

## Deliberative Dialogue -- Key Concepts from Various Sources

1. Dialogue and deliberation are dynamic processes which can be empathy-enhancing, relationship-changing, problem-solving, action-planning, organization-developing, community-building, conflict-resolving, skill developing, prejudice reducing, consciousness-raising, and more!
2. A process dating back to the ancient Greeks, “deliberative dialogue” bring a diverse group of citizens together to explore an issue from several vantage points.
3. Dialogue is not a debate in which you are trying to persuade others to your point of view. The focus is on “listening to understand” other points of view, the values behind them, and using the common values to define what’s most important related to the issue.
4. Dialogue is not about winning an argument or coming to an agreement, but about understanding and learning.
5. Deliberation emphasizes the use of logic and reasoning to make better decisions about public policy issues.
6. Deliberation is characterized by critical listening, reasoned argumentation, and thoughtful decision-making.
7. Deliberations aren’t just discussions to promote better understanding. They are the way we make the decisions that allow us to act together.
8. 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.
9. 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 ideally 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.
10. Deliberation is the kind of reasoning and talking we do when a difficult decision has to be made, a great deal is at stake, and there are competing options or approaches we might take. It means to weigh possible options carefully by examining what is most valuable to us.
11. Timing is critical – Dialogue allows one to know when the community is ready to deliberate toward a decision.

## **LINKS:**

NIFI home page: [www.nifi.org](http://www.nifi.org)

The Kettering Foundation: [www.kettering.org](http://www.kettering.org)

Clemson Laboratory for Deliberative Dialogue:  
<http://www.clemson.edu/sandhill/page.htm?pageId=945>

Children, Youth, and Families Education and research network:  
[http://www.cyfernet.org/research\\_spotlight/08-07.html](http://www.cyfernet.org/research_spotlight/08-07.html)

National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD):  
[http://www.thataway.org/?page\\_id=713](http://www.thataway.org/?page_id=713)