

DELIBERATION AND DEBATE – NOT ONE OR THE OTHER

Deliberation will not replace debate. Adversarial debate will always occur, and it is necessary to resolve polarized conflict between two well-defined technical options. Evaluating the broad choices to get to these technical options, however, may require deliberation.

The strength of the debate will always be demonstrated at the stage of making an either-or and a yes-no decision in a legislative or executive process. The purpose of deliberation, however, is to frame the type of decision that might ultimately have to be made. Debate can settle where to build a bridge. Deliberation determines whether or not a bridge should be built and, if so, for what purposes. Deliberation also serves to develop a public for actions on an issue which serves as the basis for consistent public policy. Deliberation, in order to serve these purposes, cannot be just any type of talk. You must talk **through**, not just **talk about** an issue.

In debate, you search for glaring differences.	Deliberation involves concern for others.
In debate, you search for weaknesses in another position.	In deliberation, you search for strength in another position.
Debate involves countering the other's position at the expense of the relationship.	Deliberation assumes that many people have pieces of an answer to a workable solution.
Debate calls for investing wholeheartedly in your beliefs.	In deliberation, you temporarily suspend your beliefs.
Debate is oppositional and seeks to prove the other wrong.	Deliberation is collaborative and seeks common understanding.
The goal of debate is winning--often only for a short-term advantage.	The goal of deliberation is common ground for action which is the basis for consistent policy.
In debate, you listen to find flaws and counterarguments.	In deliberation, you listen to understand and find meaning in agreement.
Debate defends assumptions as truth.	Deliberation reveals assumptions for reevaluation.
Debate defends original solutions.	Deliberation opens the possibility of better solutions.
In debate, you submit your best thinking and defend its rightness.	In deliberation, you submit your best thinking in order to improve it.