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# Dialogue and Debate

“Most people  
don’t change  
without first being  
understood.”  
- Jeffrey Kottler



Quick tips for distinguishing dialogue from debate  
and keeping your important conversations going forward

For more dialogue tips, visit [Lenski.com](http://Lenski.com).

DEBATE	DIALOGUE
Focus is on winning, convincing or changing others.	Focus is on learning, joint exploration, and understanding.
Listening to trap, point out flaws, refute.	Listening to understand.
Commitment to certainty.	Commitment to openness even in the face of skepticism.
Zealousness for one's position.	Zealousness for understanding underlying interests.
Viewpoint is generally black or white.	Viewpoint acknowledges shades of gray.
Emphasis is on dogged investment in own beliefs and ideas.	Emphasis is on trying new ideas on for size, suspending disbelief.
Differences in perspective are magnified, complexities minimized.	Opportunities are magnified and over-simplifications minimized.
Attitude is oppositional.	Attitude is collaborative.