Dialogue and Debate

Dialogue is collaborative: two or more sides work together toward common understanding.	Debate is oppositional: two sides oppose each other and attempt to prove each other wrong.
In dialogue, finding common ground is the goal.	In debate, winning is the goal.
In dialogue, one listens to the other side(s) in order to understand, find meaning, and find agreement.	In debate, one listens to the other side in order to find flaws and to counter its arguments.
Dialogue enlarges and possibly changes a participant's point of view.	Debate affirms a participant's own point of view.
Dialogue complicates positions and issues.	Debate simplifies positions and issues.
Dialogue reveals assumptions for reevaluation.	Debate defends assumptions as truth.
Dialogue causes introspection on one's own position.	Debate causes critique of the other position.
It is acceptable to change one's position.	It is a sign of weakness and defeat to change one's position.
Dialogue is flexible in nature.	Debate is rigid in nature.
Dialogue stresses the skill of synthesis.	Debate stresses the skill of analysis.
Dialogue opens the possibility of reaching a better solution then either of the original solutions.	Debate defends one's own positions as the best solution and excludes other solutions.
Dialogue creates an open-minded attitude: and openness to being wrong and an openness to change.	Debate creates a closed-minded attitude and a determination to be right.

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Dialogue calls for temporarily suspending one's beliefs.	Debate calls for investing wholeheartedly in one's beliefs.
In dialogue, one searches for basic agreements.	In datable, one searches for glaring differences.
In dialogue, one searches for strengths in the other position.	In debate, one searches for flaws and weaknesses in the other position.
Dialogue involves a real concern for the other person and seeks to not alienate or offend.	Debate involves a countering of the other position without focusing on feelings or relationship and often belittles or deprecates the other position.
Dialogue encourages de-polarization of an issue.	Debate encourages polarization of an issue.
In dialogue, everyone is part of the solution to the problem.	In debate, one person or viewpoint wins over the other.
Dialogue affirms the idea of people learning from each other.	Debate affirms the idea of people learning individually in competition with others.
Dialogue remains open-ended.	Debate implies a conclusion.

(Adapted from Educators for Social Responsibility)

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