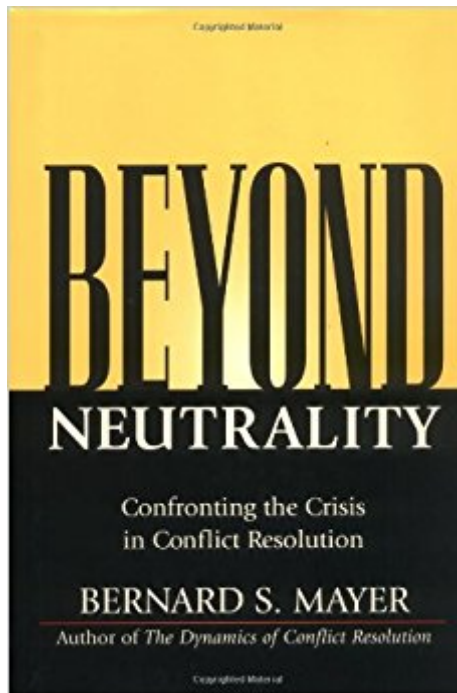




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# Beyond Neutrality: Confronting The Crisis In Conflict Resolution



## Synopsis

In this thought-provoking, passionately written book, Bernard Mayer – an internationally acclaimed leader in the field – dares practitioners to ask the hard questions about alternative dispute resolution. What’s wrong with conflict resolution? Why aren’t more individuals and organizations using conflict resolution when they have a problem? Why doesn’t the public know more about it? What are the limits of conflict resolution? When does conflict resolution work and when does it not? – Offering a committed practitioner’s critique of the profession of mediation, arbitration, and alternative dispute resolution, *Beyond Neutrality* focuses on the current crisis in the field of conflict resolution and offers a pragmatic response.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“In this passionate and provocative book, Bernie Mayer challenges the field of conflict resolution to reinvent itself so as to include advocacy and engagement at its core. Mayer practices what he preaches by engaging us in a vital discussion sure to stir productive controversy.” –William Ury, co-author, *Getting to Yes* and author, *The Third Side* “Takes us into challenging and potentially transforming territory by shedding light on how too narrow a commitment to neutrality or an exclusive focus on resolving disputes can limit our usefulness in the clashes of passion, positions, and power struggles inherent in how people actually confront (and avoid) their deepest conflicts.” –Gail Bingham, president, RESOLVE, Inc. “As

professional fields develop, people look back and identify a few books that stand out because they marked turning points wherein the stroke of a pen incisively pushed both theory and practice to a higher plane of understanding and purpose. Beyond Neutrality will mark such a place for the conflict resolution field in the first decade of this century.

—John Paul Lederach, professor, the Kroc Institute and Eastern Mennonite University

“This book will inspire conversations that will shape our field for years to come.”

—David Hart, CEO, Association for Conflict Resolution

“Guaranteed to spark lively debate and dialogue.”

—Nina Meierding, former president, Academy of Family Mediators

“The first major step toward the field’s second wave.”

—Christopher Honeyman, director, Broad Field Project

“Berine Mayer’s book is honest, forthright, and filled with wise and loving criticism for the field of conflict resolution that has significantly helped to build.”

—Jay Rothman, president, ARIA Group, and author, Resolving Identity-Based Conflict in Nations, Organizations and Communities

“Mayer exposes some tough realities that focus on how we have limited our identity, narrowly defined what we do, and why disputants don’t always like what we have to offer.”

—Brian Polkinghorn, associate professor, Conflict Analysis and Dispute Resolution, and executive director, Center for Conflict Resolution, Salisbury University

“Beyond Neutrality is a foundational work for creating a deepened, more robust field. The premises of this book will be debated, revised, and expanded, but they will set the agenda for our field for the next generation.”

—Carl Schneider, director, Mediation Matters, Bethesda, Maryland

In this thought-provoking, passionately written book, Bernard S. Mayer—an internationally acclaimed leader in the field—dares practitioners to ask the hard questions about alternative dispute resolution. What’s wrong with conflict resolution? Why aren’t more individuals and organizations using conflict resolution when they have a problem? Why doesn’t the public know more about it? What are the limits of conflict resolution? When does conflict resolution work and when does it not? Offering a committed practitioner’s critique of the profession of mediation, arbitration, and alternative dispute resolution, Beyond Neutrality focuses on the current crisis in the field of conflict resolution and offers a pragmatic response. Mayer urges practitioners to evolve from resolution to engagement and actual advocacy, going beyond neutrality in order to redefine conflict resolution at a level of participation more appropriate to the current era. Mayer argues that to be more effective, conflict resolution professionals must become conflict engagement specialists and thereby become a more powerful force for changing the way conflict is conducted. By building on the old roles of mediators and facilitators, conflict resolution professionals can

dramatically expand what they offer to people in conflict. Beyond Neutrality challenges mediators, arbitrators, therapists, attorneys, and counselors to take conflict resolution to the next level of effectiveness, utility, and engagement.

I am a mediator in training, and I found this book to be very helpful. I am intrigued by the idea of neutrality in mediation, and this book has a chapter dedicated to that exact subject. Highly recommended.

This is an excellent source for a student of conflict resolution. It helps the student to open up to creative thinking and problem solving by considering conflicts from other perspectives.

I love Bernie's books! I can't wait to read the next one!

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Good Condition

In Mr. Mayer's book "Beyond Neutrality" he tackles several problems that mediators have virtually avoided for the last 30 years. The concept of neutrality itself is one of those such topics. Mediators see themselves as "Neutral" but Mr. Mayer posits that really there is no such thing as neutral in the truest sense. That is, all mediators bring to any case, all the emotional, personal and spiritual baggage that makes up their life choices and moral values. All of us have some Political Affiliation, or we have NONE, which is in effect, the absence of any one. We each are either male or female, we have opinions about labor and management, we have various age biases, prejudices and the like, which we bring to every mediation. Thus can anyone really be fully neutral? Perhaps not. Yet this should not stop us in our objective to help people deal with the problems of life. Rather, we should redefine what we do, so it encompasses what the client might need, not just our definition of a narrow range of activity, i.e. A Mediator. Specifically, Mayer suggests that we look at the techniques and skills in such fields as facilitation, arbitration, negotiation and coaching. All of these avocations have intersecting skill sets. Each of these groups could teach a lot to the other groups, and vice versa. At this time, when mediation is finally really showing some benefits to many, we must now

examine, where we see mediation going in the future, and how we wish to be involved with that evolution of the field. If nothing else, Mr. Mayer's book raises questions about ethics and values that we should have been talking about for the last 30 years.

Bernie Mayer addresses the crucial premise of the necessity and benefit of getting mediation on the radar of everyone! His book is a practical must read for anyone in the conflict resolution and management field. Dr. Barbara Sunderland Manousso, CEO of Manousso Mediation Training and ADR Services and International Mediation Resource Center, based in Houston, TX.

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