

Appreciative Inquiry

Introduction

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is an approach rooted in the research and experience showing that positive approaches with people have more stable effects, encourage growth and development and enable people to function well in times of change.

In this mode, organizations create and move toward their vision of a desired future in harmony with a world view that sees the interconnection of all parts of a system; that accepts the complexity and subjectivity of the world; that knows planning to be a continuous and iterative process; that embraces the concept of many truths and multiple ways to reach a goal; that understands the relational nature of the world; that believes information to be a primal creative force; and that knows language to be the creator of “reality”. (Watkins and Mohr,¹ 2001, p. 11)

Assumptions of Appreciative Inquiry:

- In every society, organization or group something works.
- The focus becomes our reality. People and groups move towards what they want.
- Negative approaches reduce energy, morale, hope and positive action
- People have more confidence and comfort to journey to the future (the unknown) when they carry forward parts of the past (the known) that are positive.
- If we carry parts of the past forward, those should be the best about the past.
- It is important to be inclusive and value differences.
- The language we use influences our thinking and ultimately our actions

Principles of AI

- *Appreciate*: the best of what has been done, exists now, and desired in the future.
- *Apply*: knowledge of what works and what’s possible.
- *Provoke*: imagination regarding ways to get more of what works and is wanted.
- *Collaborate*: involve others in building capacity, generating ideas and resources.

4D model of AI:

Discover Engage stakeholders, explore the best experiences

- *When has it really worked, with whom, and why?*
- *What are we proud of?... Tell the stories*

Dream Vision of becoming better and guiding principles

- *What is it that we dream of becoming?*
- *What values and principles will take us there?*

Design Organizational implications, key strategies

- *What will be done, by and with whom, and how, to make it happen?*
- *Build the framework for Deliver in terms of desired outcomes and measures.*

¹ Watkins and Mohr, 2001

Working with Appreciative Inquiry

Deliver

Do it! Make the changes; adjust to fit experience and the Dream/Design

- *What will it look like when it's done, what are the key measures of effectiveness?*
 - *After: How do we capture, learn from and build on the improvements?*
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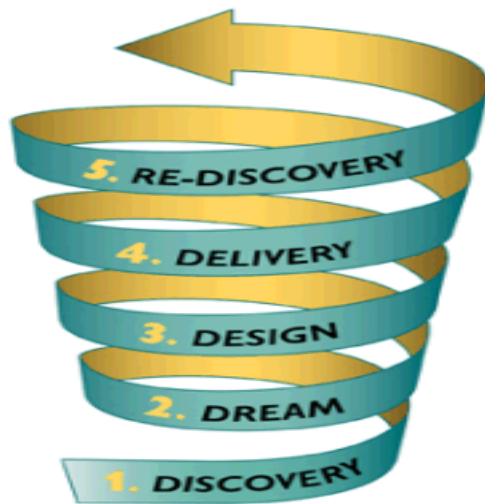


Figure retrieved from the Appreciative Inquiry Commons:
<http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/practice/toolsModelsPPTs.cfm>

Working with Appreciative Inquiry

Resources

Cooperrider, D. L., Sorensen, P. F., Whitney, D., and Yaeger, T. F. 2000. *Appreciative Inquiry: Rethinking Human Organization Toward a Positive Theory of Change*. Champaign, IL: Stipes

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<http://www.iisd.org/pdf/appreciativeinquiry.pdf>

Ford, N., and Ashford, G. "Appreciative Inquiry." *eViews*, no. 1. Ottawa, Ontario: Participatory Development Forum, February 2000. <http://www.pdfforum.org/evIEWS1.html>

Fry, R.; Barrett, F.; Seiling, J.; Whitney, D., eds. *Appreciative Inquiry and Organizational Transformation: Reports from the Field*. Westport, CT: Quorum Books, 2002.

Hall, J., and Hammond, S. "What Is Appreciative Inquiry?" *Inner Edge Newsletter*, 1998. Thin Book Publishing Co.
<http://lib1.store.vip.sc5.yahoo.com/lib/thinbook/whatisai.pdf>

Watkins, J. M., and Mohr, B. J. 2001. *Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer,

Websites

AI eResource Center: <http://www.aradford.co.uk/pagefiles/newsletter.htm>
Links to AI resources; current and back issues of the AI E-Newsletter, available by subscription.

Appreciative Inquiry and Community Development: <http://iisd.ca/ai/default.htm>. Section of the International Institute for Sustainable Development's website describes AI projects among nongovernmental organizations in Southern India and First Nations communities in Northern Canada.

Appreciative Inquiry Commons: <http://appreciativeinquiry.cwru.edu/>. Comprehensive worldwide portal at Case Western Reserve University devoted to the sharing of academic resources and practical tools on Appreciative Inquiry; includes research, case studies, listserv, network, resources and websites, events and training, AI tools.