

Technology of Dialogue

Extracted from *Dialogue:
Rediscovering the Transformative
Power of Conversation* – Glenna
Gerard and Linda Terfs



Tel: (604) 943-9133 Web: www.breakthroughsunlimited.com

Dialogue Involves:

- Deeply reflective listening and speaking
- Speaking when truly moved
- "Suspending" one's assumptions and "noble certainties" by holding them up for examination
- Speaking into the group, rather than to individuals
- Listening in the silence for the shared flow of meaning.



Sharing Responsibility

- We all share responsibility for the practice of Dialogue.
- As you participate, please attend to your listening, speaking, and noticing.
- On the next pages are some suggestions, woven together from a variety of sources.



Listening

- Listen empathetically, from your heart, without judgment or blame.
- Listen without the urge to argue, counter, dissuade, or fix.
- Listen with equal respect to everyone, regardless of status or roles.
- Listen for each person's special contribution to deeper understanding.
- Listen from a place of learning rather than confirmation of current thinking.
- Listen to the quality of your own listening.
- Listen from the collective, from the community, from the whole.



Speaking

- Speak from your heart, your experience, from the moment.
- Speak when you are truly "moved", not to fill the silence.
- Speak into the circle, into the whole group, into the stream of shared meaning.



Speaking

- Ask questions from a place of genuine curiosity, wondering, or not knowing, not to make a point.
- Avoid cross-talk -- acknowledge others by speaking about their contributions but do not address them individually (reason: this avoids excluding others and turning the group into spectators watching a one-on-one interaction).
- When you are silent, indicate your listening presence from time to time in the group -- "Here listening," or "I sit and reflect," or "Simply noticing".



Noticing

- Move back from conclusions to observations - notice what you're noticing and what meaning you're making of it.
- Pay attention to your judgments, assumptions, and certainties; hold them lightly, explore and examine them, and consider alternatives that may be just as useful.
- Notice the metaphors and images in your own thinking and speaking.



Noticing

- Be present to what's happening inside you as well as in the group.
- Be involved while being detached -- open to outcomes but not attached to specific outcomes.
- Allow for pauses and silence -- reflection has its own rhythms - Look for deeper levels of understanding.



Timing

- Dialogue takes time to develop and deepen.
- It takes sustained and consistent practice to move out of more habitual ways of thinking, speaking, and listening.
- It also takes presence, intention, energy, and attention.



Flow

- Dialogue often goes through phases where the energy ebbs and then flows again.
- At times you may feel energized, inspired, touched, confused, bored, uncomfortable, silent, satisfied, and more.
- Notice all that and bring it into the group.
- It's all part of the shared field.

