

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

working with what's possible

Appreciative Inquiry is a strategy for intentional change that identifies the best of 'what is' of the present moment to pursue dreams and possibilities of 'what could be'; a cooperative search for strengths, passions and life-giving forces that are found within every system that hold potential for inspired, positive change. (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987)

ASSUMPTIONS

- In every community something works.
- What we focus on becomes our reality.
- Reality is created in the moment — there is more than one reality.
- The act of asking questions influences the community in some way.
- People have more confidence and comfort to journey into the future when they carry parts of the past.
- Carry forward the best parts of the past.
- It is important to value differences.
- The language we use creates our reality.

WHAT IS APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY GOOD FOR?

Appreciative inquiry is useful when a different perspective is needed, or when we wish to begin a new process from a fresh, positive vantage point. It can help move a group that is stuck in "what is" toward "what could be." Appreciative inquiry can be used with individuals, partners, small groups or large organizations.

GENERAL FLOW OF AN APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY PROCESS:

Appreciative inquiry can be done as a longer structured process going through 4 phases:

DISCOVER: identifying organizational processes that work well.

DREAM: envisioning processes that would work well for the future.

DESIGN: planning and prioritizing those processes.

DELIVER: implementing the proposed design.

The basic idea is to build organizations around what works, rather than trying to fix what does not.

PROBLEM SOLVING

"Felt Need" - Identification of the Problem

Analysis of causes

Analysis of possible solutions

Basic Assumption: An organization is a problem to be solved.

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

Appreciating and valuing the best of "What is"

Envisioning "What might be"

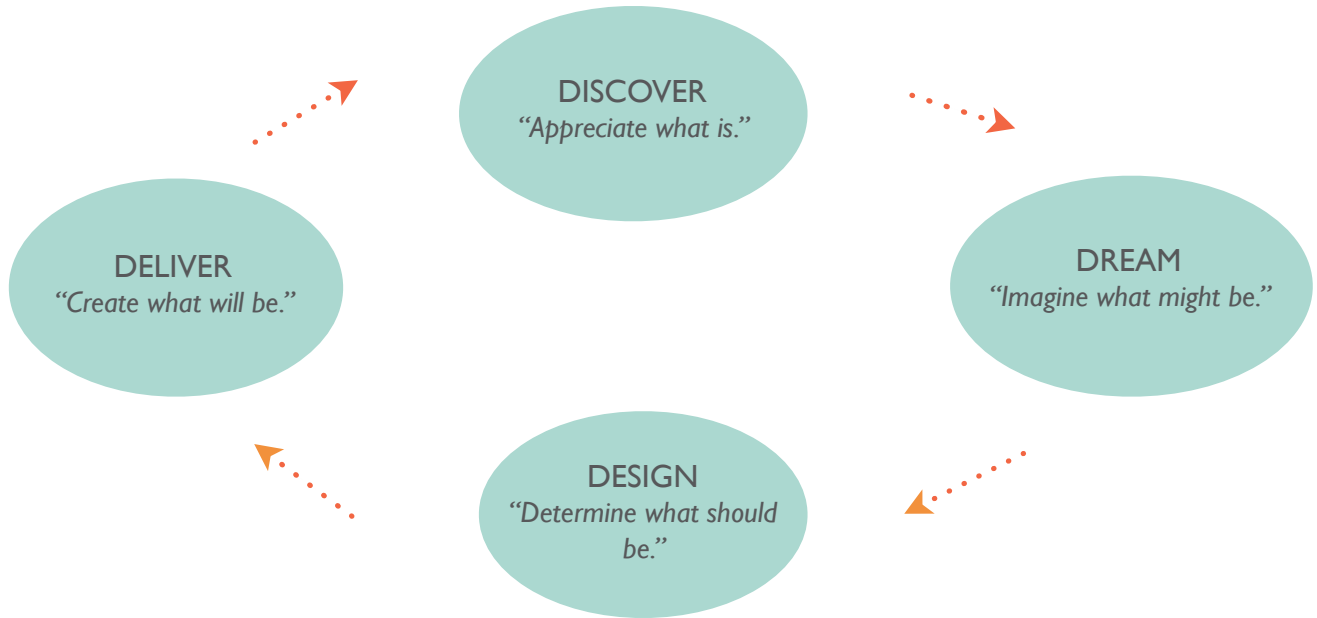
Dialoging "What should be"

Innovating "What will be"

At the center is a positive topic choice – how we ask even the first question contains the seeds of change we are looking to enact.

Appreciative Inquiry can also be used as a way of opening a meeting or conversation by identifying what already works. What do you value most about yourself/work/organization?

“We grow in the direction of the questions we ask.”
- David Cooperrider



NOTES