Conflict as an Advantage

What great leaders do before the lawyers arrive

We often talk about the “fear of conflict”: but most leaders don’t fear conflict as such. They fear the mess that comes from handling it too late, or in the wrong way. This keynote shows how to turn early tension into a strategic advantage instead of a legal problem. You’ll learn simple ways to spot friction before it explodes in your face, surface the real issue in a delicate yet crystal clear way, and run conversations that cut through politics and superficial talk. If you want higher-quality decisions, fewer escalations, and people speaking openly instead of hiding behind artificial harmony, this is the keynote you book.

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Frank Garten

CONFLICT: GREAT. LET'S ENTER DISCOMFORT.

Conflict is a resource, not a fire to avoid. Tension should be treated as an early signal that competing views are at work. The goal is to use these views to innovate, to learn, and to connect with others. It is an invitation to surface what's really at stake, remove politics, and focus on the insights that improve our business.

Handled early, conflict is your fastest tool to good decisions. We start by mapping what others miss: avoidance patterns, triangulation, and the "polite narratives" that predict later escalation. The 'Early-Warning Map' makes tensions visible, identifies interests and power, and shows where to step in.

Learn to make the unsaid sayable, without drama. Set a shared outcome, invite dissent from participants, and test assumptions in plain language. The conversation about the competing views is run with tight roles and rules, so defensive responses don't overtake rational moves.

Then we make choices stick. We clarify ownership, identify derailers, kill unnecessary roadblocks and bring conversations back to polite, yet sharp and clear exchanges. Especially in a global, multi-cultural setting, conflict is a source of higher quality and better decisions, if handled with tact.

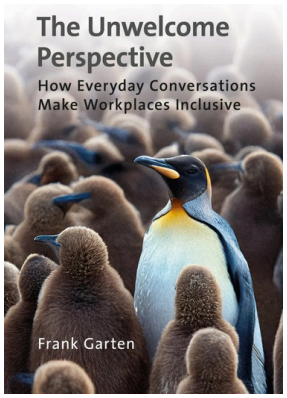
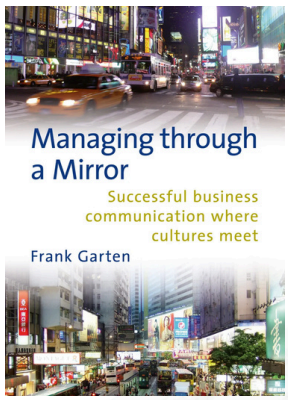
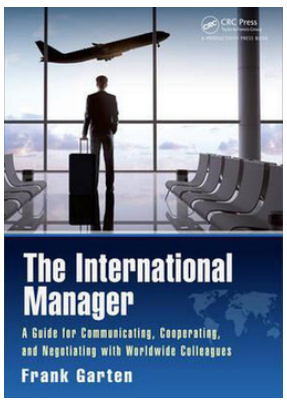
CONTENT

- Early-Warning Map: spot avoidance, triangulation, sarcasm, and email sniping; map interests and power.
- 10-Minute Reset Protocol: exact steps to surface the unsaid and reset the room without losing trust.
- The 'Decision-Hold Check' routine: stress-test to assess risks, dependencies, and communications so choices stick across levels and cultures.
- Meeting mechanics: roles, timeboxes, and ground rules that keep tension healthy and productive.
- Language for hard truths: ask for what's meant, not just what's said; invite dissent and welcome it.
- Use emotions to your advantage: in hard business contexts, emotions are not to be suppressed, but explored.

Frank Garten

PRACTICAL

Frank's keynotes are lively, funny, yet grounded in deep research about the topics he is speaking about. Striving for maximum interaction, he will invite the different perspectives living in the room. Use his keynotes as a catalyst to discuss the undiscussable with your teams, or include a talk by Frank in the next offsite when different – and perhaps unwelcome – perspectives should be voiced.

Keynotes are 30-75 minutes and always tailored to the needs of your audience, and your intentions for the event.

Frank's Books