



The Network for Peace through Dialogue Why Dialogue? (and when, and how, and where?)

[American Values Are, LLC](#)

Civic Engagement: Helping make the Connections Needed for Meaningful Dialogue

[The Public Conversations Project](#) was formed to promote nonpartisan dialogue on the values which shape democracy (e.g. accountability, tolerance, free speech, public education). These shared values serve as a platform for meaningful dialogue and the discovery of common ground, rather than partisan debate or apathy toward the political process. American Values Are has produced guides designed to facilitate dialogue about what it means to be a citizen, and to energize more Americans to be engaged in shaping and interacting with their own government. They also hope to be able to inform and educate people on how to engage in the dialogue that leads to common ground and minimizes partisan debate that divides and demoralizes us. They hope to encourage individuals to exchange ideas, thoughts, and concerns in a safe and comfortable environment, and by so doing build new relationships. Using their "American Values Are..." dialogue guides, their presentation demonstrated the role of informed dialogue in encouraging civic engagement.

Below are one participant's notes on this workshop:

- PRESENTERS: David Collier- University of Missouri
- Sarah Read- energy lawyer

Civic = developing community; promote civil discourse

- Metaphor from the Midwest:

1. choose the field before you- politics, election, government, arts & science of society
2. Till the ground
3. Plant the Seed
4. Weed & watch
5. Harvest

- What fields are we choosing?

Lack of interest in politics & voting in elections

- Till the ground

Decline in social studies education

- Plant the seed

Teaches values & traditions-civic classes

- Weed & watch

Day to day activities involved with peace. Patterns of communication

- Harvest

How to increase communication, tolerance, peace, compassion, safety. Close gap between values and actions.

- Define words accurately (e.g. *democracy* or *sprawl*)

Purpose: 1). Educate 2). Engage 3). Preserve & Restore

- "We can have facts without thinking but we cannot have thinking without facts." – John Dewey

- Why people don't engage: 1). Not motivated 2). Overwhelmed

3). Uninvited 4). Fearful or anger

- What gets people engaged? 1). Purpose 2). Passion 3). Invitation 4). Information 5). Ability & capital (social)

- Key concepts: 1). Words matter 2). History teaches

3). Relevance is required 4). Citizenship requires critical thought

- Dialogue based learning meets fundamental needs: 1). Attention 2). Acknowledgement 3).

Affection 4). Acceptance

- Conflicts arise from differences: 1). Structure 2). Values

3). Interest 4). Information 5). Relationship

- Dialogue allows exploration of differences

- Dialogue allows for real engagement

- You cannot sustain dialogue if people don't see progress being made.