

‘Dialogue is shared exploration towards greater understanding, connection, or possibility.’ -
Tom Atlee, The Co-Intelligence Institute, www.co-intelligence.org

‘Dialogue means we sit and talk with each other, especially those with whom we may think we have the greatest differences. However, talking together all too often means debating, discussing with a view to convincing the other, arguing for our point of view, examining pro’s and con’s. In dialogue, the intention is not to advocate but to inquire; not to argue but to explore; not to convince but to discover.’

- Louise Diamond, Ph.D., The Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy, www.imtd.org

‘Dialogue is about what we value and how we define it. It is about discovering what our true values are, about looking beyond the superficial and automatic answers to our questions. Dialogue is about expanding our capacity for attention, awareness and learning with and from each other. It is about exploring the frontiers of what it means to be human, in relationship to each other and our world.’

- Glenna Gerard, The Dialogue Group

‘A dialogue is a forum that draws participants from as many parts of the community as possible to exchange information face-to-face, share personal stories and experiences, honestly express perspectives, clarify viewpoints, and develop solutions to community concerns.’

- President Clinton’s Initiative on Race, 1998, <http://clinton2.nara.gov/Initiatives/OneAmerica/america.html>

‘Dialogue derives from the Greek word, dialogos. Logos can be explained as ‘meaning of the word’ and dia means ‘through.’ ‘Dialogue can be among any number of people, not just two. It is a stream of meaning flowing among and through us and between us, in the whole group, out of which may emerge some new form of understanding or shared meaning.’

- David Bohm, On Dialogue

‘Dialogue is a process of genuine interaction through which human beings listen to each other deeply enough to be changed by what they learn. Each makes a serious effort to take others’ concerns into her or his own picture, even when disagreement persists. No participant gives up her or his identity, but each recognizes enough of the other’s valid human claims that he or she will act differently toward the other.’

- Harold Saunders, A Public Peace Process, www.sustaineddialogue.org/researchpublications.htm

‘The goal [of dialogue] is to deepen understanding and judgment, and to think about ways to make a difference on a community issue you care about. This can occur in a safe, focused discussion when people exchange views freely and consider a variety of views. The process – democratic discussion among equals – is as important as the content.’

- Everyday Democracy, Toward a More Perfect Union, www.everyday-democracy.org
'The purpose [of dialogue] is to explore alternate viewpoints, to foster respect and understanding, and to help gain

greater skill both communicating and working more effectively across social and ethnic boundaries.' - Ethnic Dialogues, University of Kentucky Student Center

'Dialogue is about bringing together many voices, many stories, many perspectives, many experiences with a goal to increase understanding about others and ourselves. It is a safe and honest facilitated discussion aimed at providing an opportunity to tell your story, listen to others and build understanding.'

- Jen Murphy, George Mason University's UDRP Dialogue Project

'Dialogue is a foundational communication process leading directly to personal and organizational transformation. It assists in creating environments of high trust and openness, with reflective and generative capacities. One might think of dialogue as a revolutionary approach in the development of the following organizational disciplines: continuous learning, diversity, conflict exploration, decision making and problem solving, leadership, self-managing teams, organizational planning and alignment, and culture change.'

- Linda Ellinor, The Dialogue Group

'When I thought about Dialogue in this larger sense, I had the image of the open central courtyard in an old fashioned, Latin American home...you could enter the central courtyard by going around and through any of the multiple arched entryways that surrounded this open, flower-filled space in the middle of the house...For me, Dialogue is like entering this central courtyard in the spacious home of our common human experience. There are many doorways to this central courtyard, just as there are many points of entry to the experience of Dialogue. Indigenous councils, salons, study circles, women's circles, farm worker house meetings, wisdom circles, non-traditional diplomatic efforts and other conversational modalities from many cultures and historical periods had both contributed to and drawn from the generative space that we were calling Dialogue.'

- Juanita Brown, The World Café, www.theworldcafe.com

'Dialogue is a process which enables people from all walks of life to talk deeply and personally about some of the major issues and realities that divide them. Dialogues are powerful, transformational experiences that often lead to both personal and collaborative action. Dialogue is often deliberative, involving the weighing of various options and the consideration of different viewpoints for the purpose of reaching agreement on action steps or policy decisions.'

- Sandy Heierbacher, The National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation, www.ncdd.org

‘Most people don’t know how to talk together as effectively as they need to. But we can learn to recognize the dynamics of conversations. We can create ‘containers’: fields for deeper communication. We can anticipate breakdowns and recognize them as the natural result of brewing relationships. We can draw to the surface undiscussable dangerous issues without inciting people to anger, inviting them instead to talk about dangerous subjects from an atmosphere of mutual interest. Once we know how to do all these things, and more, we can lead people into a space where they are truly thinking together, and where that in turn leads to dramatic new levels of alignment and capability.’

- DIA-logos International