

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

Around the world Community Based Organizations, international agencies, governments, universities and donors are discovering an inescapable lesson. The fight against poverty, issues of social justice and environmental decline requires new forms of cooperation or PARTNERSHIPS that enable diverse constituencies to join forces to meet enormous challenges which none of them can accomplish alone. The difficulty in forging partnerships built on mutual respect and shared goals can scarcely be underestimated, yet neither can its potential importance.

Appreciative Inquiry process has taken this challenge and is creating possibilities for building partnerships that transcend the usual results of many collaborations.

WHAT IS APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY?

What problems are you having?

What is working around here?

These two questions underline the difference between traditional Change Management theory and Appreciative Inquiry. The traditional approach to change is to look for the problem, do a diagnosis and find a solution. The primary focus is on what is wrong or broken; we look for the problems, we find them. By paying attention to problems, we emphasize and amplify them. This approach is consistent with a historical attitude in American Business that sees human systems as machines and parts (people) as interchangeable. We believe we can fix anything and there is a right answer or solution to any organizational problem or challenge.

PROBLEM SOLVING

- “Felt Need” Identification of Problem
- Cause Analysis
- Solution Analysis
- Action Planning “Treatment”
- Metaphor: Org. as problems to be solved

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

Valuing “What is” (what gives life?)
Envisioning “What might be?”
Dialoguing “What should be?”
Innovating “What would be?”
Metaphor: Org. as mystery to be Embraced

In the mid-seventies, David Cooperrider and his associates at Case Western Reserve University challenged this approach and introduced the term Appreciative Inquiry. APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY is an approach to organizational analysis and learning that is uniquely intended for discovering, understanding, and fostering innovations in social organizational arrangements and process.

Appreciative Inquiry suggests that we look for what works in an organization. The tangible result of the inquiry process is a series of statements that describe where the organization wants to be, based on the high moments of where they have been. Because the statements are grounded in real experience and history, people know how to repeat their success.

Through a workshop format, the participants stir up memories of energizing moments of success creating a new energy that is positive and synergistic. Participants walk away with a sense of commitment, confidence and affirmation that they have been successful. They also know clearly how to make more moments of success. It is this energy that

distinguishes the generative process that results from Appreciative Inquiry. There is no end because it is a living process.

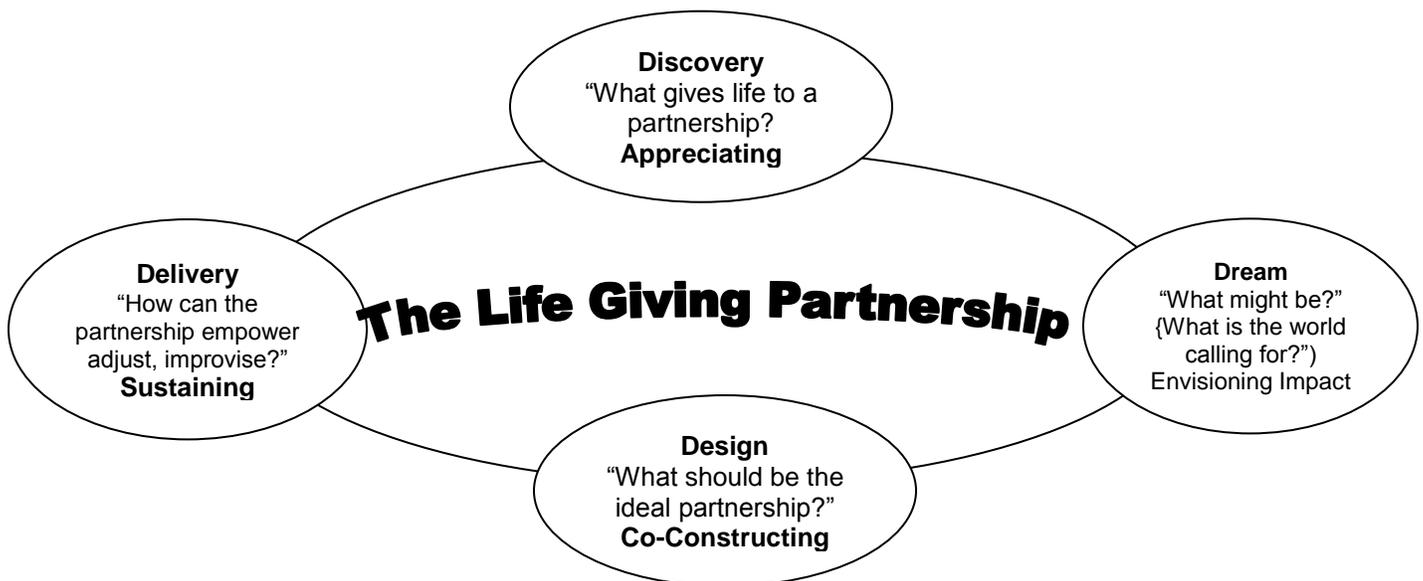
Because the statements generated by the participants are grounded in real experience and in history, people know how to repeat their success.

Assumptions of Appreciate Inquiry

1. In every society, organization, or group, something works.
2. What we focus on becomes our reality.
3. Reality is created in the moment, and there are multiple realities.
4. The act of asking questions of an organization or group influences the group in some way.
5. People have more confidence and comfort to journey to the future (the unknown) when they carry forward parts of the past (the known)
6. If we carry parts of the past forward, they should be what is best about the past.
7. It is more important to value differences.
8. The language we use creates our reality.

The organization Excellence Program at Case Western Reserve University uses the Appreciative Inquiry Approach to support management teams from diverse organizations that are ready for growth and change.

Appreciate Inquiry is based on the four D's model



Written by Yoland Trevino, Sunday, October 17, 2010

Some Principles of Appreciative Inquiry

- There is some value in every organization and community
- Starting a change process from a position of strength adds power and possibility to the process
- Questions are a good tool for facilitating change
- The kinds of questions you ask determine what you will find
- Stories are an important part of information gathering
- Image (vision, dream) and action are linked
- Having a positive, powerful vision/dream empowers people to take action
- Getting the whole system involved helps bring about change