation is not merely a tool for dispute resolution, but can become part of a broader social infrastructure of peace.

From this perspective, mediation, meditation, and medication can be considered three practices of peace because they share the same approach: they do not deny the rift, but they do not allow it to become destiny. Mediation does not eliminate conflict; it makes it manageable. Meditation does not eliminate emotion; it makes it observable. Medication does not immediately eliminate the wound; it protects it so that it can heal. In all three, peace is not a mechanical result, but a process of care.

The argument remains deliberately modest. It does not claim that mediation, meditation, and medication are the same practice, nor that one can be translated into the other without loss. It claims only that, in situations of

vulnerability, good intervention requires a common discipline: to understand before acting, to calibrate before applying force, to monitor effects, and to avoid turning a repair attempt into a second injury.

The proposed title for the work—The Art of Not Destroying: Mediation, Meditation, and Medication as Practices of Peace—thus captures the essential point. Not destroying does not mean refraining from action. It means acting with restraint. It means understanding that conflict, suffering, and wounding cannot be addressed with blind, automatic, or merely oppositional tools. It means recognizing that peace is a practical skill, even before it is a moral ideal: the skill of creating conditions in which what is torn may not be torn further.

Mediation, ultimately, shows that peace does not arise from the elimination of the other, but from the possibility of continuing to speak to them. Meditation shows that peace does not arise from the repression of impulse, but from the ability to observe it without being governed by it. Medication shows that peace does not arise from the denial of the wound, but from the prudent care that allows for its repair. From this convergence emerges a sober and practical conception of peace: not as motionless stillness, but as the active art of preservation, responsibility, and transformation.

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