

Premises, Practices and the Spirit behind them

Premises Assumptions & Principles	Spirit Attitude & Stance	Practices Methods & Techniques
People are more invested in a dialogue when they have been consulted in its design.	Collaborative	We rely on participants' knowledge and include them in planning throughout the dialogue process.
People are more likely to have a constructive conversation when they do not attack, are not defensive, and generally abstain from polarizing ways of speaking.	Preventive	Participants agree in advance to set aside accusation and argument and avoid the communication patterns that impaired their previous conversations.
Equal respect for everyone enhances trust and collaboration.	Fair	We encourage equal air time and open-mindedness.
In an affirming, exploratory, future-oriented atmosphere, people are more open to new ways of communicating.	Hopeful	We elicit participants' dreams and wishes for the future and highlight the appearance of promising, new interactions among them.
When people share personal stories, their uniqueness and their complexity emerge. Personal exchanges diminish stereotyping and promote caring.	Rehumanizing	We discourage depersonalized debate. We invite participants to share life experiences which they somehow associate with their current viewpoints.
When people are straightforward with one another, they more easily develop relationships of trust, respect, collaboration, and mutual empowerment.	Candid	Participants are encouraged to talk openly about themselves. We explain why we do what we do, if asked. We express no opinion on the divisive issues at hand.
People learn more and relate better when they listen carefully to each other.	Receptive	We listen attentively. We design meetings that promote respectful listening among participants.
When people have an inquiring attitude about themselves and others, they interact more constructively than when they speak from certainty.	Inquiring	We encourage participants to ask instead of assuming or advocating. We invite participants to be open-minded with themselves as well as others.
When each person in a conversation considers varied perspectives, new ideas emerge and build on one another, dispelling simplistic polarizations.	Expansive	Our questions and tasks are designed to stimulate reflections and conversations that generate diverse ideas and clarifying distinctions.