

# Mediation Opening Note — Three Threshold Questions

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Working mediation note

## Opening Concern

I am 56 years old. I have no meaningful retirement savings. I have not held a genuine non-self-employed position since my time at Linden Lab in 2010. My background is in visual effects, computer graphics, and software engineering — fields that are now undergoing major disruption.

What I am afraid of is not just short-term cash-flow difficulty. I am afraid of entering the later part of my life without meaningful employability and without enough financial security to live on in retirement.

That is why I do not think this mediation should begin and end with monthly numbers in the abstract. Before we get there, I think it helps to identify the underlying questions that determine what problem we are actually trying to solve.

## Three Threshold Questions

### 1. Fairness

*Are we trying to reach a genuinely fair outcome, or simply negotiating around the narrowest Missouri baseline?*

This matters because if the process is only going to replicate the legal floor, it is better to be explicit about that from the beginning.

### 2. Inheritance / Retirement Security

*Do you contest that we planned to use Lisa's inheritance for retirement security?*

This matters because it goes to the basic structure of the marriage and to what the parties were actually relying on for long-term security.

### 3. Rebuilding Location

*Do you contest that San Francisco is the most realistic place for me to rebuild my life?*

This matters because any discussion of needs, budget, and earning capacity depends on a realistic location assumption.

## Closing Thought

I am not trying to argue every supporting fact in advance. I am trying to identify the real issues that should be addressed before the mediation moves into numbers.

My concern is that if these questions are left unspoken, the conversation may drift too quickly into budget trimming and income assumptions without first addressing the deeper retirement-security problem that I am facing.

*Prepared for mediation discussion.*