

# DIALOGUE

Have you ever noticed what happens when you really listen to another person or to a creature rustling in the brush at night or the wind moving in the trees, listen without reacting or even the intention to respond, listen without being influenced by long-held images and memories or firmly held positions, listen instead with a beginners mind and the ears of a child hearing a bedtime story?

*J. Zimmerman and V. Coyle*

---



# What is Dialogue?

---

- # A conversation that builds a fuller picture of reality, a synthesis of points of view, out of which emerges some new understanding, something creative.
  - # A conversation that can build community by providing a timely context for exploring differences without pressure for agreement or even consensus.
  - # A conversation that is open-ended and that employs deeper levels of listening and reflection. Dialogue builds collective meaning, which can result in new insight.
  - # A conversation that builds capacity to think together and express beliefs and assumptions that motivate our decisions, action, and the results we produce.
  - # A conversation that extends thinking beyond the familiar, creating new possibilities. “Stop remembering and start thinking!” *David Bohm*
-



# Skills of Dialogue

---

- # Suspending Judgment - making judgments are a normal part of daily discerning thought. Practice listening without conclusion or judgment but if you can't, own up to your judgments and...
    - Name the assumptions that your judgment is based on publicly.
    - Examine the origin of your assumptions
    - Become comfortable with paradox and uncertainty because creating new meaning and new thought begin outside your comfort zone.
-



# Skillful Inquiry

---

- # Open questions that create curiosity and learning
  - # Example: “If the apple falls from the tree, why then don’t the stars fall from the sky?”
-



# Intentions

---

- # A question begins dialogue: “Are you in the intent to learn?”
  - # Speak to the center or whole, not to individuals
  - # One person speaks at a time
  - # “Hold the container” by refraining from critiquing individuals’ contributions....ever...in any context
  - # “Think about your thinking.” Learn about your own mental models first, then....
  - # Explore others’ mental models with the intent to expand your understanding and meaning of reality
  - # Suspend roles, authority and status
  - # Speak with the voice the “opens doors into new levels of understanding.
-



# Listening

---

- # Adopt a learners mind, rather than a knowers mind
  - # Empty your head enough to deeply connect with what others are saying
  - # Be open enough to be changed.
  - # Be in the here and now. This allows you to be silent without cluttering thoughts
    - Three Dimensions of Listening
      - Listen to others to expand your understanding
      - Listen to yourself to identify your own filters
      - Listen to the collective for them and shared meaning
-



# Reflection

---

- # Notice what is being said and how it affects you
  - # Identify the assumptions that are behind the effect
  - # Notice patterns and relationships that emerge
  - # Notice the collective integration of diverse perspectives and new information
-



# Identifying Assumptions

---

- # Our thinking (assumptions, values and beliefs) creates our feelings
  - # Reactions or feelings to the statements and beliefs of others are a clue that your assumptions are being challenged. Check them out!
-





# Three Rules

---

- # Speak honestly from the heart
- # Be brief
- # Listen from the heart

*During a dialogue session no comments are made after a person speaks, no speaker is to be interrupted, and the person holding the talking stick holds the attention of the group. When the totem is passed the receiver may speak.*

---



# The Challenge

---

One of the great challenges for participants is to refrain from thinking about what they will say until it's their turn to speak. Preparing thoughts ahead of time diminishes spontaneity and responsiveness to what others have contributed. Dialogue offers the opportunity to experience the unpredictability of ourselves and others - sometimes with startling results. As trust builds in the circle, the urge to go deeper and explore brings life to the dialogue. One benefit of dialogue is the conscious exploration of values that can occur and the learning that results when individuals get in touch with their undeniable or non-negotiable assumptions. Many times, each person's story or sharing provides a reflection of some aspect of our own experience - familiar and yet different enough to yield fresh insight.

---



# DIALOGUE

Are you in the intent to learn?

