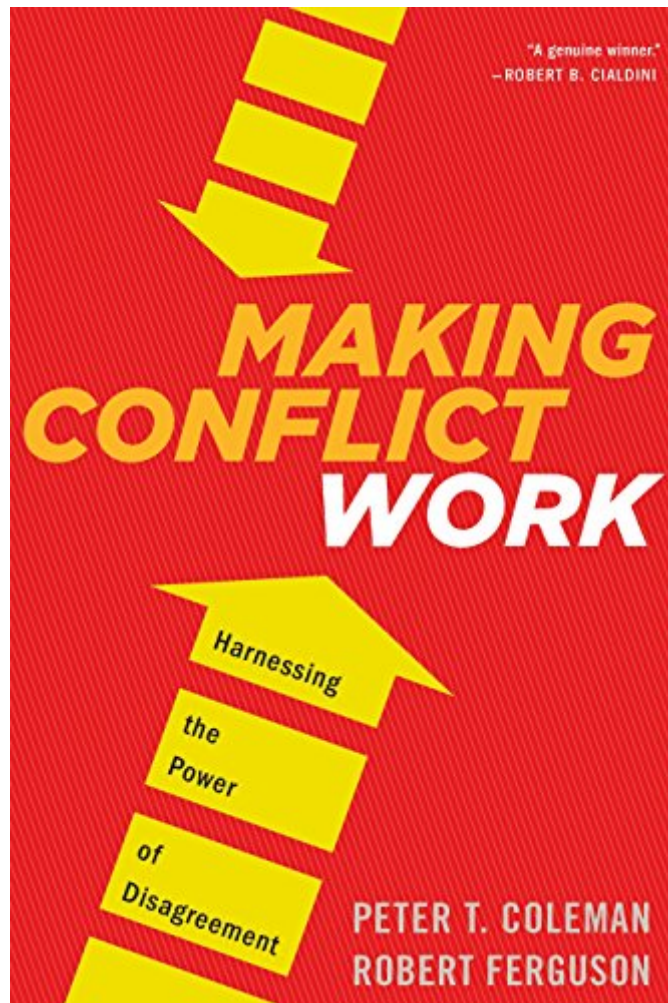


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# Making Conflict Work: Harnessing The Power Of Disagreement



## Synopsis

• "This book is a necessity. Read it." • "Leymah Gbowee, 2011 Nobel Peace Prize laureate and Liberian peace activist" • "Innovative and practical." • "Lawrence Susskind, cofounder, Program on Negotiation, Harvard Law School" • "Every workplace is a minefield of conflict, and all office tension is shaped by power. This book teaches you to identify the nature of a conflict, determine your power position relative to anyone opposing you, and to use the best strategy for achieving your goals. These strategies are equally effective for executives, managers and their direct reports, consultants and attorneys" • "anyone who has ever had a disagreement with someone in their organization. Packed with helpful self-assessment exercises and action plans," • "Making Conflict Work" gives you the tools you need to achieve greater satisfaction and success. • "Navigating conflict effectively is an essential component of leadership." • "Making Conflict Work" illustrates when to compromise and when to continue driving forward. • "Honorable David N. Dinkins, 106th mayor of the City of New York" • "An excellent workbook-like guide." • "Booklist," starred review

## Book Information

File Size: 4314 KB

Print Length: 306 pages

Publisher: Mariner Books; Reprint edition (September 2, 2014)

Publication Date: September 2, 2014

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00HK3ESKI

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #312,044 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #126

in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Business & Money > Management & Leadership > Negotiating  
#131 in Books > Business & Money > Human Resources > Conflict Resolution & Mediation #435  
in Books > Business & Money > Management & Leadership > Negotiating

## Customer Reviews

â œMaking Conflict Work: Harnessing the Power of Disagreementâ • by Peter T. Coleman and Robert Ferguson provides seven strategies and seventy tactics to make conflict work up and down the ladders of power in organizations. It's backed with science, examples and illustrations of how the strategies and tactics work, as well as self-assessment evaluations to determine the strategies and tactics you use the most, and which you might want to incorporate more. This isn't a â œsimpleâ • book, but one that takes a serious look at conflict and deserves a serious read to incorporate the information provided effectively when dealing with conflict, especially in the workplace. The book is aimed at managers, mediators, consultants, and attorneys who deal with conflict, and I'd echo those as the target readers, but would also include anyone wanting to be in those positions or better understand conflict and how they can approach it differently to help increase the amount of positive resolutions. One of the things I really like about this book is that it looks at conflict, and the various ways you can deal with it for different outcomes. It allows the reader to choose strategies and tactics that will work the best in certain situations, while acknowledging that completely different strategies and tactics will be needed when in conflict with a different person or over a different matter. I also like the self-assessment exercises that provide insight to your own preferred conflict styles. Knowing this helps when making choices to best deal with disagreements and other conflicting situations. The book also discusses power imbalance and strategies and tactics geared toward being the person with more power, or the person with less power.

MAKING CONFLICT WORK is one of the most useful self-help books I have ever read, and certainly one of the most organized and substantial. Since I have been self-employed for 40 years, I don't have much experience with the daily situation of being an employee or boss. But I occasionally encounter conflict situations with demanding or critical clients or with directors of educational programs. Usually I respond more from the gut than strategically either because I'm deeply invested in my point of view or because I'm not aware of or experienced with alternative ways of responding. When I do respond with an attitude of "how can we make this work for both of us?", the results are often positive, but in some situations, good will and a cooperative attitude are ineffective. This is why I chose to read this book. What is exceptional about MAKING CONFLICT WORK is its clarity (and self-evaluation assessments) in regard to seven different methods of dealing with workplace conflict. These methods differ, applying to conflict situations in which you have more or less power or equal power than the other party. The authors Coleman and Ferguson discuss power conflict traps in regard to a number of situations, and then presents chapters to each

of the strategic methods for approaching conflict. In brief, four of the seven methods are: pragmatic benevolence (compassionate responsibility) and constructive dominance (command and control) for circumstances in which you have more power; and cultivated support (cooperative dependence) or strategic appeasement (unhappy tolerance) for circumstances in which you have less power.

While reading this book, I nodded my head in approval and shook my head in amazement with the way the authors presented the concepts and included relevant examples. It even mentions how one's rearing as a child will affect the way you treat your manager. I found myself intently studying this book, even re-reading sections so I could completely grasp what was being discussed. There is a bibliography at the end of the book, showing the works cited for each chapter. At the end of each chapter, there are self development checklists of the concepts presented to help the reader take a look at their own actions and attitudes. This is an exceptional book assisting the reader to understand the roots of conflict, how to effectively handle your manager, your subordinates and your peers. With over 100 ideas that I wrote down for this review, I will provide a few here. The theme of the book: "This is a book about conflict, power, and change. It chronicles the challenges and opportunities we face when we find ourselves with those in authority--bosses, executives, regulators, police officers....and with authority over. It also addresses what to do in those precarious situations in which power shifts occur and we face new conflicts with former peers we now supervise, or with former supervisees who have now become the boss." On conflict: "...is a lot like fire. When it sparks, it can intensify, spread and lead to pain, loss, and irreparable damage. It can distract, distance, and occasionally destroy opportunities and relationships. It makes most people anxious, and as a result it is often mishandled and made worse.

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