I'm not alone in this view. Since I have discovered that I am not a "natural" learner, I believe that this is where I have also been affected. I have had to work through things and put in the time and effort to understand and internalize concepts. This has been true in my role as a mediator and in my teaching of mediation. I have found that practical tips and real-life examples are the most effective way to learn and remember the skills required for mediation.

One element of mediation practice that beginners can find daunting is language. Experienced practitioners seem to have a knack of using the right words at the right moment. And so they do. Indeed, if you watch a lot of mediators you hear the same turns of phrase cropping up again and again. This must be because they have the right words to use. So I devised 20 phrases that I felt would be helpful. I first passed them on to my students and then put them into a handout. A significant number of practical tips are really useful. Some students say they remember these more than anything else. So, here are some of the key ones:

**Acknowledging**
- What do you think about that? (This sounds really important to you.)
- What do you think about that? (This sounds really important to you.)
- What do you think about that? (This sounds really important to you.)

**Affirmation**
- You were saying earlier ………….
- Do you agree? (This is to encourage the participant to agree.)
- Do you agree? (This is to encourage the participant to agree.)
- Do you agree? (This is to encourage the participant to agree.)

**Checking/Clarifying**
- So, what you're saying is ……..?
- What do you think about that?
- What do you think about that?
- What do you think about that?

**Reality testing**
- So if the position now is …(summary) how could things be improved?
- What needs to happen for you to ……?
- What are you looking for?
- What will you recognize it when it happens?

**Option generation**
- Have you heard that before?
- Have you heard that before?
- Have you heard that before?

**Encouraging**
- What would be the effect of that?
- What could you live with?
- What are you looking for?

**Sweeping it under the carpet**
- You really don't see things the same way. It's OK to disagree – that's why we're in mediation.
- You were saying earlier ………….

**Positivity**
- On hearing something positive from the other side
- You really don't see things the same way. It's OK to disagree – that's why we're in mediation.
- You were saying earlier ………….

**Positivity**
- On hearing something positive from the other side
- You really don't see things the same way. It's OK to disagree – that's why we're in mediation.
- You were saying earlier ………….

**Flavouring**
- You see ……….
- I see ……….
- I see ……….

**Intrusive and irritating**
- How do you feel about that?
- What do you feel about that?
- What do you feel about that?

**Intrusive and irritating**
- What do you feel about that?
- What do you feel about that?
- What do you feel about that?

**Decision making**
- So, what you're saying is ……..?
- So, what you're saying is ……..?
- So, what you're saying is ……..?

**Listening underlines**
- Thanks for explaining that so clearly.
- Thanks for explaining that so clearly.
- Thanks for explaining that so clearly.

**Naming the conflict**
- Naming the conflict is the first step to resolving it. It has three benefits: 1) it names the conflict, 2) it tells both parties that the mediator has heard their perspective, and 3) it lets people hear their own thinking out loud, something they have often never done.
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**Personal expression**
- Positive phrases are reassuring and reward the mediator's patience.
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Thank you for reading this post. Please refer to this post as:

Charlie Irvine
April 12, 2013
Kluwer Mediation Blog
Practical Tips for Mediators

http://mediationblog.kluwerarbitration.com/2013/04/12/practical-tips-for-mediators/