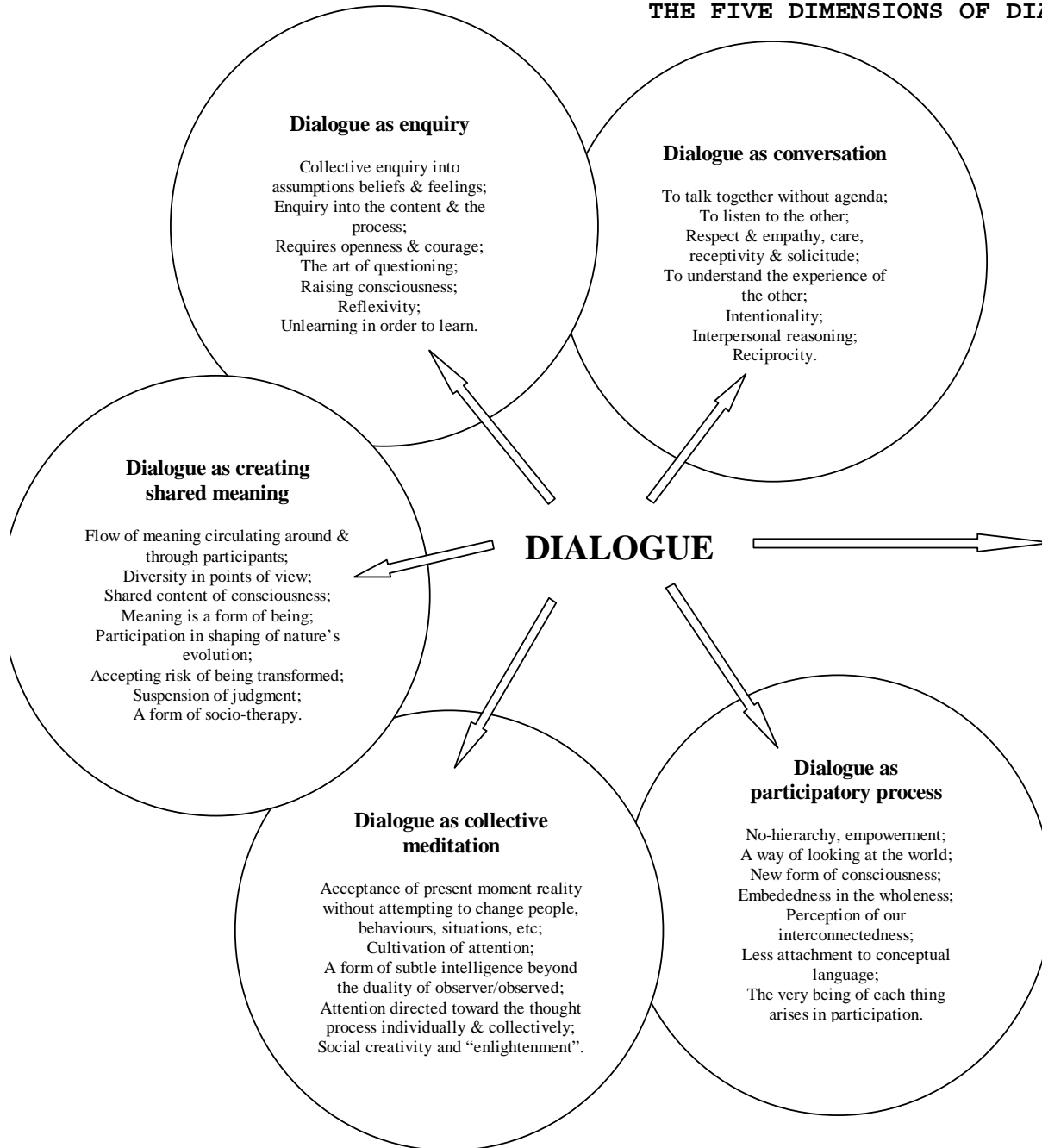


THE FIVE DIMENSIONS OF DIALOGUE



This diagram and conclusion are extracted from Professor Mario Cayer's doctoral thesis The Five Dimensions of Dialogue which was a study he completed in the 90's into the experience of a group of people with long-term involvement in dialogue groups. These extracts summarize the reasons which study participants gave for their involvement in the Dialogue process.

Conclusion

"Here I will mention one last thing about this model: It is not free from tensions and paradoxes. For example, how can one reconcile conversation which puts emphasis on empathy, listening and receptivity with inquiry which explores and questions? This tension can be illustrated by one example. In one of the dialogue groups I visited during this research, one woman only wanted to talk, share with others; she did not want to focus on the individual and collective assumptions and wanted even less to reflect on the process. Her attachment to conversation and the attachment of other participants to inquiry degenerated into a violent argument and resulted in the woman leaving and never coming back.

How can one reconcile the no-goal characteristic of meditation with the purposes of other dimensions, for example the creation of a shared meaning, the surfacing of the collective assumptions, etc. In other words, the different dimensions of this model can very easily be in contradiction with one another. And it is precisely in such a situation that it is imperative to initiate a dialogue.

One must not be naive and think that the presentation of this model will resolve all problems. No model can resolve problems. Models are a creation of the human mind. And when we grow attached to our models, to the creations of our minds, we then give up our capacity to create. That price is much too high. Let us hope that individually and collectively we have the courage not to become too attached to the creations of our minds and, consequently, keep our capacity to create. It is what the practice of dialogue invites us to do."

Mario Cayer