



QUOTES ON CONVERSATION & DIALOGUE

“Conventional discussion, per se, is not the issue. The extent to which we unquestionably accept its value and our habitual use of it is. Unfortunately we are so steeped in debate, proving one’s point and challenging others, that alternative possibilities for interaction are often eclipsed from our view. It is interesting to notice that even when we say we want to dialogue we commonly end up in debate. We appear to have a longing to do something different but the vortex of habit confounds us. As a result our options for building mutual respect, deepening understanding among each other, and creating more beneficial outcomes than we experience currently are severely limited.”

– Deborah L. Flick, Ph.D., From Debate to Dialogue: Using the Understanding Process to Transform Our Conversations

“Dialogue is a vital threshold through which the Unthinkable crosses over to the Possible generating hope for those involved.”

–Laura Chasin, Founder & Executive Director, Public Conversations Project “How to Break the Argument Habit,” Christian Science Monitor, October 26, 1994; (article can be found at <http://search.csmonitor.com/2004/1026/p08s01-coop.html>)

To listen respectfully to others, to cultivate and speak your own voice, to suspend your opinions about others—these bring out the intelligence that lives at the very center of ourselves—the intelligence that exists when we are alert to possibilities around us and thinking freshly. Musician Michael Jones calls this “intelligence of the heart”.

“...it is proposed that a form of free dialogue may well be one of the most effective ways of investigating the crisis which faces society, and indeed the whole of human nature and consciousness today. Moreover, it may turn out that such a form of free exchange of ideas and information is of fundamental relevance for transforming culture and freeing it of destructive misinformation, so that creativity can be liberated.”

– David Bohm

Suppose we approached conversation aesthetically, looking for elegance, beauty, and simplicity. Suppose we listened to discover the beauty of others’ ideas instead of picking out flaws.



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"In human societies there will always be differences of views and interests. But the reality today is that we are all interdependent and have to coexist on this small planet. Therefore, the only sensible and intelligent way of resolving differences and clashes of interest, whether between individuals or nations, is through dialogue. The promotion of a culture of dialogue and nonviolence for the future of mankind is thus an important task of the international community."

– His Holiness the Dalai Lama, in a speech to the "Forum 2000" Conference, Prague, Czech Republic, September 4, 1997

Creating a positive future begins in human conversation. The simplest and most powerful investment any member of a community or an organization may make in renewal is to begin talking with other people as though the answers mattered.

– William Grieder, *Who Will Tell the People?*

"Conversation is a meeting of minds with different memories and habits. When minds meet, they don't just exchange facts: they transform them, reshape them, draw different implications from them, engage in new trains of thought. Conversation doesn't just reshuffle the cards: it creates new cards."

–Theodore Zeldin