

# **DIALOGUE OR DEBATE?**

**DIALOGUE IS COLLABORATIVE: TWO OR MORE SIDE WORK TOGETHER TOWARD COMMON UNDERSTANDING.**

*Debate is oppositional: two opposing sides try to prove each other wrong.*

**IN DIALOGUE, ONE LISTENS TO THE OTHER(S) IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND, FIND MEANING, AND FIND AGREEMENT.**

*In debate, one listens to find flaws, to spot differences, and to counter arguments.*

**DIALOGUE ASSUMES THAT MANY PEOPLE HAVE PIECES OF ANSWERS AND THAT COOPERATION CAN LEAD TO GREATER UNDERSTANDING.**

*Debate assumes a single right answer that somebody already has.*

**IN DIALOGUE, ONE SEARCHES FOR STRENGTHS IN ALL POSITIONS.**

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

**DIALOGUE OPENS THE POSSIBILITY OF REACHING A BETTER SOLUTION THAN ANY OF THE ORIGINAL SOLUTIONS.**

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

**DIALOGUE CREATES AN OPEN-MINDED ATTITUDE – AN OPENNESS TO BEING WRONG AND AN OPENNESS TO CHANGE.**

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