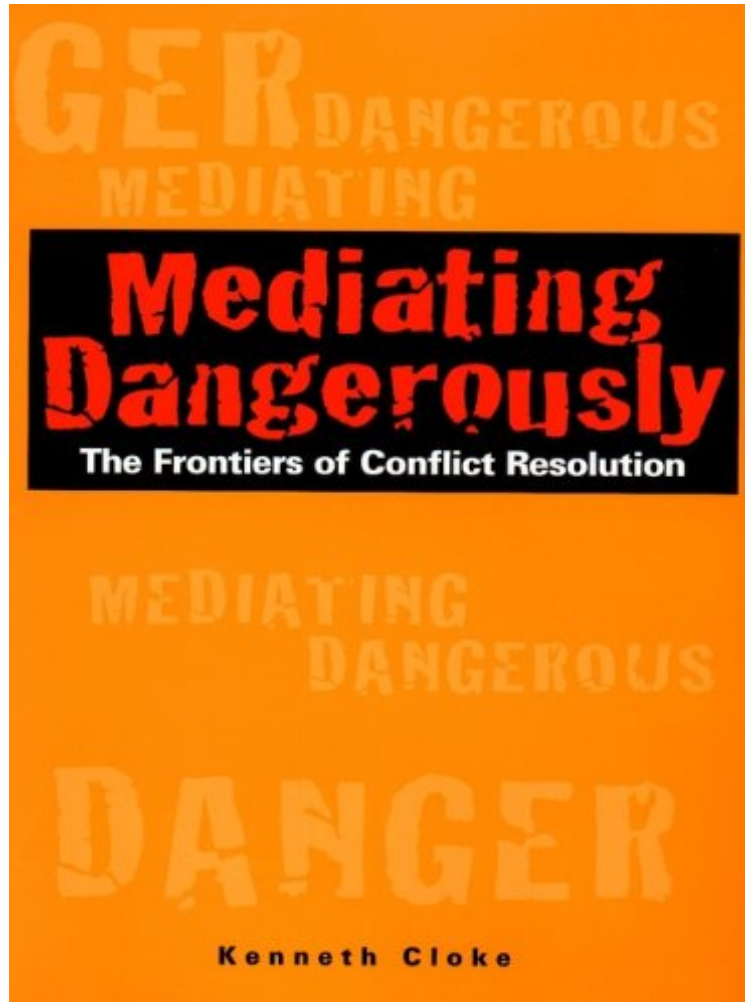


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Mediating Dangerously: The Frontiers of Conflict Resolution

Kenneth Cloke

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Kenneth Cloke : Mediating Dangerously: The Frontiers of Conflict Resolution before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mediating Dangerously: The Frontiers of Conflict Resolution:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. but they'd better know and trust what you're doing By R. Mullen If you come to mediation from the perspective of being on high and forcing some concept of "peace" on people in crisis, you will fail. It's just that simple. "Mediating dangerously" means being the adult in the room, but releasing the need to judge in favor of the need to listen and ask the *right* questions. You can't do that if you're on level one, asking stuff to poke or because you, yourself, are curious. This stuff is level 5, but it's stuff you need if the ultimate goals of mediation as a capacity-building exercise are to be met. This is not for the faint of heart, but there's really no other way to do it: you have to center yourself, read the angles and give it a go. You will get your nose smacked, but that's how you learn. Helps to have a co-mediator to monitor and support you, but they'd better know and trust what you're

doing!! And, yes, I've used these ideas to support resolution within the framework of those infamous 15-minute ...no, wait, the judge is calling you back after only 10 minutes....sessions that small claims courts often give you to resolve a dispute that has lasted 2 years. If you're serious about the craft of mediation, immerse yourself in Dr Cloke's work, -- then let it simmer. 22 of 24 people found the following review helpful. A valuable book with some flaws

By Bob Epstein
This is a passionate, in-your-face plea for exploring the difficult process of transformational mediation, truly digging into the roots, the skin, the pores of people's, group's and organization's conflicts (although Cloke denies being a wholehearted transformational mediation believer). Cloke is the highly respected author of numerous books on conflict resolution and the director of the Center for Dispute Resolution in Santa Monica, Calif. He has a very fine sense of the nature of conflict, in all its rough-and-tumble, down-and-dirty depth and breadth. Cloke deftly and deeply explores the psychological, emotional and spiritual nature of conflict within each of us - an important facet of mediation. But sometimes, in his very exploration of these matters, he overreaches in his hopes of what mediation can accomplish. Certainly, in the confines of community mediation, even generally with only few participants involved, there is just so much of transformational mediation, of this deep personal examination that one can accomplish in basically a two-hour time period, the general length of most community mediations, at least in most of the United States, I believe. I find Cloke veering toward encouraging counseling and psychotherapy as part of mediation. Mediators are rarely trained in these and other similar fields and should tread lightly when going beyond their skill level and the parameters of mediation itself. In other forms of more in-depth and complex mediation, these possibilities might be explored, but in community mediation, it hardly seems likely or even possible. Cloke does come up with some astute observations. He says to not be afraid of conflict, which obviously can become tense and heated. This is very important, especially in Minnesota (where I've been a community mediator for 19 years), where people are frequently afraid of confrontation, of raising of the voice, where, from my understanding, the introductory comments of Minneapolis Mediation Program mediators are supposed to include saying basically that the participants should not raise their voice and not get confrontational, something I have never been comfortable saying, and something I as a mediator rarely do indeed mention. He gives an outstanding list of questions mediators can use in exploring conflicts (pages 37-38), citing a specific case of bullying. Mediation absolutely benefits from deep and clear thinking, and this series of questions is an excellent example of how a mediator can explore participants' conflicts in a very thoughtful and crucial way. This is a very valuable exploration. Cloke does a very good job of telling and showing how to become a better, more insightful mediator, a more self-examined mediator and person. Sometimes, however, Cloke can have his head in the clouds in his hopes and dreams of what mediation can be. On page 47 he mentions "...moving conflicts beyond settlement and resolution, beyond resolution to personal and organizational transformation, and beyond transformation to transcendence" (page 47). Whew! Made me feel like I was at an EST seminar and what exactly was he smoking? But better to have a grand vision and greater reach than to have a small and puny mind. No one could accuse Ken Cloke of that. He spends pages trying to define "spirit" and gets nowhere. He is just too New Agey in this and some other regards. Still, there is much valuable and thought-provoking material in this first half of the book, entitled "The Inner Frontiers." The book's second half, "The Outer Frontiers," is less successful, discussing the larger issues of overcoming fascism and racism, building community, the limits of law, transforming institutional systems, etc. His plea for an issues-based thought process is delightful, and when we can convince dictators and warring tribes about this the world will be a better place. But hey, put out the ideas. Dream. Here some readers will find Cloke a visionary, others a dreamer. I lean toward the latter but admire his reach. I feel Cloke has little here that can be of use to a mediator. But if schools, businesses, government bodies and so on can use this kind of thinking and make some inroads on change and growth, wonderful. He does make a bold plea for the value of mediating domestic abuse, something mediation, in my opinion, correctly has avoided. With all his arguments, he fails to make the most important one: the imbalance of power between the parties. An obvious omission. "Mediating Dangerously" can be of significant benefit to both the beginner and experienced mediator, although the complexities Cloke often delves into are much more likely to be of value to an experienced mediator who can more relate to these situations from the very fact of having gone through them. Still, they can be a valuable learning experience for the new mediator. In spite of some flaws, "Mediating Dangerously" is a valuable resource.

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A great resource for challenging times

By Tesa S.
A well-known lawyer and mediator at the Center for Understanding in Conflict highly recommended this book during my first training. Intrigued by the title, I ordered the Kindle version that same day. Discovering the possibilities of conflict-resolution through Kenneth Cloke's eyes was an exhilarating experience. He is not just a highly skilled lawyer and bold mediator. He is also a visionary, a systems thinker, and a poetic writer, who has mastered the art of using words (and questions) to open people's mind and heart to the extraordinary opportunities which personal and collective conflicts offer us, when we are prepared to engage them more deeply and courageously than is customary. I was so taken with this book that I ended googling and contacting the author to find out whether I could train with him. And this has been a wonderful adventure as well. Mediating Dangerously is primarily geared toward professional mediators, but I think that anyone involved in conflicts (i.e. pretty much all of us!) could benefit a great deal from developing the kinds of mediating, bridge-building, and self-reflecting skills which this book invites us to cultivate. These are the fierce, not the timid kind. They

require a willingness to look at how our own inner conflicts, fears, triggers, and blind spots impact the way we show up (or don't show up) on behalf of what we say we care about and want. If, like me, you do not wish to be a complacent witness to this world's violence, injustices, corruption, craziness, and you also do not want to join the finger-pointing fest, you will find a lot of wisdom and guidance about how to show up in more constructive and courageous ways, whether or not you are a mediator. There are no simplistic solutions or formulaic strategies offered here, but deeply thought-provoking lenses and inquiries to build our capacity to mediate or engage conflicts in more transformative ways, and to understand what prompts us to avoid, suppress, project, oppress; or seek peace (or war) at the expense of justice, inclusiveness, creativity, and building bridges across divides. Here are a few chapter titles to stir your curiosity: Honesty and Empathy: Speaking the Unspeakable - Exploring the Conflicts Within Ourselves - Mediating Fear, Apathy, Insanity and Dishonesty - Conflict as a Spiritual Path - Mediating Fascism and Oppressive Relationships - Creating Responsible Communities - Shifting from Debate to Dialogue - Improving the Way we Fight - Transforming the System.

Sometimes it's necessary to push beyond the usual limits of the mediation process to achieve deeper and more lasting change. *Mediating Dangerously* shows how to reach beyond technical and traditional intervention to the outer edges and dark places of dispute resolution, where risk taking is essential and fundamental change is the desired result. It means opening wounds and looking beneath the surface, challenging comfortable assumptions, and exploring dangerous issues such as dishonesty, denial, apathy, domestic violence, grief, war, and slavery in order to reach a deeper level of transformational change. *Mediating Dangerously* shows conflict resolution professionals how to advance beyond the traditional steps, procedures, and techniques of mediation to unveil its invisible heart and soul and to reveal the subtle and sensitive engine that drives the process of personal and organizational transformation. This book is a major new contribution to the literature of conflict resolution that will inspire and educate professionals in the field for years to come.

"*Mediating Dangerously* is, as all of Cloke's books, a book to buy." (The Texas Mediator, January 2002) "Cloke writes with passion..." (Dispute Resolution Journal, October 2002) "If you want to stretch your thinking about the art of mediation, Ken Cloke's new book is for you. *Mediating Dangerously* is packed with enough thought-provoking ideas for ten books." —William Ury, author, *The Third Side: Why We Fight and How We Can Stop* "Cloke has tremendous insight into the psychology of the mediation process and its potential for profound impact on the mediator as well as the disputing parties. One of the most provocative and useful new books in the field." —Christopher Moore, managing partner, CDR Associates, and author of *The Mediation Process: Practical Strategies for Resolving Conflict* *Mediating Dangerously* presents an invaluable mediating model and process for systemic change and conflict resolution. Kenneth Cloke's ideas can be applied to developing new justice models and addressing racism, xenophobia, ethnic and national minority conflict, and international conflict. His approach is inspiring and innovative." —Ray Schonholtz, president, Partners for Democratic Change "Shows how a trained ear, an open mind, a respectful and intuitive stance, and humane values can lay the foundation for a broad and flexible repertoire of effective third-party practices." —Laura Chasin, director, Public Conversations Project, Watertown, Massachusetts "Gather a few friends and colleagues around the fireplace, break open a bottle of sherry, pick a chapter of Ken Cloke's *Mediating Dangerously* and prepare for an evening of mind-sparking conversation." —Albie Davis

In this inspiring new vision of the art of conflict resolution, Kenneth Cloke shows new and accomplished mediators how to examine the inner processes and hidden personal recesses that limit their effectiveness, as well as the outside systems and structures that restrict their capacity to act on what they have learned. Cloke explores the dark places—the edges, boundaries, and possibilities of mediation. He reveals how to approach dangerous conflicts—domestic violence, war, slavery, fascism, insanity, and oppression—to uncover hidden choices and transformational opportunities that help people and organizations develop, grow, and learn more about themselves. Offering a wealth of fresh possibilities, *Mediating Dangerously* identifies potential openings, creative techniques, and new and unusual approaches to dispute resolution. The book includes specific guidelines, questions to ask, sample dialogues, checklists, and diagrams to help readers apply new techniques immediately in their current practice. The inevitable stress and pain of conflict can lure mediation professionals into taking the easy route to a quick compromise. But, claims Cloke, the role of mediators is not simply to settle conflicts or fashion agreements, but to create choices. This means going further, taking risks, opening wounds, and exploring dangerous terrain to locate the center of what isn't working. It requires great courage, honesty, and self-knowledge to open a Pandora's box of fear, resistance, dishonesty, revenge, oppression, and all the defenses and rationalizations that keep individuals, organizations, and societies locked in conflict. *Mediating Dangerously* shows conflict resolution professionals how to advance beyond the traditional steps, procedures, and techniques of mediation to unveil its invisible heart and soul and to reveal the subtle and sensitive engine that drives the process of personal and organizational transformation. This book is a major new contribution to the literature of conflict resolution that will inspire and educate professionals in the field for years to come. The Author Kenneth Cloke, director of the Center for Dispute Resolution in Santa Monica, California, has been a mediator, arbitrator,

university professor, judge, counselor, coach, consultant, trainer, and designer of resolutions systems for over thirty years. He is the author of several books, including *Resolving Conflicts at Work* and *Resolving Personal and Organizational Conflict* (both with Joan Goldsmith, Jossey-Bass, 2000).