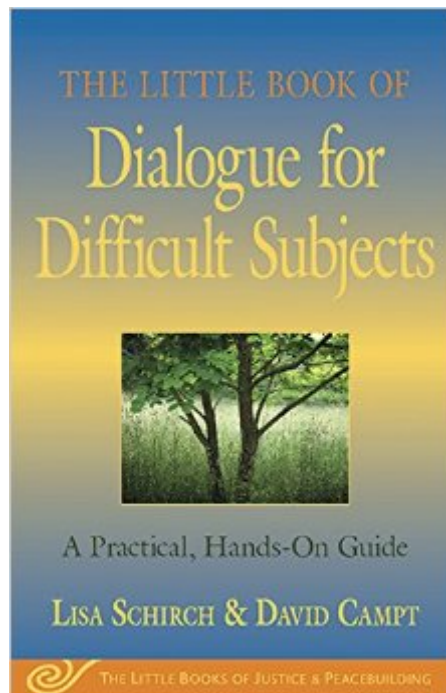


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The Little Book Of Dialogue For Difficult Subjects: A Practical, Hands-On Guide (Little Books Of Justice & Peacebuilding)



Synopsis

The word "dialogue" suffers from over-use, yet its practice is as transforming and as freshly hopeful as ever. Authors Schirch and Campt demonstrate dialogue's life and possibilities in this clear and absorbing manual: "Dialogue allows people in conflict to listen to each other, affirm their common ground, and explore their differences in a safe environment." Schirch has worked throughout the Southern hemisphere in peacebuilding projects. Campt has focused on racial and class reconciliation in American cities.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

My expertise in facilitating difficult dialogue has been earned mainly through hard experience, but reading this book made me feel more equipped, and even excited, about the possibilities of facilitating more dialogue in a systematic way in my personal and professional lives. I am a counseling psychologist who has worked with individuals, couples, groups, and organizations in improving communication and resolving conflict. Within organizations and within families there are often many stakeholders with different perspectives. Everyone is working to take action or make changes, but often the important dialogue about different perspectives is absent - and can lead to larger conflicts, misunderstandings, and impaired productivity down the line. This methodology could help in so many different work settings and communities, not to mention within families. The practical, step-by-step style of this book is its most significant strength. That the book was able to

evoke a feeling in me of desire to approach, rather than avoid, difficult discussions, is truly inspiring. This book lives up to its title of being the "little" book - it's a quick 90-page read. I appreciated this given the bookshelves of half-read books in my office. It occurred to me upon finishing the book that the authors have done a great service by giving readers a digestible chunk of a large topic. Because facilitating dialogue is a skill, readers are best served initially by having the process simplified and explained with concrete examples. Lest you think my comments imply that only laypersons and novices will find this book helpful, let me point out that the book places the methodology within the context of social change processes.

This book amazed me in its simplicity and profound insights. As an instructor and practitioner in conflict resolution, I have read many books and journal articles on the topic of dialogue. This little book takes the concept of "dialogue" to a whole new level of clarity, compassion, and higher understanding. It reminds us that our future survival on planet earth - amidst our pressing global concerns - depends on our abilities to creatively address our problems through dialogue for positive social change. This is the same message that the Dalai Lama shares in his public talks: we need to promote the spirit of dialogue and cease the use of violence to resolve differences among people. Lisa Schirch and David Campt approach their book in simple terms that most people can understand. All the while, there is a rich depth in their writing that reveals the fact that the authors are highly educated and experienced practitioners in the field of dialogue. Their use of examples, interspersed throughout the book, draw on their unique experiences yet distill universally applicable guidelines, challenges, and solutions for people everywhere. As dialogues begin in my own community, I will use this book as a template to guide the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of the dialogues. The book gave me insights on how to articulate the distinctions of dialogue from other communication processes and it helped me to better understand important ideas for designing dialogue. While reading the book, I often heard my mind thinking: "ah-ha . . . that's interesting . . . I never thought of it like that before." I believe that this book is critical for anyone involved in holding dialogues for community transformation.

We have all had the human experience of losing something of value to us, and then finding it again. Reading *The Little Book of Dialogue* feels like that, only, in this case the reader didn't know what an incredible thing it was that had been lost. What the authors reveal in this handbook, in simple and powerful ways, are the essentials of a human communication and interaction practice theory. This slim volume distills the organizing principles for creating higher-level discussion in small or large

groups. It is a kit of tools for enhancing a variety of conversations and interactions, from improving day-to-day conversations, all the way up to and including how to organize, publicize and facilitate dialogues on a range of issues and shared concerns. David Campt has probed across cultures to refine the best of human interaction principles and has created a simply yet powerful way of thinking about dialogue, around these principles. He has drawn from years of practice with all of the ideas in the book, honing, compressing, and buffing them into an elegantly-simple-yet-hugely-powerful-Gem of a book! All the paths are laid out, you can't get Lost! The winter holidays and the new year are upon us--with all of the rich and varied ways of giving. This year, for the price of a pack of cigarettes, or a mocha latte espresso lite you can give a real gift--one that will help people have better conversations in their lives. Even if you never engage in a dialogue, this book will provide you with simple, fundamental ways you can flex your approach in conversations with associates, customers, and family, and increase the mutual experience.

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