



# ANYTHING GOES ACTIVITY

## Objectives:

- To engage in conflict
- To practice the skills of dialogue
- To build consensus

**Group Size:** Any

**Materials:** None

**Time Needed:** 10-20 minutes

## Activity Instructions:

This game is a great way for participants to engage in a mini-conflict with another team member in a nonthreatening manner. Ask participants to find a partner. Have each pair stand face to face, right fist out (as in Rock, Paper, Scissors), and say together, “Nothing, something, anything!” Once the word anything is said, the two participants yell out the name of any item they can think of (dog, coffee mug, shoe). After yelling out their items, team members must now debate one another as to why their item would “beat” the other person’s item. Allow about two or three minutes of debate, then call a brief time-out to discuss the difference between debate and dialogue. After that, have the team continue with their conversations, only now, encourage team members to engage in dialogue—asking questions and listening to the answers—to come to an agreement between the two of them.

## Tips:

The essential difference between debate and dialogue is that true dialogue is collaborative. Participants are working toward shared understanding and strength and value in each other’s positions. A debate is a discussion with the goal of persuading or advocating for their own view, attempting to prove the other side wrong, and searching for flaws and weaknesses in the other’s positions. In dialogue, the intention is to really listen to one another’s perspective with a willingness to be influenced by what we hear. Dialogue allows people to develop understanding for one another’s perspectives, thoughts, and feelings as well as to reevaluate their own position in light of the other’s understanding. In dialogue, everyone has a chance to be heard, understood, and to learn from each other.

## Discussion Questions:

1. How did you react to your mini-conflict?
2. Is this how you normally act in conflict situations? Why or why not?
3. How were you able to come to a consensus?
4. What happened when you switched from debate to dialogue?
5. When someone disagrees with you, do you always stop to ask questions?
6. Is it difficult to listen when someone disagrees with you? Why?
7. What made it easier in this activity?
8. In what ways could you use these skills the next time you’re in conflict with another person?