

Dialogue, Deliberation, and Choice-creating*

| | Dialogue | Deliberation | Choice-creating(CC)* |
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| Kind of conversation? | An open-minded and open-hearted exploration of a topic. People inquire and do not advocate. All grow in knowledge while building shared meaning | A thoughtful weighing of options. In trying to influence others, people adhere to a set of guidelines and try to be objective | A heartfelt, creative conversation seeking win/win solutions. Group unity is achieved through shifts and breakthroughs |
| Kind of issue? | A topic or theme like racism or leadership. Usually the topic is predetermined | A specific carefully framed issue, along with predetermined options | An ill-defined, complex, or impossible seeming issue that people care about solving |
| To set up the conversation? | Topics are chosen ahead of time. People sit in a circle. Guidelines are established. Participants self-manage ... keeping to the spirit of inquiry vs. advocacy | A respected, impartial authority convenes the meeting, sets the topic, identifies the options, provides balanced expert perspectives, and is neutral | Using Dynamic Facilitation people sit in a half-circle facing a set of charts ... solutions, concerns, data, and problem-statements ... to value each comment |
| The facilitator? | The facilitator plays a minimal role. Participants help one another maintain the guidelines. Sometimes a “talking stick” is used | The facilitator is a moderator, helping people adhere to guidelines, follow the agenda, and proceed step by step | The dynamic facilitator (DF'er) helps people talk authentically, trusting group energy as guide (concern, frustration, excitement, etc.) |
| Participants? | Are capable of holding to the guidelines and spirit of inquiry. Group depth is limited by the participant least capable | Should become knowledgeable about the issue, think rationally, and adhere to the guidelines in expressing views | Need to care about the issue. The DF'er helps them to be authentic, letting go of roles and speaking as they feel moved to speak |
| Why use this? | It helps build deep understanding of the issue and good feelings about other people, plus greater connectedness to life in general | To help people learn about issues, different perspectives, and to put emotions aside in favor of reasoned judgment. | To solve difficult impossible-seeming issues. To reach group unity on an issue in a way that builds the spirit of community |
| Relationship to action? | Dialogue is not about group action. There is no advocating of ideas. | Deliberation is oriented to judgment, not creativity. It is often used before a vote | Choice-creating evolves a clear choice of action along with the motivation to act |
| Relationship among these forms? | Dialogue might be used to build trust in preparation for group decision-making. | Deliberation can also provide for better group decisions | New possibilities appear when choice-creating is distinguished from decision-making |

For more information about Dynamic Facilitation see [*www.DynamicFacilitation.com](http://www.DynamicFacilitation.com);
 For more information about how distinguishing choice-creating can yield breakthroughs in the field of democracy see <http://www.WiseDemocracy.org>