

# Appreciative Inquiry

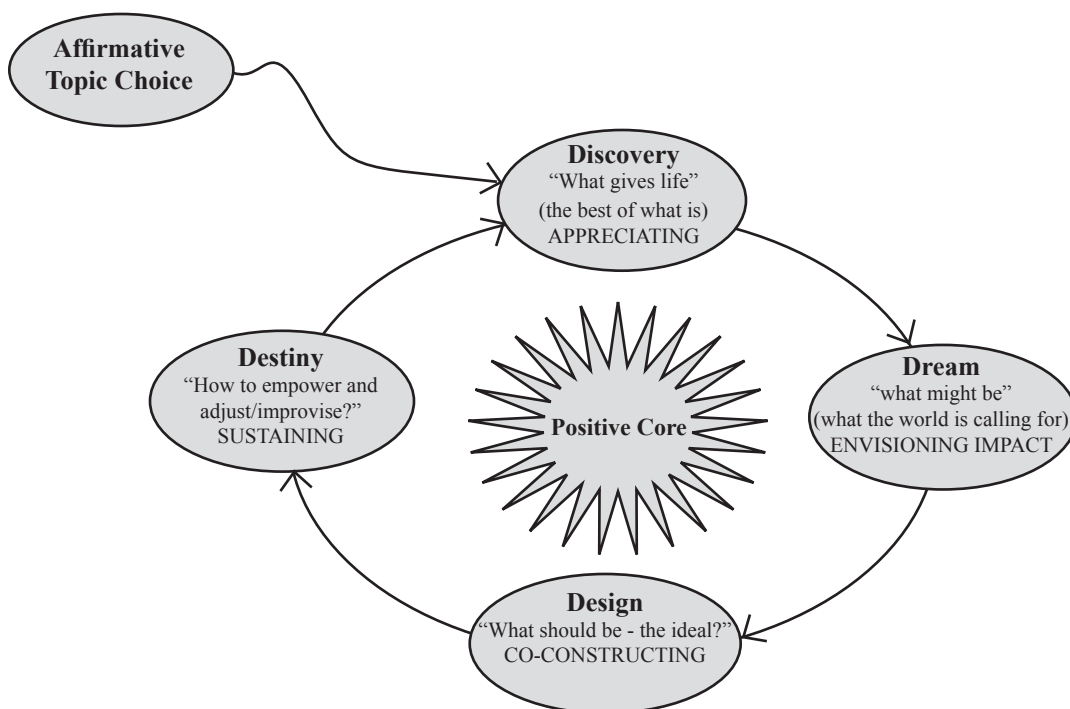
## What is it?

“Appreciative Inquiry” is the study and exploration of what gives life to human systems such as persons, teams, organizations or communities when they function at their best. This approach to personal and organizational change is based on the assumption that questions and dialogue about strengths, successes, values, hopes, dreams are themselves transformational. Appreciation has to do with recognizing the best in people; affirming past and present strengths, successes, assets, and potentials; and recognizing how these things add value to the human system, the church in our particular case. Inquiry refers to the acts of exploration and discovery and implies a quest for new possibilities, a willingness to learn from one another, and an openness to change on the part of all included in the system. This means organizational leaders, members, and key stakeholders all learning together and opening up to change.

The approach of appreciative Inquiry has a long history of more than 25 years of research and experimentation. The idea originated with David Cooperrider at the Weatherhead School of Management at Case Western Reserve University. However it has been applied with great success as a catalyzing force for change in for-profit, not-for-profit, and religious organizations across the world.

## How does appreciative inquiry work?

The process used to generate the power of appreciative inquiry is the 4-D Cycle pictured below. It is based on the notion that human systems - individuals, teams, organizations, and communities - grow and change in the direction of what they study. Appreciative Inquiry works by focusing the attention of an organization on its most positive potential - its positive core - and unleashes the energy of the positive core for transformation and sustainable success. Starting with affirmative topic choices, the approach begins with a discovery phase of learning to appreciate the people’s collective wisdom about the organization’s tangible and intangible strengths, capabilities, resources and assets. This discovery phase involves sharing best practices through stories from the past and the present and then proceeding to imagine what the church might be like in the future in preparation for the dream phase . A complete 4-D Cycle includes using the discovery and dream phases as a foundation for a design phase and then actually co-creating and sustaining what has been planned, thus achieving the final phase of destiny. Turn this page over to learn how the 4-D Cycle will proceed in our church over the weeks and months to come.



## **How will Appreciative Inquiry Proceed in Our Church?**

### Projected Time Table for complete 4-D Cycle

Mid-April to Mid- June:	Discovery through One-on-one interviews
Mid June to July:	Data Analysis
August:	Positive Core Identified
September 19:	Dream Summit
October to Nov.:	Design Team Work Groups
December:	Beginning of Destiny during Budget Process

## **How can I become involved in the appreciative inquiry interviews?**

We need everyone's participation in the appreciative inquiry interviews if we are to be effective in building the church of our dreams that will challenge us all in our search for spiritual fulfillment. We are currently signing up people for interviews. Check the sign up sheet in the foyer in the clip board rack on the Welcome Counter where new visitor's information is displayed.

## **When will the interviews be held?**

Once you sign up, an interviewer will be assigned to you and this person will contact you to set up an interview session at a time and place that is practical for you. You will be able to look at the interview questions ahead of time on the church website or a handout if you prefer. The interview will last about 60 minutes depending on how many affirmative topic areas you are interested in addressing.

The purpose for the interview sessions is to discover from as many people as possible the stories of best practices and ideas and build on this information to co-create the best possible future for our church.

## **General Information about the Interview Sessions**

- The role of the interviewer is to listen to you and record your stories and ideas.
- Your comments will be in response to open ended questions that flow from affirmative topics (posted on the church website or obtainable as a handout in hard copy)
- Your stories, ideas and comments will be recorded by the interviewer.
- The session should take approximately 60 minutes
- The AI team will be responsible for analyzing the summaries of information generated from the interview sessions.
- This information will be reported at the Dream Summit in September, but samples of the stories and ideas will also be shared in creative ways during the weeks preceding the Summit.

**The information explaining the appreciative inquiry approach to organizational change has been excerpted from the book *The Power of Appreciative Inquiry: A Practical Guide to Positive Change* by Diana Whitney & Amanda Trosten-Bloom, published by Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., San Francisco, 2003.**