

NAVIGATING CONFLICT

Tools for Difficult Conversations



LYNNE CURRY

Description

Navigating Conflict: Tools for Difficult Conversations gives readers a life-changing, self-training manual for navigating difficult conflicts and situations. This book is perfect for readers that want positive outcomes from personal, professional, and workplace conflicts.

Written by a nationally respected trainer and coach, *Navigating Conflict* provides readers a toolbox chock-full of practical, effective, innovative, easy-to-apply skills and strategies.

In this workbook-like guide, you will gain:

- A step-by-step roadmap for handling conflict and defusing tough and touchy situations.
- Strategies for achieving productive outcomes to conflict.
- Strategies for effectively handling yourself under fire.
- Skills for making conflict work for you.
- Tools for dealing with toxic individuals, personality conflicts, office politics, and problematic personal situations.
- Tools for handling criticism and attacking comments.
- Tools for raising problem issues so they can be resolved.

Written in a straight-forward, relatable, engaging manner, *Navigating Conflict* is designed to enable readers to return to specific chapters for a quick reference when they need an immediate tactic or strategy. Readers will find the real-life stories engrossing, the skills immediately actionable, and will walk away knowing exactly how to achieve positive outcomes in conflict situations.

Contents

<i>Testimonials</i>	xi
<i>Foreword</i>	xxi
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xxiii
Part 1 The Payoff	1
Chapter 1 The Promise: Tools for Difficult Conversations	3
Chapter 2 The Price You Pay for Avoiding Conflict	7
Chapter 3 What Stops You From Handling Conflict?	11
Chapter 4 Courage Is Your Partner.....	15
Part 2 Toughening Up	19
Chapter 5 Learning to Handle Yourself Under Fire	21
Chapter 6 Creating the “You” Who Stands Up for Yourself.....	25
Chapter 7 Teflon Yourself to Criticism	33
Chapter 8 Develop Your Arsenal for Counteracting Attacking Comments.....	39
Part 3 Your Tool Chest: Skills and Tactics for Defusing 75 Percent of Conflicts	45
Chapter 9 Listening As If You Mean It.....	47
Chapter 10 The Rapport Tool.....	51
Chapter 11 Conflict-Resolution Questions: How to Effectively Question to Surface Key Issues Without Offending or Pushing Buttons.....	55
Chapter 12 Bringing Issues Up So They Can Be Resolved.....	61
Part 4 Successful in Conflict: Strategies, Skills, and Tactics ..	65
Chapter 13 Exploring Your Stories So You Don’t Trip Over Them	67
Chapter 14 Owning Your Part So It Doesn’t Muddy the Discussion..	73
Chapter 15 The Most Effective Way to Start a Conflict Discussion...77	
Chapter 16 Make It Through Unscathed When Dealing With Toxic Individuals	83

Chapter 17	Keeping the Conflict Discussion Productive	87
Chapter 18	If You Sense Fear or Anger Rising	93
Chapter 19	The Right Way to Apologize.....	99
Chapter 20	Conducting an After-Conflict Assessment	103
Chapter 21	Unraveling Conflict: Conflict Diagnosis: Mediating and De-escalating Conflict	107
Part 5	Going Deeper	113
Chapter 22	Assessing Your Conflict Style	115
Chapter 23	Digging Into Where Much Conflict Begins: The Drama Triangle	125
Chapter 24	Personality Conflicts Decoded: Explaining People Who Drive You Crazy and the Ones You Drive Crazy ..	131
Part 6	Handling Specific Conflicts: Fixes That Work.....	139
Chapter 25	Seven Strategies for Nuking Energy Vampires and Judgmental Critics	141
Chapter 26	Snappy Comebacks When You Need Them.....	145
Chapter 27	When a Sniper Won't Let Up.....	149
Chapter 28	When You're Thrust Into an Important Role in Which Your Ability to Navigate Conflict Might Mean Life or Death	153
Chapter 29	Let Go of What You Can't Control.....	157
Chapter 30	When You're Up Against a Street Fighter	161
Chapter 31	When You're Chairing a Meeting and a Hothead Challenges You.....	163
Chapter 32	Resolving Conflicts in a Virtual Work Environment.....	165
Chapter 33	Defeating a Verbal Attacker's Three Favorite Weapons..	169
Part 7	Finishing Touches	171
Chapter 34	Your Game Plan	173
Chapter 35	Just in Time.....	175
	<i>Resources</i>	177
	<i>About the Author.....</i>	179
	<i>Index</i>	181

Testimonials

“How I wish I had the opportunity to read Dr. Lynne Curry’s most recent book, Navigating Conflict: Tools for Difficult Conversations a few months ago! Over the past months, I’ve voyaged through numerous large and small conflicts. There is no doubt that Curry’s sage advice and guidance helped me maintain a steady course during those challenging times. I’m certain some of the conflicts I encountered would not have been resolved without her help and valuable insights.

Curry’s newest book is a field guide to identify those uncomfortable situations where one may fall short in personal confidence or past experiences to deal with conflict. She pulls back the curtain of self-doubt to show you relatable strategies to positively overcome and resolve those uncomfortable encounters. As an added bonus, you find your confidence and strategic thinking strengthening. Curry has done a splendid job of drawing upon her decades of experience to help you address and resolve conflict. I have learned many lessons from Curry, and this is another of her superb writings that will become a go-to textbook.”—Dr. James Powell, President, Clearwater Marine Aquarium

“No one understands how to handle and manage conflict like Lynne Curry, and no one writes about it better. If you ever have to deal with conflict (and you will), Curry’s book helps you identify and improve how you handle conflict. This is a must read.”—Sean Eichrodt, Securities and Investigations Management, The GEO Group

“When I read the 1st page of this book, I knew it would be my ‘Bible’ when ‘Navigating Conflict.’ In our organization. I immediately was able to equate ‘On the Ground Situations’ I had experienced over the past 30+ years of managing people with the examples Curry presented. I quickly grabbed my highlighter and started madly highlighting key areas of interest. This is not just a book to read but a book to have at arm’s length as a reference when you know you’re about to enter in a situation that may be confrontational. Use

the book as a guide and it will make your organization more productive and give you a 'peace of mind' when you leave work each day.”—**Joel Klessens, President, Alaska Mill and Feed**

“Lynne Curry’s new book, Navigating Conflict: Tools for Difficult Conversations, is a gem. Filled with effective and practical advice for touchy and tricky situations, this book is a must for anyone wanting to tool up and become more effective communicators both personally and professionally. Curry’s writing is both engaging and empowering.

Curry has a knack for connecting with the reader and taking us on a journey through her powerful storytelling that weaves in simple solutions for difficult situations. I will be adding this book to my permanent library along with her equally seminal book, Beating the Workplace Bully.”—**Jessie Sutherland, author of *Worldview Skills: Transforming Conflict from the Inside Out* and Director of Intercultural Strategies and TEDx Speaker**

“Navigating Conflict: Tools for Difficult Conversations is a must-read for anyone in a leadership role. The story-based format is founded on real-life examples and draws from Lynne Curry’s four decades of experience. I found myself shaking my head in agreement and relating to similar situations I had experienced and wished I had had the information in this book to help navigate those past conflicts.

Dr. Curry actively engages the reader each step of the way by asking probing questions and providing exercises that the reader can immediately use at home or in the workplace. In addition, Dr. Curry conveys to the reader complex concepts with ease, such as building the necessary skills needed when being faced with criticism challenges. From just the first few pages, I had already started building my toolkit.”—**Lisa Oliver, Chief Operating Officer, Clearwater Marine Aquarium**

“Dr. Lynne Curry has been an invaluable resource throughout my career. She combines empathy and a no-nonsense solution-oriented approach to business and interpersonal development. Her writings incorporate the experiences from her distinguished career giving the reader insight into specific and very real situations.

Unlike many management self-help writers, Curry delivers each lesson in three distinct touch points including a brief interactive section. I can't emphasize how critical that is for retention and implementation in the real world. Navigating Conflict: Tools for Difficult Conversations is a must read for anyone looking for advice on tackling the tough situations and conversations the hit us in both the management world and our personal lives.—**Jed Shandy, Vice President, Davis Constructors and Engineers**

“Dr. Lynne Curry has done it again! For the past 25 years, my teams and I have been the recipient of Curry's practical approach to unlocking the potential of our workforce and understanding our team's interpersonal dynamics. I have personally learned and developed so many life skills from Curry's instruction, coaching, and mentoring. Her new book, Navigating Conflict, is not just a 'must-read' but a resource that you will want to keep handy for frequent reference.

You will find a concentration of pragmatic, yet idealistic, tools and approaches to recognizing, understanding, and responding to conflict in the workplace and beyond. This book will help you develop self-awareness in a way that has you stand up for yourself candidly and professionally while understanding what it is like being on the other side of you.

It will concomitantly increase your awareness of others in an empathic way that prefers to call others 'up' and not 'out.' This best-of-breed concentration of conflict tools accompanied by Curry's real-life application, experience, and lessons learned will become my new go-to for both personal and team development and improvement. You'll want to get your copy and start augmenting your conflict management skills as well as those of the teams you lead and/or participate in.—**Jim Bates, President and CEO of BIG-Business Improvement Group, Inc.**

“Navigating Conflict: Tools for Difficult Conversations is a book I wish I would have had at the beginning of my management career. Dr. Curry uses her vast experience and real-life examples to succinctly describe how tough issues can be managed appropriately.

Curry's practical and understandable strategies show the reader how to manage issues head-on while still considering other's points of view and our own biases. This book has already helped me recognize how I can better

confront conflict in a timely manner that does not sacrifice my own opinions or values.

Her helpful exercises at the end of the chapters and real-life examples from her years of experience in HR consultation are engaging and helpful, like having Dr. Curry working side-by-side with us in these difficult situations. All of this information is packaged in an interesting and engaging manner. Thank you for this wonderful resource!”—**Debbie Davey, Director of Risk Management, Cross Road Health Ministries, Inc.**

“Lynne Curry has done it again! Lynne’s latest book, Navigating Conflict: Tools for Difficult Conversations, is an excellent read. It is another great primer by Curry for all who read it on how to deal constructively with conflicts in all walks of life. Although Curry focuses her examples upon the work environment, her counseling on conflict resolution has universal application—be it the workplace, social interactions, or even the family. Recognizing that time is valuable, Curry has encapsulated her coaching into concise, easy-to-understand common sense chapters. I highly recommend Curry’s book to anyone who wants to improve their approach to dispute resolution at whatever level and situation.”—**William Satterberg, J.D., owner, Law Offices of William Satterberg, Jr.**

“Lynne Curry gives you clear, concise, and current advice on how to chart a course through the rough seas of interpersonal conflict. Using real-life examples, Navigating Conflict helps you understand motivations of other people (and yourself). The book is packed with self-tests, exercises, and checklists to help you overcome old behaviors and bring your best attitudes to interactions with others. This book will help you develop strategies for navigating through conflict in the workplace and off-the-job.”—**Barbara Manning Grimm, Managing Editor for Plain Language Media, the publishers of Medical Office Manager and Law Office Manager**

“If you are working with others, have interpersonal relationships of any kind, or are in the workforce, you want to read this book. With our world so full of conflict, from personal to political issues, Dr. Lynne Curry’s newest book will help you navigate the challenges. Navigating Conflict gives you a

roadmap to success in dealing with conflict and demanding situations with employees, co-workers, and in the workplace and at home.

I write this as a business leader with 35 plus years working in the resource and technology industry, government, and the nonprofit sector. I have been an avid reader of Curry's books and have found multiple answers to concerns I experienced during my career, thanks to her insightfulness and 40 years of experience counseling clients and business leaders worldwide. I recommend buying this book for yourself and your friends who confide in you about workplace issues. You are surely to find this book full of inspiration, and insightful, creative, and thoughtful answers.”—**Rebecca Parker, Executive Director, Anchorage Senior Activity Center, Alaska**

“Dr. Curry's Navigating Conflict provides real-world tools for managers facing the daily challenges of our complex and ever evolving workplaces. The skills attained from the lessons presented here are extremely valuable to our personal as well as our work lives. Curry provides practical tools and effective strategies for managing myself as well as employees. Her book thus benefits me and everyone I encounter, home or office. I'm grateful for this book; it's a gift I keep on my desk.”—**Randall Kowalke, Chief Executive Officer, Sunshine Community Health Services**

“We all experience conflict. Through a wealth of real-life examples and action suggestions, Curry helps me understand conflict and how we can better manage and use conflict to enjoy more profitable, and happier relationships. This book is full of relatable lessons Curry shares from her 40 years of consulting and training in organizations. The knowledge Curry shares has inspired me to look at conflict in new ways, and through this, helps me to understand and manage it in ways that benefit not only me, but those around me.”—**Barbara Elfman Bell, Chief People and Culture Officer, Rural Alaska Community Action Program**

“Dr. Curry does it again! Curry has a unique way of asking questions that makes you reflect inward and have light bulbs turn on! Her book, Navigating Conflict, provides a practical guide to use at work or at home; to use with coworkers, personal acquaintances, or to provide self-recognition. Curry gives

you a little bit of herself in the ‘YOUR TURN—ACTION STEPS’ at the end of each chapter. You can hear her coaching you through different scenarios. Through Navigating Conflict, Curry provides you the tools to turn challenges into learning moments, and then into growth opportunities. This is a must-read, must practice, and must share book!”—**Kimberly McCourtney, Sr Vice President, Alaska Mill Feed & Garden Center**

“Curry writes with a direct approach that is refreshing. In a professional world fraught with political correctness, creating paralysis among managers concerned about taking a misstep, Curry takes an approach that gives life to how conflict can and should be handled—both personally and professionally. Reading this shows individuals how to take control of situations that they otherwise may avoid—and ‘gives permission’ to professionals to direct criticism and conflict down a productive path where resolution can occur.”—**Wendy Yow, Vice President of Human Resources, Credit Union 1**

“Curry’s Navigating Conflict is written in a conversational format that makes for easy reading. That is not to say it is easy in that it challenges the reader to dig deep and recognize the part they play in conflict. Within minutes I was seeing myself in several of the situations and realizing there were things that I could have done differently to get a much better outcome. This will be a book that I will be recommending to my team and others!”—**Michele Sommer, Global Employee Relations Leader in a leading technology company**

“In four decades as a management consultant, workplace coach, and expert witness, Lynne Curry has shown her expertise in dealing with difficult situations. In Navigating Conflict: Tools for Difficult Conversations, she provides practical guidance in managing conflict. This book provides strategies and tools for handling conflicts in the workplace and personal life, with real world examples and concrete action steps. Topics include responding to criticism, understanding your stories, and dealing with difficult individuals. No matter what your position is, you will benefit from this book.”—**Harry Cylinder, CPCU, ARM, Risk and Insurance Consultant, Beacon Insurance Services LLC**

“In this immediately useful book, Lynne Curry teaches valuable tools for standing up for yourself and strengthening your backbone muscles. Put these exercises into practice; rehearse with a friend or a workmate, and you’ll see clear benefits. You’ll make the relationships with good character colleagues even stronger by having real discussions. And these same techniques will help you disarm bad-faith actors and bullies. I heartily recommend this book.”

—**Ramji Srinivasan, Founder and CEO at Teiko.bio**

“This is the book we all need to read! In Navigating Conflict, Dr. Lynne Curry provides a practical, how-to manual for dealing with professional and personal conflict. Reading the book requires critical self-analysis that can lead to more productive relationships at work and at home. If you read this book, you will understand the role you have played in the conflicts in your life and a pathway to resolve those conflicts.”

—**Clint Campion, J.D., Partner, Sedor Wendlandt Evans Filippi**

“Conflict always seems like something aggressive and unkind, but if you read Lynne Curry’s Navigating Conflict, her practical tools will help you become the most trusted and followed leader and colleague. Most people want to know where they stand with you and this book will help you communicate clearly and early on to defuse relationship issues and create an environment of clear communication. You will find if you apply these practical tools in all areas of your life. Your relationships will be stronger, and you will feel like you have a voice and be able to use it.”

—**Trisha Blake, M.S., Chief Marketing Officer**

“Navigating Conflict by Lynne Curry is about how to make your business more successful by making employee–employer relationships more productive. Curry does this with relevant, true-to-life examples of conflicts on the job and then provides a host of tools to help managers and employees see both sides of every situation. Then she gives managers suggestions on how to communicate their own views in ways that lead to understanding and agreement instead of unproductive impasses or dictatorial declarations. Interestingly enough, the same solutions that help managers and their employees be more accountable on the job, work equally well when dealing with conflicts at home. Because

ultimately, this book helps readers deal better with people, whatever their position, relationship or situation.”—**Wendy Lalli, Principal, Words & Beyond, LLC**

“A large percentage of problems in the workplace stem from the avoidance of, or the inability to effectively handle, conflict. Confronting and pro-actively dealing with conflict is a skill set that few inherently possess. In Navigating Conflict: Tools for Difficult Conversations. Lynne Curry provides us with a common-sense, practical, and very useable tool set for improving our conflict-handling skills. While the lessons of this book are most beneficial to handling workplace conflict, the skills acquired will benefit the reader in all aspects of their life where conflict may arise. I will heartily recommend it to all my clients.”—**William Evans, J.D., Partner, Sedor Wendlandt Evans Filippi**

“Lynne Curry’s decades of expertise in human relations and conflict resolution are on full display in Navigating Conflict. She provides insight into why conflict occurs and provides actual tactics and techniques for resolving conflict and tension in relationships, whether at or outside of work. This is a logical, as well as emotional, portrayal of the genesis of conflict, how they peak and how they fester or blowup and how to successfully resolve them. Spoiler alert: Curry’s book is not intended as a passive reading activity. Curry requires the reader to critically analyze their own experiences, and what to work on or get beyond, and how to do that. If the reader puts the work in, Curry’s strategies and insights will improve their conflict resolution skills as well as their life.”—**Charles Krugel, J.D., Charles A. Krugel Labor and Employment Law on Behalf of Business**

“Navigating Conflict provides very helpful advice about the art of listening, which is very helpful in the contexts of the workplace, marriages, and for an attorney like myself, to learn information from witnesses, and/or negotiating and resolving problems with opposing parties. I appreciated learning the tools of paraphrasing and matching to enhance rapport, communication, and trust, as well as the types of questions to employ for resolving conflicts. Navigating Conflict also provides helpful advice about stating facts versus judgments and setting up guardrails (cooling down) and maintaining the big picture before giving feedback.”—**Kenneth Gutsch, Attorney, Law Offices of Richmond & Quinn**

“Navigating Conflict is both valuable and extremely compelling. I loved the “discovering the stories you tell yourself,” Curry’s succinct writing and how she peppers the book with real-life examples that bring her points home.”—**Maxwell Mercer, M.S., Deputy Director, Community Connections, Inc.**

“Navigating Conflict gives readers both the courage and the tools to communicate effectively during conflict.”—**Tiffany Van Horn, BU President at Corix Group of Companies**

Foreword

You're reading this book by my friend Lynne Curry for one of a few reasons—you either want to help yourself for the future just in case you have to deal with THAT co-worker, you're dealing with that difficult person now, or maybe you're trying to figure out why you've had trouble with certain people in the past.

When I began to write my first book, *The Arsonist in the Office: Fireproofing Your Life Against Toxic Coworkers, Bosses, Employees, and Culture*, I researched and quickly learned that there were many books written on problems in the workplace. Some provided practical tools, others relied on stories, and some were designed for just a manager or an HR professional.

Then there were Lynne Curry's books. When I read Lynne's book, *Beating the Workplace Bully*, she showed the ability to speak to numerous audiences, provide relevant information, and showed a knack for providing perspective that can only come with having consulted for some of the most powerful companies in the world in solving very complicated problems.

That's pure gold for readers. No matter who you are, I can tell you that Lynne has dealt with and understands your side of the problem. And keep on reading because she not only understands the problem, but she's about to give you questions to ask to help you solve or prevent them.

This book is going to force you to deal with the bad actions and attitudes of others, but what I like best about it is that Lynne also wants you to deal with what you can control—how you treat others and your inactions or actions that can start up all sorts of additional problems or make existing ones even worse.

That old saying of “It takes two to tango”? It applies every day to long-term messes in the workplace.

- The young employee who got burned by their manager years ago becomes a manager years later but doesn't recognize they've exactly adopted the management style they resented.

We can either understand what makes them tick—or react when the timebomb of their temper stops ticking and blows.

- Or the employee who is bitter, angry, and disconnected. We treat them as landmines to avoid, or we can become friends, allies, or at least come to an ability to work together if we simply understood their past life experiences that brought them to that point.

Or we can do nothing and simply blame it all on them. We live in a world full of choices, but this book will help you make good ones about the things you deal with daily.

Communication matters. Understanding matters. And learning from the mistakes we make, the patterns of errors we make that we can either analyze or ignore, and creating better habits matters. Listening well and practicing the Golden Rule of good workplace communications habits matters too.

Trust me when I say that Lynne Curry's experience as a workplace consultant on an international stage, her hard work helping millions of people through her columns and blogs, and her ability to equip you for the toughest situations and conversations will help you deal with tough times.

As someone who wrote a book about my experience inside a toxic workplace, I can tell you I did it so others would understand more about how to think and what to understand when they're in the toughest, high-stress moments.

Lynne's provided the same types of tools, techniques, and stories in the pages to follow. Soak it up, use it, and let her smart perspectives protect and position you for great things to come.

—Pete Havel

President, Fireproofed Leadership
Author, *The Arsonist in the Office: Fireproofing Your Life
Against Toxic Coworkers, Bosses, Employees, and Cultures*

CHAPTER 1

The Promise

Tools for Difficult Conversations

Savannah's Situation

Savannah felt she'd taken care of the problem that had ruined her department's harmony for months when she fired Aaron. Aaron had been an infection, pulling other employees behind closed doors and badmouthing Savannah.

Although Savannah knew none of her other employees liked Aaron, she hadn't understood how much they disrespected her because she'd put up with his problem behavior for nine months. When Aaron started a competing firm and sued Savannah for wrongful termination, she expected her employees to back her.

They didn't.

Savannah's best employees feared they'd be dragged into an ugly legal battle. They looked for new jobs and left.

The weaker employees discovered the lawsuit distracted Savannah, enabling them to get away with problem behavior. After all, they'd watched Aaron get by with much worse.

Savannah needed to learn it wasn't enough to be good at what she did; she needed to learn to stand up for herself.

Too-Nice Norm

Norm faced a different conflict challenge. You know the cartoon in which Wile E. Coyote races to the cliff's edge, giving it his all, his legs wheeling as fast as he can; and then, looks down and realizes there's nothing beneath his feet?

That was Norm's life. No matter how hard he worked, his feet never seemed to land on solid ground. Kent and Matt, his peers on the company's sales team and graduates from the same Ivy League school, collaborated with each other and used dirty tricks to steal clients away from Norm.

Unlike Wile E. Coyote, Norm clung to a golden-rule naiveté. He never fought fire with fire or exposed his peers' actions to his boss. Eventually, his boss fired Norm, saying, "you're a nice guy, but not cut out for sales."

Max and His Mouth

Then, there was Max. He opened his mouth and let words fly, detonating important relationships and decimating career opportunities. Max often regretted what he'd said or done, but by the time he apologized, it was often too late.

What's *your* conflict challenge? Are you someone who:

- Says the wrong thing at the wrong time?
- Avoids conflict?
- Wants to win no matter what it costs?
- Fears you'll make others mad if you voice what you're really thinking?
- Tries to compromise even when you shouldn't?
- Or _____?

In what situations do you need additional conflict tools? Do you need to learn how to:

- Raise problem issues with a boss who micromanages you?
- Talk to a friend or family member who always criticizes you?
- Come right out and say what you mean without it sounding like an accusation?
- Diplomatically present a problem situation?
- Or _____?

If you picked up *Navigating Conflict*, you want a better result the next time you face conflict. That's what this book promises: proven strategies and tools you can immediately apply, along with real-world examples that

show you how these tools and strategies have worked for others and can prove useful for you.

In these chapters, you'll gain:

- A step-by-step roadmap for handling conflict and tough and touchy situations, regardless of your starting point
- Strategies to effectively handle yourself under fire
- Tools that improve the quality of your relationships at work and home
- Strategies for achieving productive outcomes to conflict
- Methods for turning the tables on manipulators and those who feel they have the upper hand
- How to decode personality conflicts
- Concrete methods for engaging your fighting spirit
- Ways to increase your self-confidence and to calm yourself in any confrontation
- An understanding of your conflict style and the chance to develop new behaviors and skills that work for you
- How to make it through unscathed when dealing with toxic individuals
- A strategy and arsenal for handling attacking comments
- How to handle anger and fear
- The courage you need to face trouble situations
- How to bring up problems so they can be resolved and make it through to successful outcomes

Within minutes after finishing each chapter, you'll be able to put what you've learned to use. Each chapter concludes with "Your Turn," in which the questions you answer provide you with new insights about your own situation and provide you with an opportunity to try out your new skills.

How I Can Make These Promises to You

For 39 years, I ran a nationally respected management consulting company. I worked directly with more than 4,300 organizations in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii,

Illinois, Michigan, New York, Oregon, Texas, Washington, Washington D.C., China, England, Guam, Japan, and Korea. My clients included British Petroleum, Conoco Phillips, the U.S. Department of Defense, and the World Bank. Every strategy and tool you'll find in *Navigating Conflict* has been field-tested and proven successful.

I've qualified to testify in court as an expert witness in the areas of Management Best Practices, Human Resources, and Workplace Issues.

I've coached thousands of individuals on how to handle conflict and helped hundreds of organizations navigate through crisis situations. For three years, I authored "The Workplace Coach" column for sheknows.com and served as coach of the quarter for womenworking.com. I answer real-life reader questions weekly in a "Dear Abby of the Workplace" newspaper column and on www.workplacecoachblog.com.

As result, you'll be able to learn from real-life examples from my four decades of helping others successfully navigate conflict. That said, no anecdote represents any one individual. In all instances, each is a composite of two or three of the many people I've coached, merged into one story. I've changed the names and specific facts out of respect for those I've coached.

I commit to you an enjoyable read and a book from which you can learn and profit.

Your Turn: Action Steps

Let's get started. When you know where you're going and why, you're more likely to get there. By answering these four questions, you'll bring to the surface where you're going and why it matters.

1. What led you to buy this book?
2. What do you hope to gain/learn from it?
3. Does unresolved conflict affect your relationships?
4. What do you hope is different by the time you've finished reading *Navigating Conflict*?