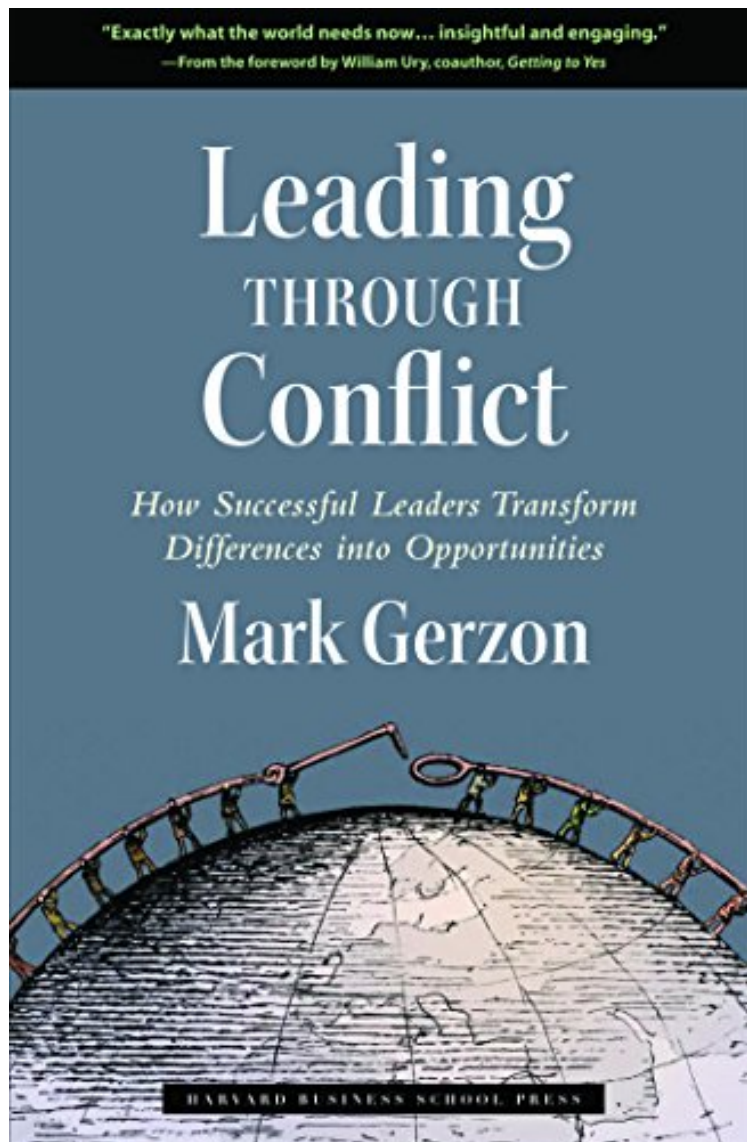


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## **Leading Through Conflict: How Successful Leaders Transform Differences into Opportunities**

*Mark Gerzon*

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**Mark Gerzon : Leading Through Conflict: How Successful Leaders Transform Differences into Opportunities** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Leading Through Conflict: How Successful Leaders Transform Differences into Opportunities*:

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A discussion of the leader as mediatorBy Erik GfesserIn this work,

Mark Gerzon presents what he views as the three faces of leadership (the demagogue, the manager, and the mediator), followed by a discussion of eight leadership tools for the mediator: integral vision, systems thinking, presence, inquiry, conscious conversation, dialogue, bridging, and innovation. The author states at the outset in his introduction that he wrote this book because "although conflict is built into our commercial and civic institutions, the skills for dealing with it are rarely taught". According to Gerzon, the demagogue "leads through fear, threats, and intimidation", "turns opponents into scapegoats", "uses lies and propaganda to dehumanize the other", and "resorts to violence to dominate or destroy the other". The author admittedly refers to extreme demagogues in order that this archetype be contrasted with the other two within the discussion, and although some of the individuals chosen are a bit tiresome, he makes his points well. The manager "operates based on an exclusive, limited definition of 'us'", "defines purpose in terms of the self-interest of his or her own group", "cannot or will not deal with issues, decisions, or conflicts that cross boundaries", and "is productive and effective only on home turf". It is within his discussion on managers that Gerzon starts to introduce small case study scenarios to illustrate the concepts being presented, and the remaining chapters follow this instructive pattern. The mediator "strives to act on behalf of the whole, not just a part", "thinks systematically and is committed to ongoing learning", "builds trust by building bridges across the dividing lines", and "seeks innovation and opportunity in order to transform conflict". The remaining chapters that focus on the eight leadership tools each conclude with several pages of tips that discuss how to apply what the author presents. For example, the first tool chapter, on integral vision, presents the following tips: "check your vision", "don't replace one border with another", "watch your language", "go to the balcony", "develop maturity of mind", and "learn to see through walls". In my opinion, the chapter on conscious conversation is especially well written. Included in this chapter is Table 8-1 which presents the eight forms of discourse (verbal brawling, debate, presentation/QA, discussion, negotiation, council, dialogue, and reflective silence), Figure 8-3 which presents ground rules to create a safe environment for open conversation, and Figure 8-4 which maps the forms of discourse to the demagogue, manager, and mediator. The chapter on dialogue furthers the discussion on discourse by its inclusion of Table 9-1, which compares debate and dialogue. Interestingly enough, the appendix was included for "all of us who lose our tempers" and for "those calmer souls who have to deal with people like us". Essentially, the appendix provides, in just 9 pages, some succinct principles for situations where time is of the essence. My only real criticism of this book is that the author evidently is not concerned about sharing his political bias within a discussion where one would think such bias would be a little less transparent. After a while, this bias gets a bit tiresome, much like his examples in the first chapter, but because this text was so well thought out this quality does not detract from the substance of the book.

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Accessible, practical and wise  
By Gary Shunk  
All leaders need this book. And, at times, we are all leaders in one way or another throughout our lives. Mark Gerzon provides an accessible, practical handbook on how to transform the world of human relationships with 8 simple, yet profound tools. Mediating conflict at home, in one's community, in the boardroom, or on the global stage is our collective calling these days. This book provides structure and wisdom for the journey.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars  
By sherry Fletcher  
This book offers a guide to transform differences into opportunities.

As our world grows smaller, opportunities for conflict multiply. Ethnic, religious, political, and personal differences drive people apart—with potentially disastrous consequences—and it's the task of perceptive leaders to bring them together again. World-renowned mediation expert Mark Gerzon argues that leaders have failed to rise to this challenge. Our organisations, schools, and governments remain filled with divisive dictators and everyday managers, instead of what he calls mediators—leaders who transform conflict so that everyone can move forward together. Through absorbing examples drawn from decades of work with organisational, political, and global conflicts of all kinds, *Leading Through Conflict* provides a powerful new framework for the leader as mediator, and outlines eight specific tools these leaders use to transform seemingly intractable differences into progress on deep-seated problems. Both practical and passionate, this book makes the tools of cross-border leaders accessible to anyone who wants to help create healthier companies, communities, and countries.

**About the Author** Mark Gerzon, hailed by the "New York Times" as an "expert in civil discourse," has worked as a facilitator and leadership trainer for the United Nations, the US House of Representatives, and a wide range of corporate and civic organizations around the world for more than a decade. He is the author of several books, including two bestsellers.