

Standing in the Fire: Leading High-Heat Meetings with Clarity, Calm, and Courage

Larry Dressler

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Standing in the Fire: Leading High-Heat Meetings with Clarity, Calm, and Courage Larry Dressler Shows that the key to effectively leading difficult meetings lies not in acquiring more tools and techniques but in your state of mind

Offers dozens of stories, exercises and practices to help readers cultivate a grounded, compassionate, purposeful presence

Draws on Dressler's interviews with 35 distinguished experts in facilitation, negotiation, organizational development and leadership

High heat meetings seem to be happening in more and more organizations these days. Situations where participants are polarized, angry, fearful, confused. If you facilitate meetings for a living, all your well-learned techniques won't help you in volatile and unpredictable situations like this. If you lead meetings as simply one part of your job, you probably feel even less able to cope.

The answer is not another technique—not something you do to people. Veteran facilitator Larry Dressler has learned the hard way that when stakes are high, outcomes uncertain, and emotions running wild what makes the crucial difference is the leader's presence. To work with people in high-heat meetings you have to work on yourself.

Standing in the Fire shares not just Dressler's experiences but also the insights of 35 iconic facilitators, leaders, conveners, and change agents, all with an eye to helping you stay grounded and focused enough to make the kind of inventive, split-second decisions these pressure-cooker situations demand. He outlines the mindsets, the emotional and physical ways of being that will enable you to master yourself so you can remain firmly in service to the group, and offers dozens of practices for cultivating these capabilities before, during and after any meeting.

In meetings as in the natural world fire can be creative rather than destructive—but only if handled skillfully. Standing in the Fire gives you everything you need to keep from being draw into the inferno yourself and instead become a masterful fire tender.



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