Summary of dialogue model

May 2014
Dialogue (Greek): “flow of meaning”

“The essence of dialogue is an inquiry that surfaces ideas, perceptions, and understanding that people do not already have”.

“This is not the norm: we typically try to come to important conversations well prepared”.

“You have a dialogue when you explore the uncertainties and questions that no one has answers to. In this way you begin to think together – not simply report out old thoughts. In dialogue people learn to use the energy of their differences to enhance their collective wisdom”.

From monologue... to dialogue

- Monologue
- Solo voice
- Debate
- Discussion
- Skilful conversation
- Dialogue

Generative dialogue

Conception

Pool of water
Ploughing a field
Table tennis
Beating down

Adapted from William Isaacs
Kantor’s Four Player Model

**Without Movers,** there is no direction

**Without Followers,** there is no completion

**Without Bystanders,** there is no perspective

**Without Opposers,** there is no correction

Reference: David Kantor  www.kantorinstitute.com
Four practices for ‘dialogic leadership’

Voicing

Move

Bystand
Suspending

Inquiry

Oppose
Respecting

Follow
Listening

William Isaacs, Dialogue and the art of thinking together, 1999
Advocacy:  
Moving and Opposing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action:</th>
<th>Move</th>
<th>Oppose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intent:</td>
<td>Offers direction</td>
<td>Offers correction, aligning or improving or helping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice:</td>
<td>Authentic voice</td>
<td>Respecting</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Inquiry:  
Following and Bystanding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action:</th>
<th>Follow</th>
<th>Bystand</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intent:</td>
<td>Offers building or completing, noticing</td>
<td>Offers perspective – on the conversation (not the topic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice:</td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Suspending judgement</td>
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Productive conversations

- A mixture of all actions in productive sequences
- Individuals have the capability and flexibility to use different actions
- Habitual patterns of behaviour are observed, named and changed
Stuck conversations

- Individuals locked into single actions
  - Habit?
  - Lack of capability?
- No-one makes clear moves
- No-one ever follows a move
- Opposes dominate or are silenced
- Bystands are unspoken or ignored
- Habitual patterns of behaviour prevail
Dialogue practice – 3 arenas

- Awareness of self-in-conversation
  - Where do I mainly ‘go’ in conversation / internal dialogue?

- Awareness of others-in-conversation
  - What do I notice of others in conversation?
  - What are their patterns of conversation?
  - What is others’ intent?

- Awareness of conversation systems
  - What are the patterns of dialogue in meetings in the organisation?

Reference: Amanda Ridings (2011)
Pause for Breath: bringing the practices of mindfulness and dialogue to leadership conversations