

VERDICTS & SETTLEMENTS

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Emotional Intelligence

Angela Reddock-Wright establishes trust by being attuned to the impact of her actions.

By **Jessica Mach**
Daily Journal Staff Writer

When people tell Angela J. Reddock-Wright something they consider significant, she responds by echoing what they've just said. Reddock-Wright likes to ask questions about people's children, pets, vacations, or the art in their house, even when those subjects aren't strictly relevant to a conversation. She will ask relevant questions, too — specific, pointed ones that help her access the nuances of an issue instead of just its bare bones.

The Judicate West neutral explained the reasoning behind these moves: They reassure her interlocutors she has heard them so she can create a bond and let them know she understands what they're going through.

But just because Reddock-Wright is attuned to the impact of her actions doesn't mean she's calculating, or putting on an act. Asked to describe the neutral, one attorney who has worked with Reddock-Wright for years said she possesses high emotional intelligence, but is also sincere. Another described her as an excellent listener and genuinely caring.

If Reddock-Wright's talent for connecting with others is rooted, as she believes, in the fact that she just loves



people, the sentiment is mutual — at least when it comes to attorneys. Some attorneys are so impressed with Reddock-Wright's mediation and arbitration services, they not only think of her as a go-to for standard cases, but as the neutral they turn to for especially contentious ones.

Reddock-Wright, they say, is the neutral they can trust to navigate turmoil.

She specializes in labor and employment law, as well as church disputes, premises liability, personal injury, Title IX sexual assault, hazing and bullying cases. In addition to handling mediation and arbitration

through Judicate West, Reddock-Wright conducts workplace investigations and training through her own dispute resolution firm, Reddock Law Group.

“One of the reasons I pick her — and I'm always really happy when the other side is going to accept her — is really her remarkable sensitivity and compassion,” said Shalini Dogra, a plaintiffs' attorney who runs her own firm, Dogra Law Group PC. Dogra said she has worked with Reddock-Wright as a mediator twice this year, for discrimination and retaliation cases.

“I wouldn't say other mediators are particularly mean

Angela J. Reddock-Wright

Judicate West, Reddock Law Group
Los Angeles

Areas of specialty:

labor and employment, premises liability, personal injury, Title IX sexual assault, hazing, bullying, church disputes

or nasty,” Dogra said. “But ... when a client has been through something really traumatic and they really need to be heard, I

think Angela is a better fit for that sometimes.”

Anthony Solana, director of employee and labor relations at UCLA, said he also hires Reddock-Wright for special cases. He calls her when a party’s demands “are just astronomical, and I need somebody to obviously serve as a neutral, but also from a neutral perspective to [explain] what they may be entitled to, which is nowhere near what they’re asking for in terms of a demand.”

“I have found a lot of success when I’ve utilized her for that,” Solana added.

For the length of her 25-year career in law, Reddock-Wright has focused on labor and employment. Her first job after graduating from UCLA School of Law was at management-side boutique Gartner & Young APC, which no longer exists. Later, she moved to Jackson Lewis PC before starting her own firm representing employers and employees. In 2007, she joined another management-side firm, Carroll, Burdick & McDonough LLP, then left litigation altogether and struck out on her own again by launching Reddock Law Group in 2011.

“I have worked on both sides of the equation,” Reddock-Wright said. “When I was a litigator, I represented plaintiffs — employees — and I represented employers. So I approach things with a neutral perspective.”

She added, “My mission in life is to help employers and employees to create great workplaces.”

Whenever Reddock-Wright conducts a mediation, she’ll call the attorneys a few days

beforehand to find out if they want her to pay special attention to any legal arguments, issues, or sensitivities of their clients. At the mediation, she’ll try to forge a bond with parties, in order to secure their trust — but recognizes that different strategies work for different people.

Some people enjoy discussing their personal lives, Reddock-Wright said, but for others, “It takes a while to build up that rapport with them, so I think the best way to connect and build trust is to be prepared.” The neutral said she always reads mediation briefs and tries to demonstrate to parties “not only that you read it, that you’ve taken notes on it, that you understand the facts and that you’re clear on some of the key dates and drivers of their case, and that you understand and know what the legal arguments are.”

“I’ll kind of give them an overview of things that I found compelling in their brief and then I say I want to spend this time walking through some areas that I have questions about,” she added. “I think that automatically builds trust because they know you’re not sitting there and saying, ‘OK, tell me about your case. That opening question can absolutely throw a mediation off because it sends the impression that you haven’t read, you’re not prepared, you’re asking this super open-ended question.”

Dogra said she appreciates that Reddock-Wright “tries to touch base ahead of time.” But the attorney was especially impressed by the way Reddock-Wright navigates the mediations themselves. The

first time Dogra worked with Reddock-Wright this year was in March. “It was a marathon mediation,” Dogra recalled. “She’s a tremendous human being and she just doesn’t give up.”

“We were there until 11 p.m.,” she said, adding other mediators “could have lost their cool and been like, ‘Hey, get it done. Everyone’s being a baby.’” But Reddock-Wright stayed calm the entire time, Dogra said. “It was very Zen-like. The clients commented on it.”

Todd Scherwin, a managing partner at Fisher & Phillips LLP who has worked with Reddock-Wright twice said, “Her approach is more of a peacemaker as opposed to getting either side too riled up. You’ve got mediators who like to get in people’s faces and sort of push and challenge.”

“Angela instead listens,” Scherwin continued. The neutral would say, “‘I understand you, but,’ and then she’d go and explain all the reasons why I was wrong, or why that wasn’t necessarily going to be the case, and why she thought my defenses weren’t as strong.” Scherwin said he always ends up trusting Reddock-Wright’s assessment.

One reason attorneys tend to trust her is because she has the credentials. In addition to having a “high level of emotional intelligence,” Solana said, she is “obviously incredibly intelligent and a subject matter expert in terms of employment law, Title IX issues, discrimination issues.”

The attorney said he also appreciates that Reddock-Wright is an “exceptional writer”

when it comes to arbitration decisions, and is creative in mediations.

As a public institution, Solana said UCLA doesn’t necessarily have the cash to give plaintiffs what they want. “Sometimes there’s a way to structure a deal, either a benefits package or any noneconomic deal points that we can offer that in many ways are more enticing than money, especially if somebody is looking to transition to another position,” he explained.

Reddock-Wright is “very, very good about exploring all those options,” Solana said. “On my most difficult cases, I always select her without reservations.”

Reddock-Wright said her instinct to find resolution is intrinsic.

“I think back to being a kid,” she said. “When the family would have some tense movements, I’d say, ‘Let’s look at how we can resolve this.’ That is a natural part of my personality.”

“The fact that I get to do this and to be a peacemaker, to be a neutral, someone that helps others resolve issues as a part of my work, and to get paid for it,” she said, “it’s like living a dream for sure.”

Here are some attorneys who have used Reddock-Wright’s services: Shalini Dogra, Dogra Law Group PC; Anthony Solana, UCLA; Todd Scherwin, Fisher & Phillips LLP; Chantal Payton, Payton Employment Law; Samantha C. Grant, Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton, LLP.

jessica_mach@dailyjournal.com