



# THE MEDIATOR'S TOOLKIT: FORMULATING AND ASKING QUESTIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES

Gerry O'Sullivan. New Society Publishing, Canada (available from 4 October 2018). [www.newsociety.com](http://www.newsociety.com). Price: Stg19.99 (incl VAT).

To every plumber, their toolbox. To every mediator, this book...

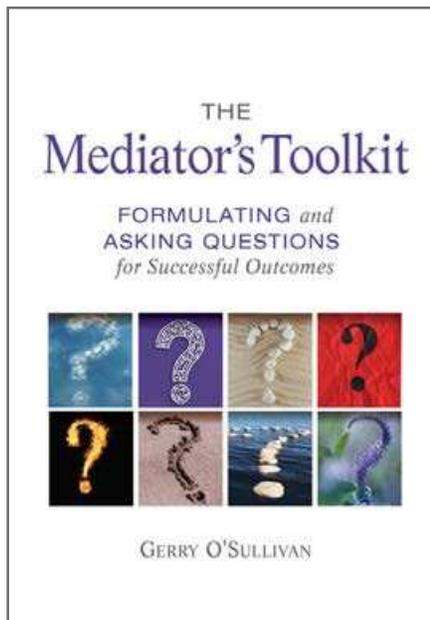
We spend so much of our working lives asking questions. They are our basic tools for understanding our clients' needs, and yet we rarely – if ever – reflect on whether these essential tools are fit for purpose.

Gerry O'Sullivan has dedicated her working life to uncovering the sources of conflict in disputing parties and enabling them, through her interventions as a mediator, to craft robust solutions from seemingly impossible depths of entrenchment.

In this book, O'Sullivan draws on this experience and marries it with an emerging body of neuroscientific research. The result is a masterpiece from a seasoned practitioner in the art of unblocking communication channels (rather than unblocking pipes – you see where I am going with this...). It is a practical guide that identifies links between the positions that parties in conflict adopt, and the interventions that can unlock the multitude of barriers along the path to resolution.

Although the book was written with a mediator readership in mind, legal practitioners will find it valuable also. It provides useful insights into the psychology of the human mind in conflict, and casts light on the utility that appropriate use of questioning can bring to a client who is experiencing conflict.

A mediator's role is to provide a process that is thoughtfully steered and calculated to achieve what a party in conflict needs – that is, paradigm shift in thinking that can move their mind into a positive, solutions-focused mindset. This is achieved by using appropriate questions. This book provides mediators with a clear, solid structure to master these essential skills of the mediation process.



Despite hundreds of hours of mediation experience, I found myself experiencing many 'aha!' moments while immersed in these pages. It provides a solid foundation in the types of questions that can be used in mediation, how to build these questions, and when, how and why to use them.

To persist with my awkward plumbing analogy, I am satisfied that an investment in this book will allow the magic of mediation to flow. [g](#)

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