



reader reviews

“What Debbe has done is create a series of easy-to-follow guidelines, instructions, and suggestions for your organization – and every leader in it – on how to utilize diversity to increase innovation. Every one of her ideas has

been tested by her in multiple settings. She’s also included a special section referencing key studies, tools, and other resources for you to do your own explorations.

What I like best about *Putting Our Differences to Work* is that Debbe teaches us how diversity accelerates innovation to everyone’s advantage. This is a win-win-win book in which you and your people win, your organization wins, and the world wins.”

Excerpt from FOREWORD by **Joel A. Barker**
Futurist, filmmaker and bestselling author,
Paradigms: The Business of Discovering the Future

“The power of Debbe Kennedy’s storytelling helps us all see our own accomplishments in a new light. At the same time, the stories encourage us to take our leadership to a new level. The six steps she offers provide a roadmap to leaders and organizations on how to effectively put differences to work.”

–**Emily J. Duncan**
former Vice President, Culture and Diversity, Hewlett Packard
Emily Duncan Consulting

“Personal, reflective, insightful and inspirational. Full of great ideas and a very powerful story that shows how we need to redefine leadership and diversity in order to help make the world a better place. Needs to be widely read – urgently!”

–**Dr. Bruce Lloyd**
Professor of Strategic Management, Emeritus
London South Bank University

“Leaders must find new sources of growth more than ever today. After questioning what leadership means while reading *Putting Our Differences to Work*, I found myself focused on one thing: I, the leader, must first harness our people’s rich and diverse experiences, cultures and perspectives to attract growth.” Debbe Kennedy compels us to see the source of unimagined growth that is locked within the people in our organization. Unlock, innovate and win... together.”

–**Lane A. Michel**
Executive Vice President, Quaero Corporation
Accelerating Marketing Performance

“The dangers of ‘groupthink’ are painfully apparent across our world. That’s why diversity, broadly understood, is so essential to innovation and progress – as Debbe Kennedy reminds us in this pragmatic and wise guide for leaders.”

–**Mike Wing**
Vice President, Strategic Communications, IBM

“Rarely has there been a more relevant, more needed guidebook for leaders of the future than *Putting Our Differences to Work*. Debbe Kennedy has illuminated diversity, innovation, and leadership in a way that will help leaders across the sectors to redefine the future in our times of massive change.”

–**Frances Hesselbein**
Chairman and Founding President Leader to Leader Institute;
Former CEO, Girl Scouts of America

“What an amazing contribution to the debate on innovation and where it comes from... *Putting Our Differences to Work* illustrates beyond any measure of doubt that the world has completely misunderstood Diversity – that we are all unique and different for a purpose; that it is not traditional thinking or a particular intelligence or logic that will rescue us from the current morass; that the world needs leaders who both recognise that and who have the ability to tap into these differences – to bring their own humanity to activate the same in others. I am convinced you have discovered a gold mine... what a powerful, profound and compelling argument for DIVERSITY! You give so much HOPE for the future.”

–**Wendy Luhabe**
Chancellor, University of Johannesburg
South Africa

“Debbe Kennedy has produced a remarkable book, *Putting Our Differences to Work*, in which she provides a convincing case for the importance of differences at work for fostering innovation. She also offers a framework for engaging differences and putting them to work to foster changes in organizations (in all domains) that are essential in engaging effectively and developmentally with the turbulence of our time. ...This book is an important read for those stepping into leader roles in organizations today.”

–**Dr. Russ Volckmann**
Integral Leadership Review

“This book is a celebration. It’s also a handbook for a revolution in leadership, relationship and creativity. It celebrates and gives guidance for a future that is happening now and is accelerating and touching, thank God, every part of life around the world. Debbe Kennedy has worked and lead at the heart of this revolution of turning the ‘problem’ of differences between people into the gold of creativity and innovation for organizations and the planet. She guides you with fascinating stories, poems, art, visuals, solid approaches and heuristics, and resources that will be relevant for years to come. She’ll amaze you by the breadth of examples from a wide variety of walks of life, types of organizations and all corners of the globe. You’ll experience in almost a visceral way the ultimate creative act of leading people with all their differences, quirks, needs, and journeys to breakthroughs in relationship, innovation and fulfillment. You’ll see how technology, much of it done by Debbe in her Global Dialogue Center and working with her many clients, is changing the game of communicating, solving problems and creating opportunities. Finally, and most importantly in my mind, this is a beautiful book.”

–**Michael Ray**
Professor, Stanford University Graduate School of Business
John G. McCoy-Banc One Professor of Creativity and
Innovation and of Marketing, Emeritus
author of *Creativity in Business* and *The Highest Goal*

“Debbe Kennedy flips the paradigm of differences on its ear. Instead of using our differences to divide us or as fodder for gossip and time-wasting judgments about others, she champions the practical advantages to employing our differences for good use. Excellence, creativity, wisdom and – dare I say it – magic become reliable deliverables!”

–**John Renesch**
global futurist, author, *Getting to the Better Future*,
Founder, Future Shapers Institute



This book goes beyond the trite *diversity solution* parroted by many industrial leaders; in fact, in so many ways, it is not quite about diversity. Nor does the book apply to industries and businesses alone: from self-help/personal growth to family to management of nations and states, there is use for, and value in, this book. And, do not expect the kind of pedantic presentation of material typically seen in industrial and business white papers, executive summaries, consulting reports and the sort. The story-telling style used for this type of material is entirely refreshing (especially coming from an author steeped, as it were, in the tradition of business and industry): it makes for easy reading and mass appeal.

Often, one reads a book quite mindful of the title and generally oblivious of the subtitle: not this book. The title is married to the subtitle: keep this tight couple in mind in order to reap the most benefit from *Putting Our Differences...* the fastest way to innovation, leadership, and high performance. If there's only one book to read this year, make it *Putting Our Differences to Work*. You will be richer for that."

—**Oguchi Nkwocha, M.D.**

Igbo visionary from Biafra/south-eastern Nigeria

"Debbe Kennedy is one of those rare business book writers who *gets it*. She understands that the true value of a business book is the degree to which the book can actually be applied. *Putting Our Differences to Work* is valuable precisely because it can be applied by organizations of any size, starting TODAY.

Kennedy uses a clear, welcoming writing style to communicate real-life stories of change agents across the for-profit and non-profit spectrum who have employed the principles outlined in this book not only to transform their organizations, but literally to change the world for the better. The good news, as she shows us, is that whether you are an owner, C-level executive, manager or *rank and file* employee, we ALL have the resources necessary to transform our own organizations. That's because *diversity* goes beyond the traditional notions of gender, ethnicity and cultural diversity to include the myriad of as-yet untapped skills and talents of our co-workers, suppliers and customers. And these diverse talents, skills and resources are available to every one of us, every day. Debbe shows you how to identify and harness the power of these resources to transform your organization (or at least your piece of it).

Read this book for the wealth of information it contains. More important, learn from this book and APPLY IT. Debbe shows you how. Follow her lead and you'll enjoy watching your organization—and the world—change for the better."

—**Christopher G. Kenny, J.D.**

President, Star Consulting Group

"It has been said that diversity is the beginning of synergy. Yet creating synergy out of differences is much easier said than done. In *Putting Our Differences to Work*, Debbe Kennedy provides a conceptual framework and practical guide for leaders who are authentically committed to the value of diversity at work and to what diversity ultimately means, both individually and collectively, for their broadly-defined community of stakeholders. More than a treatise on participatory democracy (that is, the power of the people) in organizations, here's a book that seeks to harness the *collective wisdom*, known as *demosophia* in Greek (that is, the wisdom of the people), in order to drive performance and innovation to new heights.

—**Alex Pattakos, Ph.D.**

Founder, Center for Meaning and Principal, The Innovation Group
author, *Prisoners of Our Thoughts: Viktor Frankl's Principles for Discovering Deeper Meaning in Life and Work*

"Debbe Kennedy raised and resolved one of the biggest challenges all the corporations are facing today. In *Putting Our Differences to Work*, she takes you through case studies that made a difference, and will make a difference in your style of thinking by showing how your differences can bring synergy in whatever field you wish to excel. For an individual, this book gives insights on how best one can deal with diverse colleague. In short this book will certainly put your differences to WORK!"

—**Vasundhar Boddapati**

Systems Engineer, IBM India

"I own the hardcover version of the book *Putting Our Differences to Work: The Fastest Way to Innovation, Leadership, and High Performance*, but the book came to life when I was able to actually read the book as a PDF E-book (available at the publisher www.berrettkoehler.com/podtw). I am completely blind and I was very happy to find that the PDF E-book was accessible and read well with my screen reader.

I thoroughly enjoyed and found this book's fresh approach to leadership pioneering and inspiring. I love the true stories with key learning points from the many innovative leaders that are in this book. Debbe Kennedy truly knows the benefits of putting our differences to work and what it takes to be an effective leader.

I recommend this book to anyone who wants to utilize and value the differences in their complete workforce and gain an edge on their competitors. If you are looking to be a better leader in your organization, citizen in your community or the world this book is for you. Being completely blind myself I truly embrace others who can see the value and extraordinary benefits of differences in people."

—**Bill Tipton**

Project Manager, Hewlett Packard

"Too often diversity programs are seen as extraneous to the core business of the organization. In this powerful book, Debbe Kennedy offers convincing evidence that managing diversity is key to an organization's ability to innovate and adapt to a rapidly changing world. Using diversity as a strategic advantage requires that we know *how to put our differences to work*—how to align our different ways of thinking and seeing the world to create breakthrough products and solutions. The *Putting our Difference to Work Model* that Debbe describes and illustrates in this book can be applied by any leader in any organization. The examples and case studies she sites ground the model in the real world. She offers tools and techniques that help people with different ways of thinking come together to get things done. The how-to information in this book is useful and easy to apply, but it is the explanation of why diversity matters that makes this book so compelling. Debbe makes it clear that putting differences to work is the key task of today's leader."

—**Leslie K. Eveland**

Organization Development and Change Management Consultant

"There are many books and articles dealing with diversity and leadership. Debbe Kennedy has written a book that is unlike most of them. In an engaging manner she underscores the fact that diversity is a many faceted concept, not only in terms of race, gender or ethnicity, but in at least, twelve other ways. Drawing on the latest research and her considerable experience as a corporate executive, Debbe shows how differences underscore innovation and high performance when facilitated by effective leadership."

—**Milton E. Lopes Ph.D.**

President, Strategic Management Associates
Professor at the Fielding Graduate Institute,
School of Human and Organization Development