

# Dignilogue Tips

**"The aim is to build together rather than to block one another.  
We change others by changing ourselves in the course of dialogue."**

~ S. Mike Miller, 2011 Lifetime Achievement Award, HumanDHS.

## **Here are two questions we ask ourselves when we engage in a Dignilogue:**

1. How can I deepen my understanding by listening (listening others into voice) and contributing to the discussion?
2. How can I help move the dialogue along so that we all can benefit from it and move to a new place?

## **Dignifying Dialogue...**

### **1. Presumes that every idea deserves a fair hearing.**

- ★ Encourages us to do our best to understand the comment, assertion or suggestion, rather than jumping to conclusions based on pre-conceived ideas or because of known or unconscious bias.
- ★ Refrains from verdict-thinking; refrains from "yes" or "no" verdicts. Instead, it draws out the speaker or the discussion by asking clarifying questions and adding useful information that builds the outlook under discussion.
- ★ Doesn't assume bad motivations on the part of the proponent (even people or ideas that you detest can be sometimes partially right).

### **2. Emphasizes appreciative enquiry, e.g., asking kindly, "How would that work?"; or, asking thoughtfully, "What are the best reasons for doing this in that way?"; or, exploring, "How might we build on, or add to, this idea?"**

- ★ Encourages us to *ask ourselves* questions, e.g., "What could make this person's idea workable or valid?" (Do mental experiments with the idea).
- ★ Involves exploring ideas/recommendations/suggestions before jumping to conclusions. Later, if you must, you can come to a conclusion.

### **3. Is a way to enjoy working with and building on others' ideas!**

#### **Trying out a new idea can be exciting!**

- ★ Is about *adding to*, rather than subtracting from, the discussion. Ask yourself, "What can I say that will be helpful to the dialogue?"
- ★ Is an opportunity to enjoy the challenge and the excitement of exploring a new idea or approach together with colleagues of diverse backgrounds and personal histories!

## **Why engage in dignifying dialogue?**

Debates might change your mind, but not very often. Dignifying dialogue can lead to new paths of appreciative understanding and creative ideas to identify and address real problems, moving us toward a better world together.

**"The new [global] citizenship is not simply accepting others, but interacting with them in mutually beneficial and supportive ways."**

Miller, S. M., & Savoie, A. J., 2002. *Respect and Rights*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, p. 177.  
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