

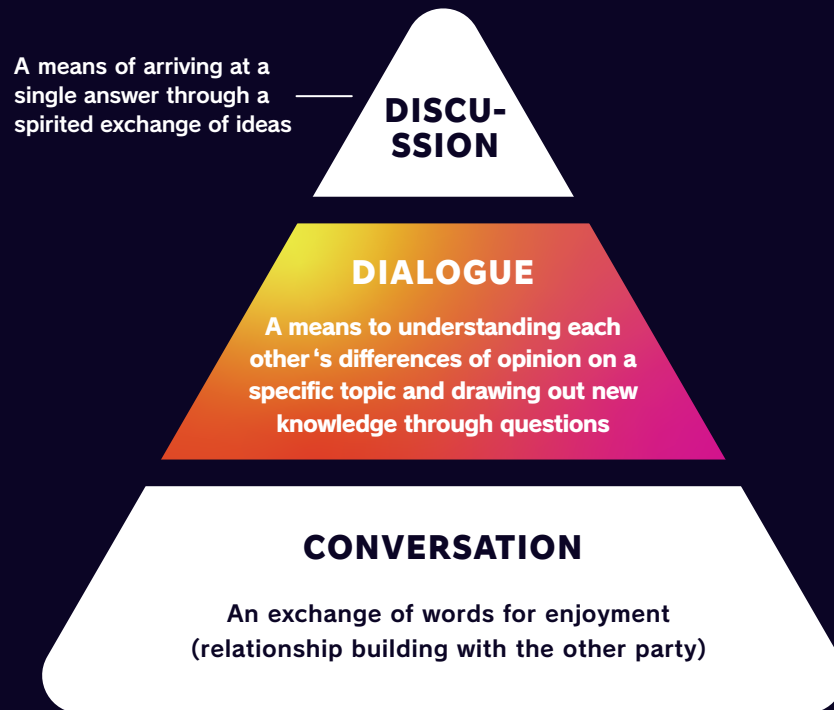


Dialogue  
for Change

with Rakuten

# What is dialogue?

Dialogue is not a discussion aimed at finding a single answer, but rather a means to understanding each other's differences of opinion on a specific topic and drawing out new knowledge through questions. As we face an increasing number of complex social issues for which solutions are difficult to find, dialogue is playing an ever-growing role among diverse stakeholders.



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# Dialogue flow

Dialogue is deepened through seven steps, from the question through to action. Some of the steps may move back and forth as needed.

[ Connect ]

**1 Share a question**



**2 Create relationships**

**3 Gather diverse knowledge**

[ Envision ]

**4 Envision the future you want**

**5 Expand ideas**

[ Form ]

**6 Make a prototype**

**7 Generate action**

## 1 Share a question



Sharing a question serves as a catalyst for dialogue among diverse stakeholders. What has been on your mind lately? Why has it been on your mind? Having a dialogue with someone may offer a new approach to addressing an issue you are not able to resolve on your own. When sharing your question, it is important to express your thoughts in your own words.

### ONE POINT TIP Finding “seeds” for questions

Dialogue allows the exploration of themes for which there is no single correct answer. Things that are on everyone’s mind, that you’re not sure how to feel about, these are what lead to good questions that everyone can relate to.

## 2 Create relationships

Where dialogue takes place, diverse people are attracted by the questions. Through ice-breakers and self-introductions, members from various backgrounds deepen their relationships and create a safe and secure place for dialogue while engaging in communication.

### ONE POINT TIP Good dialogue begins with relationships

If many members are meeting for the first time, it will take time for them to understand each other’s personalities. They should describe themselves in three short key phrases and use them to develop the conversation. Using nicknames also helps to create an equitable dialogue.

## 3 Gather diverse knowledge

Gathering knowledge from diverse people with diverse perspectives creates a chemical reaction-like effect that generates new insights. You may find connections between seemingly unrelated things, or discover that the person next to you is highly knowledgeable about something you know nothing about. Sharing and learning from each other’s differences enables us to broaden our horizons, which leads to new ideas.

### ONE POINT TIP The important information is at the source

Like performing fieldwork, going directly to where things are happening and talking to the people there takes time and effort, but provides access to firsthand information that cannot be obtained only through online means or in a meeting room.

MEMO

## 4 Envision the future you want

Form a clear image of the exciting future you envision and share it with everyone. Since no one knows what lies ahead, there are no right or wrong answers when thinking about the future. What is important is not to think about whether what you aim for is achievable or not, but rather to work backwards from the future you desire (backcasting). This approach will bring creativity to the dialogue and lead to the generation of new ideas.

### ONE POINT TIP Making what you say easy to understand

Using such tools as large-format presentation paper and sticky notes, presenting thoughts not only through words but also illustrations and diagrams, and expressing ideas in the form of short catch phrases can help to convey concepts in a more concrete manner.

## 5 Expand ideas

This is the stage where you expand on the ideas you came up with. Share as many ideas as you can on how you can reach the future that you envisioned in Step 4. Ignore feasibility for the moment and expand on these ideas from various perspectives. When it comes to selecting the ideas, members can vote on their favorite one among themselves or consolidate them by combining similar ideas.

### ONE POINT TIP There's strength in numbers

Key to the process is to first generate as many ideas as possible and put off critiquing them until later. Also important in expanding thinking is piggybacking on the ideas of others, not rejecting seemingly outlandish ideas, and sharing ideas with other teams.

## 6 Make a prototype

When you find the idea that feels right, promptly give shape to it. Don't simply treat it as a thought exercise, actually try it out. Doing so could lead to the next idea that otherwise never would have occurred to you. And don't worry about making it perfect; try to quickly give shape to it using the simplest way possible. If necessary, you can refine and brush up your idea along the way.

### ONE POINT TIP Prototypes can take any form

A prototype can take any form: a picture, something crafted out of paper, a story, a play or video, or even something as simple as a handwritten note. One possible approach is to imagine a society of the future and write an article for an imaginary newspaper or magazine.

## 7 Generate action

The more magnificent the future and ideas you envision are, the longer the path to achieving them may feel. Begin by taking that first step, setting things in motion toward the future you want. A first step means a concrete action that you can get started on today or tomorrow. Taking that first step, no matter how small it may be, will lead to the next step.

### ONE POINT TIP With action comes new colleagues

If you get started and take action, even on a small scale, you will attract new colleagues who share your vision. With new friends and new insights, and through repeated trial and error, you will move closer to the future you want.

# Conclusion

In today's world of growing uncertainty, it is becoming increasingly important to bring together diverse perspectives from diverse people to address various social issues and create the future we want.

Toward this objective, we believe that "discussion" alone is not enough to arrive at an answer; we need more "dialogue."

The Dialogue for Change initiative was launched with this ambition in mind.

Compared with discussion, dialogue may seem like a roundabout approach, but it is well-suited to exploring themes for which there is no single correct answer.

More dialogue, whether in our company, organization, or community, just may be the answer to creating the future we want.

# Through dialogue

 ***I experienced the importance of process***

*I usually focused on conclusions, or what the correct answer to a question might be, but by taking the time to engage in dialogue, I realized the importance of the process of thinking and acting while internalizing differences.*

 ***I gained insight from the source***

*Since the COVID-19 pandemic, face-to-face communication has declined, but I think there's great value in the things you can discover and the lessons you can learn by meeting and talking to people in person, on-site, where things are happening.*

 ***I realized questions lead to questions***

*By engaging in dialogue with diverse members, I often realized just how important things that hadn't occurred to me when I asked that first question really were. I think asking good questions leads to the next good question.*

# Rakuten



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