

Moving From Discussion to Dialogue

Taken from "Debate to Dialogue", by Deborah Flick

Conventional Discussion Process

PREMISE In any given situation there is one right answer or right perspective, *usually* one's own.

GOAL To win, to be right, to sell, persuade or convince

ATTITUDE Evaluating & critical

FOCUS "What's wrong with this picture?"

BEHAVIORS Listening:

- Accept nothing at face value
- Hear advocacy as a challenge
- Listen judgmentally
- Listen for errors and flaws
- Plan your rebuttal
- Talk more than you listen

Inquiring:

- Interrogate the other person
- Ask questions that:

Support your perspective

Challenge other person's view

Advocating:

- Assert own position
- Describe flaws in other perspective
- Justify your position
- Defend your assumptions as truth

ROLE Devil's advocate or Truth Sayer

OUTCOME **DEBATE**

The Understanding Process

PREMISE In any given situation there are multiple, valid answers & perspectives, *including* one's own.

GOAL To understand other person from their pt of view
(*To understand does not mean to agree*)

ATTITUDE Curious & open

FOCUS "What's new? Of value? What can I learn?"

BEHAVIORS Listening

- Accept what is said as true for the speaker
- Advocacy = opportunity to deepen understanding
- Listen "for" their story
- Listen without judgment
- Listen more then you talk
- Reflect instead of react

Inquiring

- Ask question in order to:

Clarify and deepen your understanding

Understand another's ideas or meaning

- Explore taken-for-granted assumptions

Advocating

- Offer your ideas as yours only
- Explore alternative points of view

ROLE Walk in another's shoes

OUTCOME **DIALOGUE**