

What is Appreciative Inquiry?

***Ap-pre'ci-ate**, v., 1. valuing; the act of recognizing the best in people or the world around us; affirming past and present strengths, successes, and potentials.*

Synonyms: VALUING, PRIZING, ESTEEMING, and HONORING.

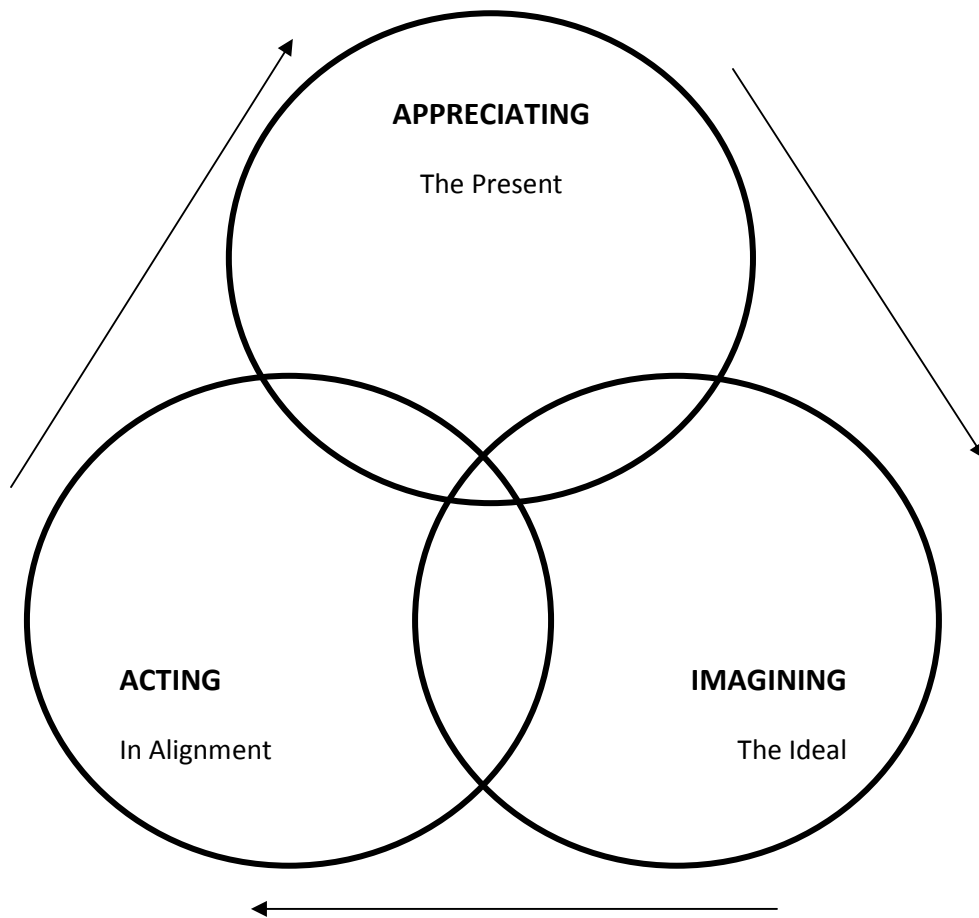
***In-quire'** (kwir), v., 1. the act of exploration and discovery. 2. To ask questions; to be open to seeing new potentials and possibilities. Synonyms: DISCOVERY, SEARCH, and SYSTEMATIC EXPLORATION, STUDY.*

Appreciative Inquiry is about the co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the relevant world around them. AI involves, in a central way, ***the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system's capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential***. It centrally involves the mobilization of inquiry through the crafting of the “unconditional positive question” often-involving hundreds or sometimes thousands of people.

from A Positive Revolution in Change: Appreciative Inquiry by David L. Cooperrider and Diana Whitney.

The Appreciative Inquiry Process

"We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them." Albert Einstein



The Unconditional Positive Question

... an affirmatively stated question that seeks to uncover and bring out the best in a person, a situation or an organization.

Crafting the positive question:

- Poetic use of language: articulating an inspiring, relevant, affirmative image (creating positive emotion)
- Grounded in reality, past or present (peak experiences or strengths)
- Stage a compelling, positive inquiry into a positive possibility (challenging current assumptions)

Sample positive questions:

1. What are our recent 'wins'?
2. What's working well in our department?
3. What are your ideas for helping our plant be more competitive?
4. What do you value most about our team?

Experience Positive Questions:

Choose one and respond. Plan to share what the positive question created in you. What new possibilities, if any, were uncovered?

1. **Can-do Coaching:** Describe a time when you coached someone successfully to do something challenging. What did you do? What did that feel like? What did you learn from this? In what areas would you like to do more coaching?
2. **Compelling Communication:** Imagine that you've arrived at work tomorrow morning to find that a miracle happened. Compelling communication is now the only form of communication within your organization. What was different? How did we get here? How does it feel?
3. **Engagement:** Recall a time when you did a good job and felt contentment and joy. What were you doing? What made it joyful? What did you appreciate about the people you were working with?
4. **Creating & Sustaining Positive Energy:** Tell me about a time when you experienced positive energy that was infectious. What was the situation? What created the positive energy? How did it feel to be a part of it? What did you learn?