

Appreciative Inquiry

"We live in the worlds our conversations create." David L. Cooperrider

Overview:

Appreciative Inquiry as a questioning technique that encourages appreciative gaze on the best of past and present positive experience. The aim is to enable a person to access their strengths, resources and insights, thus becoming better equipped to deal with current or future challenges and goals successfully.

Appreciative Inquiry began as a change management approach that developed in the 1990s. It is equally good for organisational settings as well as being helpful for self-coaching. This style of questioning can be used with to enhance the performance of high-functioning teams as well as help teams that are in conflict.

As a self-coaching technique, the approach is good for self-esteem building as it highlights your skills, abilities and strengths. Purposefully recalling good experiences can make a person stronger and reminds them that they can act to enable a beneficial change. It can also provide motivation to continue or grow helpful habits.

Sample Appreciative Inquiry Questions:

What are some of the high point experiences you have had in your life?

What is it like when you are most alive and engaged in what you do?

Without being modest – what do you value most about yourself and your work?

What are the core factors that give life to [your work/your team/your practice] that you most value and without which [your work/your team/your practice] would not be the same?

What three wishes do you have to enhance the health and vitality of your life?

How might you act to move towards fulfilment of these three wishes?

What are some of the magic moments you have experienced in life?

Framing a Conversation Worth Having:

Step 1. Name it. What is the problem, complaint or thing you don't want?

Step 2. Flip it. What is the positive opposite – the thing you really want?

Step 3. Frame it. What is the positive impact if the flip were true? What might be the desired outcome?

Step 4. Forward it. What is one thing you can do today to move towards what your really want?



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Appreciative Inquiry is based on the following beliefs:

- Questions set the stage for what we find and discover
- Questions can elicit possibilities, hope and inspiration
- Words create worlds
- The seeds of change are implicit in the very first questions we ask
- Sharing best practices, magic moments and life enriching experiences enables us to grow towards these things

Sources & Recommended Reading:

Stavros, J. and Torres, C (2018) Conversations Worth Having, Berret-Koehler

Magruder Watkins, J. and Mohr, B.J. (2001) Appreciative Inquiry, Pfeiffer