

## Dialogue or Debate?

1. Dialogue is collaborative: two or more sides work together towards common understanding.  
*Debate is oppositional: two sides oppose each other and attempt to prove each other wrong.*
2. In dialogue, finding common ground is the goal.  
*In debate, winning is the goal.*
2. In dialogue, one listens to the other side(s) in order to understand, find meaning, and find agreement.  
*In debate, one listens to the other side in order to find flaws and to counter its arguments.*
4. Dialogue enlarges and possibly changes a participant's point of view.  
*Debate affirms a participant's own point of view.*
5. Dialogue reveals assumptions for reevaluation.  
*Debate defends assumptions as truth.*
6. Dialogue causes introspection on one's own position.  
*Debate causes critique of the other position.*
7. Dialogue opens the possibility of reaching a solution that is better than any of the original solutions.  
*Debate defends one's own positions as the best solution and excludes other solutions.*
8. Dialogue creates an open-minded attitude – an openness to being wrong and an openness to change.  
*Debate creates a closed-minded attitude, a determination to be right.*
9. In dialogue, one submits one's best thinking, knowing that the other peoples' reflections will help improve it rather than destroy it.  
*In debate, one submits one's best thinking and defends it against challenges to show that it is right.*
10. Dialogue calls for temporarily suspending one's beliefs.  
*Debate calls for investing wholeheartedly in one's beliefs.*
11. In dialogue, one searches for basic agreements.  
*In debate, one searches for glaring differences.*
12. In dialogue, one searches for strengths in the other positions.  
*In debate, one searches for flaws and weaknesses in the other position.*
13. Dialogue involves a real concern for the other person and seeks to not alienate or offend.  
*Debate involves a countering of the other position without focusing on feelings or relationships, and often belittles or deprecates the other person.*
14. Dialogue assumes that many people have pieces of the answer and that together they can put them into a workable solution.  
*Debate assumes that there is one right answer and that someone has it.*
15. Dialogue remains open-ended.  
*Debate demands a conclusion.*