

# appreciative inquiry

## foundations and practice

*leading from strengths we discover in  
our communities and ourselves*

*sponsored by the UNC Office of Faculty Governance, the  
Center for Faculty Excellence, and the Institute for the Arts and  
Humanities*

sallie lee  
2010



**shared sun studio**

o r g a n i z a t i o n a l   d e s i g n

*We have reached the end of problem solving as a mode of inquiry capable of inspiring, mobilizing and sustaining human system change, and the future of OD belongs to methods that affirm, compel and accelerate anticipatory learning involving larger and larger levels of collectivity.*

David Cooperrider

*Little progress can be made by merely attempting to repress what is evil. Our great hope lies in developing what is good.*

President Calvin Coolidge, 1872-1933



# Table of Contents

This workbook is designed to provide an introductory overview of Appreciative Inquiry applications and the research that informs its principles and approach.

A Brief Background on AI	5
☼ What is AI	6
☼ Defining AI	7
☼ Why does AI Work?	9
☼ Overuse of the Deficit	10
☼ The AI Principles	12
☼ How Can We Connect to the Principles	13
☼ Common Misconceptions	15
☼ Results from Appreciative Approaches	16
Related Research	25
☼ The 3-Circles of the Strengths Revolution	26
☼ AI Related Research	31
☼ The Positive Psychology Movement	32
☼ Strengths Movement	34
☼ Neuroscience and AI	35
☼ Appreciative Intelligence	36
Whole System Processes	38
The 5 D Methodology	
☼ The 5D Core Practices and Overview	39
☼ Working with Discovery	43
☼ Working with Dream	48
☼ Working with Design	53
☼ Working with Destiny	59
☼ Working with Definition	63
☼ Success Factors	65
AI Summits	
☼ Definition Phase and Success	68
☼ Potential Outcomes	71
The Art of Inquiry	72
☼ Reframing Steps	73
☼ PRACTICE: Reframe Charting	75
☼ Basic Generative Questions	77



☼ Samples/Examples	78
AI Everyday	89
☼ Collaboration	90
☼ META: Collaborative Capacities	91
☼ Breathing A-I-R	93
☼ Practicing Everyday	94
☼ How Leaders Can Apply Everyday	99
Resources	100
☼ Online resources	101
☼ Books/articles	104
☼ Workbook Acknowledgments	111
Final Note: AI as a Generator of our Best	112



# A Brief Background of AI

All the greatest and most important problems are fundamentally insolvable...They can never be solved, but only outgrown. The



"outgrowing" proved on further investigation to require a new level of consciousness. Some higher or wider interest appeared on the person's horizon, and through this broadening of his or her outlook the insolvable problem lost its urgency. It was not solved logically in its own terms but faded when confronted with a new and stronger life urge.

Carl Jung



# Appreciative Inquiry: What Is It

Appreciative Inquiry is about the co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the relevant world around them. In its broadest focus, it involves systematic discovery of what gives “life” to a living system when it is most alive, most effective, and most constructively capable in economic, ecological, and human terms.

David Cooperrider

the positive core of the organization

root causes of success

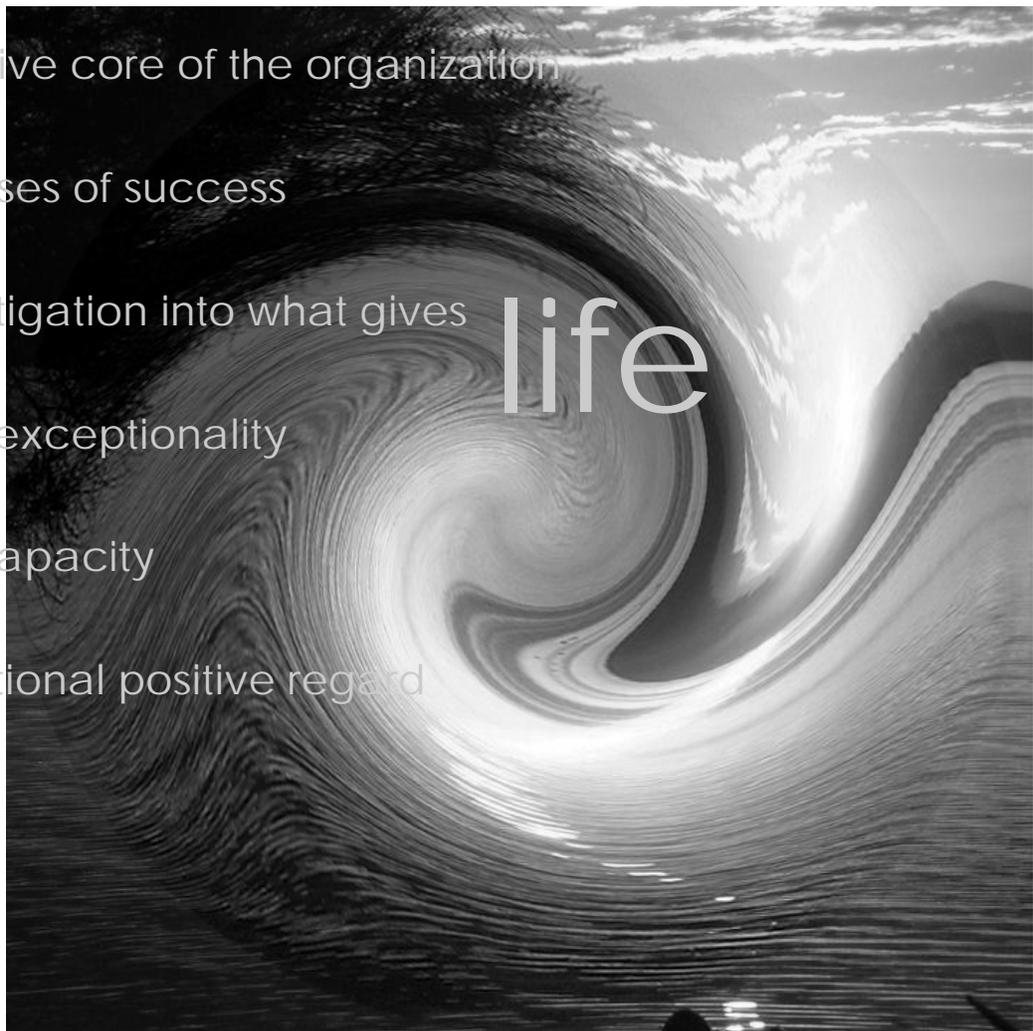
an investigation into what gives

life

positive exceptionalality

infinite capacity

unconditional positive regard



# Defining Appreciative Inquiry

*Appreciative Inquiry (Ai)* is an emergent approach to organizational, community, and human development that calls for us to look at organizations from a different perspective, to rediscover and organize the good rather than limit our focus to problem solving. The principles of Ai cluster around the idea that organizations and the people in them do not need to be fixed but rather affirmed. With Ai, the intervention is not around analyzing and attacking problems but around asking powerful, positive questions that help access an organization's strengths and capacities, their "positive core" for energy and movement. Choosing to study the best in a system and "what gives life" generates energy, participation, self-expression, and fresh, well-grounded visions of the future.

Ai provides an effective philosophical and methodological container for important conversations, enabling collaborative dialogue and knowledge sharing that can involve a whole system in clarifying purpose, illuminating competencies and values, strategizing, and moving in new directions. The process can serve diverse organizational situations, ranging from deepening relationships and team alignments to whole system change initiatives. Ultimately, it is a planning method – one that allows each individual's best ideas to surface-- with small groups or even thousands of people in the room at the same time.

## *Background*

The Appreciative Inquiry process was developed by David Cooperrider and others at the Weatherhead School of Management, Case Western Reserve University, in Cleveland, Ohio, USA. The original impetus came from Cooperrider's work on his PhD dissertation as he worked through an organizational analysis of a hospital and was surprised to find a high level of positive cooperation, innovation, and opportunities for equal voice. He continued with a study of the "life-centric" properties of the organization and published his findings with his advisor, Suresh Srivastva, in 1986. As his research continued, he found connecting practices and philosophies that grounded his work into a new theory and framework.

Many innovations and adherents later, Ai has emerged as one of the most refreshing strategies for enhancing organizational life. Academic and professional literature has proliferated; there is an ongoing discussion list serve with more than 3000 members, a newsletter, international



conferences around Ai, and an enormous, research-oriented, practice-sharing web page, the *Ai Commons*.

*AI Takes Us From.....To*

Using an appreciative, strength-based approach, organizations have the opportunity to shift their focus and framing to more energizing approaches that create the agile, adaptive cultures of innovation and collaboration needed today.

FROM	TO
Problem focus	Solutions and building on what works well
Overcoming weaknesses	Excelling at core strengths
Controlling information	Openness and inquiry
Silo culture	Collaboration/total organization mindset
Leadership as control	Leadership as affirmation
Top down planning	Whole system planning
Short-term change	Sustainable, generative change and innovation
Fragmented organizational change	Integrated change through whole system involvement
Flavor of the month driven change	Relational, collaboratively driven change
Diagnosis	Dialogue
Critical analysis	Powerful, positive inquiry
Criticism and negative reinforcement	Valuing and positive regard
Negotiation	Shared vision
Organizational Fatigue	Energy and enthusiasm
Organizational depression	Organizational confidence
Relying on individual contributions	Tapping collective wisdom and intelligence
Root causes of failure	Root causes of success



# Why does it work?

## key elements of appreciative inquiry

*Transformative dialogue emerged through the simple process of giving voice to the multiple communities present in the room.*

Sheila McNamee

Organizational Wisdom and Executive Courage

### self-organizing, self-responsible, self-creating, self-generating

Creating an environment where the group can fully express and create with minimal intervention. That environment includes topics, questions, materials, seating, timing.

### careful framing and focusing of topics

What is compelling to talk about? What do we want more of? What stories do all participants have about how a project emerged and was carried through? What is most life-giving?

### inquiry-based

inquiry directs the focus. Powerful, positive questions that everyone can relate to uncover our knowledge and strengths.

### whole system dialogue and conversations

The whole system includes those who have some involvement or vested interest in an organization's vitality. In place of winners or losers, dialogue offers us participants.

### full voice

Opportunities for everyone to articulate the coherence of their realities invites and allows full, equal voice

### use of story telling, image and metaphor

Engaging the whole brain; story telling is accessible--we can all do it. And, our own experience is very compelling.

### unconditional positive regard

Inviting unconditional positive regard and love to enter the room and be present as we do the work of organizing. Love has an ordering effect.

### learning from what works

in every system, something works. Co-design those learnings into new options and systems.

### collective vision of the future

building the future on the foundation of strengths and the alignment of the whole





Vocabularies  
of human  
deficit are the  
opiates of the  
masses.

David Cooperrider



# Overuse of Deficit-Based Management and Problem-Solving

*Most schools, companies, families and organizations function on an unwritten rule... "Let's fix what's wrong and let the strengths take care of themselves"*  
--Gallop Poll

## Unintended Consequences

- Fragmentation
- Few New Images of Possibility
- Exhaustion
- "The Experts Must Know" ... Dependence and Hierarchy
- Spirals in Deficit Vocabularies
- Closed Door Meetings
- Disempowering Climate
- Anti-innovation

Problem Solving	AI
Identify the problems	Identify current successes and strengths
Analyze the causes of the problems	Identify the factors that enable our success and envision our desired future
Treat the problems	Innovate to build more support for those factors that enable success
We get better by solving our problems	We get better by enabling our best work.



# The Appreciative Inquiry Principles

## *Principle of Social Constructionism*

- ☀ Our reality and meaning are socially constructed.
- ☀ Words make worlds. When we change the way we talk together, the questions we ask, we change reality.
- ☀ We create reality together through our language, stories, and relationships.
- ☀ Our organizations are living, human constructions.
- ☀ Our perspectives, our ways of knowing, our conversations are fateful.

## *Principle of Simultaneity*

- ☀ Change begins the moment we ask the question. Outcomes are implicit in the question.
- ☀ Inquiry and change are simultaneous.
- ☀ What you focus on, what you think about and talk about, determines where you end up.

## *Poetic Principle*

- ☀ Everything is open to reinterpretation. Our organization's story is constantly being co-authored.
- ☀ How we understand, what story we believe, impacts everything.
- ☀ We can re-author our history, re-author our organizations.

## *Anticipatory Principle*

- ☀ Positive Image= Positive Action
- ☀ The image of the future guides any organization's current behavior and is our most powerful resource.
- ☀ We grow in the direction of our most compelling image of the future and focus.

## *The Positive Principle (or Principle of Generativity)*

- ☀ The questions we ask and what we inquire into are generative.
- ☀ The more potent and positive the questions and conversation, the more positive and generative the outcome.
- ☀ The more positive an approach, the more healthy, creative and resilient the individual and organization.

## *Plus, the emergent principle of Wholeness:*

Not top down or bottom up but whole. Wholeness brings out the best in human systems and taps the collective wisdom.



# How Can We Connect to the Principles?

## *Given the Constructionist Principle*

*If the construction of cultures and systems is social, what culture do you support and participate in?*

- ☀ How do we greet one another? How do we run our meetings?
- ☀ How do we respond to one another in our families and communities?
- ☀ How do we learn about one another?
- ☀ How do we jointly discover what we are creating and what is possible?
- ☀ What do we talk about?

## *Given the Principle of Simultaneity*

*If change occurs the instant you ask a question, what questions will you choose? What change do you invoke?*

- ☀ What questions do we ask when faced with challenges and problems?
- ☀ What questions will turn conversations on a dime so that they head toward desired outcomes?
- ☀ What language do we use?

## *Given the Poetic Principle*

*If all history is open to reinterpretation, what interpretation will inspire us to new levels of relationship, to higher ground?*

- ☀ How can we pay attention to what is important to us now?
- ☀ What stories of our past do we choose to tell?
- ☀ How can we reframe our relationships and situations so that we are empowered to move forward and achieve our dreams together?
- ☀ How can we question our frames and explore new possibilities?
- ☀ Am I focusing on what is working or on what has gone wrong?



### *Given the Anticipatory Principle*

*If positive image=positive action, how do we get the most powerful, positive, widely shared image?*

- ☀ What do we expect from one another?
- ☀ What do I hope will happen and is it the same as what I expect?
- ☀ What hopes and wishes do we share for our organization?
- ☀ What happens if I shift my anticipation from goals and products, to learning and possibilities? What new questions might emerge?

### *Given the Positive Principle or Principle of Generativity*

*If the positive elevates, bonds, and dissolves the negative in favor of a broader view, higher view, in what ways can you nurture the presence of the positive?*

- ☀ What questions will generate powerful conversations, new knowledge, possibilities, and innovation?
- ☀ How can we generate bold, provocative images through our questions?

## Reflection Time

How are the AI principles relevant to your way of doing, thinking and being in the world?

How might these principles influence your future actions?



# Common Misconceptions About AI

- ✿ Myth #1: AI is just about the positive; we have to make sure that we only talk about what is working well, just look at our best, and pay attention to the good things that are happening.
- ✿ Reality: Practicing AI is first and foremost about inquiring into what will generate the knowledge and action that will move us in the direction we want to move. AI inquires into whatever is of value in moving forward. AI is about being in the world with awareness that the principles are in effect.
- ✿ Myth #2: AI means we can't talk about problems or use problem-solving strategies.
- ✿ Reality: It is important to address problems. Practicing AI means context is essential; it means beginning with the goal(s) in mind and addressing the problem by looking at desired outcomes. Inquiring into positive deviance supports solution-finding. Benchmarking supports innovation. Inquiry and dialogue can generate new knowledge and innovative solutions that achieve desired outcomes.
- ✿ Myth #3: It's not okay to talk about what's wrong or complain. We can only talk about what's right. If someone is angry or has a complaint, they should keep it to themselves.
- ✿ Reality: It is important to listen to all voices. Practicing AI means engaging in dialogue and inquiry with the aim to understand what needs to happen and how to bring about a "social reality" that works for everyone. Knowing what is wrong doesn't tell anyone what someone needs to make things right. Surfacing issues is the only way to move them forward.



## Results from Appreciative Approaches A Few Examples

Company	Challenge	Outcomes
<p>Microsoft Corporation</p>	<p>Microsoft required all managers to participate in a company-wide leadership development program with the goals of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Strengthening their ability to have a positive impact on the business; and,</li> <li>b) Creating a pipeline of talent throughout the organization.</li> </ul> <p>The program was highly experiential, allowing managers to work on actual projects that benefitted the company as opposed to simulated exercises and role-plays.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Many managers report the program has changed their professional life and describe a new sense of hope for managers and the company</li> <li>- Employee retention has increased at the manager and individual contributor levels</li> </ul>
<p>Hanover Insurance Company</p>	<p>Hanover Insurance Company engaged in a cultural transformation over five years. They became a company with strong values on education, excellent service, decisions made as locally as appropriate and being a leader in the field. They had been a bit player in the state, had difficulty in recruiting employees, and were marginal in terms of profit.</p>	<p>Over five years they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased their workforce by 300 percent</li> <li>- Retention rate increased from 40 to 94%</li> <li>- They had the most CPCU's (advanced insurance certifications) of any company in the state, and were profitable, well known and had begun educating the public and legislators</li> <li>- They became leaders in the field interacting and influencing the governor, legislature, Department of Insurance and the public</li> </ul>
<p>British Petroleum – Upstream Technology Group</p>	<p>The challenge for the 700 engineers, scientists and geophysicists of the Upstream Technology Group was to “meet the production challenge by quickly becoming better at moving our innovations into application in field operations (Exploration) ”</p> <p>This meant finding new ways</p>	<p>The positive change process produced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An increase in Exploration productivity of 30,000 bpd</li> <li>- Identification of key variables in the knowledge/innovation transfer process</li> <li>- Much improved and closer working processes with their clients</li> </ul>



Company	Challenge	Outcomes
	to transfer the knowledge and innovations generated by the R&D work of the 700 engineers, scientists and geophysicists, to the people in "Exploration" – those who actually go out and find the oil and gas.	
CertainTeed Gypsum	CertainTeed Gypsum, a major manufacturer and distributor of Gypsum products in North America, was building a new high-speed plant in Moundsville, West Virginia. Part of the company's strategy was to create a high-commitment/high-engagement organization to operate this "best in the world" plant. IPI partners guided the Moundsville steering committee and design team through the process of designing and implementing this strategy using a strength-based design process.	<p>The organization had developed all plant teams and had finished installing and commissioning all plant equipment and supporting technologies prior to its opening in March 2008. Using all plant members in the commissioning and preparation of all plant technology was seen to be very unique in the industry. This plant has become a model for CertainTeed/Saint-Gobain to follow in the future. Example Results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- zero recordable incidents since start up</li> <li>- teams successfully working together from the start</li> <li>- Moundsville plant becoming the low cost producer of wallboard for CertainTeed</li> </ul>
Rutland Regional Medical Center (RRMC)	RRMC needed to design, develop and deliver a whole-system Performance Improvement (PI) initiative that would allow RRMC to re-engineer its core business processes, design a Leadership Effectiveness Program and improve the satisfaction levels of various stakeholder groups including physicians, staff and patients. It would also enable the organization to realize related initiatives that were key to achieving its vision of being the best hospital in New England.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There was an 83 percent reduction in paper waste by going to paperless billing</li> <li>- Patient satisfaction in the psychiatric ward was raised dramatically (Press Ganey results showed that RRMC jumped from the 30<sup>th</sup> to the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile)</li> <li>- The level of accuracy in care increased by 16 percent to 92 percent</li> <li>- Patients admitted through the Emergency Department were admitted to beds 70 percent faster</li> <li>- The results also supported the opening of additional beds</li> </ul>
Rockingham Elementary	The Halifax Regional School Board's strategic plan identified math and literacy as	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students showed a marked improvement in math</li> <li>- Students were more engaged</li> </ul>



Company	Challenge	Outcomes
School, Halifax Regional School Board	key areas for improvement. The challenge was to assist them in transforming Rockingham Elementary School, one of the schools within the Board.	<p>and took greater ownership of their learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers reported how surprised they were at the level of enthusiasm that this approach generated among the students</li> <li>- As a result of the positive outcomes at the classroom level, the board decided to develop in-house personnel who could work with other schools and school teams to teach them the approach and support the board's overall strategic plan</li> </ul>
Governor's Task Force for Higher Education in Central Maine	The challenge was to create conditions so that the many impassioned and divided parties could speak, know they had been heard and agree upon recommendations to move higher education forward in Central Maine. Citizens, faculty and students felt under siege when the possibility of merging their school with another, larger one was recommended. All involved needed a way to come together.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The summit was a decisive turning point for the task force whose members held diverse and passionate viewpoints on the issues</li> <li>- Recommendations were delivered to the Maine Governor that were supported by all parties and allowed the issue to move forward in creative and positive ways</li> </ul>
Points of Light Foundation (POLF)/Volunteer Center National Network (VCNN)	The challenge was to create a national strategy to mobilize a national network of volunteer centers across the country. This was the first time the network had come together to collectively set their direction, discuss consistency of services and common identity, and explore economies of scale to be gained through the network.	<p>The result was a dynamic and bold strategic plan that immediately engaged its committed stakeholders to action. Following the plan's creation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- VCNN secured \$1.3 million and an additional \$1 million to support plan implementation, particularly the development of new volunteer centers across the country</li> <li>- Other benefits included increased cooperation and affiliation among VCNN members, POLF and external stakeholders</li> <li>- The process empowered the VCNN leadership and its</li> </ul>



Company	Challenge	Outcomes
		<p>constituents to stand together in support of their commitment to support the growing needs of communities across the country</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Today the VCNN is energized and succeeding in working together and tapping into the strengths of its collaborative network</li> </ul>
<p>Newark Beth Israel Medical Center</p>	<p>Newark Beth Israel Medical Center is a 673-bed inner-city hospital. The Emergency Department (ED) was designed to handle 45,000 patient visits a year but it typically handles 90,000. Approximately 54,000 of these patients are admitted. When a patient is admitted and transferred between departments there is a risk of losing critical patient information, creating unnecessary costs and producing potentially life-threatening events. Accelerating the design and implementation of a safer, more satisfying and clinically more effective patient-transfer process was a big challenge especially in an environment of skepticism and with minimal resource availability.</p>	<p>A variety of organizational, work relationship and technical innovations were developed and implemented including a map that serves as an overall guide to the "Ultimate Patient Handoff Process," a low-risk cardiac transport protocol, a safety-assessment process, a standardized transfer report and a patient-welcome script. To ensure buy-in, a "build on it" communications strategy was developed to engage stakeholders affected by the changes. Some quantitative results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Medication administration record compliance jumped 82 percent</li> <li>- Skin assessment completion by 70 percent</li> <li>- Nurse satisfaction jumped 9.3 percent</li> <li>- Patient satisfaction was up more than 10 percent</li> <li>- There was a 60 percent increase in the number of patients transported without a cardiac monitor, resulting in a savings of 67.5 nursing hours per month as a result of this one transfer process alone</li> </ul> <p>As word of the success spread, other telemetry and medical surgical units throughout the hospital adopted these improvements and the Medical Center is now supporting a much larger, more comprehensive redesign within the hospital.</p>
<p>Green Mountain Coffee</p>	<p>As a result of tripling its sales force and doubling its plant size the company needed to capture the economies of its</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Among the improvements generated was the adaptation of purchase orders for all buying activities, a change that cut</li> </ul>



Company	Challenge	Outcomes
Roasters (Waterbury, Vermont USA)	new scale or sink under its own significantly increased weight.	<p>costs in obtaining competitive bids and the processing of payables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The company also enhanced cash flow by optimizing its order entry and delivery systems, thus speeding the receipt of revenues</li> <li>- Overall, reduced operating costs by 25 cents per pound of coffee, roughly a 7 percent reduction in gross costs</li> </ul>
Roadway Express (Akron, Ohio USA)	Building employee involvement while simultaneously reducing waste and speeding workflow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teams generated savings of \$10,000 per month in driver delay reductions and more than \$70,000 per year in other cost reductions</li> <li>- Several months later, Roadway Corporation reported that revenues for the sixteen weeks constituting the company's fourth quarter were \$1,074,110,000—up 25.7 percent compared with revenues of \$854,640,000 for the same period the previous year</li> <li>- According to later analysis, the employee-driven improvements translated into \$17 million in additional revenue for the year and \$7 million annual profit</li> </ul>
Hunter Douglas's Window Fashions Division (Upper Saddle River, NJ)	<p>There was confusion over the vision; lack of experienced leadership at the top; noticeable communication gaps (from leadership to the general workforce, as well as across business units and functions); diminishing levels of initiative in the workforce with increasing turnover, and decrease in employee satisfaction and productivity.</p> <p>The challenge was to develop new business strategies and improve business processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Used appreciative approach to identify the Division's core capabilities, ten-year strategic vision and three-year strategies, one result was a shift from a "window shade company to an interior design company"</li> <li>- Cross-Divisional collaboration that was initiated as part of its initial appreciative approach resulted in an integrated streamlined customer communication process for all of Hunter Douglas</li> <li>- Using an appreciative approach as the foundation of its Focus on Excellence business process improvement initiative the company, implemented the</li> </ul>



Company	Challenge	Outcomes
		<p>ideas that were generated saved the division \$3.5 million in the first year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Employee retention is the best it's ever been," reports the HR Vice President, "despite years of record low national and local unemployment"</li> </ul>
Company	Challenge	Outcomes
Santa Ana Star Casino (Bernalillo, NM, USA)	<p>After an unsuccessful attempt to maintain its position through a \$60 million facility expansion, the Santa Ana Star had slipped to fourth place in its regional market "Customer service was very low. You would come in and the employees wouldn't engage. They wouldn't talk to people much. They wouldn't smile. There was also a feeling on the employees' part that management didn't care about them, didn't want to talk to them."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "We used an appreciative process in our table-games department and in our slots department," says the General Manager. "We asked employees how to become this new hometown casino, and we took their ideas and implemented them in our marketing and operations."</li> <li>- How has it worked? "This approach has been instrumental in making our numbers a lot better. We made a \$10 million turnaround in operating profits in fiscal year 2003," says the general manager, who hopes to regain the third slot in market share this year.</li> </ul>
John Deere Co (Moline, Illinois USA)	<p>Challenges: Decreasing quality (20-year old technology couldn't keep up with new combines); Losing market share to Case/New Holland; Cost reduction flat-lined and an aging workforce; 5-10 year new product cycle time; and an "Us versus Them" internal environment.</p> <p>Needed: Increase quality, reduce costs, improve product cycle time and do it FAST!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved Relationships Between Labor and Management ("First time in over 20 years I've had hope for the future")</li> <li>- 12% Reduction in Costs</li> <li>- New Product Cycle Time from 5 to 3 Years</li> <li>- \$5 Million in New Market Share</li> </ul>
Nutrimental Foods (Curitiba, Brazil)	<p>Nutrimental, experienced a period of growth and success for more than 20 years. In 1994, the market changed significantly and the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- At Nutrimental the average return per worker from the period between September/96 and April/97 compared to September/97 and April/98</li> </ul>



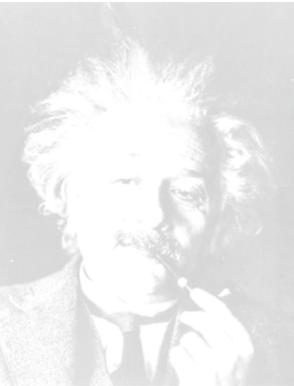
Company	Challenge	Outcomes
	<p>company's situation became dramatic.</p> <p>In 1996, it became clear that reinvention of the business was, once more, a question of survival.</p>	<p>increased by 22.3%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 200% Increase Profits and 300% Decrease Absenteeism</li> <li>- In 1998 company used AI to develop "The Principles for Organizational Action"</li> <li>- In 1999 new business strategy developed using an appreciative approach</li> </ul>
<p>Veterans Affairs Canada</p>	<p>At the start of this work, Veterans Affairs Canada was a 20,000-employee organization. Five years later it had been streamlined to 10,000 people. The challenge for the whole system transformation was to substantially improve customer service by:</p> <p>a) Transforming the culture from a bureaucratic procedures oriented culture to a service oriented results driven culture</p> <p>b) While simultaneously transferring the 10 federal veterans hospitals from government ownership to provincial ownership/operation</p> <p>c) While simultaneously relocating the 1000 person headquarters from Ottawa to Charlottetown, PEI (1500 miles away)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Customer satisfaction increased by 65 %</li> <li>- Head count decreased by 50%</li> <li>- The systems integration achieved at the department level became models for the whole government</li> <li>- Quality of patient care increased as a result of transferring hospital operations to provincial ownership where more services were available</li> <li>- The headquarters operation was successfully relocated in spite of a 90% turnover rate from people choosing not to relocate</li> </ul>



Company	Challenge	Outcomes
<b>Avon Mexico</b>	Change a culture where sexual harassment was considered to be OK and where women were limited in the jobs they could get.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New policies, improved relationships, shattered glass ceiling</li> <li>- Catalyst Award for best place for women to work in Mexico</li> </ul>
<b>Dex, (subsidiary of US West)</b> Denver, CO USA	<p>Take a low morale professional services group and reenergize them so that the quality of their work improves, the speed of their work improves, and customer satisfaction improves.</p> <p>Lower the divisions operating costs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Return on investment of \$15.62 for every dollar invested</li> <li>- The Dex office that pioneered the appreciative approach also improved product quality by 51%, cycle times by over 400%, and employee morale by 245%</li> <li>- During this same period, this U.S. office moved up to number one in employee satisfaction among all 46 offices</li> <li>- Additionally, operating costs declined and customer satisfaction increased</li> </ul>



Few people are capable of expressing with equanimity opinions which differ from the prejudices of their social environment. Most people are even incapable of forming such opinions.



Albert Einstein



# Related Research

## Appreciative Inquiry, Positive Psychology, and Strength-Based Organizing



*The task of leadership is to create an alignment of strengths, making our weaknesses irrelevant.*

Peter Drucker



# The 3-Circles of the Strengths Revolution

David L. Cooperrider

*Adapted from Foreword to AI Practitioner's Special Issue on Strength-based Organizations Edited by Bernard Mohr, Catherine McKenna, Sallie Lee, and Joann Daykin, 11.08*

To appreciate the magnitude of strength revolution is to appreciate possibilities such as these:

Imagine what would happen to you if you had the ability to consistently see, and connect with, every strength—every one of the capacities— inherent in the world around you; or to see every positive potential in your son or daughter; or, like Michelangelo, the intellectual ability to sense the towering, historic figure of David “already existing” in the huge slab of marble—even before the reality. <sup>i</sup>

Imagine settings—organizations, communities, businesses—designed not only to obsessively notice and employ each partner's most valued strengths every day, but settings that are also designed to connect and magnify the reverberating strengths of the whole, much like a terrific fusion-energy explosion that leads to the birth of new stars. <sup>ii</sup>

Imagine even further the world thirty years from now and consider the following scenario for the economy and ecology of organizations: it's a bright-green restorative economy that purifies the air we breathe; it's a system that has eliminated the concept of waste and toxic byproduct; extreme poverty has been eradicated through prosperity; it is powered through solar and renewable energy innovations; it is a system that has united the strengths of markets with the power of universal ideals, where positive incentives have been aligned with the long-term social good (thus, it has virtually eliminated “perverse incentives”); it is a globally inclusive system that respects and replenishes the health of people, diverse communities and the wealth of nature; and it is all built in and through institutions that are widely trusted as positive institutions—workplaces that elevate, magnify, and refract our highest human strengths (wisdom, courage, humanity, compassion, inspiration, creativity, freedom, hope, joy, integrity, love and meaning) into the world. <sup>iii</sup>



This, in a brief few paragraphs, is what the 3-Circles of the strengths revolution are all about. Take a look at it now; it's a model I want to come back to and elaborate on.

Figure 1: Three Circles for Understanding the Strengths Revolution and the Design of Strengths-based Organizations



In this special issue of the AI Practitioner, the editors (Bernard Mohr, Catherine McKenna, Sallie Lee, and Joanne Daykin), and the authors propel us forward to the next major question in the strength revolution: What does it mean to design not just strengths-based interventions—for example appreciative inquiry coaching, or strength-finder and VIA surveys, or appreciative inquiry summits—but what does it mean to discover and design enduring strength-based organizations and institutions capable of embedding a strengths-based focus into everything they do?

It's almost hard to believe that there was ever a time when we were not focused on strengths as "the real stuff" of leadership, strategic management, and the positive material for igniting change. I look back now at the industrial-era's deficiency focus—not just the field of management but literally all the "helping" professions--and it almost looks like a giant caricature now.

It was just a few short years ago when Marty Seligman, for example, noticed that out of 44,000 published articles in the professional journals of psychology more than 99% of those articles were focused on human deficiencies of all kinds—depression, anger, fear, co-dependency, substance abuse, schizophrenia and the like. Only 1% (about 400 out of the 44,000 articles at the time) had to do with human strengths such as hope, inspiration, joy, wisdom, courage, and human flourishing. "Working



exclusively on personal weakness and on damaged brains" wrote Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi in the 2000 millennium issue of *American Psychologist*, "has rendered science poorly equipped...Psychologists need now to call for massive research on human strengths and virtues." <sup>iv</sup>

The implicit theory of change, of course, was one of recovery. It's a simple theory that says change is all about correctly diagnosing the problem and moving from a -2 to 0-- as distinct, for instance, from a theory that says positive transformation can accelerate development from a +2 to +20 and then perhaps leap to a + 80. The same deficit-based management model obviously holds its grip in many other domains as well. In our big city newspapers it's now been well documented by Harvard's Sisela Bok, that 90% of the front-page headlines are focused on the very worst, not the courageous best, in the world. In business management too, for example Gallop Poll surveys still show, that people have several times more potential for growth when they invest energy in developing their strengths instead of correcting their deficiencies, and that they are six times as likely to be invested and engaged in their jobs when they do have the opportunity to focus on their strengths—yet in spite of all this evidence, fewer than two out of ten of us get to play to our strengths most of the time (Buckingham, 2006; Rath, 2007) . It's staggering: 80% of the people—workers and managers alike—report and feel that their strengths are institutionally underappreciated, not noticed, and not put into play every day in their work. Somehow it's a continuing mantra. In surveys of communities, families, corporations, and governments alike the conclusion continues to be "let's fix what's wrong and the strengths will take care of themselves." Think about your own experiences for a moment, and the grip of the problematic. Think about the last seven projects you've worked on and the last dozen organizational meetings you've attended. How many of those projects were designed to "fix" something? How many of the meetings were called to address "the problem of...?"

In his recent best seller, Marcus Buckingham takes note of the strengths movement as a wave of change that, over the past ten years, has the potential to sweep us all forward. Buckingham (2008) writes: <sup>v</sup>

"It's hard to say when the strengths movement began. Some will identify Peter Drucker as the first mover, citing his seminal 1966 book, *The Effective Executive*...Some will trace it back to a 1987 article (by David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva) which launched a new discipline called *Appreciative Inquiry*...Some will point to Martin Seligman's 1999 speech on becoming the president of the American Psychological Association (launching the



positive psychology movement)...More recently, some might even reference the book I wrote with Donald Clifton, *Now Discover Your Strengths*."

But the bottom-line conclusion for Buckingham?

It's true, he argues, that the strengths movement has been launched in earnest. But we have scarcely just begun. The evidence of how it works better than deficit-based perspectives is now pouring in.<sup>vi</sup> The theoretical groundwork is there, for example the proposition that a person, or an organization, will excel only by amplifying strengths, never by fixing weaknesses. Indeed it sounds good. But such lofty vision now needs to be matched but what and how we teach, the tools and practices needed to pragmatically enact strengths-based management, and by the design of strength-based organizations.

Going back to figure-one and our opening three paragraphs—about Michelangelo's ability to see the David already inside the mass of marble; then about the need not to just see strengths everywhere but to have the tools to combine and magnify (like fusion energy) connected strengths; and thirdly, to organizationally extend and refract our highest human strengths out into the world—these are what this special issue is all about and here is a compass definition:

Strength-based organizations are organizations, including groups, families, and communities, explicitly designed and managed for the elevation of strengths, the combination and magnification of strengths, and ultimately, the amplified refraction of our highest human strengths outward into the world.

What do I like most about this whole special issue and its topic? In a word it is an exciting "invitation" to unite across disciplines, levels of analysis, and fields. It's an invitation to unite everything we have discovered about (1) the elevation of human strengths: positive psychology, appreciative intelligence, strengths-finder tools, and the amazing VIA inventory of strengths; (2) the alignment and magnification of connected collective strengths: e.g. Peter Drucker's leadership principles, whole-system strength magnifiers such as large group Appreciative Inquiry Summits, insights about strength-amplifying and innovation-amplifying nets and webs, and finally (3) the organizational magnification and refraction of our higher human strengths outward building better worlds and societies. Elevation,



magnification, and refraction—these are the three circles for a strength revolution 2.0. vii

As the authors and editors of this volume show—they all are great theory/practice professionals-- it all begins and ends with a special spirit of inquiry: where do we see strengths-based organizations at their life-generating best—and what can we learn about peak performance? What do strengths-based organizations really look like and precisely how are they designed? When and how do they create new and better value? And why now? Why when we look at the world, the universe of strengths we hold in our hands, and the call of our time, why do we need strengths-based organizations now?

#### Endnotes

- i See David Cooperrider. (2006). 'Elevating Our Capacity to Appreciate the Appreciable World', in Tojo Thachenkery, *Appreciative Intelligence: Seeing the Mighty Oak in the Acorn*. San Francisco, Ca.: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- ii James Ludema, Diana Whitney, Bernard Mohr and Thomas Griffin. (2003). *The Appreciative Inquiry Summit*. San Francisco, Ca.: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Related to the magnification of strengths, see Frank Barrett and Ron Fry. (2005). *Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Approach to Cooperative Capacity*. Taos Publications.
- iii David Cooperrider. (2008). 'Sustainable Innovation', in *Biz Ed Magazine*.
- iv Marty Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. (2000). 'Positive Psychology', in *American Psychologist*.
- v Marcus Buckingham, (2006) *GO Put Your Strengths to Work*. New York: Free Press.
- vi Tom Rath. (2007). *Strengths Finder 2.0*. New York: Gallup Press.
- vii See the VIA classification of human strengths and imagine how institutions are and can become places for the magnification of qualities such as courage, wisdom and love of humanity and how institutions can refract such strengths outward into our world. See <http://www.viastrengths.org/> created by Neal Mayerson and the Mayerson Foundation. It is a world-class contribution and resource for everyone wanting to elevate-and-extend human strengths. It is built on the scholarship of Chris Peterson and Mary Seligman.



# Appreciative Inquiry Related Research

## Positive Image → Positive Action Research

- ☼ Cooperrider article: <http://www.stipes.com/aichap2.htm>

## Placebo Effect

- ☼ Between 30 - 60% of patients with illnesses ranging from arthritis to depression report a substantial improvement in their symptoms after receiving a placebo.
- ☼ When treatment with placebo reduces symptoms, it also changes the function of the brain (Leuchter, *et al*, UCLA, January 2002).

## Pygmalion Effect

- ☼ Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968, 1992
- ☼ Tim O'Shea ("teacher has greater effect than treatment in all cases")
- ☼ Jane Elliot's blue-eyed, brown-eyes (April 5, 1968)  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/divided>

## Positive Affect/Effect and Imbalanced Inner Dialogue

- ☼ Unhealthy people have 1:1 [or even less] ratio of good: bad images. Healthy people have 2:1 ratio of good: bad images (research on recovery from heart surgery).
- ☼ See Fredrickson's research in section on Positive Psychology

## Rise and Fall of Cultures

- ☼ Underlying cultural images impact the fate of a nation
- ☼ Fred Polak, 1973: positive image of the future → cultural evolution
- ☼ Positive future, which can be influenced: valuing creative imagination, open questions, rich emotional life, freedom of speech
- ☼ When hope and positive images of future die, the culture dies (Becker, 1971)



## Affirmative Competence

- ☼ Our own capacity to generate positive images that can compel our futures; the whole body responds just like the whole culture responds to a positive image
- ☼ Athletics and imagery, psychotherapy and imagery, imagery and healing, hypnosis and imagery, and others related to overall meta-cognitive capacity
- ☼ Sheikh, 1983; Malouff, et al, 2008
- ☼ Bowling research, Kirschenbaum, 1984

## The Positive Psychology Movement

Dr. Martin Seligman, one of the most often quoted psychologists of our day, is a founder of the Positive Psychology movement. Positive psychology began as a new area of psychology in 1998 when Seligman chose it as the theme for his term as president of the American Psychological Association, reflecting his idea that it was just as important to study how people can become happier as it is to study how to help people be less miserable. He currently directs the Positive Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania.

*We overcome suffering not only by healing damage and repairing what is broken within ourselves. More commonly, we overcome troubles by doing end-runs around them, by deploying our highest strengths as buffers against the setbacks of life. And these domains--buffering, strength, pleasure, and meaning.... are the subject of positive psychology.*

[Suffering Trump Happiness?, MEP Seligman, from Authentic Happiness newsletter, 2003, [www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/newsletter.aspx?id=52](http://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/newsletter.aspx?id=52) ]

## Martin Seligman

- ☼ The scientific study of the strengths and virtues that enable individuals and communities to thrive; the scientific pursuit of optimal human functioning and the building of a field focusing on human strength and virtue.
- ☼ According to Seligman, there are three forms of authentic happiness and routes to them, all of which are measurable and buildable:
  - Positive Emotion: The pleasant life--hedonism, feelings, pleasures and savoring those pleasures.



- Positive Character: An engaged life--a good life. This relates to Aristotle's 'Eudaimonia' where you are capable of flow, of time-stopping intense concentration, instead of just pleasure. There are no shortcuts to engagement—it calls for crafting your life to use your highest strengths on your highest challenges [use Signature Strengths instrument accessible on webpage—Values in Action (VIA) Classification of signature strengths]
- Positive Institutions: A meaningful life—knowing and using high strengths to belong to and serve something higher and bigger than yourself.
- ✿ The Center for Positive Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania: <http://www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu>
- ✿ The APA website for Positive Psychology: <http://www.apa.org/apags/profdev/pospsyc.html>

### Barbara Fredrickson

- ✿ Research area: function of positive emotions
- ✿ 'Broaden & Build' theory of positive emotions:
  - Broaden attention and thinking
  - Positive emotions literally undo the effects of negative experience and emotions
  - Fuel resilient coping, like immune system
- ✿ Positivity Ratio of 3:1—Tipping point for building positive emotion reserves that help us flourish, rather than languish.
- ✿ Fredrickson's website at the University of NC-Chapel Hill: [http://www.unc.edu/peplab/barb\\_fredrickson\\_page.html](http://www.unc.edu/peplab/barb_fredrickson_page.html)

### Institute of HeartMath

- ✿ Researching heart intelligence and stress and emotional management
- ✿ Findings: coherence in heart rate impacts coherence in neurology of the brain and hence brain functioning
- ✿ Positive emotions increase coherence, especially appreciation, love, and gratitude.
- ✿ Coherence correlates with improved critical thinking and decision making, increased creativity, improved social interaction
- ✿ HeartMath website: <http://www.heartmath.org>



## Jonathan Haidt

- ☀ Studies the positive emotions of moral elevation, admiration, and awe
- ☀ Human flourishing research, 2003
- ☀ Current research on suspending individual/cultural moral view in order to learn from others who believe differently
- ☀ Haidt's website at the University of Virginia:  
<http://people.virginia.edu/~jdh6n>

## Positive Organizational Scholarship

- ☀ Focuses research on optimal organizational states: the dynamics in organizations that lead to the development of human strength, foster resiliency in employees, make healing, restoration, and reconciliation possible, and cultivate extraordinary individual and organizational performance (Cameron, Dutton, and Quinn, 2003).
- ☀ The Center for POS Website at the University of Michigan:  
<http://www.bus.umich.edu/Positive>

## Strengths Movement

The Strengths Movement is a social movement intended to change how we view ourselves, our children, and our world. We have all been conditioned to see weaknesses and mine for deficits. This movement seeks to change that perspective.

## Marcus Buckingham

- ☀ Build on strengths vs. fixing weaknesses.
- ☀ Identify our strengths and make a contribution using those strengths.
- ☀ We are most challenged and resilient when using our strengths.
- ☀ Strengths are not necessarily our talents—using our strengths leaves us feeling strong, invigorated, and motivated.

## Jennifer Fox

- ☀ Strengths-based curriculum at the Purnell School
- ☀ Video interview with Buckingham and Fox:  
<http://video.msn.com/?mkt=en-us&brand=msnbc&vid=fbf562fa-2acf-4bd0-bc22-0be9281324ea&from=00>



## Neuroscience and AI

What you focus on expands. What you pay attention to is what you fall in love with. The brain has more plasticity than was originally believed. We can do “mind sculpting”—we can sculpt the brain with our thoughts and focus.

**Collective Development** Developmental psychology tells us that our minds only develop in relationship to other minds. Our minds are actually fields that constantly interact with each other to create larger social fields. AI supports our capacity to intentionally generate social fields.

**Attention** The brain changes as a function of where we place our attention. Most people can focus on only one new idea at a time. Therefore, it is important to create an environment that fosters attention and a compelling reason to bring their attention to the table.

**Power of Focus** The more we see the world and relationships as problems to be fixed, the more embedded problem-focused thinking becomes in our neural circuitry. This often makes problems more intractable. More importantly, however, it entrains us to use this as a default lens for experiencing the world. This inhibits our capacity to see solutions or new ways of going forward. Using solution-focused questioning around topics of importance entrains the brain to see possibilities in a situation and speeds a group’s ability to find a way forward.

**Shifts in Perception** Our mental maps play an important role in how we perceive the world around us. To create change, we have to encourage moments of insight in which we can question and eventually shift our attitudes and habits of thinking. It is not enough to be told about new ideas by our leaders; we have to experience insight. The ability to frame and reframe, seeing an object, person or situation from a different perspective, is a form of intelligence that can be strengthened with practice. This capacity leads to greater resilience.

**Reflection Time** Expanding our awareness and capacity is enhanced by moments of reflection and meditation. During these “time outs” we can pause the urge to automatically respond to situations and instead thoughtfully consider our decisions about how to act.



# Appreciative Intelligence

*Seeing the Mighty Oak in the Acorn*

*From the Work of Tojo Thatchenkerry and Carol Metzger*

Is it possible that the ability to appreciate--to see and realize hidden value in people and situations--and to construct a positive future is more related to a leader's overall success than traditional IQ?

## ■ Three Aspects of Appreciative Intelligence

### 1. Reframing

- The ability to frame and reframe, seeing an object, situation or person from a different perspective
- The capacity to see one's view of the world as a view [for the first time articulated as a signature strength of contemporary intelligence.]

### 2. Appreciate the Positive

The ability to view everyday reality with appreciation..... selecting from that perspective what is valuable, useful or positive

### 3. See how the future unfolds from the present

The ability to see concrete ways the possibilities of the present moment can be channeled...seeing how the valuable or useful aspects of the situation or person right now can generate a desired future.

## ■ Tools for changing behaviors and thought patterns

- *Change your stories*  
Develop a resilient mindset by rewriting negative scripts
- *Change your reflections*  
Reflect on your assumptions, observations, and actions each day and begin to see potential in your surroundings. What you seek, you will find.
- *Change your questions*  
Use reframing questions to find evidence and situations of success-- what instead of why
- *Seek diverse ideas*  
Talk to someone different; be curious about them and their perspectives.



Don't ask yourself  
what the world  
needs – ask  
yourself what  
makes you come  
alive, and then go  
do it.

Because what  
the world needs  
is people who  
have come  
alive.

Harold Thurman Whitman



# AI Whole System Processes:

## The 5 Ds AI Summits

*Organizations are perfectly designed to  
get the results they are getting.*

Marvin Weisbord



# The 5 Ds: The Core Processes of Appreciative Inquiry

An Appreciative approach to change involves six core processes for sustainability:

(Bernard J Mohr & Jane Magruder Watkins adapted by Joan Chadbourne)

2. Inquire into stories of Life-giving Forces

**DISCOVERY**

3. Locate Themes that appear in the stories

1. Choose the Positive as the Focus of Inquiry

**DEFINITION**

4. Create Shared visions of a Preferred Future

**DREAM**

5. Innovate ways to Create that Dream

**DESIGN**

6. Transition – Implementation

**DESTINY**



# The 5 Ds: Definition, Discovery, Dream, Design, Destiny

## Quick Overview

### Definition

What is the scope of your project or the goals or desired outcomes that you want to achieve? Gaining clarity is perhaps the single-most important step in achieving any vision, outcome, or goal. In keeping with Appreciative Inquiry, define your goals in terms of what you want to achieve in the most vivid, bold, provocative, and inspirational way possible. Use present tense and affirmative language.

British Air started their change management effort with a goal to *eliminate lost luggage*. They were going to do an in-depth analysis on lost luggage, uncovering all the possible reasons that it did not arrive at the destination with the passenger in hopes of closing all loopholes. Instead, they worked with Diana Whitney, an AI consultant. They decided that what they really wanted was *all passengers having an exceptional arrival experience*. This was a very different inquiry and assessment!

### Discovery

With the vision of what you want to bring about, Appreciative Inquiry suggests you begin with continuity—inquire into when and where the outcome you are looking for already is occurring or has been achieved previously. Positive deviance often surfaces knowledge you do not even know is present in the organization or in the industry. An inquiry into best practices generates themes and actions that have proven successful; it also taps the strengths of the members of your organization, acknowledges them when they are at their best, and motivates them to be part of an intentional way of working together. External benchmarking can inspire healthy competition and encourage innovation and motivation.

Imagine the difference for members of British Air when they were asked to *share stories of being part of exceptional arrival*



*experiences for passengers rather than what happened that time you lost the luggage.*

## Dream

With the information that surfaces during discovery, an organization can begin to imagine what the organization, the system and the interactions would be like if their desired outcome were the present reality. What sets AI apart from other visioning processes is the continuity inquiry; that means the dream is grounded in real experience. It's been done...how do we make it occur all the time?

Since we move in the direction of the images we hold, the more detailed, bold, provocative, descriptive, and inclusive the dream image, the more likely the organization is to move toward it. A dream or vision statement should always be in the present tense—as if it is already occurring—and use affirmative language—the future you want to create.

## Design

Organizations are designed to achieve exactly what they are getting. If you want a different outcome, you have to change the system's design. This requires more than just a vision; it requires aligning the *socio-technical systems* with that vision. Think architecture, work processes, and relational dynamics.

Avon wanted to *eliminate sexual harassment*. By working with AI consultant, Marge Schiller, they shifted their desired outcome to an *organization free of gender bias, where men and women excelled equally*. In designing the organization to achieve this, they addressed the socio-technical systems in the organizational design that inadvertently resulted in inequalities and opportunities for harassment.

They established new rules around shared leadership in meetings; they designed new hiring, promotion, and pay scales; they created new policies around project management, etc. They redesigned the way they worked, the way they made assignments, and the way they rewarded employees so that actions would align with their desired outcome. A year later they achieved the "Best Corporation for Women" award from the National Organization for Women.



## Destiny

Designing a system or an organization to deliver specific outcomes is an iterative and evolutionary process because the outcomes change over time and the way to achieve an outcome changes as a result of technology, people, and new information. Think prototyping!

Developing organizational practices that support learning and collaborative thinking and knowledge generation are essential. These include the collaborative learning practices of dialogue, reflective practice, listening for multiple ways of knowing, and the construction of new knowledge. Leaders in organizations that aspire to create an Appreciative Organization will recognize the importance of developing their own capacity to sustain collaboration by engaging effectively in these practices including the ability to facilitate questions instead of answers!



# Working with Discovery

## Discovering the Best of What Is

The most important thing we do as consultants is inquiry. We try to read situations; we do ...organizational analysis and diagnosis. It all starts with inquiry. The key point is that the way we know is fateful. The questions we ask, the things that we choose to focus on, the topics that we choose determine what we find. What we find becomes the data and the story out of which we dialogue about and envision the future. And so, the seeds of change are implicit in the very first questions we ask.

*David Cooperrider*

Following the Definition phase, where focal topics are identified, the Discovery phase engages participants in exploring the best of “what is” by uncovering peak experiences, successes, and triumphs—inquiring into stories that made us feel most alive and effective. A series of questions are used that abandon deficit analysis and instead inquire into and learn from examples of high performance, success and satisfaction—even exhilaration. Through inquiry participants discover what gives life to their lives, and/or their organization when performing at its best, and simultaneously add meaning to those experiences. They tell stories about all aspects of their organization – inspired leadership; generative relationships and partnerships; technologies that make work go more smoothly or facilitate better service; structures that support innovation and creativity; planning that encompasses new ideas and diverse people; opportunities to learn; and so on. This raises their awareness around personal and organizational best practices and feelings of achievement, reacquainting people with previously less obvious core strengths, values, passions, and hopes for the future. Participants’ histories transform into positive, empowering possibilities, and they become poised for deeper awareness, learning, and change. Members come to know their organization’s *history as positive possibility* rather than a static, problematic, eulogized, romanticized, or forgotten set of events. *Where appreciation is alive and stakeholders throughout a system are connected in discovery, hope grows and organizational capacity is enriched.*

An AI Discovery Interview Protocol consists of a series of questions aimed at exploring the following:

1. *High point successes*
2. *What is valued most—in yourself, your work, your community or organization*



### 3. Images of the future

Participants are encouraged to listen carefully and to inquire deeply into each other's responses. Two skills that are central to this process are reflection and inquiry. *Reflection* relates to slowing down our thinking processes in order to become more aware of how we form our mental models. *Inquiry* is holding conversations where we openly share our views and develop knowledge about each other's values, assumptions, and beliefs. Both are critical to AI in that they enable people to discover their values and interpret their meaning in a manner that is open and honest.

#### *Tips for Conducting Interviews*

- Let the interviewee tell his/her story.
- Take notes and listen for great quotes and stories.
- Be genuinely curious about their experiences, thoughts, and feelings.
- Some people will take longer to think about their answers—allow for silence.
- Here are some possible questions to use to probe further:
  - Tell me more.
  - Why was that important to you?
  - How did that affect you?
  - What was your contribution?
  - How did the organization/ business area/team support you?  
For example: information technology systems, leadership, resources, and structures.
  - How has it changed you?
- If somebody doesn't want to, or can't answer any of the interview questions, that's OK, let it go.
- The questions should be used as guidelines, you may choose to not use all the questions, or to adapt the questions to what you find works best for your interviews.
- Allow the interviewee to interpret whether the questions apply to work or to personal situations.

#### *What to do with Negatives<sup>1</sup>*

With the introduction paragraph provided in the interview guide—you can generally get interviewees to identify things at their best. However, people *should not* feel like they do not have permission to talk about things that need fixing. Depending on your empathic understanding of where the interviewee is, there are several different ways to handle negatives.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Mohr, B.J., & Watkins, J.M. (2001). *Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the speed of imagination*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/Pheiffer.



*Postponing:* Say that you would like to make a note of what the person has said and come back to it later. When you get to the question about what he or she would wish for the organization in the future, this is the time to discuss the “negative” data.

*Listening:* If the person has some real intensity about problems, let him or her express it. If it is the major focus of the person’s energy, you are not going to get any positive data until she or he gets it out. This may mean muddling through quite a bit of organizational negativity, and the biggest threat is that you will take it in and lose your capacity to be appreciative. Keep a caring, and affirmative spirit.

*Redirecting:* If the person is adamant about dealing with the negative, or if you have listened sufficiently to understand the negative issues being raised, find a way to guide the person back to the positive: “I think I understand a little bit about some of the problems you see (paraphrase a few of the ones you’ve heard), and now I would like to guide us back to looking at what is happening when things are working at their best. Can you think of a time, even the smallest moment, when you saw innovation (for example) at its best?” If the person says it never happened where he or she works, find out if the person has had the experience of something working well in any organization or work context.

*Using Negative Data:* Everything that people find wrong with an organization represents an absence of something that they hold in their minds as an ideal. For example, if the interviewee says something like, “The communication in this organization is terrible”, say to them, “When you say that the communication is terrible, it means that you have some image in your mind about what good communication would look like. Can you describe that for me?” In fact, one could argue that there is no such thing as negative data. Every utterance is conditioned by affirmative images. If the interviewee cannot reframe his or her statement into a positive image, use the negative information and reframe it yourself into a wish or vision statement and then confirm that statement with the interviewee.

#### *After The Interviews: Debriefing and Meaning Making*

After the interviews are complete, *locating the themes that appear in the stories* includes the work of:

- “Mining” the data by looking for themes of life-giving forces in the interview data
- Expanding the positive dialogue about these themes to people throughout the organization.



This process, heliotropic in nature, encourages the organization to turn toward images of its most life-giving forces and, through continuing dialogue, to assure that the future will be built on those themes and images.

Of course since many people will have conducted the interviews – anywhere from 2 to 2000 in our experience – it is necessary to create a mechanism by which all that data can be absorbed and digested by people in the organization. (Notice that we do not say, “analyze the data.”) The search here is not for the norm, the most mentioned idea, even the best idea. The process of absorbing and digesting data is one that allows people to take it all in and to react to the messages and meaning in ways that move the organization in the direction of the combined positive energy of the members. It is more about creating synergy than about consensus.

The group working with the interview data can also range from 2 to 2000, or even more! Remembering the theory that we get more of what we focus on, it follows that the more people involved in sharing the stories, “mining” the data, and identifying the themes of life giving forces, the more the organization will move in the direction of those themes.

There are many ways of sharing and working with the data just as there are many choices in the earlier processes about who does the interviewing, who “collates” the data (if that is the decision) and who works with the data to pull out the themes/life-giving forces. Before we get into identifying the choices in data collation and data synthesis (i.e. making meaning of the data), let’s focus on the idea of themes and life giving forces, as well as ways to identify the themes and life-giving forces in the data.

In describing the interview process we argue that the very action of asking people to reflect on and tell stories about exceptional moments in the present or past of their organization, and to identify how they hope things will be different in the future (the wish question) is a powerful intervention in and of itself which begins to move the system in directions that are positive and life-giving. We argue that it is the combination of positively focused inquiry, positively focused dialogue and the resultant influence on the collective imagination that propels forward movement. We now want to keep those conversations and that dynamic alive and extend them for the same reasons we asked the questions in the first place. However, it’s not just a process of talking about good things. Rather we need to work with the data in a way that continues the inherent value of conversations focused



on life-giving forces while also developing the ground from which we can later build shared images, dreams, and visions of a preferred future.

## The Positive Core

*It is the collective wisdom, knowledge, strategies, attitudes, skills and capabilities of the organization at its best. Often undiscussed, an organization's positive core is a source of life-giving potential, consisting of all its creative, life-affirming qualities, capabilities, and resources.*



*It is the essence of the organization at its best: its remembered past, its enacted present, and its imagined future.*

Diana Whitney  
Corporation for Positive Change



# Working with Dream

## Dreaming What Might Be

Appreciative Inquiry creates ground. By coming to agreement on a set of provocative propositions, people have a compelling vision of the organization at its best and this in itself motivates new behaviors. People will take initiative and act differently without an action plan because the provocative propositions align the organizational visions with the employees' internal sense of what is important.

Gervase R. Bushe

The Dream phase of Appreciative Inquiry provides an opportunity to challenge “what is” through envisioning a preferred future. Here every involved stakeholder can engage in conversations around the possibilities for the organization’s standing, calling, or the unique offering it can make locally and/or globally. For most stakeholders in organizations, this is the first time they have been offered the opportunity to think and create new possibilities. The dream phase offers a chance for the organization’s stakeholders to share stories of organizational history and engage in creating a new story that elevates images of the future, capturing the best, most positive part of history. The new images and narrative helps give life to a more positive future. The dream phase seeks to expand the organization’s potential in a generative way.

“The more compelling the image before us, the more committed we are to action.”

*What makes Appreciative Inquiry different from other visioning methodologies? It is different because images emerge from stories that exemplify an organization’s extraordinary, positive history. With these examples, organizations are able to imagine a future that is both positive and compelling: An image of the future that holds present the organization’s extraordinary past successes and using these to rise above or go beyond what they thought possible. It is an opportunity to push*



*creative edges of possibility and wonder about their organization's greatest potential.*

The dream is energized by the creation of Provocative Propositions that go further to define with clarity the shared visions of the future. Provocative Propositions help paint a picture of the most desired future and guide the direction of all the activities that follow.

#### *Anticipatory Reality: Positive Images*

Our behavior emerges from three vantage points on reality: The past, the present and our images of the future. When our image of the future is positive and based in our values, we are more likely to take positive action. Our anticipatory reality or thinking; that is, our expectations, hopes and dreams are influenced by our historical and current reality. Our beliefs—what we believe to be true and real about the world—determine much of what we find and shape our perceptions about the future.

Several theorists suggest different views on how we know who we are: Sigmund Freud suggests the *historical reality*: We are determined by our past. Karl Lewin and BF Skinner suggest the *current reality*: We are determined by our environment.

Evidence suggests that we are also determined by our *anticipatory reality*: We are determined by who we imagine we can be!

Robert Fritz, author of *Path of Least Resistance*, writes about the creative process: "without making the fundamental choice to be the predominant creative force in your life, you will merely be finding more sophisticated ways of responding to circumstances. "

Appreciative Inquiry shifts our discovery and our thoughts toward the things we value; things that give us joy, hope and energize us. The positive life affirming stories we share allow each of us to open our minds and hearts to create powerful images of the future.

*Can you think of a time when you had a bold vision or image of the future and lived into it?*



*Macro Provocative Propositions: The Dream in Words*

Provocative Propositions, or possibility statements, bridge the best of “what is” with your own speculation or intuition of “what might be.” They are statements that stretch the status quo, challenges common assumptions or routines. They are unique statements that illuminate, invigorate the group’s vision of the organization’s most desired future; these statements provide the direction for all the activities.

*Inspiring and Energizing Provocative Propositions (or Possibility Statements) are...*

1. Provocative: *stretch, challenge, or interrupt the status quo*
2. Written in present tense: *to describe the current reality, as if it is already happening*
3. Grounded: *illustrate the ideal or real, practical possibilities*
4. Desired: *If you could have it, would you want it?*
5. Affirmative: *boldly stated in the positive: “We are... We do... We have...”*
6. Guidance: *clearly provide direction for the future*

A macro provocative proposition is a statement that best describes what the organization/community will look like and feel like, when all of the chosen topics of inquiry are at their best. It brings the image – the dream – to life through words.

“By macro provocative proposition (propositions that stretch beyond the status quo) we mean statements of fundamental belief and aspiration about human organizing—that body of belief of how we want to be related to one another and the ways we want to pursue our dreams” - David Cooperrider, AI list serve

*Examples of Macro Provocative Propositions*

Patient-Centered Care

- o We create patient-centered care by:
- o Establishing and atmosphere of respect by promoting honesty and truth-telling and complete information sharing as THE core value.



- Empowering patients with knowledge of their responsibilities and rights, the “ideal functioning” of their care team, and the skills to provide feedback to their care providers.
- Empowering patient’s families and friends with the knowledge of the healthcare system and the skills to advocate for their loved ones.
- Establishing a Patient Care Coordinator role to customize care plan with and for each patient and to facilitate understanding and agreement between the patient and their care team. (Coordinator evaluated only by the patients and their families – gold star program, patient rights cards, extra mile cards, etc.)

#### Peaceful Co-existence in Jerusalem

In Jerusalem’s bustling markets, Muslims, Jews and Christians come together to build a world of enlightenment. It is a time when these three communities are living together in harmony, neither oppressing nor being oppressed. The society in this era is being studied worldwide, not only for its intellectual excellence emanating from new knowledge being jointly created in the arts, sciences, medicine, engineering, philosophy and literature, but also for its principles of tolerance and creative coexistence. Coexistence is modeled not on the melting-pot theory, but rather on the interchange of different points of view through wide-ranging dialogue.

#### Outstanding Dialogue, Collaboration, and Decision-Making

Dialogue and collaboration weave themselves through the fabric of XYZ. Fueled and inspired by customer and employee stories, dialogue and collaboration provide the foundation for thought and action, acting as the integrating mechanism in pursuit of quality, excellence and growth. Opportunities and space for dialogue and collaboration in decision making are evident everywhere; in conversations in the hallway, in staff meetings, in work-teams, in planning sessions, and in day to day, moment to moment interactions.

- Employees have the power to make appropriate on the spot improvement decisions.
- People have voice in decisions that impact them.
- Ideas and risk taking are encouraged and always greeted with an open mind
- It is safe to raise issues and observations
- Conflicts are resolved through healthy, robust conversations
- Dialogue and collaboration are rewarded
- Employee behavior reflects collective values
- Dialogue and collaboration include the customer’s voice



The outcome...the ultimate customer experience – fun and play The Starship Way for eons!!!

Racial Harmony in Guyana's Region 6 (drafted by a 16-year old):

A friendly and peaceful Guyana. Walking down the streets of Region 6 seeing different people with different color of skin, texture of hair and clothing all interacting and helping each other in the most loving and caring way possible. What a wonderful Guyana living up to our motto: "one people, one nation, one destiny". Togetherness – it is great to see our African people attending Indian culture show along with our other races and vice versa.



# Working with Design

## Designing What Could Be

*People think that design is styling. Design is not style. It's not about giving shape to the shell and not giving a damn about the guts. Good design is a renaissance attitude that combines technology, cognitive science, human need, and beauty to produce something that the world didn't know it was missing.*

*- Paola Antonelli*

*What does Appreciative Inquiry have to do with DESIGN?*

1. A call for new ways of thinking about the nature of human collaboration within institutions of world enterprise
2. Enhancing wealth creation and elevating potential for world benefit
3. Engaging the system to invent new "social architectures" which:
  - a. Unleash the energy of the dream
  - b. Serve as an organizational fabric within which work is accomplished
  - c. Enable people to experience dignity, meaning and community
  - d. Enable new and innovative combinations of individual tasks
  - e. Radical rethinking of work flows, technologies, measures and goals for monitoring performance
  - f. Governance and decision making processes which assure vibrant internal integration and simultaneous connection of the organization to environmental opportunities



## Seven Principles of Appreciative Designing

1. **Inclusion Principle**  
When the whole system and its voices (i.e. all levels, functions, key stakeholders) are in the room, the richer the conversations and the greater the possibility for true innovation
2. **Aspirations Principle**  
When the design process is led by and supports our highest aspirations, we move from “better” to the “breakthrough” in the imaging of innovative structures and systems
3. **Continuity Principle**  
Building on successes of the past provides hope, energy, and confidence in our ability to create the world of our dreams
4. **Innovation Principle**  
In their early stages, radically new ideas about how to organize (ideas which take us beyond our comfort zones) require bold leadership until these ideas and practices come to be seen as the normal way of doing business.
5. **Chaordic Principle**  
At the boundary of chaos and order, is freedom and the autonomy within the glue of shared purpose and principles. When all parts can self-organize to fit their unique circumstances, while still collaborating with and contributing to the greater whole, the organization becomes more agile and adaptable.
6. **Re-Inquiry Principle**  
All “designs” are “best bets” about what will work in a given environment. Regular cycles of inquiry are needed to deepen the understanding of what is working and to stay in tune with the environment. A sense of “it’s never done” is core to the always emerging, continuous quest to discover best alternatives.
7. **Homegrown Principle**  
The more a design framework is locally developed, the more power it will have to guide and support the design process.



## Design Possibilities Map: One Example



Relational: Those key relationships that will impact or be impacted by the achievement of the dream

- Relationships of employees (individuals, groups, departments, etc)
- Relationships of stakeholders (internal/external)
- Relationship of the organization to the environment (customers, community, regulatory)

Formal: Those formal elements that will influence the achievement of our dream

- Structures
- Work processes
- Job roles/descriptions
- Compensation and reward systems
- Practices for continual improvement and rejuvenation
- Education and training

Cultural/Conversational: Those cultural or conversational elements that will influence the achievement of our dream

- Organizational culture
- Values and beliefs
- Language
- Behaviors
- Symbols (e.g. military badges/ribbons)



## Micro Provocative Proposition (Design Statement) Guidelines

- A “micro” provocative proposition, or design statement, is a brief but focused narrative describing the ideal state of your specific design element (chosen from formal, cultural, relational).
- Great design statements are...
  - Provocative – stretches & challenges status quo
  - Grounded: examples that illustrate the ideal as a possibility
  - Desired: people want to create this future
  - Stated in affirmative and bold terms and are written in the present tense, as if they are already happening

## Examples of Micro Provocative Propositions

### FORMAL

#### *Performance Appraisal*

Our organization acts on its value for high levels of trust and the belief that people are committed to high levels of personal accountability by using an Appreciative performance appraisal process that focuses on employee competence and exemplary service to the organization.

#### *Company Website*

*Our website...*

- Clearly states who we are and the services we provide in a manner that excites and engages prospective clients, partners, and competitors from around the world to want to learn more about us.
- Is a portal for external outreach as well as internal management of our practice operations (shared hard drive, calendar, financial reporting, practice scorecard, etc.); security measures are in place to ensure authorized-only access to our business sensitive materials.
- Is easy to navigate with the least possible clicks required to retrieve company information.
- Is valued and updated regularly to ensure that its design and content are 100% current, accurate, and supportive of our evolving practice development and



service delivery

- Includes various published articles that promote our many past/present successes
- Includes overviews of our key business service offerings, as well as specific cases, testimonials, etc.
- Includes photos and bios of all partners, as well as a central point of contact
- Is artistic, colorful, and fun to visit.

## RELATIONAL

### *Customer Connections*

XYZ's long-term viability is built through strong integration and intimate relationships with our customer(s). We achieve this through partnership and creating opportunities to MEET, HEAR and LIVE through our customer stories. Our customers collaborate with us to grow and innovate our product(s) to exceed existing and emerging market needs.

As stakeholders in our strategy and operations, our customer fully participates in all facets of our organization:

- Annual conference
- Interactive Market Research (Play Day)
- Rotation through customer feedback centre.

## CULTURAL/CONVERSATIONAL

### *The Values of Quality Caring and Fairness:*

As a leadership team we look for everyday ways in which we can demonstrate our commitment to these values through our own behavior. We support each other in finding novel and significant ways of bringing these values to life with our staff, with elected members and in our dealings with people in the community.

At our weekly management meeting we share stories that demonstrate our active support for these values. We spend time with new staff who join our organization talking about how these values matter to us and how we can support them in living up to them. We take every opportunity to publicize outstanding examples of these values in action."

Sample Design Statements for a Canadian Government Division  
*Infrastructure*



The Infrastructure is a multi-technique integrated network that produces EOP, XYZ & rates, timely & continuously it's connected globally and driven by the requirements of Canadians. It uses leading technology in a flexible & cost effective manner.

It serves present science & enables future science & social progress.

#### *Vision*

Our vision statement inspires our staff and guides our activities. It involves our partners, clients, and identifies our capabilities. It is clear, understandable by the Sector and Canadians, as well as relevant. It gives us an identity both nationally and internationally.

#### *Approval Process*

This Division is structured around projects that are managed in an open, transparent issues/client driven, process. The approval process is flexible simple, allows timely decision-making and fosters staff engagement.

The outcome will prevent duplication of activities; increase visibility, recognition and acceptance of this Division's contribution both internally & externally.

#### *Lobbying Outreach*

This Division is a client-driven organization. It knows, logs, consults and communicates with clients (expert and non-experts). Products and services offered by this Division are targeted to meet client needs + dept issues. New tools, real-time services provide our clients cost-effective global world-class solutions. This Division maintains a comprehensive website that highlights "real-world" examples for usage of our products.

#### *Knowledge Transfer*

We facilitate, promote and maintain scientific innovation and the generation and dissemination of expertise and knowledge. We encourage the submission of ideas for the development and enhancement of available products and technology.



# Working with Destiny

## Destiny: Sustaining What Will Be

*The future is not a result of choices among alternative paths offered by the present, but a place that is created--created first in the mind and will, created next in activity. The future is not some place we are going to, but one we are creating. The paths are not to be found, but made, and the activity of making them, changes both the maker and the destination.*

John Schaar

During the Delivery/Destiny phase, organizations co-construct a sustainable preferred future embracing system wide innovation. This process is ongoing and creates an environment for continuous learning and improvisation all in service to shared ideals of the identified positive core. This appreciative environment provides fertile ground for innovation and sustainability.

The Delivery/Destiny phase is an on-going process that allows the innovation to continue in order to assure sustainability. This is a time to communicate the changes through all levels of the organization and to celebrate success. An environment is creating that allows for collaboration, cooperation and creativity. Self-organizing groups emerge that continue innovation and build supportive infrastructures for sustainability. These Infrastructures are supportive and encourage learning about and celebrating successes and continuing self-directed innovation.

AI becomes the foundation from which all activities are designed tasks are accomplished and appreciative processes are expanded through the organization. This is accomplished through continually building applications of appreciation and inquiry into the system. Through the building of an "appreciative eye" organization members imbed appreciative inquiry principles into all systems and practices. This is done through continuing dialogue and learning, and additional inquiry.

By innovating what will be, the organization builds AI learning competencies into the system and creates its destiny by delivering new images of the future that include the overall visions of *Dream* and the possibility statements of *Design*.



When people participate in the AI process change occurs all along the way, but is the actions planned or taken during the destiny phase that help to set the action agenda for moving forward to sustain change.

Four key parts of the destiny phase are

1. Action
2. Innovation
3. Collaboration
4. Commitment

### 1. Action

Action includes championship, buy-in and ownership to sustain momentum of the change.

A way to look at this is through Inspired Action. Inspired Action is “action on behalf of the whole that is energized by deep encounter with the positive core. As people connect with their strengths, dream bold dreams and organize to fulfill their highest aspirations, they act spontaneously with vision and commitment”<sup>2</sup>. Inspired action supports positive self-organizing, is tailored to the dreams of the organization, aligns discovery, dream, design, and destiny and balances planning and improvisation. This is the time when individuals commit to sustaining the preferred future.

### 2. Innovation

Innovation includes improvisation and appreciative learning cultures.

Improvisation

Plans can be carried out with much greater success if they are done with a spirit of improvisation balanced with planning. Goals and plans should be written in a spirit of flexibility. Borrowing from the world of jazz, improvisation allows players to have some understanding of each other’s roles and responsibilities (plans and goals) but provides space for individuals to seize opportunities when they arise – this allows a whole set of opportunities to arise.

Lessons learned from jazz about improvisation include:

- At any given time, know who the leader (soloist) is and you are in the piece (intense real time communication)
- Identify and agree upon minimal structures for embellishing
- Be open to reassemble and departures from routines
- Develop high confidence to deal with non-routine events
- Experiment as a *group* (change or eliminate structure)

---

<sup>2</sup> Ludema, Mohr, Whitney & Griffin. (2003.) *The Appreciative Inquiry Summit*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.



- Do not play the same solo over and over (practice new approaches and styles in familiar pieces)
- Incorporate the unexpected

### Appreciative Learning Cultures

Appreciative learning cultures are those that support people learning and growing through business rather than just business getting done through people. In his article, "Creating Appreciative Learning Cultures," Frank Barrett identifies four core competencies of appreciative learning cultures:

1) *Affirmative Competency* – The organization draws on human capacity to appreciate positive possibilities by selectively focusing on current and past strengths, successes and potentials

2) *Expansive Competency* – The organization challenges habits and conventional practices, provoking members to experiment, it makes promises that challenges them to stretch in new directions; and evokes a set of higher values and ideals that inspire them to passionate engagement.

3) *Generative Competency* – The organization constructs integrative systems that allow members to see the consequences of their actions, to recognize that they are making a meaningful contribution, and to express a sense of pride and progress.

4) *Collaborative Competency* – The organization creates forums in which members engage in ongoing dialogue and exchange diverse perspectives.

### 3. Collaboration

Collaboration is integral to success of the destiny phase. Since very little is accomplished in organizations these days in a vacuum, whole systems perspectives are encouraged that involve all stakeholders in a spirit of "group genius" or the sum is greater than its parts.

Partnerships within the organization are encouraged to carry forward the plans of the inquiry to a practical level. The question to be answered during this phase is: *How will organization members collectively and in partnership actualize and sustain their dreams.* During the collaboration phase, new topics are identified that will sustain this continuous inquiry.



One way to foster the continuous inquiry is through the creation of Innovation Teams. Innovation Teams are groups that are tasked with working together to steward dreams for the preferred future. An Innovation Team is a group of highly committed people who volunteer to move the organization forward. They are usually cross-functional, cross-level and cross-occupational.

#### 4. Commitment

Commitment is the fuel that keeps the destiny/delivery phase ongoing—a deliberate, never-ending pledge to keep the learning process fresh and new.

Commitment is nurtured by two building blocks: consistent inquiry and dialogue. This calls for a steady revisiting of past discussions around possibility and updating them to incorporate the perspectives and considerations of new members, new environments, new marketplaces. Continuous inquiry and dialogue, combined with intention, allows us to socially construct organizations that are based upon our most desired anticipatory images. Renewal and innovation become inevitable.

These four things combined – action, innovation, collaboration, and commitment – deliver new images of the future into the present, transforming wishes into realities, dreams into destiny.



# Working with Definition

## Choice Points in Getting Started

### Forms of Engagement: Possible Organizational Situations and Related AI Methods

People often ask, “Who should be involved in the change process?” In most of the work we do, we use some combination of the involvement methods listed below:

Some Possible Organization Situations	Related AI Method
Small, focused working groups need to generate new knowledge, innovations and implementation plans	AI Learning Team A small group of people, for example, an evaluation team, a process improvement team or a group of students, conduct an AI 5D process focused on a specific topic, project or process.
An organization needs to involve many of its people but the constraints of available time are stronger than the benefit of intensive 3-4 day sessions	Progressive AI Meetings An organization, small group, or team goes through Discovery, Dream Design and Destiny over the course of 10 -12 meetings that are each 2-4 hours long
All stakeholders need to be engaged over time (2 months to 1 year) and at multiple locations simultaneously.	Whole System Dialogue Everyone in the system engages in Discovery, Dream, Design, Destiny over an extended period
Speed is critical - All stakeholders can be engaged, at one location, in a 3 - 5 day large group (50 - 2000 people) process.	AI Summit Organizational members participate in a 3-5 day face to face process of Discovery, Dream, Design and Destiny.
Members of different organizations want to collaboratively explore and learn about a common area of interest.	AI Consortium Organization representatives join together to implement their own joint inquiry.
The organization wants to diffuse change capacity throughout the organization and to create an appreciative learning culture	Positive Change Network Members of the organization are trained in AI and provided with resources to initiate projects and share materials, stories and best practices
The “system” is numerically large and dispersed (e.g. a city, community or the world.) and the resources to bring people together are limited.	Mass Mobilization of Inquiry Large numbers of interviews (thousands to millions), on a socially responsible topic, are conducted throughout a city, community or the world.



## Inquiry Strategy

Note: Decisions for ALL the phases are usually made during the Definition phase even though we have chosen to show the decisions by phase to provide context.

Focus of the 5-D Cycle	Decisions to be Made
<p><i>Definition</i> Involves introducing decision-makers to Appreciative Inquiry as a process for change, establishing a supporting infrastructure, and engaging participants in the process. AND <i>Affirmative Topic Choice</i>. Involves selecting the topics that establish the organization's course for learning and transformation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is Appreciative Inquiry appropriate for us?</li> <li>- What is our Change Agenda?</li> <li>- Who will serve on our Advisory Team/SC?</li> <li>- What training does our Advisory Team/SC need?</li> <li>- What Form of Engagement will we use?</li> <li>- What will our Inquiry Strategy be?</li> <li>- How and when will we introduce the process throughout the organization?</li> <li>- Who will select the topics?</li> <li>- Which topics will we study?</li> <li>- Who will craft the questions? The Interview Guide</li> <li>- What questions will we ask?</li> </ul>
<p><i>Discovery</i>. Involves conducting interviews, and making meaning of what's been learned.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Who will we interview?</li> <li>- Who will conduct the interviews? How many each?</li> <li>- What training will our interviewers need?</li> <li>- Who will make meaning of the data? How?</li> <li>- How will we communicate stories and best practices?</li> </ul>
<p><i>Dream</i>. Involves individual and collective visioning, group dialogues, and enactments of positive images of the organization's future.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Whom should we involve?</li> <li>- What experiential activity will we use to reveal our images of the future?</li> <li>- What will be the outcome of our dream?</li> </ul>
<p><i>Design</i>. Involves collaborative identification of the organization's social architecture and crafting Provocative Propositions – descriptions of the ideal organization.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What are we designing?</li> <li>- Who needs to be involved?</li> <li>- How do we describe our ideal organization?</li> </ul>
<p><i>Destiny</i>. Involves unleashing self-organized innovation, through which the future will be made real.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How will we gather stories about what we have achieved?</li> <li>- How will we celebrate?</li> <li>- What are our parameters for self-organized action?</li> <li>- How shall we self-organize?</li> <li>- How will we support ongoing success?</li> </ul>



# Success Factors in Using AI

Tips on Having the AI Approach Make a Difference in an  
Organization  
Keys to the Kingdom

[with thanks to Gervase R. Bushe and Bernard J. Mohr for contributions to this list]

## 1. Sponsorship, sponsorship, sponsorship—ongoing strong sponsorship from leadership

Who are sponsors?

- o Those who head up what will be impacted
- o The people with the power and authority to say 'no' to any of the outcomes and who must say 'yes' to the process and outcomes
- o The people paying for the change process

What kind of agreements do you need with sponsors?

- o Personal commitments to the process
- o Budgets for process and change efforts
- o 'Givens and boundaries' for process
- o Roles: authorizations, participation and high visibility, encouragement, supporting, leading the Destiny Phase

## 2. Team of pulse takers and direction makers [Core Team]

- o Cross-functional representation
- o Strong commitment to the AI process
- o Willingness to act as an advocate and host

## 3. Whole system participation—continuous invitation to participate and own the process

- o Engage everyone who provides resources for change in at least the Discovery Phase
- o Engage everyone who will have to change!
- o Get whole as much as possible—it takes time for the collective mind to wake up.

## 4. Work on topics of great importance to the stakeholders and system.

- o Have key stakeholders, pulse takers, planners and sponsors be part of topic selection and framing



- Ensure topic will invite, compel, and excite those involved—they must have experience that is relevant to the questions and relevant to the future of the organization
  - Test out the topic and key questions first
  - Create questions [the inquiry] that provoke generative conversations and move in the direction of targeted solutions and innovation. Generative questions help reframe our perspective, engage us, build relationships, and help us invite the new. [Continuity, novelty, transition]
5. *Make the process interesting, compelling, inviting, beautiful, special*
- Actually design the process and events so that people feel like they have been prepared for and are important.
6. *Find a way to coordinate efforts in the Design Phase*
- When you get to the Design Phase, there has to be a way for it to move forward and people stay engaged with one another over time, for authorization to happen and get coordinated. This is part of developing the system's collaborative capacity.
7. *During Destiny, prepare to stay in improvisation--that once the Design blueprint is approved, that teams can move forward on their own.*
- Find and define a way to track the fulfillment of Design, make it visible,
  - Have enough budget and system support for the changes to actually occur.



# AI Summits

*What is an AI Summit?*

...an opportunity to bring people together to accelerate and 'kick-start' a whole system shift toward a positive future that is co-created .

When the whole system is in conversation, the dialogue is powerful. A summit provides an opportunity for all stakeholders to come together around a central focus. We don't know yet what the largest number possible is: 50 to 2000 to 40,000. Even more?

In an AI Summit, organizational members participate in a collective face-to-face process of Discovery, Dream, Design and Destiny around a powerful affirmative topic. It is an opportunity for them to share stories of success and link them with their dreams for the organization. Together they then design structures and systems that when lived will deliver the shared visions.

A 'typical' Summit brings the whole system together for at least 3 days. However, summits can, and have, taken different forms. The first part of this chapter will outline a 'typical' summit. Flexibility lies in the ability to ultimately see "what makes a summit successful".

Here are the four key concepts related to successful, powerful summits:

## Focus determination

How central to the core mission/strategy of the organization is the focus of the inquiry?

Topic articulation

How "transformational" are the topics? (i.e. Revolutionary Customer Response vs. Customer Service Excellence, or Business as An Agent of World Benefit vs. Corporate Social Responsibility)

Length of the summit

- day 1 = discovery/dreaming
- day 2 = dreaming/design
- day 3 = design/destiny



- 4 days = all of the 3 day benefits PLUS detailed designing, actual progress on projects/initiatives

Who is in the room to decide each of the above?

Are all the stakeholders represented so that their views, frame of reference, ideas, and input can be part of creating the shared future?

## The Definition Phase

The Definition Phase is one of the most important and challenging steps in this process. The first challenge is to determine what it is you really want to study. What is it that you want to learn about, discover more about, and expand in the organization? The topic should be affirmative and transformational. The affirmative topic will infuse and inform every step of the rest of the process. It will guide the crafting of questions. If you are doing a summit, this phase occurs long before the Summit begins; the other 4 D's occur during the summit.

## Getting Started: Before the Summit

Create High-Level Sponsorship Team (Summit Committee)

- Determine COMPELLING Summit Task
- Provide resources and authority

Form a Representative Planning Team (Core Group)

- Create interview guide (topics & questions)
- Determine summit participants (stakeholder analysis) and the invitation strategy
- Design the summit
- Manage Logistics
- Plan Summit Follow-up



## What makes a summit successful:

### **Areas for Conversation During the Definition (and Planning) Phase**

1. *Educating and Involving Key Decision Makers*
  - Who are the key people that can make the decision to proceed and to support the new ideas and ways of working?
  - What ways of learning about new ideas work for this organization?
    - Meeting in a small group?
    - Articles describing the ideas and/or the research?
    - Mini-workshops?
    - Talking with others who have used an AI approach
2. *Selecting Affirmative Topics*
  - What is this system wanting to create more of? What could we focus on that has the ability to transform?
    - Who will Select Topics?
    - Summit Committee
    - Core Group
    - Executives
    - Whole System
    - What data/information exists to inform our topic selection?
3. *Summit design*
  - What is the whole system?
  - How many will attend?
  - How many days ?
  - How will we involve and include the whole system?
  - Budget?
4. *Crafting Questions*
  - Who will Craft Questions?
    - Core Team
    - Consultants
    - How will we test the questions ?
5. *Conducting Interviews*
  - Will we conduct pre-summit interviews?



- Train Interviewers or Not?
- Who to Interview?
- Employees? How Many?
- Customers? How Many?
- Others? Who? How Many?

6. *Making Meaning of Data*

- Who will Make Meaning?
  - Local Groups?
  - Core Team?
  - What Presentation Media?
  - Written Report?
  - Video?
  - Other?

7. *Unleashing Innovation, Improvising and Evaluating*

- How to Organize?
  - Established Work Groups
  - AI Learning Teams?
- Who to Support Success?
  - Business Leadership Team?
  - Core Team?
- How will we monitor our progress in ways consistent with the AI philosophy

8. *Communication*

- How best to communicate to stakeholders and others not at the summit?
- Key messages
- Best vehicles for communications
- What action or response is required?

9. *Venue and timing*

- What venue is most suitable and is it available?
- Does it have: natural light, ample space, easy access
- Tables of 6-8
- Wall space for reporting out



10. *Current organizational goings on*

- What else is going on in the organization that will hinder or support a summit?

## Potential Summit Outcomes

### *Tangible*

- Whole system shift in the one direction
- Clear, shared direction of whole system
- A new story for the organization (re-story)
- A re-focus/ concentration of effort
- Action Plans (short term & long term)
- New ideas
- New energy and enthusiasm
- Current activities and processes enhanced
- 'Double-up' dramatically reduced - streamlined
- New and enhanced collaboration
- Accountability
- Individuals invested in what the business does
- Ownership of actions & outcomes at all levels
- Self-organized workgroups

### *Less tangible/ emergent*

- Networks developed
- Informal relationships formed
- Individuals feel acknowledged and heard
- Sense of belonging
- Individual confidence = more robust system
- Sense of achievement
- Self-awareness in a group
- Emergence of strengths
- Participants understand their role in the big picture
- Mutual appreciation and respect
- Sense of purpose and connection
- Strategic thinking at all levels
- A more positive outlook
- A desire (&ability) to find the possibilities in a situation
- Appreciation for the power of inquiry & genuine curiosity
- Increased Innovation



# The Art of Inquiry:

## Generous and Generative Questions

*The questions themselves are an art form worthy of a lifetime of study. They are what transforms the hour.*

Peter Block



# THE ART OF THE QUESTION

*What we ask determines what we find. What we find determines how we talk. How we talk determines how we imagine together. How we imagine together determines what we achieve.* David Cooperrider

In important respects, human beings and organizations move in the direction of what they talk about. What we focus on, and the language we use, becomes our reality. So, what is the most powerful focus we can take in our conversations?

Perhaps when we choose to study the best in our systems and ‘what gives life’, we can create more of that and move more easily toward solutions. Inquiry designed to focus on organizational/community health, strength, and wisdom creates a move from negotiation to dialogue and co-creation, from problem to positive alignment.

This is important for teams to understand, as well as for our organizational and community leaders. More and more, leaders are being valued for their ability to tap the best from the people around them, to be able to create generative inquiries that will direct the conversation toward powerful, positive solutions. Great outcomes are the answers to generative questions.

The great business thinker Peter Drucker reflected a few years ago:  
“The task of leadership is to create an alignment of strengths, making our weaknesses irrelevant. ”

## ACTIVITY

### Develop Our Ability to Find the Most Generative Topics for Collaboration

Remaking our communities and organizations begins with us—with the way we approach our issues and challenges. Research suggests that in social systems we generate more of what we focus upon (i.e. what we ask questions about). This suggests that focusing on pathology and breakdown may create more pathology and breakdown. It also suggests that focusing upon strengths/capabilities creates MORE strengths/capabilities.

### Reframing Steps:

1. Acknowledge Issue/Problem/Challenge.



2. Help in the Reframing by Asking: *“What would you/we have if this problem went away?”*
3. From Good to Great: *What’s desired? What describes the positive outcome we want?*
4. Then...Exploring What We Know About this Desired Topic
  - a) Would this topic excite/energize you?
  - b) Has there ever been an example of this desired “behavior” in your/our past?
  - c) Where has this image of what you want to move toward come from?
  - d) Could we learn from the times in the past when what you/we now want has been present?
  - e) What questions might we ask that would help us learn from the moments in the past when we have had what we now want?
  - f) Reflection on what we already know--our experience with aspects of the topic;
  - g) Clarity and emergence of what we want more of and what it might look like.

Organizations move in the direction of what we consistently ask questions about:

If the presenting issue is one of the below, what could you study?

Sexual discrimination \_\_\_\_\_

Poor communication \_\_\_\_\_

Low morale \_\_\_\_\_

Fragmented communities \_\_\_\_\_

Ethical concerns \_\_\_\_\_



## Examples of Reframing from Issue to Generative Topic

Issues/concerns	Positive Opposite	Generative Topics
Values and ethics violations	Ethical behavior	Living Integrity: Doing the Right Thing Everyday
Poor cross-functional team cooperation	Good cross-functional team cooperation	Boundless synergy
Baggage handling problems for an airline	Better baggage delivery	Outstanding arrival experiences
An unsatisfying work environment	Good working environment	A place where everyone wants to come to work
Poor communications and collaboration in a merger	Clear communications and good collaboration	Magnetic connections
How can we impact our community? We have no power.	We can have influence.	Tapping and Uniting Our Spheres of influence
We are in an era of deep community conflict and separation.	Community alignment	Vibrant communities: Finding Ways forward together
So much disease and epidemics	Improved research and healthcare	An Epidemic of health
So many mistakes and errors	Fewer errors	Total commitment to quality
Concern about future leadership preparation	Succession planning	Bold and Enlightened leadership at every level

### PRACTICE: Reframe Charting

Complete the following table columns [-, +, +++, ???, !!!] on chart paper using the guiding questions below.

- 1) Identify a common complaint, problem, or challenge you might face – something you “don’t want”. [-]
- 2) Then, seek its positive opposite – something you “do want”. What would you call it? [+]
- 3) Go from good to great. What would make this positive opposite most valuable, most desirable? What would you call *that*? [+++]



- 4) What questions might you ask that would help to uncover evidence of this “great” already existing? What questions will help move you forward? [???
- 5) What stories, experiences, and examples come to mind where you already know this to exist? Share briefly in table groups. [!!!]

Table on Chart Paper:

1)	2)	3)	4)	5)
-	+	+++	???	!!!
“Don’t Want” Complaint or problem	“Do Want” – positive opposite	Good to Great	Inquiry questions	Evidence it already exists

[thanks to Jen Hetzel Silbert, *Innovation Partners International*]

### Criteria for Great Affirmative Topics

- ☑ Affirmative and Possibility-focused – stated in the positive, as if it’s already taking place
- ☑ Bold, Evocative – Challenges status quo
- ☑ Desirable System-wide – The organization wants to grow, develop and enhance them; it’s engaging for all involved
- ☑ Stimulate learning – The organization is genuinely curious about them and wants to become more knowledgeable and proficient in them
- ☑ Stimulate conversations about desired futures – taking the organization where it most wants to go with strategic business relevance

Source: Silbert, J.H. and Silbert, T. (2005), Adapted from Whitney, D. & Trosten-Bloom, A. (2003.) *The Power of Appreciative Inquiry: A Practical Guide to Positive Change*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.



How do we collaborate to move forward together on something important?  
What is it that we really want to know about a topic?

The Basic Generative AI Questions:

- Preface [context setting and framing+] What's important to put in your introduction?
  - The situation that brought us here
  - What connects the participants in the inquiry to the topic?
  - How your experience is important to the outcome of this topic
- Best experience/high point. A time when...
- What do you value about... yourself, work, organization, the way we work with this topic/area now?
- What are the most exciting trends and opportunities in your field/industry that could positively impact the way you work/your organization?
- What three wishes do you have for moving this organization/project/topic forward?
- Miracle question: It's xxxx date in the future and you have realized your dreams around this topic. You are flourishing in so many ways. What does it look like? What are people doing? What are you doing? How did you get to this stage? What did it take?

*You can tell whether a man is clever by his answers. You can tell whether a man is wise by his questions.*      Naguib Mahfouz [Nobel Prize winner]

Checking our inquiry: Do the questions:

- Focus on something that is important to us?
- Invite conversation and stories, create connection and dialogue, not just complaint and restating of problems?
- Bring everyone involved into the inquiry and tap their strengths, knowledge, and experience?
- Build on the positive--are they affirmatively focused on what we want more of?



- Value " the best of what is" and spark the appreciative imagination by helping locate experiences in the past or present that are worth valuing?
- Make us think in new ways and create positive images of what is possible?

## Samples/Examples of Topics, Prefaces, and Generative Questions:

### Sample 1: Prefaces and key questions

#### Topic: Infectious Energy

Positive Preface: Organizations work best when they are vibrant, alive and fun. You know, when the "joint is jumping!" You can sense that the spirit of the organization is vital and healthy and that people feel pride in their work. Everyone builds on each other's successes, a positive can do attitude is infectious and the glow of success is shared. What's more, this positive energy is appreciated and celebrated so it deepens and lasts.

Questions: Tell me about a time when you experienced positive energy that was infectious. What was the situation? What created the positive energy?

How did it feel to be a part of it? What did you learn?

If positive energy were the flame of the organization, how would you spark it? How would you fuel it to keep it burning bright?

#### Topic: Patient Safety through Exceptional Handoffs & Creative Workarounds

##### A. *Learning From Great Times*

Positive Preface: The ultimate measure of the Beth's success is great patient care – medically, organizationally and humanly. Our commitment to and experience with innovation and meticulous attention to patient care is a source of real learning for us.

Question: Tell me about a specific time that you experienced the ER to A6 handoff in a way that you would describe as nearly perfect or exceptional – an experience that if it had been captured on video could serve as a teaching tool for handoffs throughout the entire Saint Barnabas System? Tell me what happened with as much detail as possible.



*B. Learning From Difficult Times*

Positive Preface: The process of handing-off patients from the ER to the A6 is not perfect by any means. Sometimes our work requires us to deal with delays, bottlenecks, unanticipated problems or other obstacles that make our jobs difficult. Fortunately, overtime we all learn about or discover tricks and other creative workarounds to help us overcome these barriers. We do this all in an effort to deliver quality care.

Question: Tell me about the tips or creative workarounds you've learned in this handoff!

Topic: Vibrant, successful companies

Positive Preface: Vibrant, successful companies attract clients. The work they do adds value to their clients' businesses. Clients return to these vibrant successful companies often and recommend them to others. Great people want to work for these companies...because the culture is alive, exciting and it meets their needs in many different ways!

Questions: Think of a time when you've either worked for or been a customer of such an organization. Tell me a story about that experience. What was it that made that organization stand out from the rest? How did that organization attract clients? How would you describe the culture?

Topic: Exceptional Arrival Experience

Positive Preface: Our goal is to provide an exceptional travel experience both in the air and on the ground. The handling of a flight's arrival and baggage reconciliation is of equal importance to any other aspect of a passenger's journey. The arrival experience is the time to leave a wonderful lasting impression. It also provides the opportunity to recover from any service shortfall the customer may have encountered. Focusing on Exceptional Arrival Experience demonstrates commitment to both our customers and to one another.

Questions:

Describe your most memorable arrival experience, as a customer or, as airline personnel. What made it memorable for you? How did you feel? Tell me a story about your most powerful service recovery. Describe the situation.

- What was it about you that made it happen?
- Who else was involved and why were they significant?
- What tools did you use or what did you do that others might be



able to do when in a similar situation?

- If you had a magic wand, how would you use it to enhance our overall arrivals experience for our customers? What ideas do you have to ensure exceptional arrival experiences for all our customers? And to make the process easier for us, as well!

### Topic: Magnetic Work Environment

Positive Preface: In the physical world, all matter is held together by the pull between opposite electric charges. Successful companies are highly nimble, flexible communities. People connect in new and innovative ways. Suppliers and customers are pulled together and become seamless edge-to-edge organizations. Communities of interest form and are pulled together by shared values and interests. Knowledge networks form as catalysts for innovation and creativity. People, process, and technology experts are attracted and deliver high value solutions to their client needs.

Questions:

Think of a time when you felt “magnetically” connected to your client, your colleagues, and your community. . . Connected in a way that the force was so strong that it could not be broken. What was that experience like?

As you look into the future, describe how we are connected to our customers and our colleagues in a way that is so strong that we are seen as inseparable business partners.

### Topic: Operational Excellence

Positive Preface: In our world the competitive edge goes to organizations that manage their internal operations effectively and efficiently AND at the same time enable creativity, risk-taking, and innovation. Through robust internal business processes, clearly defined roles and responsibility, and strong internal communication—all the resources we need for “doing the right things right” are seamlessly available.

Questions:

Describe a situation in which internal operational functioning supported your work fully – allowing you to “do the right thing right.” What happened? What were the contributing factors that made your operations so efficient and effective? How did you maintain the flexibility in your structures and processes to be innovative and exploit emergent opportunities? What was it about you, your co-workers, and the management of organizational resources—human and technical—that helped to realize exceptional results? What is one thing you could do NOW which would enhance internal operations even more?



Generative Questions: Sample 2:

Interview Guide for Empowering New Positive Leadership in a Community Organization

## Leading Positive Change

Leading positive change in underserved communities calls for bold new approaches to leadership that help people bring 100% of their creativity and courage to bear on some of the most challenging issues of our time.

With this interview we begin a process of discovery to awaken the leader within, to unlock our creativity, and to ignite our spirit of cooperation through an inquiry into the doing and being of leadership. We are joining a cadre of “positive revolutionaries” who lead by valuing, and who create change by synthesizing or combining capacities and by imagining the new, the better, the possible in ways that compel, transcend and uplift.

### Inspirational Leadership

1. Which leader has most inspired you? Tell a story about when you first became aware of this leader and his/her attributes. What is it about this person that has captured your imagination? What strengths does this person demonstrate as a leader?

### Your Special Assets

2. Leading positive change takes many forms. How would you describe your own unique brand of leadership? What has been required of you to develop as a leader?

### Leading Through Adversity

3. Tell a story of your leadership – of a time when you were truly proud of yourself, a time when you were stretched beyond where you had gone before. Perhaps it was a challenging situation when you were able to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles, in your own life, in your work, or in your community. Describe the situation fully. What was it in you that allowed you to be successful? What did it teach you about leadership?

### Bringing Out the Best

4. Successful leaders of positive change thrive when they are part of a supportive community where collaboration and shared learning are highly valued. Think of a time when you have been part of a vibrant learning community or action team. What did you value most about that experience? What were the circumstances? What practices or



behaviors of the team or community led to yours and others success?

### Your Image of Success

5. As you think about the future, what are your highest hopes for yourself as a leader of positive change? How about your hopes for NCI's role in promoting positive change in communities. What are three wishes you have for yourself as a leader of positive change at NCI?

### Generative Questions: Sample 3—

A Multi-Topic Interview guide for a manufacturing firm that included all employees in a daylong collaborative conversation

### Making a Great Company

*The greatness of our future will come from discovering and building on its greatness today--what makes it a special place to work, what makes its products great, what keeps employees wanting to work here, how new ideas turn into products. Please interview your partner on the questions below and write their responses in the spaces provided.*

#### a. S... at its best

*We want to know what, in your opinion, makes S... a great company, what gives it an edge over other companies.*

- Tell a story about a time when you experienced S..... at its best and were proud to be a part of it. [What was the situation? What year did it happen? Who were you working with? How did you contribute to it? What made it possible? Give details.]

#### b. Communication--staying connected

*One key to an organization working well is the way the organization communicates with itself and the outside world. The way information travels throughout the organization impacts every aspect of operations.*

- When have you been part of a group at S..... or elsewhere where you felt really connected to a process or team. What made the connection and the communication work? What different groups were involved?
- Where is communication at its best at S.....?
- How can departments work and talk together better?



c. Innovation--Bringing in the New

*Another key to a successful organization is how new ideas take form--where they come from and how long they take to become reality.*

- When have you been part of a change for the better at S....? [Where did the ideas come from? How did they get implemented? Who worked on them? What did they impact?]
- How can innovation, creativity, "bringing in the new" be made easier and more a part of everyday process at S.....?

• Facilities--An Excellent Human and Physical Environment

*S.... is committed to a safe, clean, comfortable facility and environment.*

- Where is this most evident in the plant now? Where/when is the plant at its best?
- With the company growing and new demands being made on the current facility, what areas of the plant should S.... focus on now?

e. Employees

*S.... has attracted an excellent group of employees. In a labor market like the one around Hendersonville, it is sometimes difficult to keep finding and retaining people with the skills S....needs.*

- What are S's best employee programs now? How does S.... best support its employees in a way that helps the company to greatness?
- What new or expanded programs, services, policies, and training will best serve employees and the company?

f. Wishes and Recommendations

*It's important to find out if those of us who work at S.... think along similar lines, if we consider the same things important for S.... as it moves forward. Given the pace of changes occurring around us, companies have to look only a few years out--about 2 or 3 years.*

- If you were an owner of S...., what three wishes and recommendations would you have to heighten the company's vitality and success over the next three years?



Generative Questions: Sample 4: Complex Issue

Creating an Epidemic of Health Think Tank Meeting: Fetzer Institute  
Interview Questions

As you know, this meeting at Fetzer is intended to create a think tank to imagine ways to engage thousands...and perhaps millions...of people in cascading conversations of health and hope in the service of creating an epidemic of health.

1. What is it that compels or draws you to this meeting? Without being humble, what are some of the best qualities and special gifts that you bring to this think tank?

2. The great Jonas Salk would ask people three simple but powerful questions. None were about illness. In Salk's view "health" was not simply the absence of disease. It was qualitatively different and vastly more. He wanted people to discover, through systematic study and delicate awareness those things that they do that *make them healthy*. He was amazed with the wisdom and varieties of techniques, behaviors, and lessons people identified. He would conclude each conversation with a request: *Please share your thoughts and insights with as many people as possible*. Salk's great hope was to discover the means and methods "to create an epidemic of health."

The creative conversation would start, for example, by anchoring the discussion in people's own life experiences, reflecting on moments in their life when they felt most alive and healthy, or he might ask about times they were in the midst of healing, when they were taking valuable steps toward visions of better health. Three questions always followed:

- What keeps you healthy?
- What do you want to teach your / our grandchildren?
- What would keep the world healthy for those children?

Reflect for a minute on a time in your life when you felt most alive and healthy. What keeps you healthy? What do you want to teach our grandchildren? What would keep the world healthy for those children?

3. Think of a time when you (or someone close to you) were unable to care for yourself – a time when you had to rely on the care of others and when those who were caring for you did such a remarkable job that you found



yourself healing and recovering more quickly and completely because of it. Tell me about that time. What was it that precipitated your illness? Who was with you? What was it about the care you received that made it so memorable?

4. I want to shift my questioning a little to reflect on how we might create an “epidemic of health” in the US. Think of a time when you observed an idea, plan, or product diffusing rapidly through a system or culture. How did you learn about it? How did you let others know about it? What made it appealing to you and to those around you? What kinds of people and situations seemed to contribute to the spreading of this idea, plan, or product?

5. Imagine that we leave Kalamazoo in our various cars and planes and wend our way back to our homes and jobs. To our amazement, we find that we have slipped through a “wrinkle in time” and that it is 2005. You notice several interesting changes, but none is as fascinating as the stunning shift that has occurred in health and care. Your friends are showing off to you something that looks like the “old” palm pilots, but instead of schedules and addresses, it appears to hold a vast and detailed history of their personal health as well as a detailed map of the vast possibilities available to them for further enhancement of their well being. Describe the world of health and care in 2005 that has revolutionized the way everyone thinks about health.

6. Staying for a moment in this world of 2005, imagine that as you inquire more deeply about what it is that has brought about such rapid and dramatic change in a system you had thought to be intransigent, you are told about a grass roots conversation initiative that was inspired by the phrase “creating an epidemic of health,” which has created a virtual epidemic of new thinking about health and care. What would you suppose happened in this “living dialogue” that produced such stunning change?

7. Returning now to the fall of 2000, reflect for a minute about what we might do to ignite a powerful movement to generate a revolutionary new system of health and care. What three wishes do you have for creating a conversation initiative that would produce powerful, grounded results? What kinds of partnerships might we wish for? What kinds of technological scaffolding might support us? What kinds of recognition or publicity might accelerate the process and bring about quick results? (Note: Treat this question as a brainstorming question.)



### Generative Questions: Example 5

Conducting a 1-way interview in preparation for a whole system event. Here, selected members of a religious community interviewed the rest of their congregation in preparation for an AI Summit.

#### BEING DOMINICAN

1. Everyone has a story of how they came to embrace this Dominican Congregation as home. When did you join? What attracted you to become a member? Still attracts you?
2. When you meet someone new who asks you what it means to be "Dominican", how do you describe it? And further, what reasons might you offer to encourage women considering membership in the Congregation?

#### COMMON LIFE

One of the marks of Dominicans is *common life*, that bond of connection which deepens and broadens the commitment of individuals so to be realized exponentially as a group, in whatever form it takes.

3. Regarding that bond, recall a time when you felt keenly aware of what it was to be Sister. What was the situation and setting? Who was involved? What was the essence of the experience?
4. Because of our religious profession as Dominican Sisters, to whom and how am I responsible for the common life of our Congregation?

#### BUILDING A HOLY AND JUST SOCIETY

*As Dominican women, we are called to proclaim the Gospel through the ministry of preaching and teaching in order to participate in the building of a holy and just society.*

*In a world graced by the Holy Spirit, and yet wounded by divisions, exploitation, and oppression, we are impelled by God's tender mercy to commit ourselves in partnership with others to seek and foster right relationships among all of God's people and with the earth that sustains us.*



5. When reflecting on our Sisters' contributions in diverse ministries, toward building a holy and just society, when have you felt most proud and appreciative to be a member of the Congregation? Think of an experience that stands out for you as a particularly high point and tell me the story.
  
6. Talk about an experience of working in partnership with others that furthers our mission of participating in the building of a holy and just society. What have you learned from the experience that can help us design a future characterized by such experiences?

#### A CONSCIOUS DESIGN FOR THE FUTURE

7. As we look at the needs/trends of society, what do you think the Spirit is calling us to be for the world today?
  
8. What three wishes do you have for our Congregation as we move into the future? Please be specific.
  
9. What tough decisions and choices about our future do we need to make as a Congregation?
  
10. What small steps, or even bold steps, will lead us in the direction you see for our Congregation?

#### Interview Summary Form—Input for Community Days

Date of interview (mm/dd/yy): \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Your name as interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person Interviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years in the community:  0-5     6-10     11-20  
 21--30     31—40     41-50     50+



Age:       31-40       41-50       51-60       61-70       71-80  
 81-90       91-100       101-110

Please use as much or little space as you need in order to answer each question.

From Questions 1 and 2, summarize what attracted and continues to attract as well as how you might encourage others to join?

From Question 3, what story of “being sister” was told?

From Question 4, how am I responsible for “common life”?

From Questions 5, capture the story of being proud and appreciative to be a member to the Congregation.

From Question 6, partnerships into the future?

From Questions 7—10, vision, wishes? Key, tough decisions? Small or bold steps?

Thank you again for participating in this Congregation conversation as an interviewer!

NOTE: There are so many examples of appreciative interview formats and processes that you can access on the Appreciative Inquiry Commons, the portal managed by Case Western Reserve University. Check there for more samples and case studies to help you with your own inquiry designs:

<http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/>



# AI Everyday

[Deep change] requires a psychological shift from being certain about our future to being uncertain, a transformation that is as stressful as it is productive. Joshua Cooper Ramo, *The Age of the Unthinkable*, 2009.

## Bonobos

It's true humans have bigger brains and language and so forth. But we would not have evolved the kind of intelligence we have—the kind that allows us to use our brains together, to build things, to be mentally flexible—if we hadn't had a shift in temperament. " That is, we had to become more like bonobos and less like chimps, which are high-strung, fearful of strangers and generally intolerant of any chimp lower on the social hierarchy. "We had to lose all those traits in order to become who we are, " he adds. Controlling one's fears, paying attention to others, finding joy in working with others—that's the path to intelligence, he says, whether for dogs, apes, or humans.

From *Smithsonian*, Fall 2007, 37 under 36, *America's Young Innovators*, "Dogged", about Primatologist Brian Hare, interviewed by Virginia Morell

I would not waste my life in friction when it could be turned into momentum. Frances Willard



# Collaboration

Collaboration is a group of people consciously choosing to work together around a particular topic of importance--In the hopes of achieving a shared vision, generating new knowledge, or innovating new ways of going on together.

Collaboration is a strikingly different way of working together.

Instead of leaders and followers, there is shared leadership and facilitation.

Instead of command and control, there is inquiry and learning.

Instead of one solution developed by the few, there are many possibilities generated by many.

Collaboration is a dynamic of consciously choosing our own participation, creating relationships with others involved, and committing to the topic of importance.



# META: Collaborative Capacities

To realize sustainable collaboration in our organizations, we have to build four key capacities: Multiple Ways of Knowing—our ability to shift perspective and reframe; Engagement—our ability to really connect with one another and create environments where we can feel we belong; Thinking together—our ability to enter into exploratory dialogues that tap our collective wisdom and spur innovation; Acting Together—our ability to not only explore but to act on what emerges from our best collective thinking.

## *Multiple Ways of Knowing*

### *Shifts in Perception/Reframing in the Moment Everyday*

The ability to frame and reframe, seeing an object, person or situation from a different perspective, can be strengthened with practice. Our mental maps play an important role in how we perceive the world around us. To create change, we have to encourage moments of insight in which we can question and eventually shift our attitudes, perspectives, and habits of thinking. We form new neural connections. It is not enough to be told about new ideas by our leaders; we have to experience insight ourselves.

### *The Power of Attention and Focus Everyday*

The brain changes as a function of where we place our attention. Whatever we emphasize creates chemical and physical changes in the brain. The more we see the world and relationships as problems to be fixed, the more embedded problem-focused thinking becomes in our neural circuitry. This often makes problems more intractable. More importantly, however, it entrains us to use problems as a default lens everyday for experiencing the world, inhibiting our capacity to see solutions or new ways of going forward.

## *Engagement*

### *Connecting Everyday*

Engagement is like going online—suddenly we are connected to more resources and become willing to contribute our own. We can't really develop the collective mind or thinking together effectively unless we connect and engage. Neuroscientist David Rock's research shows that the threat response is easily triggered in social situations. He describes the fundamental organizing principle of the brain as "*Minimize danger, maximize reward*". For example, Rock



found that feeling excluded in a group provokes the same type of reaction in the brain as might physical pain. When people experience feeling betrayed or unrecognized—they experience it as a neural impulse, like a blow to the head. This contributes to our limiting our engagement, participation, and commitment.

*Praise and the Positive State: Positive Emotions, Elevating and Affirming Everyday*

The positive state is a skill than can be trained in ourselves. Threat trumps reward in our brains because the threat response is immediate and hard to ignore. So, according to positive psychologist Barbara Fredrickson, we need to have a ratio of at least 3 to 1 positive to negative talk to flourish in teams, 6 to 1 for our individual inner dialogue, 5 to 1 in healthy marriages. The more we look for ways to praise and affirm in our conversations and inquiry, the more fruitful and long lasting the results.

*Thinking and Learning Together*

*Our Social Nature and Collective Wisdom: Generating, Imagining, Innovating and Emerging Everyday*

The human brain is a social organ. Social connection is necessary for survival...and for learning, development, and innovation. Developmental psychology tells us that our minds only develop in relationship to other minds.

Learning together in dialogue requires a question we do not have the answer to/ are curious about and movement toward finding the potential that wants to emerge from the group. Curiosity and interest are both examples of positive emotions that help broaden and build our thought-action repertoires and help us access greater capacities together. Environments and inquiries that allow time and space for exploring each other's ideas and contributions, watching for what is emerging, and harvesting the best of the collective wisdom are necessary everyday.

*Conversations and Stories*

Conversations and storytelling in organizations change the future. They connect us to one another as well as uniting our knowledge and wisdom into collective potential.



*Acting Together: Applying and Reflecting Together Everyday*

Part of remaining engaged together over time rests in being able to turn our conversations into actions that resonate with the potential expressed in our groups. Just having continued conversation without a sense of forward movement eventually drains our energy. Sustainable collaboration creates a generative spiral of continued engagement, dialogue, design, and reflection.

*Reflection time and mindfulness*

Expanding our awareness and capacity is enhanced by moments of reflection and meditation. During these “time outs” we can pause the urge to respond automatically to situations and instead thoughtfully consider our decisions about how to act.

One of the best ways to make new neural pathways is to take time to observe our own mental processes, which over time opens us up to full presence.

Sources

Dobbs, David, *The Gregarious Brain*, The New York Times, 07.07.07.

Fredrickson, Barbara L., *Positivity*. Crown Publishers, 2009.

Lehrer, Jonah, [www.jonahlehrer.com](http://www.jonahlehrer.com).

Rock, David and Jeffrey Schwartz, *The Neuroscience of Leadership*. Strategy+Business, Issue 43.

Rock, David, *Managing with the Brain in Mind*. Strategy + Business, Issue 56, 2009.

Thatchenkerry, Tojo and Carol Metzker. *Appreciative Intelligence: Seeing the Mighty Oak in the Acorn*, Berrett-Koehler, 2006.



# Breathing AIR

## Affirmation—the power of the positive

- Research shows high performing teams flourish with a ratio of 6:1 positive to negative talk.
- Our focus changes the brain:
  - A focus on the positive builds our ability to be resilient.
  - Enables us to cope with adversity in an open-minded way.
  - Builds greater connections to others. You think of we instead of me. You look past things that separate you from others.
  - Creates good mental habits. People who experience more positivity in their lives grow more psychologically. They become more optimistic, more resilient, more open, more accepting, and more driven by purpose.

## Inquiry—the power of the question

- Conversations designed to focus on organizational health, strength, and wisdom create a move from confusion and despair to dialogue and co-creation, from problem to positive change.
- What is the most powerful focus possible for organizational conversations?
- What kind of conversations are important to encourage?
- Where will we place our attention?

## Reflection—the power of the pause

- Taking time out from our conversations, dialogues and brainstorming lets us perceive the edges of our topics, what is trying to be heard, what some of the best ideas are.
- Reflection can take the form of prayer, meditation, simple silence, taking a walk, listening to music, anything that allows the mind to quiet and integrate.
- Reflecting together in a group on how we are working together and what is emerging can help us see progress and perceive innovative ideas.
- Try it on something important.



## Practicing AI Everyday

Here are some quick reminders and practices to try. They may help you exercise your appreciative muscles and give you some good ideas. Try them with a team.

*What is the most powerful focus we can take in our conversations?*

PRACTICE A-I-R: From a focus on problems, we can first find the positive opposite, then expand the frame to create a topic large enough to really explore what we want more of and how to get it, together.

Try this:

- 1] Think of a problem or situation you are dealing with.
- 2] Ask yourselves: "What is the positive opposite?"
- 3] Then ask yourselves: "What would make this positive opposite a real opportunity? What do we really want to encourage and grow?"

Here's an example:

Problem: We live in an era of deep community conflict and separation.

Positive Opposite: Community alignment and unity

Generative Opportunity: Vibrant communities finding our way forward together

*How can you begin to create very powerful, strength-based questions?*

PRACTICE A-I-R: INQUIRING INTO STRENGTHS AND THE BEST OF WHAT IS

- Experience and strength: Ask everyone involved in a project what you and they already know about a topic or focus. Focus on your strengths, when there might have been successes, what your experience has been, what you value.

DO YOUR QUESTIONS OPEN, INCLUDE, AND STRETCH?



*What's your Positivity Ratio today?*

PRACTICE A-I-R: POSITIVITY RATIOS

The more positive our thoughts, emotions, and language, the more healthy individuals and organizations become.

Remember the Positivity Ratio of positive to negative talk and emotions from the research of Dr. Barbara Fredrickson and her colleagues at the University of North Carolina:

3 to 1: the ratio that leads to flourishing

More than 11 to 1: too much of a good thing--out of balance

Take the 2-minute Positivity Self-test and see what your ratio is today!

<http://www.positivityratio.com/single.php>

You can take the self-test as often as you would like and see what patterns it shows you.

*[from Fredrickson, BL, POSITIVITY, 2009].*

*How can we remember to focus on and affirm the best of those around us?*

PRACTICE A-I-R: AFFIRMING OUR STRENGTHS

Organizations, communities and individuals do not need to be fixed but **AFFIRMED**.

Reflect on:

--What are the strengths and good intentions of your colleagues that you want to focus on?

--How are you bringing out the best of your colleagues, constituents, and clients?



What can you do to quickly surface alignment in a group on a particular topic? Try this.

PRACTICE A-I-R: WHAT FUTURE ARE WE INVITING? POSITIVE IMAGE=POSITIVE ACTION

Once you know what your strengths and knowledge are on a topic, you might ask these questions to help easily gain alignment on a direction into the future.

- Trends and Opportunities: What are the most exciting trends and opportunities in our field that could positively impact the outcomes of this group's collaboration?
- Wishes: What three wishes do you have for heightening the success of this project?
- Miracle question: It's 2012 and xxx is flourishing....What did it take?

Take a moment to reflect on your focus:

PRACTICE A-I-R: WE CAN CHANGE OUR BRAINS BY WHAT WE THINK ABOUT.

- What you study, grows.
- What you focus on expands.
- What you pay attention to is what you fall in love with, whether that focus is positive or negative.

Take a moment to reflect on your frames:

*How are you focusing and framing your work this week?*

*What do you want to pay attention to?*

*What do you find yourself thinking about?*



*How can you take a little time to reflect?*

PRACTICE A-I-R: REFLECTING ALONE AND TOGETHER

- Reflection can take the form of prayer, meditation, simple silence, taking a walk, listening to music, anything that allows the mind to quiet and integrate.

- Taking time out from our conversations, dialogues and brainstorming lets us perceive the edges of our topics, what is trying to be heard, what some of the best ideas are.

--How are you taking care of yourself everyday in the midst of your work?

--How are you taking care of your work itself, stepping back to see what new ideas come to you?

--How are you taking care of your dialogues and teams, taking time to step back and consider what is emerging in your work together? Are you taking the time to get on the same wavelength or to hear one another's thoughts in depth?

*How's your state of mind?*

PRACTICE A-I-R: WHY WORK ON HAPPINESS: THE BROADEN AND BUILD THEORY

According to Dr. Barbara Fredrickson, over time, positive emotions:

- **Broaden Attention and Thinking**

We access greater capacities and strengths. We open more to others and collaborate better.

- **Undo Lingering Negative Emotional Holds**

Positive emotions serve as an "undo" button—they help us let go of negative past experience.

- **Fuel Resilient Coping, Like Immune System**

There is a long-term accumulation effect for the benefits of positivity.

As we accumulate hope and joy in relationships, we can handle more stress later.

Fredrickson, BL, What Good are Positive Emotions? AMERICAN SCIENTIST, Vol. 91

This week, tune into your state of mind. How often are you experiencing interest, curiosity, joy, gratitude, hope, serenity, amusement, inspiration?



# HOW LEADERS CAN APPLY THE AI APPROACH TODAY

*WHAT COMPETENCIES CAN YOU BUILD IN YOURSELF AND OTHERS?*

1. Observe your organization at work. Notice what people talk about and focus on. How much of the conversation is forward-looking and strength-based and how much is deficit-based?
2. Shift your own perspective to focus on organizational and community strengths and opportunities. Pay attention to strengths.
3. Consciously focus on and talk about what's good, what you want more of, and on the direction you want to go in.
4. Review organizational successes. Find out what strengths caused those successes.
5. Tap the wisdom of the whole. Include the whole system in choosing direction and creating solutions. Share and include broadly.
6. Ask for ideas, stories and each person's experience around solutions for your current challenges. Find the knowledge and wisdom already in the system.
7. Ask powerful, open, solution-focused questions that help others find answers and have insights. Questions are your best tool.
8. Ask what people want more of and recommend rather than just settling for a description of the problems.
9. Reinforce good ideas with praise and affirmation. Appreciate.
10. Invite the good. Create a work environment where good ideas can flourish.

ADD YOUR LEARNINGS TO THIS LIST!



# Resources

...People come to this place to study it, and in doing so, they invariably fall in love with it...

Then this love for the landscape that is our collective unconscious, this loverknower's apprehension of the land's divine resonance, blossoms outward and northward to encompass the rest of the planet. Love for the planet radiating from the bottom up, like revolution in the soul...

The same road goes both up and down. Knowledge is not wisdom. Wholeness arises from distinct particulars. All things come in seasons. Character is fate...

First you fall in love. Then anything could happen.

Kim Stanley Robinson *Antarctica*



## Online Resources

appreciativeinquiry.case.edu \*\*\*

Ai Commons—huge repository of great resources: articles, interview guides, research, calendar of events, sponsored by Case Western Reserve University

appreciative-inquiry.org

home page for the Philanthropic Quest, an application of Ai to fund raising and philanthropy

aradford.co.uk/AInewsletter.htm

aipractitioner.com

home of the Ai Practitioner journal, published by Anne Radford in London

imaginechicago.org

citywide Ai conducted in part by the city's school children; great references to community initiatives using Ai

sharesunstudio.com

sallie lee's web page with lots of resources and constantly updated applications to collaboration and innovation.

taosinstitute.net

home page of the Taos Institute, which supports training and research on Ai and social constructionism, solution-focused brief therapy

thinbook.com

publisher of Ai books; articles for downloading at the site

worldbenefit.case.edu

home page of the Business as an Agent of World Benefit initiative

You can subscribe to the Ai listserve by going to the following web page:

<http://mailman.business.utah.edu:8080/mailman/listinfo/ailist>



# Positive Psychology and the Strength-based Movement

Drs. Martin Seligman, Barbara Fredrickson, and Jonathan Haidt are pioneers in the emergence of the positive psychology arena. Below see some links to their work and a few other gems.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ds\\_9Df6dK7c--U](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ds_9Df6dK7c--U) Tube Video with Dr. Barbara Fredrickson, Kenan Distinguished Professor of Psychology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, discusses her new book, "Positivity" that focuses on what positivity is and why it is important to pay attention to.

[http://www.unc.edu/peplab/barb\\_fredrickson\\_page.html](http://www.unc.edu/peplab/barb_fredrickson_page.html)

Dr. Barbara Fredrickson's Positive Emotions and Psychophysiology Laboratory at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The lab exists to answer a single question: 'What good is it to feel good?' Our purpose is to understand and to share the full significance of positive emotions.

<http://www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu/>

The Positive Psychology Center promotes research, training, education, and the dissemination of Positive Psychology. This field is founded on the belief that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within themselves, and to enhance their experiences of love, work, and play.

<http://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu>

from Dr. Martin Seligman and the University of Pennsylvania Positive Psychology Center

<http://www.viasurvey.org/>

Location of the Values in Action Strengths survey

<http://people.virginia.edu/~jdh6n/>

Homepage for Dr. Jonathan Haidt, University of Virginia, who does research on human flourishing, the concepts of [positive psychology](#) (the scientific study of human flourishing) and positive emotions such as [moral elevation](#), admiration, and awe. His research these days focuses on the [moral foundations](#) of politics, and on ways to foster more [civil forms of politics](#). Wrote the 'Happiness Hypothesis'.



<http://munnecke.com/blog/?tag=positive-psychology>

VIDEO CLIP: Jonathan Haidt in Conversation with Tom Munnecke [Eclectica] about science of happiness, uplift, theory of goodness, and the possibility of creating cascades of goodness. [Other great clips there as well]

<http://www.bus.umich.edu/Positive/>

The Center for Positive Organizational Scholarship at the University of Michigan is committed to advancing research in the emerging field of Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS).

<https://secure.ippanetwork.org/>

International Positive Psychology Association Membership Network with excellent newsletter, web presentations and calls, and conferences and events.

<http://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/>

Treat yourself to a daily dose of the Good news Network

<http://cuttingedgelaw.com/>

Shared Sun Studio colleague Kim Wright's compendium of stories, cases, and videos on collaborative law.



## Books and Articles

a selection of the best books and articles on ai and social constructionism

Anderson, Harlene, David Cooperrider, Kenneth Gergen, Mary Gergen, Sheila McNamee, and Diana Whitney, *The Appreciative Organization*. Taos Institute, 2001.

Barrett, Frank J. and Ronald E. Fry. *Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Approach to Building Cooperative Capacity*, Chagrin Falls: Taos Institute Publication, 2005.

Cooperrider, David L. and Diana Whitney. *Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Revolution in Change*, San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, Inc. 2005.

Cooperrider, DL, J. Stavros, and Diana Whitney, *Appreciative Inquiry: The Handbook (w/CD)*. Lakeshore Publishers, 2001.

Cooperrider, DL, P. F. Sorensen, Jr. , D. Whitney , T. F. Yaeger [editors], *Appreciative Inquiry: Rethinking Human Organization toward a Positive Theory of Change*. Stipes Publishing, 2000.

Cooperrider, D., & Srivastara, S. *Appreciative management and leadership: The power of positive thought and action in organizations*. Euclid, OH: Williams Custom Publishing, 1999.

Gergen, K., *An Invitation to Social Construction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1999.

Gergen is the major writer in the US about the concepts of "social constructionism" especially as applied to psychology and, by extension, to management and organizational development theory and practice. This is the theoretical basis for Appreciative Inquiry.

Gergen, Kenneth, *Realities and Relationships*. Harvard University Press, 1995. [on social constructionism]

Gergen, K.J. (1994b). *Toward Transformation in Social Knowledge (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: sage.



- Gergen, K.J. (1991). *The Saturated Self: Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Life*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gergen, Kenneth J. and Mary Gergen. *Social Construction: Entering the Dialogue*, Chagrin Falls: A Taos Institute Publication, 2004.
- Hammond, Sue and Cathy Royal, *Lessons from the Field: Applying Appreciative Inquiry*. Thin Book Publishing, 2001.
- Hammond, Sue, *The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry*. Thin Book Publishing, 1996.
- Kelm, J. *Appreciative Living: The Principles of Appreciative Inquiry in Personal Life*. Venet Press, 2005.
- Ludema, James D., Diana Whitney, Bernard J. Mohr, and Thomas J. Griffin, *The Appreciative Inquiry Summit: A Practitioner's Guide for Leading Large-Group Change*. Berrett-Koehler, 2003.
- Mohr, BJ and Jane Watkins, *The Essentials of Appreciative Inquiry: A Roadmap for Creating Positive Futures*. Pegasus Communications, 2002.
- Mohr, B.J., Smith, E., & Watkins, J.M. *Appreciative Inquiry and Learning Assessment: An Embedded Evaluation Process in a Transnational Pharmaceutical Company*. *OD Practitioner*, 32(1), 36-52, 2000.
- Nelson, N.C., Calaba, J.L. *The Power of Appreciation: The Key to Vibrant Life*, Hillsboro, OR: Beyond Words Publishing, 2003.
- Sampson, C., Abu-Nimer, M., Leibler, C, et.al. *Positive Approaches to Peace Building: A Resource for Innovators*, Washington, D.C., Pact Publications, 2003.
- Schiller, Marjorie, Bea Mah Holland and Deanna Riley [eds]. *Appreciative Leaders: In the Eye of the Beholder*, Taos Institute, 2001.
- Srivastva, S. and D.L. Cooperrider [eds.], *Organizational Wisdom and Executive Courage*. New Lexington Press, 1998.
- Stavros, Jacqueline M. and Cheri B. Torres. *Dynamic Relationships: Unleashing the Power of Appreciative Inquiry in Daily Living*, Chagrin Falls: A Taos Institute Publication.



Thatchenkery, Tojo. Appreciative Sharing of Knowledge: Leveraging Knowledge Management for Strategic Change, Chagrin Falls: A Taos Institute Publication.

Thatchenkerry, Tojo and Carol Metzker. *Appreciative Intelligence: Seeing the Mighty Oak in the Acorn*, Berrett-Koehler, 2006.

Torres, C.B., Weisenberger, C.R., From Conflict to Collaboration, pre-published draft, [www.mobileteamchallenge.com](http://www.mobileteamchallenge.com)

Torres, Cheri B., *The Appreciative Facilitator: A Handbook for Facilitators and Teachers*, Mobile Team Challenge, 2001.

Watkins, Jane and Bernard Mohr, *Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination*. Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer, 2001.

Whitney, D., Trosten-Bloom, A., Cherney, J., et.al. *Appreciative Team Building: Positive Questions to Bring Out the Best of Your Team*, New York, i-Universe, Inc., 2004.

Whitney, D., Cooperrider, D., Trosten-Bloom, A., et.al. *Encyclopedia of Positive Questions: Using Appreciative Inquiry to Bring out the Best in Your Organization*, Euclid, OH, Lakeshore Communications, 2002.

Whitney, Diana and Amanda Trosten-Bloom, *The Power of Appreciative Inquiry: A Practical Guide to Positive Change*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2003.

## ai classic articles

*available on the Ai Commons*

Barrett, F. J., Cooperrider, D. L. (2001). Generative Metaphor Intervention: A New Approach for Working with Systems Divided by Conflict and Caught in Defensive Perception. *Appreciative Inquiry: An Emerging Direction for Organization Development* (First Edition ed.).

Bushe, G. (1999). Five theories of change embedded in appreciative inquiry. In *Appreciative Inquiry: Rethinking human organization toward a positive theory of change*.



- Bushe, G. R. (1998). Appreciative inquiry with teams. *Organization Development Journal* Vol. 16. 41-50
- Bushe, G. R. (1995). Advances in appreciative inquiry as an organization development intervention. *Organization Development Journal* Vol. 13. 14-22
- Cooperrider, D., Srivastva, S. (2000). Appreciative Inquiry in Organizational Life. *Appreciative Inquiry: Rethinking Human Organization Toward a Positive Theory of Change*.
- Cooperrider, D. L. (2000). Positive Image, Positive Action: The Affirmative Basis of Organizing. *Appreciative Inquiry: Rethinking Human Organization Toward a Positive Theory of Change*. 29 - 53
- Cooperrider, D. L. (1996). Resources for getting appreciative inquiry started: An example OD proposal. *Organization Development Practitioner* Vol. 28. 23-33
- Cooperrider, D. L. (1996). The Child as Agent of Inquiry. *Organizational Development Practitioner* Vol. 28. 5-11
- Ludema, J. (2001). From Deficit Discourse to Vocabularies of Hope: The Power of Appreciation. *Appreciative Inquiry: An Emerging Direction for Organization Development* (First ed.).
- Watkins, J. M., Cooperrider, D. L. (2000). Appreciative inquiry: A transformative paradigm. *Journal of the Organization Development Network* Vol. 32. 6-12

## positive psychology resources

- Aspinwall, Lisa and Ursula Staudinger. *A Psychology of Human Strengths: Fundamental Questions and Future Directions for a Positive Psychology*
- Buckingham, Marcus and Donald O. Clifton. *Now Discover Your Strengths*, New York: The Free Press, 2001.
- Cameron, K.S., Dutton, J.E., Quinn, R.E. *Positive Organizational Scholarship*, San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2003.



Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, New York: Harper & Row, 1991.

Fox, J. *Your Child's Strengths*. Penguin, 2008.

Frankl, Viktor. *Man's Search for Meaning*, New York: Washington Square press, 1959.

Fredrickson, B.L. *Cultivating Positive Emotions to Optimize Health and Well-Being*, Prevention and Treatment, (3), 2000.

Fredrickson, Barbara L. *Positivity*. Crown, 2009.

Fredrickson, B.L. and M.F. Losada. *Positive Affect and the Complex Dynamics of Human Flourishing*, *American Psychologist*, 60[7], 2005.

Fredrickson, B.L. and C.E. Waugh. *Nice to Know You: Positive Emotions, Self-Other Overlap, and Complex Understanding in the Formation of a New Relationship*, *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 1[2], 2006.

Goleman, D. *Destructive Emotions: How Can We Overcome Them?* New York: Bantam Books, 2003.

Haidt, Jonathan. *The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom*, Basic Books, 2006.

Linley, P. Alex and Stephen Joseph. *Positive Psychology in Practice*, Wiley, 2004.

Maslow, Abraham. *Toward a Psychology of Being*, 1968. Wiley, 1998.

Peterson, Christopher and MEP Seligman. *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification*, Oxford University Press, 2004.

Reivich, Karen and Andrew Shatte. *The Resilience Factor*, Broadway, 2003.

Seligman, M.E.P. *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment*, New York: Free Press, 2002.

Seligman, M.E.P. *Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life*, New York, Free Press, 1998.



Snyder, C.R. and Shane Lopez [editors]. *Handbook of Positive Psychology*, Oxford University Press, 2001.

## collaboration, community, and collective intelligence

Argyris, Chris. *Overcoming Organizational Defenses*, Prentice Hall, 1990.

Bache, Christopher M. *The Living Classroom: Teaching and Collective Consciousness*, State University of New York Press, 2008.

Block, Peter. *Community: The Structure of Belonging*, San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2008.

Block, Peter. *The Answer to How is Yes*, San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2002.

Bohm, David. *On Dialogue*, Routledge Classics, 2006.

Briskin, A., S. Erickson, J. Lederman, J. Ott, D. Potter, and C. Strutt. *Centered on the Edge: Mapping a Field of Collective Intelligence and Spiritual Wisdom*. COTE. Kalamazoo, MI: The John E. Fetzer institute, 2001.

Gardner, Howard. *Five Minds for the Future*, Harvard Business School Press, 2007.

Glaser, J.E. *Creating WE: Change I-Thinking to WE-Thinking Build a Healthy, Thriving Organization*, Avon: Platinum Press, 2005.

Huston, Tracy. *Inside Out: Stories and Methods for Generating Collective Will to Create the Future We Want*, SoL 2007.

Isaacs, William. *Dialogue: The Art of Thinking Together*, Currency, 1999.

Kahane, A. *Solving Tough Problems: An Open Way of Talking, Listening, and Creating New Realities*, San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2004.

McNamee, S., Gergen, K.J. *Relational Responsibility: Resources for Sustainable Dialogue*, London: Sage Publications, 1999.



Pink, Daniel. *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future*, Riverhead Books, 2006.

Rock, David and Jeffrey Schwartz. *The Neuroscience of Leadership*, in *Strategy+ Business*, Issue 43,

Sawyer, Keith. *Group Genius: The Creative Power of Collaboration*, BasicBooks, 2007.

Scharmer, C. Otto. *Theory U: Leading from the Future As It Emerges*, Cambridge, MA: SOL, 2007.

Senge, P., Scharmer, C.O., Jaworski, J. et al. *Presence: Human Purpose and the Field of the Future*, Cambridge, MA: Society for Organizational Learning, 2004.

Wilber, Ken. *The Integral Vision*, Shambala, 2007.



# Workbook Acknowledgements

Dr. David Cooperrider, the original co-conceptualizer (with Suresh Srivastva) of Appreciative Inquiry, with several of his colleagues and students at Case Western Reserve University, created the basic theory materials in this Workbook. Much of that work was done through the pilot OEP (Organizational Excellence Program) and its successor, the GEM Initiative (Global Excellence in Management), an ongoing program based at Case that works with global social change organizations. Ada Jo Mann and Claudia Liebler, Co-Directors of GEM, have not only created and revised training sessions, lecture presentations and other materials used in this Workbook, they have also incorporated ideas and materials from the several hundred people who have participated in GEM programs.

Also included in the Workbook are materials developed by Diana Whitney, Amanda Trosten-Bloom, Cathy Royal, Barbara Sloan, Frank Barrett, Ron Fry, Bernard Mohr and Jane Watkins, who, along with Cooperrider, are part of a group of senior Ai consultants who pioneered workshops for training others in Ai. As such, they have been creators of many models, theory sessions and training designs that have impacted the way this Workbook has been put together.

The Workbook draws heavily on the book *Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination*, written by Jane Magruder Watkins and Bernard Mohr, (2001, Jossey-Bass Publishing) and on previous Manuals developed by Sallie Lee and Cheri Torres, the GEM Initiative, and the Taos and NTL workshops on Ai. Jen Hetzel Silbert, Joan Chadbourne, and other principals of Innovation Partners International [IPI] have added new ideas about the CNT Model and other key workshop ideas. As the conceptualization of Ai expands based on multiple uses in human systems, new theory and approaches are emerging and are documented in the ever-increasing number of books and articles being written by Ai practitioners, many of which are referenced in the Resource section.

From its constructionist roots, Ai puts high value on inclusion and cooperation. We have noted whatever existing record we have of the origins of the material, but because no accurate record exists of precisely who created much that is included here, we acknowledge the impossibility of naming all of the inspired and gifted people, both practitioners and participants, who have helped to create or improve this material.

Many thanks to all contributing to the ongoing co-creation of Appreciative Inquiry.



## Appreciative Inquiry as a Generator of Our Best

Often, participants in AI workshops say that they don't think their organizations or clients are ready for a large, whole system Appreciative initiative. They are excited about the shift in their own perspective with Appreciative Inquiry and see new possibilities. However, they are unsure how to start inviting others to adopt an appreciative stance.

To help with that occasional feeling of being overwhelmed by possibilities, we have begun to speak of AI as a generator—a generator of our best. The more we use it, the more power and strength is generated: the power of discovered and valued strengths, the power of aligned vision and collaboration in their systems, the power of continuous innovation.

Power builds on power, so it's okay to start in small ways, without even talking about Appreciative Inquiry and its principles. Even without explanation, using the principles of AI turns on the generator and releases energy.

You may just run the generator on **LOW** everyday, asking appreciative, powerful questions in meetings, or making sure you are affirming in your feedback to others. You can help your co-workers or clients reframe a challenge into an opportunity, expressing the challenge as what they want more of, instead of what they want to eliminate. These applications will make a difference.

You may take the opportunity to introduce an appreciative way of organizing a retreat or strategic visioning and planning process. Turning the generator up to **MEDIUM**, you might introduce the concepts of AI to a core team. You might work with them to plan a summit in a way that gives them a taste of how easily great alignment and innovation can emerge from applying the simple, yet profound AI principles to something of importance to an organization. Many of us have had the experience of bringing AI into an organization as a planning approach and having the people want more. They are ready to bring AI more fully into their culture and way of working.



That request for more experiences of high energy and engaged capacity allows us to turn up the generator to HIGH, co-designing ways to allow the principles and practices of AI to energize the vision, values, structures, processes, and relationships in an organization or community. AI HIGH generation fuels an organizational state of high engagement, lasting capacity, continuous innovation, and valued collaboration. When we are in that state, we recognize it as being an expression of our best. Our generator is ON.

---

