

## Appreciative Inquiry<sup>6</sup>

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<b>ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION</b>	The facilitator guides the group through a “4D cycle” with four phases of inquiry: Discover, Dream, Design and Destiny. The group chooses a theme, identifies what they are already doing well, what their dream is for the future and how they will get there.
<b>PURPOSE</b>	To generate a positive vision of the group’s present and collective future.
<b>INTENDED OUTCOMES</b>	Identifying the existing strengths and assets of the group; creating a clear vision of what is wanted and a concrete action plan
<b>SKILLS DEVELOPED</b>	Collaboration; positive framing of issues; collective visioning; strategic planning
<b>TOTAL TIME</b>	2 hours, 30 minutes
<b>NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS</b>	No limit
<b>MATERIALS</b>	Handouts; 4-D process on big paper; art materials
<b>SETTING</b>	Space for whole group and small breakout spaces

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### INTRODUCTORY FRAME

We often can take a deficit-thinking approach to problem solving by focusing on what’s wrong and trying to fix it. Appreciative Inquiry is an approach that looks at what is already working well and building on it. The question is: "Where do you want more of?" rather than "What problem must we solve?" This can produce stories of passion, effectiveness, quality that generates energy and connection within the group. Appreciative inquiry is an approach that works because it starts from the positive experience. Asking a good question change the thinking in terms of problems to think in terms of possibilities. Everyone is involved in deciding how things should change and how that should happen. Everyone's input is important to take into consideration when dreaming into the future.

The 4 D cycle of Appreciative Inquiry is the following:

1. **Discover:** Identify the best of what is
2. **Dream:** Imagine what could be
3. **Design:** Determine what is necessary
4. **Destiny:** Decide what will be

## PROCESS

- **Choose your theme or area of focus.** The first task is to determine what you want to work on as a group. For example, you might decide to look at the issue of water conservation or the retention of girls in school.
- **Phase 1: Discovery**
  - This can be conducted through interviews or in small group discussions. Find out the best there is and has been. You can ask people to share specific stories of success and the positive feelings associated with them. If focused on water conservation, possible questions for interviews or discussion can be: What are the best practices we have implemented to conserve water in our community? What is already working well? What are the key factors, forces and conditions that allow us to be successful?
  - Based on the interviews or discussions, work in small groups to identify the key factors which supported success: what are the underlying values, beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, relationships, or structures?
  - Write them up and have the groups share their results or do a gallery walk to see where there are patterns and overlap.
  - Celebrate the strengths and successes!
- **Phase 2: Dream**
  - Remind the group that only through our creative imagination can we dream into the world we want and make it a reality. The dream phase puts our imagination in motion and is necessary to building a sustainable world that works for all.
  - This is an exploration of “what might be”. What would your ideal organization, community, environment look like? What do you hope for? How are you organized? Who does what?
  - Get creative! In small groups, ask them to use different artistic modalities to depict their dream of the future, in relationship to the topic they are working on. Assign different groups to use drawing, collage, theater, storytelling, or other ways to share their visions.
  - Each group presents their dreams to the whole. Make sure to write down the key elements and factors presented on big paper.
  - Discuss what the commonalities were. What possibilities were exciting and inspiring to consider or see?

- **Phase 3: Design**
  - Based on the positive findings from the interviews, small group discussions and dreams, determine the key interventions and elements that are necessary to realize the dreams. Think of these categories:
    - i. Attitudes/Beliefs
    - ii. Behaviors/Actions
    - iii. Culture/Relationships
    - iv. Systems/Structures/Policies
  - Search for actionable items and create a draft action plan. What needs to be done? What existing strengths and assets can be contributed or built upon?
  
- **Phase 4: Destiny**
  - Determine if you want to work in small working groups with different areas of focus or if you want to work together as a whole group.
  - Make action plans and goals for implementation complete with clear roles, responsibilities and timelines. Who is going to do what by when? You can use this table as a template:

<b>Task</b>	<b>Who is the lead?</b>	<b>Who is on the team?</b>	<b>What materials and resources are needed?</b>	<b>By when?</b>

- Develop systems of reflection and feedback so that you hold each other accountable and continue to learn and grow as an organization.

## 4D Cycle of Appreciative Inquiry



## 4 Quadrants of Integral Design

<b>I N D I V I D U A L</b>			
<b>I N T E R I O R</b>	ATTITUDES/BELIEFS	BEHAVIOR/ACTIONS	<b>E X T E R I O R</b>
	CULTURE/RELATIONSHIPS	SYSTEMS/STRUCTURES	
<b>C O L L E C T I V E</b>			

Sources:

- Appreciative Inquiry *adapted from* Case Western Reserve University
- 4D Cycle of Appreciative Inquiry <http://crocuscoaching.co.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Appreciative-Inquiry-AI.png>
- 4 Quadrants of Collaboration *adapted from* Ken Wilbur's Integral Theory