

Socratic Dialogue

The word ‘Socratic’ comes from the name Socrates, a Classical Greek philosopher (470-399 B.C.) who developed a Theory of Knowledge gained through sharing of ideas and discussing them with a goal of refining and strengthening understanding. He believed that the answers to all human questions and problems reside within us, but we are unaware of the answers and solutions we possess. Socrates was convinced that the surest way to discover what lies within each of us was to practice the **DISCIPLINED** conversation. He called this method the dialectic which means the examination of opinions and ideas in a logical fashion through questions and answers so as to determine their validity (truth/worth).

KEY- discussion must be formal, polite, guided by selfless desire toward truth rather than selfish desire toward entertainment or righteousness.

KEY- Conversation must be forced to clarify ideas into a clear statement of what was meant. By successively correcting incomplete or inaccurate notions through discussion, one can coax out the truth.

KEY- We are seeking deeper understanding through thoughtful dialogue. This is NOT a debate.

SEATING: Create 2 ‘circles’ with the inner circle at the big table and the outer circle at the small table.

After 25 minutes you will switch places.

Inner circle are those talking-

1. discuss in sequence (taking turns one after another around the circle so that all MUST talk)
2. appoint a discussion leader
3. all inner circle participants can ask questions such as:
 - a. What is your point?
 - b. Are you saying that....?
 - c. Could you explain that again....?

Inner Circle purpose is to:

1. Practice effective discussion skills
2. Practice speaking clearly and precisely
3. Sincerely add to the groups’ success

Outer circle are those listening, taking notes.

A member of the outer circle can join in the inner circle IF:

1. Inner circle gets off topic
2. Inner circle becomes nonproductive or argumentative
3. Inner circle has missed a point of importance that is deemed important
 - a. If someone joins the inner circle they become the next speaker

To join the inner circle consider carefully if you have something of importance to add or simply wish to talk. Joining the inner circle from the outer circle is not a desired occurrence.

Outer Circle purpose is to:

4. practice good listening skills
5. Submit written responses to the teacher
6. Offer 10 minutes of feedback to the inner circle on their performance

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS: per each person's book:

1. What book I chose and why?
2. What was the morale, message or main lesson of my book?
3. Would someone take issue with that lesson today (as being not politically correct)
4. Does anyone agree or disagree with the above answer? Why? Why not?