

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY IN BRIEF

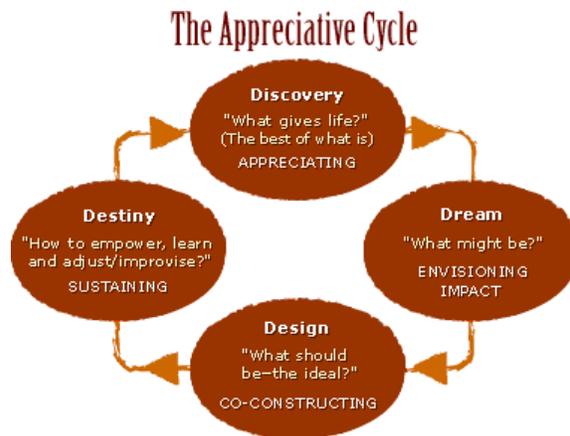
Appreciative inquiry is a ***strategy for purposeful change*** that identifies the best of "what is" to pursue dreams and possibilities of "what could be."

It is a ***co-operative search*** for the strengths found within every system that hold the potential for inspired, positive change. It involves ***collaborative inquiry using affirmative questioning*** to collect and celebrate the good news stories of a community.

It involves an appreciation for the mystery of being and a reverence for life.

We use it to construct a vision of what their community ***might be if they identify their strengths, then improve or intensify them.***

There are four steps to the appreciative approach.



Discovery phase (appreciating): to appreciate the best of "what is" by ***focusing on peak moments of excellence.*** Participants then seek to understand the unique conditions that made the high points possible. People share stories, discuss the life-giving conditions of their community and deliberate upon what they most value and want to enhance in the future.

Dream phase (envisioning/impact): Challenge the status quo by envisioning more valued and vital futures. ***This phase is practical.*** (grounded in the community's history), ***and generative,*** in that it seeks to expand the community's potential. Appreciative inquiry uses positive stories in the same way an artist uses paints ***to create a portrait of the community's potential.***

Design phase (co-constructing): Participants create a strategy to ***carry out their provocative propositions.*** They do so by building a social architecture that re-defines their approach to leadership, governance, participation or capacity building.

Destiny (sustaining): Is a time of ***continuous learning, adjustment and improvisation*** in the service of shared community ideals. Everyone in the community re-aligns their work and co-creates the future. ***Appreciative inquiry is a continual cycle.*** The destiny phase leads naturally to new discoveries of community strengths, beginning the process anew.