# Appreciative Inquiry

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#### PERSPECTIVES.....

"NO PROBLEM CAN BE SOLVED FROM THE SAME CONSCIOUSNESS THAT CREATED IT. WE MUST LEARN TO SEE THE WORLD ANEW."

ALBERT EINSTEIN



"We are often trapped by the images we hold of ourselves." (Morgan, 1993)



#### APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

- A FORM OF ACTION RESEARCH.
- PROVIDES A POSITIVE RATHER THAN A PROBLEM ORIENTED LENS ON THE ORGANISATION AND/OR SITUATION.
- MEMBERS' ATTENTION IS FOCUSED ON WHAT IS POSSIBLE RATHER THAN WHAT IS WRONG.

CONSIDER SOME PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS:

E.G. LEARNING TO RIDE A BIKE, PARKING A CAR....

"Summing up appreciative inquiry is difficult - a philosophy of knowing, a methodology for managing change, and an approach to leadership and human development."

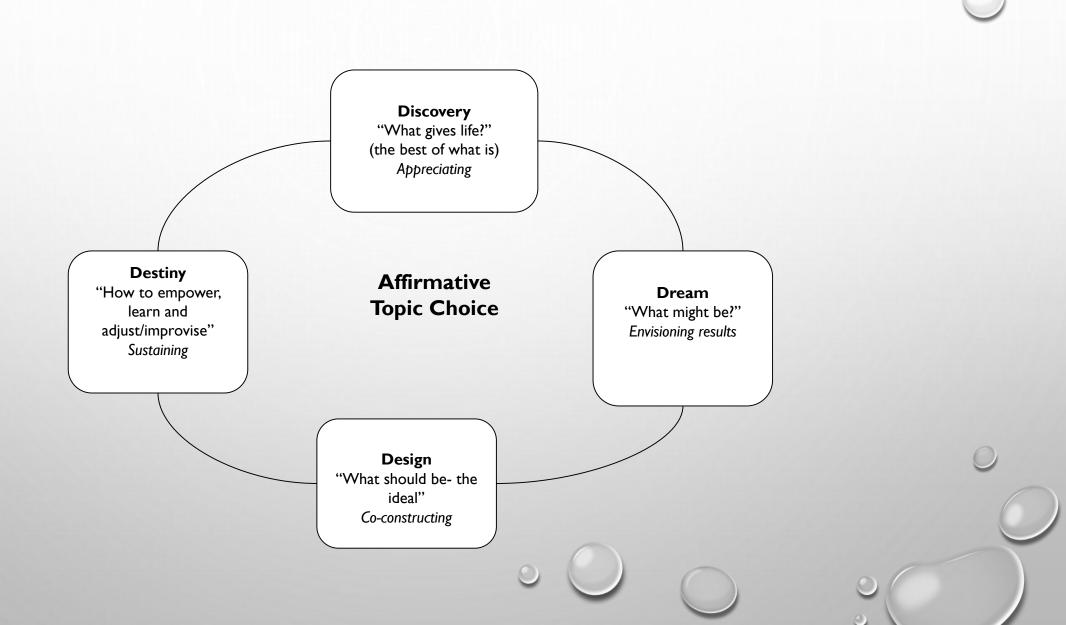
Cooperrider and Whitney (1999)

**Ap-pre'ci-ate**, v., I. valuing; the act of recognising the best in people or the world around us; affirming past and present strengths, successes, and potentials; to perceive those things that give life (health, vitality, excellence) to living systems.

However: I propose an enhanced definition:

To know, to be conscious of, to take full and  $\bigcirc$  sufficient account of....

## **APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY 4 – D CYCLE**



- THE CONSTRUCTIONIST PRINCIPLE
- THE PRINCIPLE OF SIMULTANEITY
- THE POETIC PRINCIPLE
- THE ANTICIPATORY PRINCIPLE
- THE POSITIVE PRINCIPLE

THE CONSTRUCTIONIST PRINCIPLE
KNOWLEDGE, LANGUAGE AND ACTION ARE INEXTRICABLY LINKED.
I.E. WHAT WE THINK INFLUENCES WHAT WE SAY AND DO.

THE PRINCIPLE OF SIMULTANEITY

INQUIRY IS INTERVENTION. SEEDS OF CHANGE ARE SOWN IN THE VERY FIRST QUESTION WE ASK.

• THE POETIC PRINCIPLE

THE STORY OF AN EVENT IS CONSTANTLY BEING CO AUTHORED & RE-AUTHORED. I.E. EVERYONE PERCEIVES, AND HENCE RECOUNTS, A SITUATION DIFFERENTLY ENDLESS INTERPRETATIONS ARE POSSIBLE.

• THE ANTICIPATORY PRINCIPLE

THE IMAGE WE HOLD OF THE FUTURE GUIDES CURRENT BEHAVIOR

E.G. IF YOU EXPECT A MEETING TO BE BORING, IT MOST LIKELY WILL BE.

• THE POSITIVE PRINCIPLE

THE MORE POSITIVE THE QUESTIONS OR APPROACH THE MORE SUCCESSFUL AND LONG TERM THE CHANGE EFFORT.

I.E. CHANGE DRIVEN BY APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY IS MORE LIKELY TO LAST <sup>(2)</sup>





- "TOO POLLYANNAISH"
- EXCESSIVELY FOCUSED ON "WARM FUZZY GROUP HUGS"
- UNDER EVALUATED AND DISCOURAGES ANALYSIS
- LACK OF CRITICAL IMPERATIVE

### CRITICAL APPRECIATIVE PROCESSES CAN HELP

- CHALLENGE ASSUMPTIONS YOU TAKE FOR GRANTED IN THE SITUATION:
- WHO DECIDES WHAT IS 'GOOD'? WHAT YOU CONSIDER GOOD MAY DIFFER FROM YOUR COLLEAGUES.
- DON'T GET HUNG UP IN THE MECHANICS OF A METHOD (E.G. THE 4 DS). IT IS THE APPRECIATIVE INTENT THAT IS MOST IMPORTANT AND WHERE THE VALUE OF AI LIES.
- ADOPT A BROADER APPLICATION OF APPRECIATION: "TO KNOW, TO BE CONSCIOUS OF, TO TAKE FULL AND SUFFICIENT ACCOUNT OF...."