

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

An Overview

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<p>Definition/ Primary Purpose</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strategy for intentional change that identifies the best of "what is" to pursue dreams and possibilities of "what could be"; a cooperative search for the strengths, passions and life-giving forces that are found within every system and that hold potential for inspired, positive change. • A process of collaborative inquiry, based on interviews and affirmative questioning, that collects and celebrates "good news stories" of a community; these stories serve to enhance cultural identity, spirit and vision. • A way of seeing which is selectively attentive to -- and affirming of -- the best and highest qualities in a system, a situation, or another human being; an appreciation for the "mystery of being" and a "reverence for life." (phrases from Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1987)
<p>Potential Uses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission Statement/Vision Development • Strategic Planning • Organizational/System Redesign • Process & Service Enhancement • Improvement Initiatives • Group Culture Change • Civic/Community Development • Umbrella for Multiple Change Initiatives in a System
<p>Ideal Conditions for Use</p>	<p>Identified need or desire for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Heart-felt inquiry, discovery & renewal - Positive, grass-roots revolution <p>Systems & situations in which there is (are):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support for full voice participation at all levels - Commitment to change as an ongoing process, not a one-time event - Leadership belief in the positive core and affirmative process as a viable change driver - Structures/resources to encourage sharing of "good news stories" and to support creative action

<p>Times to Avoid/Use</p>	<p>Situations in which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Predictable, linear process & outcomes are required - Problem-identification/problem-solving is the preferred method for change - There is lack of support for passionate dreaming & inspired self-initiative
<p>Potential Outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in basic orientation from problem-focused to possibility-focused • Clarified or enhanced sense of identity, shared values & culture • Established climate of continual learning & inquiry • Renewal of group energy, hope, motivation & commitment • Increase in curiosity, wonder and "reverence for life" • Whole system changes in culture & language (increase in cooperative practices & decrease in competition; increased ratio of positive: negative comments; increase in affirmative questions and/or narrative-rich communication) • Improved working relations/conflict resolution • Decrease in hierarchical decision-making; increase in egalitarian practices & self-initiated action • Successful achievement of intents listed above (see "Potential Uses");
<p>Key Principles & Assumptions</p>	<p><u>Four Guiding Principles:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Every system works to some degree; seek out the positive, life-giving forces and <i>appreciate</i> the "best of what is." 2. Knowledge generated by the inquiry should be <i>applicable</i>, look at what is possible & relevant. 3. Systems are capable of becoming more than they are, and they can learn how to guide their own evolution -- so consider <i>provocative</i> challenges & bold dreams of "what might be." 4. The process & outcome of the inquiry are interrelated and inseparable, so make the process a <i>collaborative</i> one. <p><u>About Reality...</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We co-create reality through our language, thoughts, images and beliefs about reality. • The act of asking a question influences the system's reality in some way (i.e. questions are a form of intervention). • The types of questions we ask determine the types of answers we receive; and "the seeds of change are implicit in the very first questions we ask." • We manifest what we focus on, and we "grow toward what we persistently ask questions about." (both quotes from Cooperrider & Whitney, 1999) <p style="text-align: right;">-continued-</p>

<p>Key Principles & Assumptions, cont.</p>	<p><u>About Problem-Solving...</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AI is distinctly different from problem-solving: AI focuses on a desired future or outcome, built on strengths/passions of the past and present. • Problem-solving attempts to analyze deficits, identify root causes, then fix problems or correct errors; because it searches for problems, it finds them. • AI doesn't ignore problems -- it recognizes them as a desire for something else, then works to identify & enhance the "something else."
<p>Background Theory & Other Influences</p>	<p><u>Constructionist Principle:</u> we construct realities based on our previous experience, so our knowledge and the destiny of the system are interwoven.</p> <p><u>Principle of Simultaneity:</u> inquiry and change are simultaneous.</p> <p><u>Poetic Principle:</u> the story of the system is constantly being co-authored, and it is open to infinite interpretations.</p> <p><u>Anticipatory Principle:</u> what we anticipate determines what we find.</p> <p><u>Positive Principle:</u> as an image of reality is enhanced, actions begin to align with the positive image.</p> <p><u>Other related research/theory:</u> Sports psychology re: visualization; educational research re: Pygmalion effect; medical research re: mind/body health, placebo effect, etc.; spiritual practices of meditation and visualization.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Story, metaphor, image, and dialogue are powerful change agents. • AI reveals common ground (shared values & dreams). • AI reveals higher ground (the most compelling, desirable possibilities). • Affirmative competence (ability to recognize & affirm the positive) is a skill that can be practiced and learned.
<p>Number & Types of Participants</p>	<p>"Everyone" who is within the system or touched by it in some way; those who hold images and have stories about the system 20 - 2000 or more, involved in interviews, meetings and collaborative actions</p>
<p>Typical Duration</p>	<p>AI Summit: large scale meeting that "gets the whole system into the room;" lasting 1 - 6 days</p> <p>Non-conference Design: interviews and dialogue that spread "web-like" throughout the system; timeframe indefinite</p>

<p>Process - Steps of Implementation</p>	<p>The process usually takes participants through the stages of <u>The 4-D Cycle</u>: Discovery -- Appreciating & Valuing the Best of "What Is" Dream -- Envisioning "What Might Be" Design -- Dialoguing "What Should Be" Destiny -- Innovating "What Will Be"</p> <p>AI Principles are adapted and customized to each individual situation; the <u>Full AI process typically includes</u>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Selecting a focus area or topic(s) of interest 2. Interviews designed to discover strengths, passions, unique attributes 3. Identifying patterns, themes and/or intriguing possibilities 4. Creating bold statements of ideal possibilities ("Provocative Propositions") 5. Co-determining "what should be" (consensus re: principles & priorities) 6. Taking/sustaining action
<p>Creator(s) & Creation Date</p>	<p>David Cooperrider, Suresh Srivastva in 1987 with colleagues from Case Western University & Taos Institute</p>
<p>References Used for this Fact Sheet</p>	<p>Cooperrider, David L. & Srivastva, Suresh (1987). "Appreciative Inquiry in Organizational Life." In Pasmore, W. & Woodman, R. (Eds.), <i>Research in Organizational Change and Development</i>, Vol. 1, p. 129-169. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.</p> <p>Cooperrider, David L. & Whitney, Diana (1999). <i>Appreciative Inquiry</i>. In Holman, P. & Devane, T. (Eds.), <i>Collaborating for Change</i>. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.</p> <p>Hammond, Sue Annis (1998, 2nd edition). <i>The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry</i>. Plano, TX: The Thin Book Publishing Co.</p> <p>Holman, Peggy & Devane, Tom (Eds., 1999). <i>The Change Handbook - Group Methods for Shaping the Future</i>. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.</p> <p>Kelm, Jackie (1998). "Introducing the AI Philosophy." from Hammond, Sue Annis & Royal, Cathy (Eds., 1998). <i>Lessons From the Field: Applying Appreciative Inquiry</i>. (p. 161-172). Plano, TX: Practical Press Inc.</p> <p>Pinto, Michael and Curran, Mary. (1998) "Laguna Beach Education Foundation, Schoolpower." from Hammond, Sue Annis & Royal, Cathy (Eds., 1998). <i>Lessons From the Field: Applying Appreciative Inquiry</i>. (p. 16 -47). Plano, TX: Practical Press Inc.</p> <p>Whitney, Diana & Cooperrider, David L. (Summer, 1998). "The Appreciative Inquiry Summit: Overview and Applications." <i>Employment Relations Today</i>, p. 17-28.</p>