

# Dialogue Circles

## ...Compared with Discussion

<p><b>Being In A Dialogue (Circle)</b> means the focus is to:</p> <p>Explore Possibilities, discover new thinking ask, reflect, deepen learning...in a Spirit of Inquiry</p> <p>learn multiple perspectives</p> <p>unfold and discover underlying assumptions</p> <p>open up thinking, ...use BOTH / AND</p> <p>suspend judging, criticizing, taking sides</p> <p>foster mutual respect, ...find common ground</p>	<p><b>Being In A Discussion (Sides)</b> means the focus is to:</p> <p>Be the Expert, tell and sell, "I know all"</p> <p>take sides, ...justify and defend a single position</p> <p>force agreement on one perspective</p> <p>challenge, compete, ...defend a set of assumptions</p> <p>reduce to EITHER / OR, ...decide right or wrong</p> <p>judge, criticize, put-down</p> <p>maintain power, position, turf</p>
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***“Suppose we were able to share meanings freely without a compulsive urge to impose our view or to conform to those of others and without distortion and self-deception. Would this not constitute a real revolution in culture?”*** By David Bohm, Physicist

-- For Reference, search Google for: "Dialogue: A Proposal" "Part 1/2 and Part 2/2".

*\*adapted from materials by LeRoy Harvey and Lela Vandenberg, Michigan State University, Used with author's permission*

**Dialogue is about exploring possibilities. Dialogue slows down communication in a group and opens up space for listening, reflecting, and seeing new connections ... getting new insights.** Often, a group decides on one to three questions to focus attention on an issue. **The Dialogue Circle Guidelines are agreed on by all participants and are listed for everyone to see. For example:**

- Sit in a circle, use introductions to check-in, (to connect the rim of the circle).**
- Obtain a "speaking stick", or ball to pass (or another similar object before speaking).
- Leave your egos, titles, positions, class distinctions and status at the door.**
- Speak a second time only after everyone has spoken once.
- Allow silence of at least 10 seconds after someone has spoken.**
- Limit your comments to a 1 minute maximum.
- If the dialogue moves back to sides, (a back-and-forth discussion), a facilitator (or another member) may call time-out to suggest realignment of process.**
- It is good to have a recorder taking notes. In order to get the most out of a Dialogue Circle it is important to have a written summary of what was said.
- At the end of the dialogue, each person takes a turn to reflect on what they've learned in circle or to tell about the Dialogue experience and then checks-out.**