

# Your Extraordinary Life

## Appreciative Inquiry

The Power of Game-Changing Questions



## Course Workbook

This workbook supports understanding of content within this program

**Presented by:**



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# What is Appreciative Inquiry?

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY is an innovative approach to problem solving and creating more of what you want

*"We must become the change we wish to see in the world."*

Gandhi

## Understanding Appreciative Inquiry

**Appreciative:** A favorable assessment, admiration, approval or gratitude

**Inquiry:** A request for information, asking questions

*Appreciative Inquiry* is asking questions that are *appreciative* in nature in order to cause *intentional outcomes*.



*Appreciative Inquiry* is a collaborative, encouraging process that meets the core need of all people for positive, intense connection, while providing a framework for gathering and sharing information with two or more members within any group. It allows for a sharing of the best information between people. The basic process of *Appreciative Inquiry* is the use of *fateful* questions, resulting in interviews, conversations and stories that create positive future outcomes. *Appreciative Inquiry* is consistent with the latest research in the new sciences, including quantum physics, chaos theory, complexity theory, simultaneity, and constructivism.

**Key Idea:** *Appreciative Inquiry* helps people access positive memories that are often otherwise ignored.

*"Appreciative Inquiry is a holistic model based on the belief that human systems are made and imagined by those who live and work within them. APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY leads systems and individuals to the life- giving and creative images in their most positive core."*

Magruder and Mohr, *Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination*

## Characteristics of Appreciative Inquiry

1. Philosophy for creating evolutionary change
2. Flexible process for engaging people using positive thoughts and feelings
3. Information gathering tool that allows people to share the very best information
4. Questioning strategy that employs the use of fateful questions, resulting in interviews, conversations and stories that create positive future outcomes

## Positive Files



*"There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle."*

Albert Einstein

### Assumptions About Appreciative Inquiry

1. In every setting, something works.
2. Looking for what works is more motivating and effective than looking for what does not work.
3. What we focus on becomes our reality.
4. Conversation and dialogue create images and images create reality.
5. The act of asking questions begins the change process.
6. Groups move toward what they ask about or focus on.
7. We have more confidence and comfort to journey to the future when we bring forward the past.
8. If we bring parts of the past forward, they should be what is best.
9. By the words we use to anticipate and describe reality, we create reality.



### Examples of Appreciative Inquiry

1. **Greeting:** "How are you?" VS "What's the best thing that has happened to you today?"
2. **Building teamwork:** "Imagine a relationship in which you wish had better teamwork. Tell me the story of a time when you had a similar situation in the past and handled it well? What is working in this relationship? Tell me what this relationship would look, feel and sound like at its best?"
3. **Leader:** "Turn to someone in the group and share one thing you did this weekend that you're proud of."
4. **During a meeting:** "What outcome would you feel happiest with? If it happened, how would you and the others be feeling? What would you be doing?"

# Contrasting Appreciative Inquiry with Traditional Problem-Solving



Traditional group problem-solving focuses on highlighting “deficits in the belief that the group can be returned to a healthy state. Appreciative Inquiry suggests that by focusing on the deficit, we simply create more images of deficit and potentially overwhelm the system with images of what is wrong.”

**Appreciative Inquiry**, as a method of group problem-solving, takes on a different perspective. A problem is defined as having “an image of how a situation ought to be. Appreciative Inquiry suggests that, by focusing on an image of health and wholeness, the group’s energy moves to make that image real.”

*(Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination, Magruder and Mohr)*

Traditional Problem Solving	Appreciative Inquiry
<b>Identify problems.</b> “He never helps with chores”	<b>Appreciate what works.</b> “Tell me the story of when were you most in love? What is working?”
<b>Conduct root cause analysis.</b> “I think it’s that his mom did everything for him and spoiled him”	<b>What supports change?</b> “What successes/strengths can help now? What new ideas do you have? What visions?”
<b>Brainstorm solutions and/or actions.</b> “How about making a shared schedule of chores and sticking to it?”	<b>Determine what could be.</b> “What would your marriage look like if it were the most supportive possible?”
<b>Develop action plans.</b> “Write down the plan and review it weekly?”	<b>Create what you want.</b> “We will focus on the loving marriage we want.”
<b>Metaphor: This is a problem to be fixed.</b> “This is a problem and I have to fix it.”	<b>Metaphor: This is a mystery, an opportunity.</b> “This is a great opportunity to re-evaluate what we want and what makes us both the happiest.”

**Digging Through Dirt**

**Panning for Gold**

**Key Idea:** What we focus on becomes our reality. We often focus on what’s wrong or what’s missing and then tend to see everything through that filter.

## Consequences of Deficit-Based Approaches

1. Defensiveness and Polarization
2. Separation (not my problem)
3. Slow: Puts attention on yesterday's negative causes
4. Produces "vocabularies of human deficit"



*"Significant problems cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were when we created them."*

Albert Einstein

## Bowling Team Example



There were two bowling teams, and they were both videotaped. The first team's video was edited so that it only showed their bad, weak, bowling moves. The other team's video was edited so that it only showed their strong, correct, bowling moves. Both teams watched the videos for the purpose of improving their games.

Which bowling team was able to improve its bowling game: the team that focused on its mistakes or the team that focused on its successes?

The team that watched its mistakes collectively improved by 30% (not bad huh?!) The team that watched its strengths collectively improved by 100% (doubled) and probably enjoyed its experience more.

**Key Idea:** Both ways produced results, but the appreciative way is easier, more graceful and efficient and works better. People don't go into **protection** using *Appreciative Inquiry*.

## List Your Own

Offer examples of instances in which you focus on *weaknesses*. Then offer some in which you focus on *greatest possibilities*. Describe how you feel and results from each.

From **Weakness/Mistakes**

From **Greatest Possibilities**

## APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY Research

**Key Idea:** We practice mind over matter, through accessing positive thoughts.

Consider the following and write down any thoughts you have on each:

1. **Perspective:** Are you a weeder or a feeder?
2. **Manifesting:** Are you open to miracles?
3. **Language:** To kids when leaving them with a babysitter - *"Have a good time. I know you'll help if she needs anything!"* **VS** *"Be Good! Don't give the babysitter a hardtime!"*
4. **Medicine:** The Placebo effect
5. **Education:** Rosenthal studies – Tagging high achieving students as *Laggards* vs *Spurters* and setting them back years
6. **Psychology:** Cognitive inner dialogue - How we speak to ourselves in such a way that we create new outcomes?
7. **Visualization:** Do you use visualization to bring about what you want?





*Just when the caterpillar thought the world was over, it became a butterfly*  
~ Proverb

### Be Your Most Imaginal Self!

Consider paraphrased excerpts from *Butterfly*, by Norie Huddle and *Waking the Global Heart*, by Anodea Judith.

*"Caterpillars are consumers that eat non-stop. They become heavy; outgrowing their skin until they become too bloated to move. Attaching to a branch, they form a chrysalis and within that chrysalis, a miracle occurs. Tiny cells that biologists call "imaginal cells" begin to appear. These cells are wholly different from caterpillar cells, carrying different information, and vibrating to a different frequency – the frequency of the emerging **butterfly**.*

*At first, the caterpillar's immune system perceives these new cells as enemies and attacks them, (much as new ideas in science, medicine, politics, and social behavior are viciously denounced by the powers now considered mainstream). But the imaginal cells are not deterred. They continue to appear, in even greater numbers, recognizing each other, bonding together, until the new cells are numerous enough to organize into clumps. When enough cells have formed to make structures along the new lines, the caterpillar's immune system is overwhelmed. The caterpillar body then becomes a nutritious **soup** for the growth of the butterfly*

*Eventually, the entire string of imaginal cells suddenly realizes that all together it is something different from the caterpillar. Something new! Something wonderful! And then the butterfly emerges - vibrant, beautiful, and free!*

How amazing that something can completely reorganize from one state into another, exhibiting totally different gifts, assets, and strengths. Something equally profound is happening with Appreciative Inquiry, as proactive, conscious, intentional thinking and behaving replace limiting beliefs and scarcity thinking.

Though we are awe struck by the incredible beauty of a butterfly, we often forget that the caterpillar had to first disintegrate into a *messy, disorganized soup*! What this means for those using appreciative inquiry is that they must stay vigilant in speaking, focusing on and feeling what is most positive and allow habits (e.g., gossip, blaming, resenting) to disintegrate and transform into something entirely new. You allow positive thoughts to predominate when problem-solving to create the best and most beautiful outcomes possible.

1. What concepts are relevant in the transformation of a person, family, or any group and a caterpillar into a butterfly?
2. Are YOU like an *imaginal* cell in a caterpillar, within your various role? Name 1-2 ways you are part of a change process?
3. What is helpful about knowing there's a period when it looks what's known and familiar, is dying, dead and messy?
4. Name at least one messy thing that you personally dismantled. What positive result(s) did you bring forward?

# Celebrate What's Right in the World



*Your dreams contain the power to  
transform mediocrity into magnificence!*

Dawn Stankowski

## Key Ideas:

1. Believe it and you'll see it
2. Recognize abundance
3. Look for Possibilities
4. Unleash your energy to fix what is wrong
5. Ride the changes
6. Take yourself to the edge
7. Be the best for the world

## Dewitt Jones' Concepts

**Directions:** Decide whether you agree or disagree with each of the following concepts presented by Dewitt Jones, photographer for National Geographic. **Circle your choice.** In the spaces provided, give a reason for your choice. Use the question asked to stimulate your imagination.

1. What do you think about ***Believe it and you'll see it?*** Do you think you need some idea that what you're striving for that is realistic and attainable?
2. What do you think about ***Recognize abundance?*** Can a presumption of scarcity become a self-fulfilling prophecy?
3. What do you think about ***Look for possibilities?*** Is the opposite of scarcity not necessarily abundance but possibilities?



4. What do you think about ***Unleash your energy to fix what's wrong?*** Does focusing on the positive give us energy to fix what is wrong?
5. What do you think about ***Ride the changes?*** Does change hold the most potential for success? Is it negative? Can you think of a period in your life that was a time of great change? How did this influence you?
6. What do you think about ***Take yourself to the edge?*** Do you think you always need to take yourself to your edge? Are there times when “good enough” really is good enough? How does “going to the edge” apply in your job? What will I gain even if my efforts fall short?
7. What do you think about ***Be the best for your world?*** List 2-3 attributes you have and can use to “be your best for the world” and in your job, your home or your community?

### **Appreciative Inquiry**

1. Creates a critical mass of people drawing on positive images
2. Focuses healthy chaos to generate quick, new, creative, solutions
3. Focuses self-determination and purposefulness (personal power)
4. Work with others, not do to them
5. Leverage the power of language, images and feelings and use them to create.



# Effects of Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative inquiry deeply, positively impacts individuals, teams, and entire groups or organizations. Effects include:

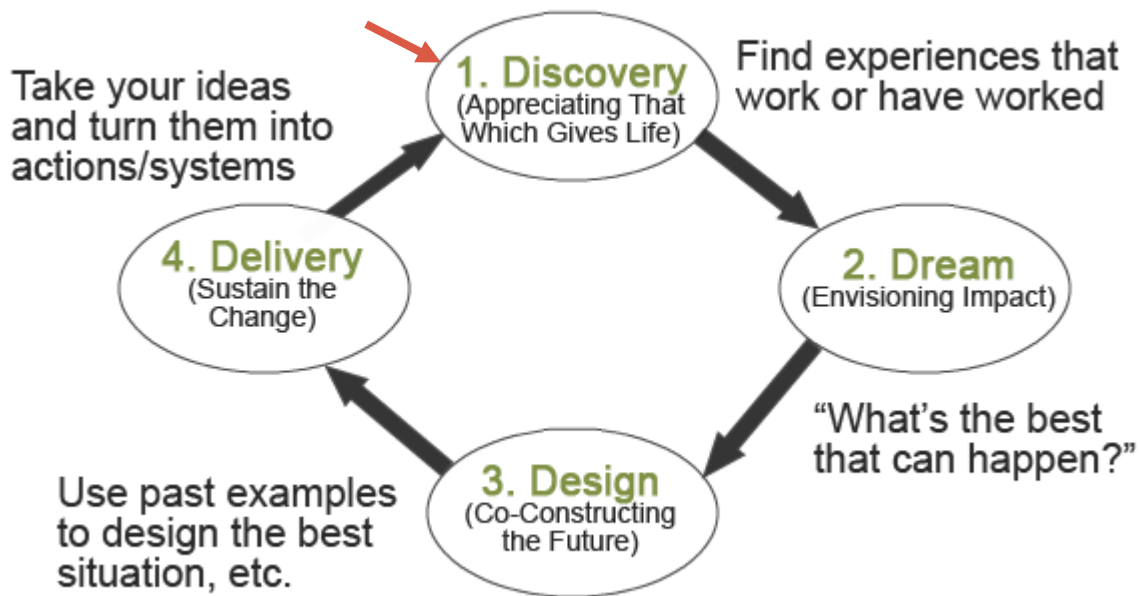
- Creates a critical mass of people drawing on positive images
- Focuses healthy chaos to generate quick, new, creative solutions
- Focuses self-determination and purposefulness (personal power)
- Works *with* others, not *to* them
- Leverages the power of language, images, and feelings and uses those to create the desired outcome



**Directions:** Consider and prepare your answers to the following questions.

1. Creating a critical mass of people who draw upon positive images and elevate enthusiasm IS meaningful. **Can you give one example of re-energizing within a group that you've experienced?**
2. **Consider chaos** (the kind that happens during innovative change when there's no defined method for doing things). **How does Appreciative Inquiry support chaos that's positive rather than negative?**
3. **How does Appreciative Inquiry direct purposefulness that moves people out of victim-thinking and behaving?**
4. Working with others, not doing to them is the opposite of trying to fix, convert, heal, or change people. **Give an example of a situation in which you have disagreed with another person, but maintained working WITH this person in a positive way and refrained from *DOING* anything *TO* them?**
5. **What are some ways you can consciously use language to creates positive images and feelings?**

## The 4 – D Cycle



### Phase 1: DISCOVERY

#### The Appreciative Interview – The Beginning of Discovery

**Key Idea:** The Appreciative Interview is the heart of Appreciative Inquiry and occurs first in the Discovery phase.

1. This is a two-person interview where each person will be both the person being interviewed and the interviewer
2. Each person is interviewed for approximately 45 minutes
3. An interview guide, developed by a team (can be a family or church, etc.), is used as a framework for the interview
4. The interview guide usually contains four generic questions plus other more specific questions designed by a few
5. The interview follows its own pace and direction with interviewers asking follow-up questions to those posed on the interview guide
6. The interviewer should take notes and be prepared to discuss the interview during an interview period.

### Discovery

1. Select a **core team**
2. They create appreciative inquiry **interview questions**
3. The core team **conducts appreciative interviews** with everyone involved
4. The answers to the interviews are **debriefed** to find common **themes**



## Four Generic Questions

**Key Idea:** An Appreciative Inquiry Interview generally consist of four generic questions, similar, but not exactly like, those listed below which can vary slightly in accordance with the needs of the group. Additional interview questions will be added based or specific group needs.

**Directions:** Record your answers to the 4 generic questions below. Use a separate sheet of paper or type your responses if you need more room than the space provided.

1. **Best Experience:** Tell me about one best time that you have had with your group (or family or church, etc.)
2. **Values:** What are the things you value deeply: specifically, the things you value about yourself, your work or activities, your role, and your group? **Note:** Values are ways of being and behaving.
3. **Core Values:** What do you think is purpose of your group? What is it that, if your group did not exist, would make your group totally different than it currently is? Another way of saying this is, "What do you *cause* at your best?"
4. **Three Wishes:** If you had three wishes for your group, what would they be?

## Appreciative Interview Tips

1. **Focus on what's working:** Past, current or future successes
2. **Avoid Analysis and Negativity:** Refocus them if they start going towards the negative
3. **Probe Relentlessly:** Encourage stories, including all details, feelings, dialogue, images (engage the 5 senses)
4. **Listen Intently:** Be very curious, they do all the talking, you hang on every word, allow for silence
5. **Use Interview Questions:** Follow the script and ask clarifying questions on surrounding conditions
6. **HAVE FUN!**

## Appreciative Inquiry: Self – Talk and the Positive Core

Internal Dialogues take place every day in a group, in meetings, on telephone calls in every setting. An image of the future of a group emerges in these conversations that are always taking place, whether they are positive or negative.

### Positive Self-Talk

It's a hallmark of a healthy group  
Promotes constructive actions and change  
Stories often propel the group to great success

### Negative Self-Talk

It's a hallmark of an unhealthy group  
Inhibits constructive actions and change  
Stories often inspire descent into dysfunction

**Key Idea:** The purpose of Appreciative Inquiry is to allow individuals to reveal the positive group qualities and activities (hidden strengths) that have allowed the group to function at its best.

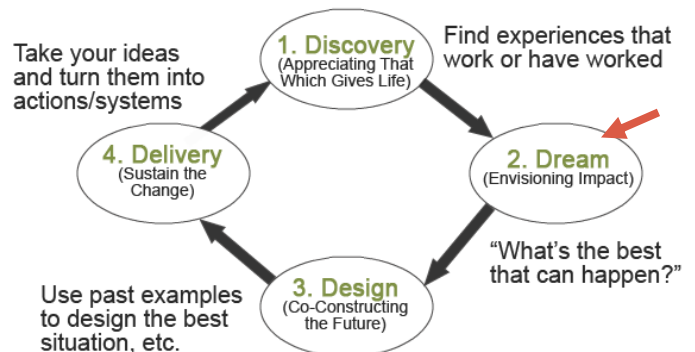
## The Debriefing Process –

1. What was this experience like for you?
2. What did you learn?
3. What do you believe should be happening to create the greatest outcomes possible?
4. What common themes are emerging?

## Phase 2: DREAM

**Key Idea:** The purpose of the Dream phase of the Appreciative Inquiry Process is to allow individuals to envision what their group would look like if it were fully aligned around its strengths and aspirations.

A group holds an IMAGE of where it wants to go. The image activates conversations, choices, commitments, and behaviors. As people imagine and dream, they begin to invent ways to accomplish their hopes and dreams. Their positive images become agents of change.



## Dream

1. Determine the **positive purpose** because it is **heliotropic**
2. Identify potential **trajectories** or **end results**
3. Clarify high level **visions**



## Dream Big

Look back at your responses to the four generic questions (page 12) and consider question 4:

***If you had three wishes for your group, what would they be?***

Choose one of the three wishes.

1. Describe what the group would look like if that wish were fulfilled.
2. Before you begin writing your description, close your eyes and try to develop a mental image of the future state.
3. Be prepared to share your thoughts with your group.



**My WISH is:**

**The image of my wish looks like (what's the story?)**

The Dream phase of the Appreciative Inquiry Cycle invites a group to change its internal dialogue by asking all those in the group to:

1. Engage in Positive Conversations
2. Think GREAT Thoughts
3. Create New Possibilities
4. Build on the group Purpose
5. Aim Higher
6. Think like an artist

*"Go Confidently in the Direction of Your Dreams. Live the Life You've Imagined."*

Henry David Thoreau

The Dream phase is inspiring, healthy and encouraging

*"When we dream alone, it is just a dream. When we dream together it is the beginning of a new reality."*

Brazilian Proverb



## Identify the Purpose (also called the *Positive Core*)

### Finding all root causes of success

This exercise is to help you identify root causes of successes, and then discuss answers to 2 key questions. These are taken from an Appreciative Inquiry Interview process and the questions may vary depending on the setting:

### Discovering resources in our community

What attracted you to this group?

What are some high-point experiences for you in our group?

What do you value most about our group?

What images do you have for the future of our group?

### Discovering the purpose of our group

Our purpose is what we cause at our best. This becomes a series of questions used to uncover strengths, assets, capacities, traditions, and practices unique to our groups at its best.

### Interview Questions (A core group starts and then interviews everyone in the group)

**Key Idea:** The process of *Appreciative Inquiry* begins with a **core group** of people with a common idea of a need for change within the entire group or a specific part of it. They agree on an **interview set of questions** and a *questioning process that uses a specific interview* and then use it to get to the thoughts of all or most of the group members. Although the idea begins with a smaller group (e.g., in a small family, this could be the parents, and in a larger one, it might be the oldest group of siblings), it does not remain only the thoughts of that group. For *Appreciative Inquiry* to be effective, it must be expansive and inclusive and engage as many people as possible.

See a sample of a complete **Interview** in this workbook starting on page 17.

## Think About It

Answer the following questions

1. What is the world calling for us (or our group) to be?
2. What are the most enlivening and exciting possibilities for us (or our group)?
3. What is the inspiration that is supporting us (or our group)?

**Activity:** Assign a core group of team members to create an interview protocol for your group.

*"So many of our dreams at first seem impossible, then they seem improbable, and then, when we summon the will, they seem to become inevitable."*

Christopher Reeve

# Sample Interview Protocol Created by a Core Team

GROUP NAME

**“Moving Forward into Greater Success and Fulfillment”**

“When I dream alone, it is just a dream.  
When we dream together, it is the beginning of reality.  
When we work together, following our dream, it is the  
Creation of heaven on earth.”

**Adapted Brazilian Proverb**

## The Appreciative Interview

**Task:** For the next 40 minutes you will be sharing interviews with another person; you may not even know him or her well. You interview your partner for 20 minutes, then switch roles, and your partner then interviews you. Decide who wants to be interviewed first. As you listen to your interview partner, jot down words, phrases, quotes, anything that stands out for you as exciting and important. It is not necessary to take *detailed* notes. Just capture enough to help you recall the story so that you can share it later.

**NOTE:** Appreciative Interviews differ from traditional interviews in that the questions are simply guidelines that lead the person being interviewed to delve into the most creative, exciting, life-giving experiences that they have had in their life and work. It is not as important to answer every question as it is to tell a complete story, evoking the situation complete with details of what happened and the feelings involved. The goal is to help the person doing the interviewing to experience the situation being described as much as possible. The interviewer’s role is to LISTEN, occasionally prompting the person being interviewed to be more descriptive or to enlarge upon the story.

## Celebrating Your Strengths and Past Successes

*Tell me about a peak experience or high point in your life – a time when you felt most alive, most engaged, or really proud of yourself or your accomplishments. What was it about you, the situation, the group (family, company), the teamwork, and/or the leadership that allowed that peak experience to emerge?*

In today’s complex and ever-changing world, teamwork is an essential ingredient for success. Teamwork requires collaboration so outcomes are better and conditions become encouraging. Winning teamwork requires common goals, open communication, and full participation in planning and decision-making. Most people work best in a team environment where enthusiasm and team spirit are high, where ideas and information is shared, and where team members work together to accomplish common goals. It has been said that the results of teamwork are greater than the sum of the parts. The synergy that comes from winning teamwork adds value to all members, and in the case of work, the customers and the company.

1. What are the qualities in the existing \_\_\_\_\_ (group name) team that most foster enthusiasm, information sharing, and collaboration toward common goals?
2. Describe the best, most winning teamwork you have ever seen or been a part of. What was it about the team's abilities that caused you to define them as best? What were conditions that allowed winning teamwork to emerge?
3. What can we do to foster winning teamwork at an even higher and more consistent level throughout \_\_\_\_\_ (group name)?

Fast forward five years. Your highest hopes and aspirations for excellence, learning, and spirit are being realized. Relationships within the group (family, organization, etc.) and with others magnify strengths that enable outstanding service, efficiency, and effectiveness. The quality of work and results has been amazing. The quality of life for everyone involved has expanded more and more over time.

Tell me what you see in our improved situation? What are we doing? How are we working together differently? What was the one small, first step we took which ignited these positive changes?

## Strategizing

(GROUP NAME) \_\_\_\_\_ **Vision Statement:**

Imagine arriving at \_\_\_\_\_ (group name) tomorrow and experiencing this as your new reality. You are part of this energetic, cohesive, team that is experiencing outstanding results. What does a quality member of this team look and act like? What values do they put forth?

## Types of Interviews

### Questions

**Step 1:** Think about your group. What areas might you improve? Below, list three areas of **improvement** you think might be good to explore. Remember: Don't dwell on the negative; focus on areas where you know improvements could happen if people were to imagine the possibilities?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Step 2:** What types of appreciative questions would you ask about each improvement? Most people immediately ask a question in a negative sense. If you need to, write a negatively stated question first, then restate it as a positive one.

Example: **Negative question** – If you could change the way we do our family meetings (or e.g., annual reviews), what changes would you make?

Example: **Positive question** – Tell me about the best family meeting (or e.g., annual review) that you ever participated in? What made it such a positive experience?

1. Improvements?

2. Positive stories?

3. Possibilities?

**APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY is a Change of Focus** – YOU change your focus.

**FROM**  
Focus on a specific problem

**TO**  
Focus on positive, life-giving forces

**How are the life-giving forces discovered?**



Appreciative inquiry leads people to experience the four core needs.  
After you do your interview, you debrief:

### The Debriefing Process

1. What was this experience like for you?
2. What did you learn about yourself?
3. What common themes did and your interview partner share?
4. What do you believe should be happening to create the greatest outcomes possible?
5. What are several things you want now as a result of this interview?



### Themes (and the images associated with them)

#### Themes are life-giving forces. . .

1. They can emerge from any interview question and are generally occurring through multiple interviews as discovered in the debriefing process
2. They provide a link between a group's past and future images of progress.
3. They provide the key to discovering the positive core (or purpose) of the group.
4. They are a generalization of the specific ideas shared by individuals.

**From the theme, a shared image of the groups' potential could come forth and cause the people to begin to DREAM. What themes do you believe might be shared by everyone?**

### Themes

Out of the Interviews of the everyone and during an interview debriefing process, themes emerge. These themes are essential to discovering the positive core (or purpose) of the group and will be used as a guide for the *DREAM* phase of the process.



The theme is an idea or concept that repeatedly occurs when stories are being shared by those interviewed and the people interviewed express joy, excitement or positive reactions to the subject they are talking about.

### The Heliotropic Nature of Groups

**Key idea:** Human Systems, like plants, grow in the direction of positive energy





*"When we dream alone, it is just a dream. When we dream together it is the beginning of a new reality."*

Brazilian Proverb

**Interview Protocol** (A core group creates the Appreciative Inquiry interview questions. Then they engage everyone)

**Key Idea:** The process of Appreciative Inquiry begins with a **core group** of individuals with a common idea of a need for change within the entire group or a specific part of it. They agree on an **interview protocol** or *questioning process and specific interview* and then use it to ascertain the thoughts of all or most of the people. Although the idea begins with a core group, it does not remain strictly in that group. For Appreciative Inquiry to be effective, it must be expansive and inclusive and engage as many people as possible.

See a sample of a complete **Interview Protocol** in this workbook starting on page 17.

### Think About It

Answer the following questions

1. What is the world calling us to be?
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3. What is the inspiration that is supporting us?

**Activity:** Assign a core group of people to create an interview protocol.

*"So many of our dreams at first seem impossible, then they seem improbable, and then, when we summon the will, they seem to become inevitable."*

Christopher Reeve

## Possibilities

**Key Idea:** Dreaming is opening to a world of new possibilities - to even go beyond that which you ever thought was possible. Everyone then begins to wonder about their greatest potential and engage in positive “What if” conversations. A new narrative emerges, one with historical roots in the successes of the past, and is an outgrowth of the positive stories shared by everyone.

1. The new story separates Appreciative Inquiry from other planning methods.
2. The new story creates a vibrant image of the future.
3. This image is created from conversations with everyone.
4. This image of what is possible both drives and limits the activities surrounding it.

## Definition of Terms

**Core Team:** A cross-section of people from all areas, so everyone’s interests are represented.

**Interview Protocol:** A document designed by a core group to use in the interview process.

**Stakeholder:** Everyone who has a stake in the outcomes of the Appreciative Inquiry process for change.

**Debriefing:** A process in which shared themes are identified through a sharing and summarizing process.

**Theme:** An idea or concept that repeatedly surfaces in debriefing after the interview occurs.

**Positive Core:** Main conclusion or purpose describing what most gives life to everyone and matters most (e.g. **Mission** and **Purpose** in the LifeWork Systems blueprint).

**Heliotropic:** Moving in the direction of what is most pleasurable, positive, and life giving.

**Trajectory:** A far-reaching target; something to shoot for that is encouraging (e.g. financial wealth for all).

**Provocative Proposition:** A vision statement(s) that will be explained (after stated) within a set of *possibilities*. It’s the statement that’s big, hairy and audacious. It stretches and challenges, is possible, is desired by all, is stated positively, guides next steps, and is expansive (e.g. It’s a **Vision Statement** in the LifeWork Systems blueprint process).

**Possibilities:** Images of results and success coming from positive past, present and future stories and events.

**Dream:** This is like an expanded vision in the LifeWork Systems blueprint process; it’s a description and story you would tell when all results and feelings play out; when any provocative propositions (Visions) are fulfilled.

**SMART Goals:** These are specific, measurable, achievable, reasonable/related and time-bound goals that include not only what goal, completed by when, but procedures for how, as well as roles for who is assigned to each.

**Commitment, Offer, Request:** People jumping in to ask for, offer and receive help to accomplish the dream.



## Make It Personal

**Key Idea:** Appreciative Inquiry not only applies to groups, but also to individuals. Are you seeing ways that you can apply the principles of Appreciative Inquiry to your life? Think about each of the following statements and decide whether you Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Somewhat Agree, or Agree. Choose your responses here and **circle** them.

1. We construct stories together with our thinking about what happens and who we are.

Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree
----------	-------------------	---------	----------------	-------

2. Our story is one perspective; there are an infinite number of perspectives.

Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree
----------	-------------------	---------	----------------	-------

3. We have poetic license to create, interpret, and focus our stories; whatever we focus on expands.

Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree
----------	-------------------	---------	----------------	-------

4. There is always a positive side to any situation or person, but we have to choose to find it.

Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree
----------	-------------------	---------	----------------	-------

5. We anticipate what a future can be by forming pictures in our minds; then we live into those images.

Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree
----------	-------------------	---------	----------------	-------

6. We can deliberately change the future by visualizing what we want.

Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree
----------	-------------------	---------	----------------	-------

7. The moment we ask about something, we simultaneously begin to move toward it.

Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree
----------	-------------------	---------	----------------	-------

8. Questions can be a powerful tool for positive change.

Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree
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## Dream Big

**Key Idea:** Using the following prompts, write a sentence of how the principles of Appreciative Inquiry can open up possibilities in your life. Record your thoughts below (or on a separate page if needed) Do not feel you must answer immediately.

1. Describe a story about when you did something for which you were very proud?
2. What made it happen?
3. What was happening at that time in your life?
4. What type of support did you seek out or experience?
5. What part did you play?
6. Think of multiple times in your life when you felt this way (proud). As you compose your responses, can you now identify in your answers a “theme” of what makes you feel proud of your accomplishments?
7. *Dream Big* – Can you imagine a life in which you are regularly accomplishing things that make you proud?

## Articulating the Dream

**Key Idea:** The articulation of the *Dream* should include the collective voice of everyone, and there should be consensus among all that this articulation reflects the collective will.

It starts with a description of the group's culture, relationships, and overall feel. The articulation may be a statement, collage or vision board, song, skit, poem, quote or any other type of creative expression. Here's an example from Judy Ryan about her dream for her company LifeWork Systems (2004).

### Passionate People for Peace


People of strength, comfort, and light  
People of focus, committed to a future that's bright  
People building new ways for the world to see  
Creating beacons of hope that show what life can be

People with smarts, savvy, and flair  
Who show the world how to mindfully care  
Who create a network of positive strategies and skill  
So people stop resorting to force, domination, or the kill

People who learn and apply the best relationship tools  
So those whom they lead can avoid acting like fools  
People who are fun, free, spiritual, and wealthy  
As they choose to be socially and emotionally healthy

People of heart, creating as a wise team  
As fluid and flexible as a cool running stream

## Provocative Propositions



A provocative proposition, aka a *possibilities* statement, is an overarching statement that expresses a shared vision for a group. This is done for professional and personal vision-setting. This should be a BHAG or a big, hairy, audacious goal.

In our blueprint process (in a separate training program), this correlates to creating **vision statements**, their connection to your overarching mission or purpose and your core values. These *provoke* a flow of awareness and declaration for specifically what you want. It's like when you were a kid and you made your Christmas list with excitement and enthusiasm, not focused on how it would happen.

*"In my experience, which is curious to me, I have never seen people create propositions about creating more hierarchy, more command and control, more inequality, more degradation of the environment, more socially irresponsible business practices, etc. Indeed the propositions, as I've seen then written, have always moved in a direction of more equality, more self-groups, more social consciousness in terms of business practices, and the breakdown of arbitrary barriers between groups and functions. I have wondered...why?"*

David Cooperrider

### Provocative Propositions (continued)

**Key Idea:** A provocative proposition, a.k.a. possibilities or vision statement, is an overarching statement expressing the shared vision of the preferred future for a group. It challenges one to *Dream Big*. An example of a Provocative Proposition for America was: "We will put a man on the moon." It is often *almost* unbelievable.

1. How do you respond to Cooperrider's question?
2. Despite this, what barriers might people have to using Appreciative Inquiry? Why?

### Appreciative Inquiry at Its Best

Appreciative Inquiry is at its best when there is no part of the groups where change is off the table; everyone involved in the Appreciative Inquiry process is creating shared visions that incorporate shared money, power, learning, decision making and distribution of resources.

### Provocative Proposition Statements

A good provocative proposition statement has the following characteristics:

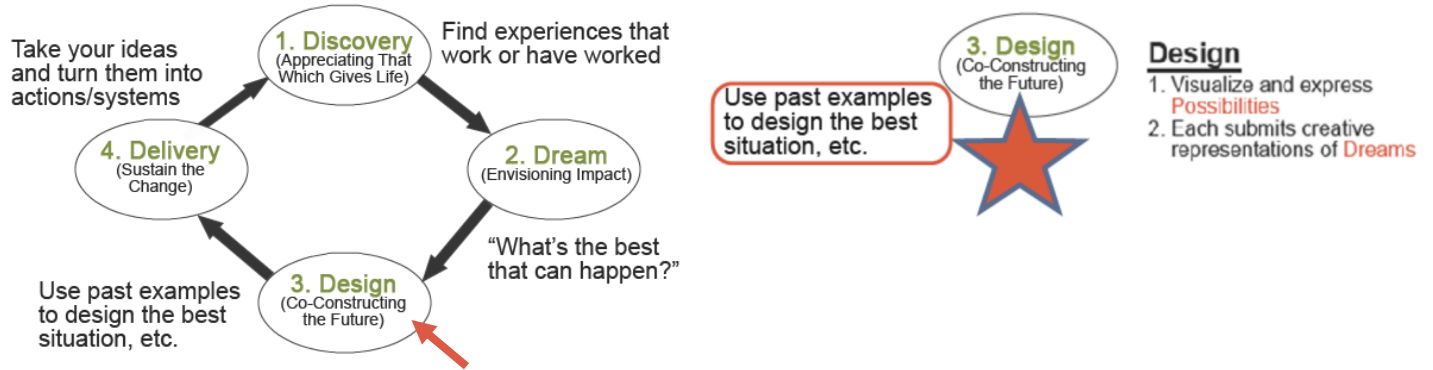
1. **Provocative** – It stretches and challenges the status quo
2. **Grounded** – It contains examples of how the statement is a real possibility
3. **Desired** – everyone wants it
4. **Affirmative** – It's stated in a positive tone
5. **Guiding** – It provides guidance for the group's future
6. **Expansive** – It expands the realm of possible change
7. **Involvement** – As many people as possible were involved in the process

*"It may be hard for an egg to turn into a bird; it would be a jolly sight harder for it to learn to fly while remaining an egg."*

C.S. Lewis



## Phase 3: Design



### Design Possibilities

The following areas (improvements, positive stories, and possibilities) were asked about in your protocol document (appreciative interview) and used to interview everyone. Here's where you recall common reflections to incorporate into your further visualization and expression of possibilities (visions) and the components within them. This is where you stretch to paint the emerging picture including the proposition, results, and feelings.

**1. Improvements:** Below, list *at least* 3 or more areas of *improvement* to explore. Remember: Don't dwell on the negative; focus on areas where you know improvements could happen if people were to imagine the best?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**2. Positive stories:** What positive stories can you share that are commonly recalled or deeply inspiring?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**3. Possibilities:** What possibilities stretch and guide our next evolution?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**4. Evolution:** What is the world calling for us (or our group) to be?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**5. Enlivening and Exciting:** What are the most enlivening and exciting possibilities for us?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**6. Inspirational:** What are the inspirations supporting us?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**Design Your Possibilities (Vision in your Design) and express it in words and in creative representations.**

## Phase 4: DELIVERY

A core group of people commits to deliver change.

### The Importance of Change

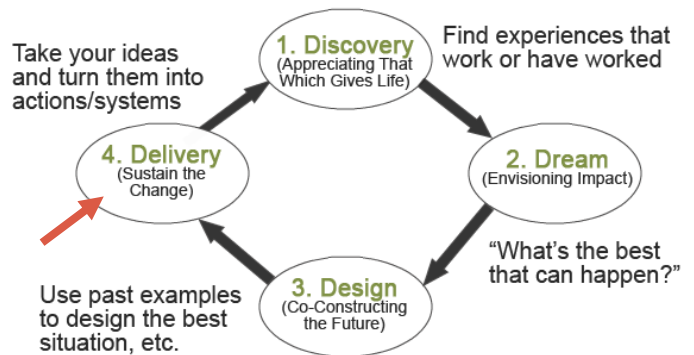
*"Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."*



### Delivery Begins with a Decision to Change

**Key Idea:** *Delivery* therefore, begins with a decision for change. Once possibility statements have been written, the avenue for change is set, and the framework for change is decided. Just as there is no truly set process for implementing Appreciative Inquiry, there is not a single process for *delivery*.

Each individual or group effectively sets its own rules and processes for delivering change.



How do you respond to John F. Kennedy's quote below? **Circle one.** Why? **AGREE** **DISAGREE**

What implications does this idea have for your own life?

*"Change is the law of life and those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future."*

John F. Kennedy

## An Appreciative Eye

**Key Idea:** In the *Delivery* phase of the Appreciative Inquiry process, every aspect of the groups that has been designated to experience change is looked at with an “appreciative eye,” which analyzes every system, procedure and way of working. Everyone is invited to participate and are invited to a commitment session where they discuss what they can and will do to contribute to positive change. This phase marks the beginning of an appreciative learning culture characterized by continuous learning, adjustment and improvisation. Everything centers around the shared ideals of everyone.

The *Delivery* process is not the end of the story. Delivery is ongoing; as it occurs, more questions are considered, which takes people back full circle to the beginning of the process, Discovery. New areas are discovered that need changing and the process begins again.

## Ask the Right Questions (Keep focus on the DREAM image)

**Key Idea:** The *Delivery* phase translates the *Dream* into reality. This is where the real work is accomplished. During this phase, everyone needs to be continuously encouraged to focus on the big picture – Remember the *DREAM*. Meeting together is essential as it gives everyone the opportunity to establish relationships, continuously learn, and vocalize what they are experiencing.



During this phase, some essential questions can keep everyone on the right track and these questions underlie the success of the *Delivery* of change.

1. What specific changes have we made in the last months that are helping us achieve our dream?
2. What do we intend to do next month that will bring us further along the road to achieving our dream?
3. What challenges are we facing as we pursue our dream?
4. How do we plan to tackle these challenges?
5. What support do you and the group need in order to successfully realize the dream?
6. What new areas need to be explored as we move in the direction of the dream?

## Questioning

**Key Idea:** Questioning is an essential element of Appreciative Inquiry. Can you think of any additional questions that could be asked during the delivery phase that would help spur others further in the direction of the goal? Write your answer below.

## The Importance of Change

John F. Kennedy once said, “Change is the law of life. Those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.”

1. Do you agree? What implications does this idea have for your own life? The life of your groups?

## An Individualistic Approach to Delivery

**Key Idea:** Each person is given the opportunity to state a commitment, make an offer or make a request. The key to this approach is the involvement of everyone within the affected part of the group, which is possibly the entire group. Write an *example* of each for delivery on a particular dream.

1. **State a Commitment** - Including specific actions that will be taken over the course of upcoming weeks that do not need any additional resources to be carried out
2. **Make an Offer** - A specific gift, use of a talent or an acceptance to collaborate with others.
3. **Make a Request** - A need identified by individuals that someone else in the groups can provide.

## Delivering Change

**Key Idea:** If change needs to be delivered to a larger group, this delivery approach can be incorporated into a larger framework for change. Either the core team can choose an existing framework or build its own, using the commitment/offer/request approach to change for smaller parts within a larger framework. Whatever the approach, the important component of delivery is the development of possibilities statements that guide the changes that are made, as well as the individual commitments, offers and requests.

Choose one of the following and circle it:      **COMMITMENT**                      **OFFER**                      **REQUEST**

Write a short but specific statement for the one that you chose and how you, as an individual will be supporting change.

**Now, to bring this exercise to a more personal level.**

1. What would success look like for me? What is MY VISION? How can I bring my vision to life?
2. Later, when you have time, create a picture, poem, provocative proposition (vision statement or other expression) on the back of this page that bridges the best of “your strengths and who you are” with your “desired future.”

Here is an example of a business provocative proposition (vision – for a landscape company).

“Using my talent for creating beauty and hope, I help uplift the spirits of my\_\_\_\_\_ (Company Name) team members and the customers I serve. I treat every landscape, co-worker and client with immense respect and appreciation, and everyone feels better and more caring in their own lives as a result of my commitment to beauty and caring in all that I do.”



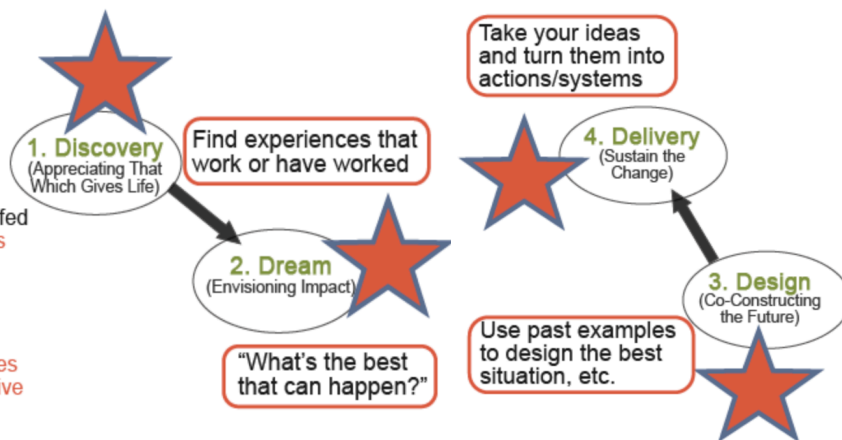
## The 4-D Cycle

### Discovery

1. Select a **Core Team**
2. Core team creates an **AI Interview Protocol**
3. Core Team **conducts AI Interviews with all the stakeholders**
4. Post-interviews are debriefed to determine major **themes**

### Dream

1. Determine **positive core** because it is **heliotropic**
2. Identify potential **trajectories**
3. Clarify high level **provocative propositions**



### Design

1. Visualize and express **Possibilities**
2. Each submits creative representations of **Dreams**

### Delivery

1. Continue to change existing, and create new, **business and human systems** using AI
2. Create **SMART goals**
3. Assign and communicate **commitments, offers and requests** needed for delivery of designed changes to occur

## Appreciative Inquiry Activities Checklist

<b>Discovery</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Clarify <u>provocative propositions</u></b> (Vision statements that stretch, challenge, are feasible, desired, positive, guiding, and expansive)
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Select a <u>core team</u></b> (A cross-section of people from all areas, representing all interests)	<b>Design</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Create the <u>APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY interview protocol document</u></b> (A document designed by a core group to use in an interview process for all)	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Visualize and express <u>positive possibilities</u></b> (Images of results and success coming from positive past, present and future stories, events)
<input type="checkbox"/> <b><u>Conduct APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY interviews with everyone</u></b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Everyone <u>expresses dreams creatively</u></b> (A creative expression of a story when provocative propositions are fulfilled)
<input type="checkbox"/> <b><u>Debrief interviews</u></b> (questions on pages 11, 20)	<b>Delivery</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b><u>Debrief with core group</u></b> (A process in which shared themes are identified – page 20)	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Identify and <u>change new or existing systems using Appreciative Inquiry</u></b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Determine <u>themes</u></b> (An idea or concept that repeatedly surfaces in debriefing – page 20)	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Create <u>SMART goals</u></b> (specific, measurable, achievable, reasonable/related, and time-bound)
<b>Dream</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b><u>Make requests, offers and commitments</u></b> (People jumping in to ask for, offer and receive help to accomplish the dream)
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Determine <u>positive core</u></b> (man conclusion; what most gives life to all and matters most)	<input type="checkbox"/> Capture goals, procedures, and roles in blueprint
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Identify <u>trajectories</u></b> (A target; something to shoot for that is encouraging)	Note: <b>Heliotropic</b> : Moving in the direction of what is most pleasurable, positive, and lifegiving.

# *It Just Got Real!*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**A-Ha Idea**

**Challenges or Barriers**

**Resources** (how will you overcome challenges or barriers?)

**1**

**Next Step**

**Date**

**A-Ha Idea**

**Challenges or Barriers**

**Resources** (how will you overcome challenges or barriers?)

**2**

**Next Step**

**Date**