

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Stephen T. Mather Training Center

Facilitated Dialogue: Interpretation with Visitors

Kimble Talley

Acting Chief of Interpretation and Education

Vicksburg National Military Park

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

What is dialogue?



Dialogue is ... “the exchange of ideas, opinions, beliefs, and feelings...listening with respect...and being able to express one’s own views with confidence.”

Gammon & Burch, the Dana Centre, London

What is facilitated dialogue?

“Facilitated Dialogue” is a form of interpretive facilitation that uses a **strategically designed** set of questions – an “arc of dialogue” -- to guide participants into a structured, meaningful, **audience-centered conversation** about a challenging or controversial topic.



Audience-Centered Interpretation

*Who is your audience?

*Who is your visitor?

*Who do you engage?

(now and in the future)



Identity: Who Am I?

Black woman

Educator

Teacher

Wife

Divorced

Parent

Single parent

Raised by grand parents

Trainer

Lower SES

Privileged

Traveler

First generation





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Identity: Who Are You?

At your table, pair up and **share** “who you are” ...

Timed Pair Share



Identity

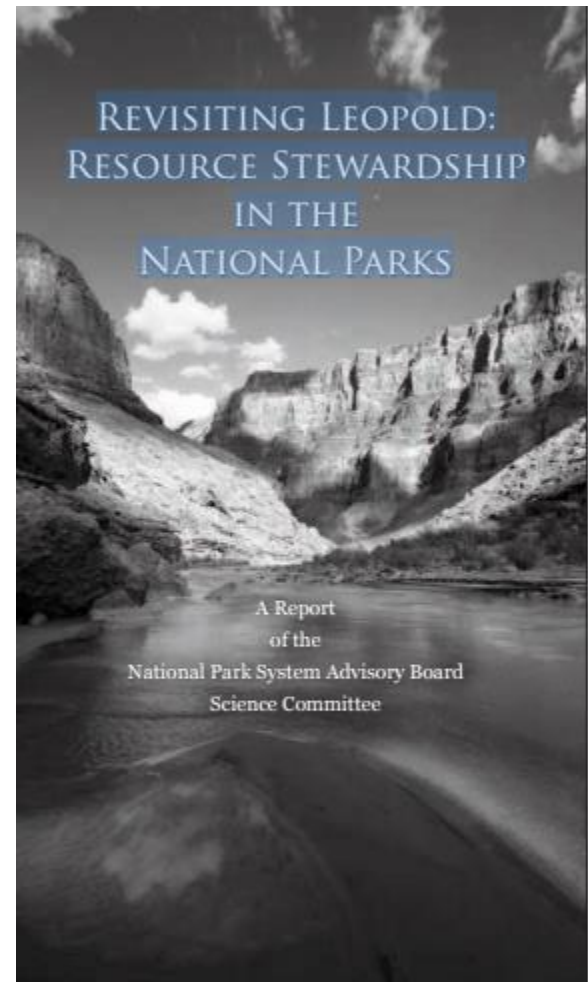
At your table, pair up with someone else and **share**, “how your identity shapes others?”



Why dialogue?

NATIONAL PARKS SECOND CENTURY COMMISSION

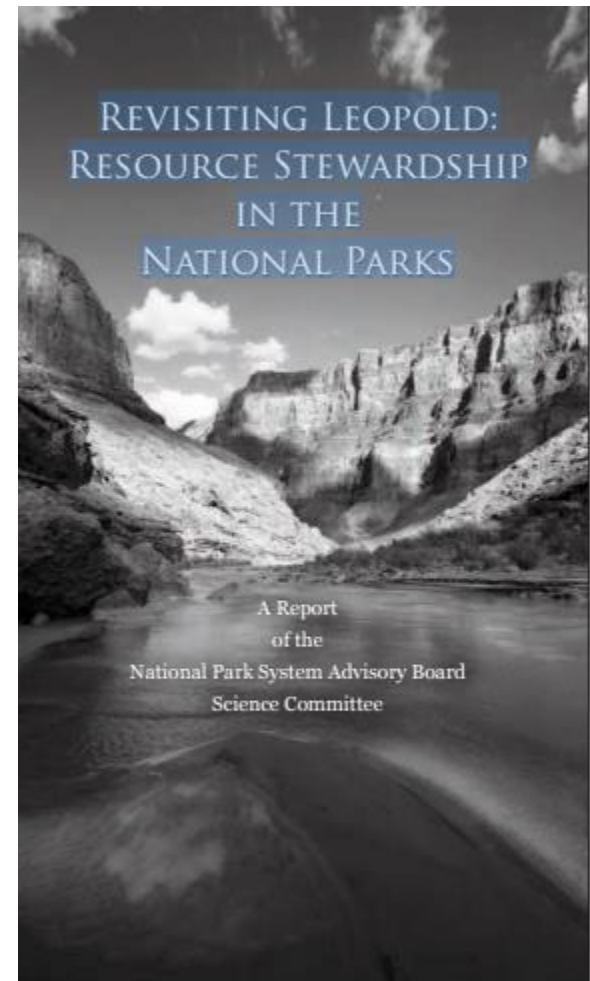
- 1) **What should be the goals of resource management in the National Park System?**
- 2) **What policies for resource management are necessary to achieve these goals?**
- 3) **What actions are required to implement these policies?**



Why dialogue?

1) What should be the goals of resource management in the National Park System?

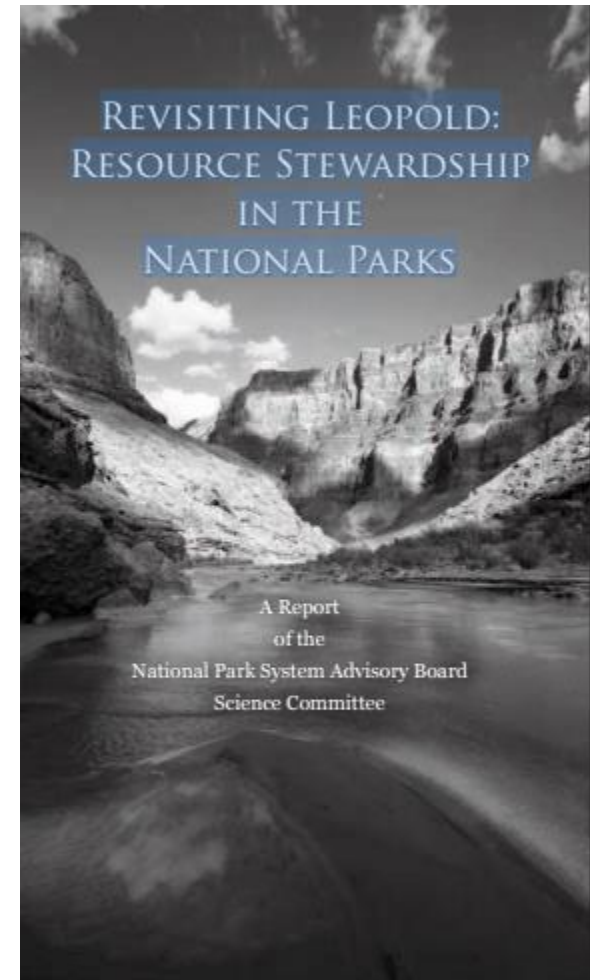
The overarching goal of NPS resource management should be to steward NPS resources for continuous change that is not yet fully understood, in order to preserve ecological integrity and cultural and historical authenticity, provide visitors with transformative experiences, and form the core of a national conservation land- and seascape.



Why dialogue?

1) What should be the goals of resource management in the National Park System?

Distinctive and transformative experiences should be available to all Americans in all units of the National Park System. This requires expanding the relevance and benefits of parks to underrepresented minority groups and communities.



The 21st Century Museum/Library Shift

How should libraries and museums evolve as institutions of learning in the 21st century? In light of 21st century demands, libraries and museums should build on current strengths and embrace new approaches such as the ones described in the chart below:

| 20TH CENTURY MUSEUM/LIBRARY | 21ST CENTURY MUSEUM/LIBRARY |
|---|---|
| Primarily content-driven | Combination of audience- and content-driven |
| Mostly tangible objects (art, books) | Combination of tangible and digital objects |
| One-way information (institution presents information to audiences) | Multi-directional (co-created experiences involving institution, audiences, and others) |
| Focus on presentation and display | Focus on audience engagement and experiences |
| Emphasis on enhancing knowledge | Emphasis on enhancing knowledge and 21st century skills |
| Acts independently | Acts in highly collaborative partnerships |
| Located in community (operates independently) | Embedded in community (aligned with and acts as a leader on community needs/issues) |
| Learning outcomes assumed, implied (content knowledge and skills like critical thinking tend to be byproducts of programming) | Learning outcomes purposeful (content knowledge and 21st century skills like critical thinking are visible, intentional outcomes of audience experiences) |
| Institution leads content development (content tightly edited and controlled) | Content co-created among diverse partners and audiences; accessible in multiple ways |

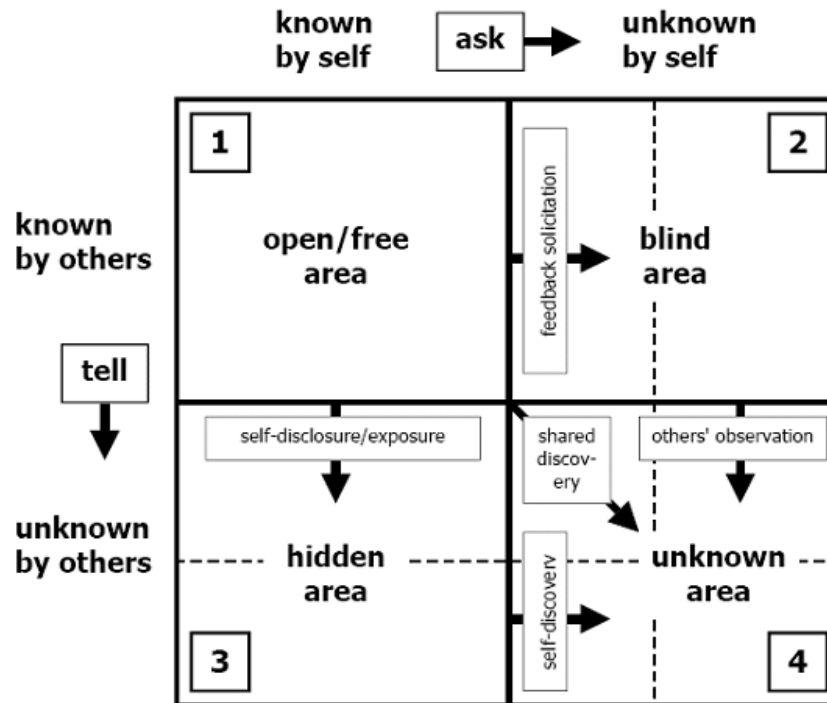
All libraries and museums—and the people they serve—stand to benefit from becoming more intentional and purposeful about accommodating the lifelong learning needs of people in the 21st century, and doing this work collaboratively in alignment with community needs.

Why dialogue?

- *Opportunity to engage in courageous conversations
- *Physical and intellectual challenge
- *Healing and hope
- *Getting the public to appreciate the real

Benefits: Visitors and for YOU

Johari's Window



Benefits: Four Truths

- *Personal truth
- *Forensic truth
- *Societal truth
- *Reconciliatory truth



Benefits: Four Truths

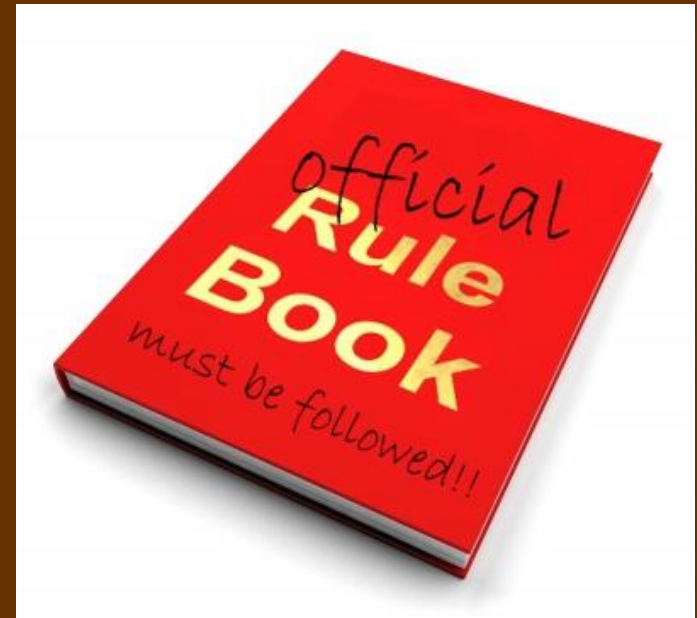
- *Personal truth
- *Forensic truth
- *Societal truth
- *Reconciliatory truth

Climate change, civil rights, civil war, immigration, Biodiversity loss, land use, groundwater removal, overdevelopment, etc...

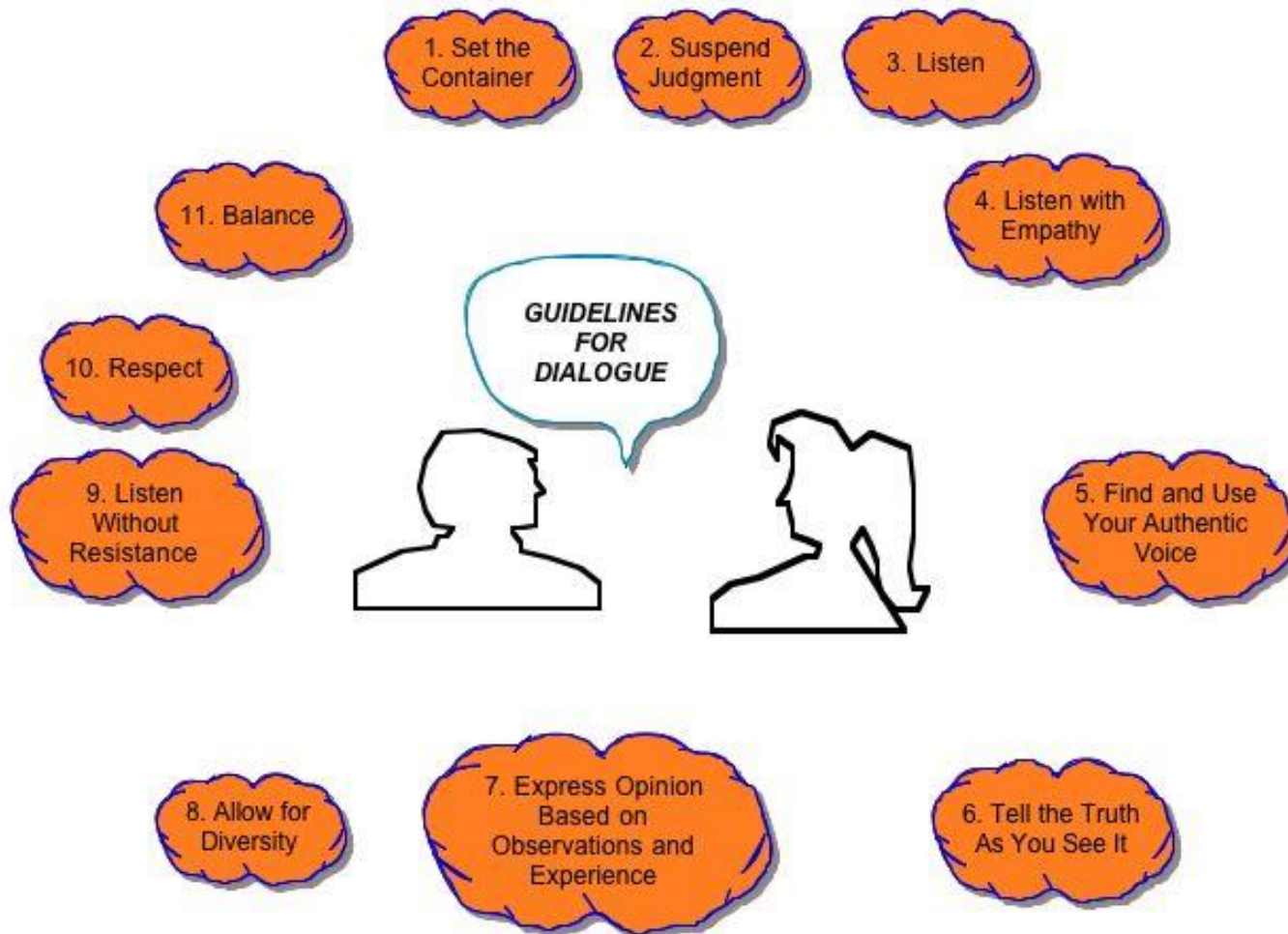


Components of facilitated dialogue

- Ground rules
- Arc of dialogue
- Shared experience
- Techniques
- Open ended questions
- Facilitation skills



Guidelines



Graphic 20: Guidelines for Dialogue
Design: Bertha Lucia Fries

The Arc Of Dialogue

**Phase 2:
Personal Experience**

**Phase 3:
Beyond the Personal**

**Phase 1:
Building Community**

**Phase 4:
Synthesizing and Meaning
making**



Shared Experience:

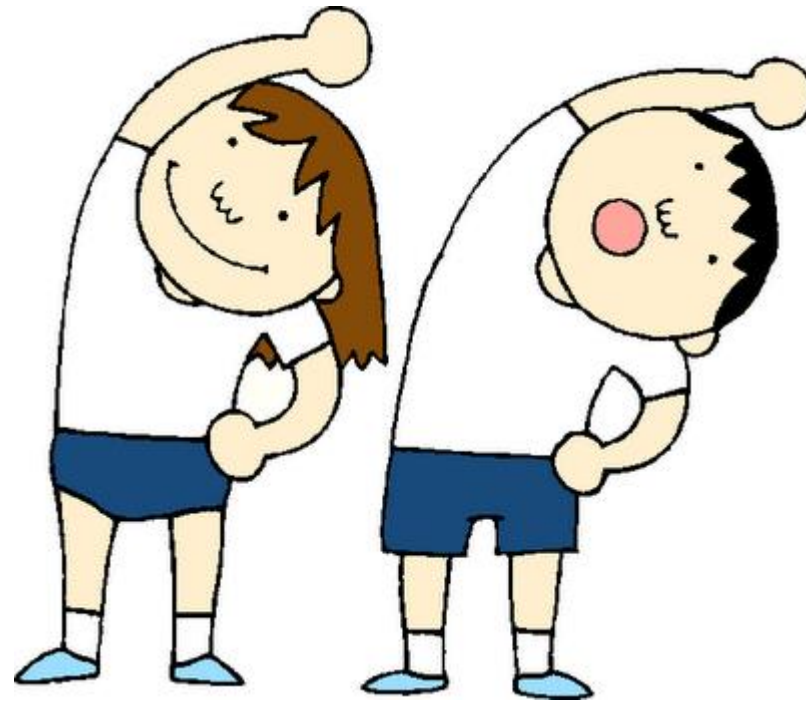
(technique) One Word Check In



Food deserts are communities with little to no access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food.

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Techniques



Open-ended Questions



Example #1

The Power of One

What does community mean to you?

Small group

Thinking of the person you mentioned earlier, how is that person special?

Large Group

What is your name and the name of someone who is special to you?

Large Group



How is our community shaped by those we look up to?

What can we do to make our community better?

Example #2

How can NPS better engage 21st century audiences?

Large Group

What is the most powerful experience you've had in a park (good or bad)?

Pair share

What can America find most useful in our parks?

Shared Experience
[Video Clip](#)

Large Group
Name; What do you do?
Why are you here?

Large Group
What can national parks do to connect to their community?

Lets Practice: Statement #1

Civilization began with agriculture. When our nomadic ancestors began to settle and grow their own food, human society was forever changed. Not only did villages, towns and cities begin to flourish, but so did knowledge, the arts and the technological sciences. And for most of history, society's connection to the land was intimate. Human communities, no matter how sophisticated, could not ignore the importance of agriculture. To be far from dependable sources of food was to risk malnutrition and starvation.

Statement #2

The stakes ahead are enormous, and agricultural research stands at the heart of an effective response to the challenges we confront. For agriculture is not only the means of producing food for the billions of humans on the planet, it is the key interface between humans and the natural environment.

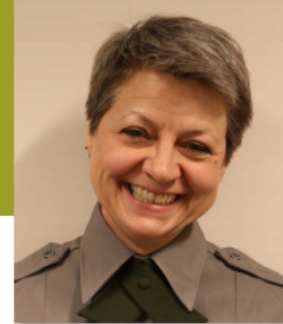
Statement #3

Agriculture, for decades, had been associated with the production of basic food crops. Agriculture and farming were synonymous so long as farming was not commercialized. But as the process of economic development accelerated, many more other occupations allied to farming came to be recognized as a part of agriculture. At present, agriculture besides farming includes forestry, fruit cultivation, dairy, poultry, mushroom, bee keeping, arbitrary, etc. Today, marketing, processing, distribution of agricultural products etc. are all accepted as a part of modern agriculture. Thus, agriculture may be defined as the production, processing, marketing and distribution of crops and livestock products.

Conclusion

- * Interpretation with visitors is more interesting
- * It can be transformative
- * You can learn about your visitors
- * Used as a tool for evaluation and/or assessment
- * Its authentic
- * Its our jobs to provoke

from the ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR



April 2014

Dear Colleagues,

Every day, I am reminded of the fundamental purpose and mission of the National Park Service. Few organizations benefit from such a clear, critical mission that is still relevant after almost 100 years. As the workforce and partners of the National Park Service, we are driven by this powerful mission. We are blessed with an incredible legacy of love, dedication, and devotion—love for our nation's natural and cultural inheritance, dedication to its stewardship in perpetuity, and through this work, devotion to perpetuating a civil democratic society.

Every generation has its own set of challenges and opportunities in accomplishing this duty—and ours is no exception. We live in a time of exponential change that often feels chaotic and overwhelming. Climate change, globalization, rapidly changing technologies, economic instability, struggling educational systems, and polarized politics are a few issues swirling around us on a daily basis. Even children's brains are developing differently due to their intensive use of technology.

We preserve park resources and values for the enjoyment, education and inspiration of this and future generations. Twenty-first-century learners have new needs and desires. Ninety-five percent of learning opportunities occur outside the classroom. Learning is highly personal and can happen anywhere, anytime. People want to engage in making meaning of the world around them. They demand interactive experiences and access to multiple sources of information. They also expect multiple opportunities to participate in decisions on the direction and scope of experiences in national parks and programs and in their communities. These challenges and changes, along with shrinking financial and personnel resources, require us to be highly strategic and make difficult choices in meeting the National Park Service mission.

How, in the face of large-scale change and new attitudes about learning, do we accomplish the mission as eloquently stated in the Organic Act? More importantly, how do we inspire others to be





Kimble Talley
Mather Training Center
304.535.4093



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