

## International Reader Reviews

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**Lee Say Keng**  
Amazon.com Top 500 Reviewer  
Singapore

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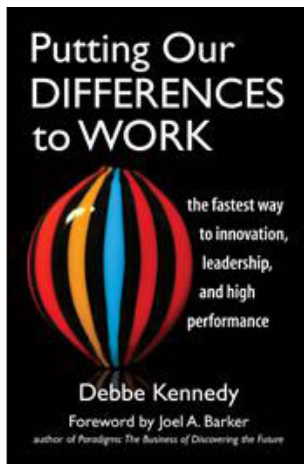
**Xuan Feng, M.A.** Master graduate, researcher and practitioner  
Ludwig-Maximilians-University, **Munich, Germany**  
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*Putting Our Differences to Work: The Fastest Way to Innovation, Leadership, and High Performance* is worthy of the name. The book itself is an amazing manifold of cutting-edge research and real-world examples, inspiring quotes and beautiful poems, engaging life stories and practical business cases, those old virtues and new technologies. Debbe Kennedy invites you into a whole new world of diversity at work. There you learn new concepts, knowledge, and many innovative products; you meet leaders with Five Distinctive Qualities and people from different backgrounds; you watch, you listen, you learn, you take your time to reflect, and most importantly you ACT!

Apart from its form, the core ideas of *Putting our difference to work* are of profound significance. Seldom you find a book that draws together so visionary elements of our time and for our future-innovation, leadership, diversity and inclusion, accompanied with a mass of wisdom, insight, know-how and human spirits.

For me personally, this book is a big treasure, where I discover the fascination of diversity, stretching myself and see the world in a big picture. This book is a guide, with which I practice leadership and experiment innovation in this *globalized* world. Debbe Kennedy's book is a great inspiration, for me, and I believe, for our young generation, and for people who live in other parts of the world – because DIVERSITY is *beyond boundaries*!

I highly recommend *Putting our difference to work* and I hope more people in non-English speaking countries could also learn this beautiful piece of wisdom and together we are making a better world!



**Lee Say Keng** Founder, Owner & Principal Consultant  
Optimum Performance Technologies  
Amazon.com **TOP 500 REVIEWER** ★★★★★

**"The author, a superb tale blazer, offers a great roadmap to exploit diversity, as diversity accelerates innovation!"**

'Putting Our Differences to Work: The Fastest Way to Innovation, Leadership & High Performance' by Debbe Kennedy

"Diversity accelerates innovation to everyone's advantage..."

The foregoing more or less sums up the gist of the book.

In fact, it has been extracted from the 'Foreword' by futurist/strategist Joel Arthur Barker to the book, 'Putting Our Differences to Work: The Fastest Way to Innovation, Leadership & High Performance', by Debbe Kennedy. [Both consultants/authors have been relatively long-time collaborators.]

Frankly speaking, it's Joel Arthur Barker's particular contribution of 'Chapter 10: Innovation at the Verge of Differences' & 'Chapter 11: Collaborating at the Verge of Differences' that has initially attracted me to read the book.

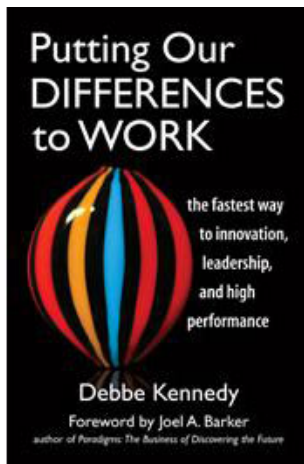
On the other hand, I am also familiar with the author (Debbe Kennedy)'s previous work, namely, 'Breakthrough! The Problem Solving Advantage' (1998) & 'Action Dialogues: Meaningful Conversations to Accelerate Change, (2000), as well as her complete 'Strategic Action Series' (2000) of short & snappy booklets, total six of them, comprising:

- 'Assessment: Defining Current Realities';
- 'Acceptance: Developing Support for Change';
- 'Action: Moving Forward';
- 'Accountability: Establishing Shared Ownership';
- 'Achievement: measuring Progress/Celebrating Success';
- 'Diversity Breakthrough with More Action: Keeping Momentum Alive';

As a matter of fact, while running my own small retail outlet, aptly called 'The Brain Resource', in the Central Business District during the nineties, the nifty toolkit - 'Breakthrough!', in the form of a book/card deck/CD-ROM package - was included in my store repertoire.

I would add that the practicality & the utility of her earlier *thoughtwares* in the workplace actually earned her the reputation as a master problem solver.

For me, reading 'Putting Our Differences to Work' is like doing a partial refresher, because the book is almost an intellectual amalgam of all her previous works, particularly the entire section of Part 2, which replicates the 6-step iterative framework for putting diversity to work in fostering organisational change.



Before I move on further, I like to recap the preamble on the inside front flap of the book, which I thought has captured the essence of the book beautifully:

"Putting our differences to work means creating an environment where people, naturally unique & different - diverse by nature & experience - can work more effectively in ways that drive new levels of creativity, innovation, problem solving, leadership, & performance in the marketplaces, workplaces, & communities of the world."

In addition to the six-step model, with each step elaborated in a given chapter, combined with best practice stories, the rest of the book identifies the five distinctive qualities of leadership, that leaders must add to their skills portfolio - & the 16 dimensions of differences that leaders must understand - in order to make diversity an engine of success.

The book closes with a presentation on virtual gathering, involving web 2.0 technologies & other social media, which open up ever-expanding possibilities for putting diversity to work. These are included in Part 3 of the book, which also includes Joel Arthur Barker's contribution (Chapter 10 & 11), as mentioned earlier.

If readers are already familiar with the intersection of ideas, concepts & cultures, as embodied in the 'Medici Effect', proposed & authored by Frans Johansson, then readers will readily notice a relatively similar, but still interesting spin, given by Joel Arthur Barker in the two chapters.

Both authors have brilliantly asserted, with numerous illuminating examples, that by exploring the 'intersections' or 'verges', we may discover the next breakthrough ideas.

As Joel Arthur Barker puts it, to dovetail with Debbe Kennedy's principal premise of the book: "...Without diversity, there can be no verges. Celebrate the differences. Enlarge the differences. It creates more options for innovation."

Overall, I must say that the book is a great road-map on harnessing people's rich & diverse experiences, cultures, & perspectives to attract growth & sustain innovation.

Best of all, the author is a superb *talé blazer*, & her writing is clear, succinct & concise, with a key-point summary at the end of each chapter, which makes reading & recap a breeze.

**Highly recommended.**