

Climate Dialogues—Objectives & Guidelines for Participants

Climate Dialogues—The Objectives

- 1) To educate people as to basic climate science and documented climate change, simplifying and bringing the complex, technical aspects “down to earth” as appropriate
- 2) To alert people to climate change related problems / potential dangers including local impacts
- 3) To educate people as to solutions to these problems, considering them at individual / family, community / city, state, regional, and global levels with emphasis on the first two
- 4) To get people to take action related to implementing those solutions, including lessons from psychology about inspiring such action
- 5) To help people deal with the psychological aspects of climate change, including feeling grief / loss, powerlessness, guilt, self-deception, etc, and use the psychology of climate change communication
- 6) To bring people w/ different beliefs together for discussion, search for common ground, including appreciating the difference between arguing to learn vs. arguing to win
- 7) To deepen individual commitments and develop leaders / climate action activists

Climate Dialogues—The Guidelines

A. Mechanics / Content

- i) Arrive by stated time for beginning of session
- ii) Recognize we are engaged in constructive dialogue with objectives (see below) and limited time frame and the facilitator’s job is to promote that, and potentially manage conflict, within these guidelines
- iii) Recognize when the facilitator is introducing a topic, intervening to give others a chance to talk, get discussion back on track, transitioning to another topic, etc., you should politely defer to him or her
- iv) Try to not talk too much (ideally all participants who seek it should have roughly equal time to talk)
- v) Speak from your own experience by succinctly sharing knowledge / stories as appropriate
- vi) Avoid doing harm by spreading misinformation—if you speak with some uncertainty let us know
- vii) Recognize that the best stories involving climate change actions or solutions (perhaps energy saving or renewable energy use related) are those relevant to our here and now and/or with positive outcomes
- viii) Recognize that we prefer to celebrate “small victories” / accomplishments rather than focus on failures
- ix) While maintaining grounding in reality, try to adopt a “we can make it happen” attitude and avoid cynicism

B. Interpersonal

- i) Treat others with respect
- ii) Try to be sensitive to the importance others attach to what they share, discomfort they express, etc
- iii) If you must error, try to do so on the side of humility rather than arrogance
- iv) Try to avoid giving unsolicited advice
- v) Avoid criticizing others while allowing for critical consideration of information, ideas and beliefs
- vi) If you find yourself arguing, try to argue to “learn / promote learning” rather than “win / humiliate”
- vii) Avoid being judgmental, pointing fingers, assigning blame, making people feel guilty