



Basics of Appreciative Inquiry

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“Appreciative Inquiry is the cooperative, co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. It involves systematic discovery of what gives life to an organization or a community when it is most effective and most capable in economic, ecological, and human terms.” – David Cooperrider

“We live in a universe that is alive, creative, and experimenting all the time to discover what's possible.”
– Margaret Wheatley

Currently, within our culture, we are rewarded for being excellent problem solvers. Certainly, this is prudent at times such as determining the number of widgets to pack in one box. However, there are also different levels of assessing a situation. Imagine if you will, that you can look at complex situation such as diversity not as a problem to be solved but rather as an opportunity to meld the greatest strengths of each individual.

Appreciative Inquiry is an active approach towards creation, whereas problem solving can be a passive approach for resolution. If we viewed our lives as a series of problems, then there is limited joy; it becomes never ending, boring, and exhausting.

The Appreciative Inquiry process is a tool that captures “what’s possible?” It focuses on discovering and appreciating what is working and how to leverage it versus concentrating on what is not working in the organization. The success of the tool depends on several factors. First, the interviewer must have a genuine and appreciative interest in the topic and of the interviewee. Second, the topics should be focused on a significant issue that the interviewee wishes to discover, learn about and become. Third, it is vital to create a series of positive questions which allow through story telling for personal, organizational symbols and metaphors of empowerment to emerge. When these factors are in alignment and the ideas are implemented, there will be increased trust and collaboration.

The AI process can be further broken down to a 4-stage process focusing on:

1. **DISCOVERY:** The identification of organizational processes that work well.
2. **DREAM:** The envisioning of processes that would work well in the future.
3. **DESIGN:** Planning and prioritizing processes that would work well.
4. **DESTINY** (or DELIVER): The implementation (execution) of the proposed design.

To learn more about how the Appreciative Inquiry process can help your team and organization expand its possibilities, give us a call. Our team consists of trained AI specialists.