

# Comparison of Dialogue and Debate

## Dialogue

Dialogue is collaborative: two or more sides work together toward common understanding.

In dialogue, finding common ground is the goal.

In dialogue, one listens to the other side(s) in order to understand, find meaning, and find agreement.

Dialogue enlarges and possibly changes a participant's point of view.

Dialogue reveals assumptions for re-evaluation.

Dialogue causes introspection on one's own position.

Dialogue opens the possibility of reaching a better solution than any of the original solutions.

Dialogue creates an open-minded attitude: an openness to being wrong and an openness to change.

In dialogue, one submits one's best thinking, knowing that other peoples' reflections will help improve it rather than destroy it.

Dialogue calls for temporarily suspending one's beliefs.

In dialogue, one searches for basic agreements.

In dialogue, one searches for strengths in the other positions.

Dialogue involves a real concern for the other person and seeks to not alienate or offend.

Dialogue assumes that many people have pieces of the answer and that together they can put them into a workable solution.

Dialogue remains open-ended.

## Debate

Debate is oppositional: two sides oppose each other and attempt to prove each other wrong.

In debate, winning is the goal.

In debate, one listens to the other side in order to find flaws and to counter its arguments.

Debate affirms a participant's own point of view.

Debate defends assumptions as truth.

Debate causes critique of the other position.

Debate defends one's own position as the best solution and excludes other solutions.

Debate creates a close-minded attitude, a determination to be right.

In debate, one submits one's best thinking and defends it against challenge to show that it is right.

Debate calls for investing wholeheartedly in one's beliefs.

In debate, one searches for glaring differences.

In debate, one searches for flaws and weaknesses in the other position.

Debate involves a countering of the other position, without focusing on feelings or relationship, and often belittles or deprecates the other side.

Debate assumes that there is a right answer and that someone has it.

Debate implies a conclusion.