



Finding New Ground

Robert J. Chadwick

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Conflict is at the heart of life. It impacts relationships of the heart, the home, the community, and at work. Most flee from it, some embrace it, but few learn how to master conflict and productively transform it into a consensus. Author Robert Chadwick is one of those few. For over forty years, he has been helping individuals and communities experience and learn how to best address their personal, interpersonal, and intergroup conflicts. In *Finding New Ground*, he shares his insights and a process from his storied career as a conflict resolution manager. He shows readers how to apply these insights and the process in their own life situations, finding new ground in their relationships, creating a path to a way of being that changes everyone around them. The author's purpose is to help you experience, learn, and understand a process for addressing and resolving conflicts and building consensus with 100 percent agreement. The book informs readers on how people define conflict, their feelings about it, what causes it, the arenas in which it occurs, and why conflict must always be confronted. It demonstrates why people avoid resolving their conflicts. It demonstrates what a true consensus is and why it is always possible. A central section of the book explores an intergroup conflict that erupts over the use of a fictional river basin in the American West. This fictional account is based on Chadwick's real-life experience, providing a context for learning about the process in a real way. You are part of the story as a co-facilitator with the author. Throughout this story the actual words and statements of previous workshop participants are used to create a sense of reality. Through this story, the reader will vicariously experience and understand the complexity of this simple consensus building process and learn how to apply the skills and tools for finding new ground. These include the use of the circle, listening with respect, empowering yourself and others, creating a sense of equity, and fostering a sense of community. This real life situation shows how a conflict-riddled group moved from divisiveness and animosity to consensus while they crafted a short term purpose, a long term vision, articulated shared beliefs, and developed a common strategic plan. His model of consensus building has worked across different cultures. It has been deployed in countries like India, Thailand, Canada, Hong Kong, Russia, and Belgium. His workshop participants cut a wide swath through contemporary society, ranging from loggers and librarians to police officers, educators, and professional managers. His methods have been used by people from a range of ages, from kindergarten students to senior citizens in their ninth decade of life. Chadwick's book presents a proven transformative model for addressing contemporary conflicts and building consensus. Individuals, families, community, churches, and businesses all stand to learn a lot from his unique approach to finding new ground. His method is grounded in reality, and through building consensus allows participants to move beyond the hostility of conflict to fostering the creation of civility and community.

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