

The Differences between Dialogue and Debate

Debate

assumes there is a right answer – and I have it.

is combative – participants attempt to prove the other side wrong.

is about winning.

entails listening to find flaws and make counter arguments.

I defend my assumptions as truth.

I critique the other side's position.

I defend my own views against those of others.

I search for weaknesses in others' positions.

I seek a conclusion or vote that ratifies my position.

Dialogue

assumes that many people have pieces of the answer and that together, they can craft a solution.

is collaborative – participants work together toward common understanding

is about exploring common good.

entails listening to understand and find meaning and agreement.

I reveal my assumptions for re-evaluation.

I re-examine all positions.

I admit that others' thinking can improve my own.

I search for strength and value in other's positions.

I discover new options.

From *The Magic of Dialogue* by Daniel Yankelovich

Listen to learn.

Speak to share from your own experience.

The goal is to learn as much as possible from others.