

## CHARACTERISTICS OF ARTS-BASED CIVIC DIALOGUE:

### DEBATE VERSUS DIALOGUE<sup>1</sup>

| The Differences Between   |  |
|---|--|
| DEBATE  | DIALOGUE   |
| Assumes that there is a right answer and you have it                      | Assumes that many people have pieces of the answer and that together they can craft a solution |
| Is combative. Participants attempt to prove that the other side is wrong. | Is collaborative. Participants work together toward common understanding.                      |
| Is about winning  | Explores common ground   |
| Listens to find flaws and make counterarguments                           | Listens to understand and find meaning and agreement   |
| Defends assumptions as truth  | Reveals assumptions for reevaluation   |
| Critiques the other side's position                                       | Reexamines all positions   |
| Defends one's own views against those of others                           | Admits that others' thinking can improve on one's own  |
| Searches for flaws and weaknesses in other positions                      | Searches for strengths and value in others' positions  |
| Seeks a conclusion or vote that ratifies your position                    | Discovers new options, not seeking closure   |

Yankelovich notes that this comparison is synthesized and adapted from the work of the Public Conversations Project, Study Circles Resource Center, The Common Enterprise, Educators for Social Responsibility, and Choice Point Consulting, and was prepared by Mark Gerzo.

<sup>1</sup> Excerpted from, Yankelovich, Daniel. *The Magic of Dialogue: Transforming Conflict into Cooperation*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999.