AT YOUR BEST

Building organizational resilience with Appreciative Inquiry
Would you describe yourself as an optimist, someone who sees the positive in any situation with relative ease?
The Evidence


Appreciative Inquiry in Youthful Offender Psychiatric Nursing Research

Elizabeth Bonham, PhD, RN, PMHCNS, BC

Elizabeth Bonham, PhD, RN, PMHCNS, BC, is Assistant Professor, College of Nursing and Health Professions, University of Southern Indiana, Evansville, Indiana, USA.
Promoting Social Justice Through Appreciative Community Service

Peter C. Mather, Erin Konkle
Building Psychological Capital With Appreciative Inquiry: Investigating the Mediating Role of Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction

Bert Verleysen¹, Frank Lambrechts², and Frederik Van Acker³
THE POWER OF QUESTIONS

“Asking questions is fundamental to organizational learning, growth, change, renewal and success. The kinds of questions that matter most are those that are learning oriented.”

- Preskill & Catsambas
The Appreciative Interview

• **Peak experience:** Describe a time where you feel most successful in terms of your contributions to your community?

• **Values:** Without being humble, what do you value most about yourself and your contributions?

• **Wishes:** If you had three wishes for your community, what would they be?
Appreciative Interviews: The “Heart & Soul” of AI

1. Begin inquiry in an interesting, non-threatening way
2. Ground success in real experience
3. Make the values of the speaker explicit
THREE FUNDAMENTAL FACTS

Exceptionality – All of us are exceptions to the rule.

Essentiality – We like to feel as if we would be missed.

Equality – Each of us wants to share our voice.

- Salopek, 2006
“the telling of stories is not just to make people feel good and warm. . . The power of the stories is in their ability to remind us what success looked like and felt like – to relive the event and remember that we can be successful, and that we have the capability to bring life and energy to our work.”

– D. Cooperrider
RE-FRAMING

Individually, list the most pressing problems facing your community right now.

(e.g. economic diversification, family violence, job loss, etc.)
WICKED PROBLEMS

A wicked problem is a problem that is difficult or impossible to solve because of incomplete, contradictory, and changing requirements that are often difficult to recognize.
Tame problem

Wicked problem
“Problem solving approaches are notorious for placing blame and generating defensiveness. They sap your energy and tax your mind, and don’t advance the organization’s evolution beyond a slow crawl.”

David Cooperrider
“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeing new landscapes, but in having new eyes.”

- M. Proust
RE-FRAMING

Share your problem list with your partner(s). Select the most pressing problem facing your organization.

Re-frame this problem into a statement or topic that clearly expresses what you want more of, the preferred future state.
A.I.

1. Definition
Choose a positive as the focus of inquiry

2. Discovery
Inquire into exceptionally positive moments

3. Dream
Create shared images of a preferred future

4. Design
Create a plan to build that preferred future

5. Delivery
(a.k.a. Destiny)
Innovate and improvise ways to create that future
Inquire
Appreciate the best of “what is”

Implement
Implement the innovation

Imagine
What might be?

Innovate
What should be?

Topic
Now SOAR!

INQUIRY into Strengths

IMAGINE the Opportunities

INNOVATE to meet Aspirations

INSPIRE to achieve Results

Stavros, Copperrider, Kelly (2005)
Possibility Statements

• constructed by everyone affected
• the confident and assertive statements of what the community hopes to become
• statements that bridge the best of 'what is' with 'what might be'
• a clear, shared vision for the organization's destiny
• written in the present tense
• statements that provoke action.
Provocative Propositions

• Is it provocative? Does it stretch, challenge, or interrupt?
• Is it grounded? Does this illustrate the ideal as a real possibility?
• Is it desired? Do you really want it as a preferred future?
• Is it stated in affirmative and bold terms? Does it inspire you?
End homelessness in Medicine Hat: MHCHS is a respected leader in positive social change in the community, utilizing a collective impact approach.

Achieve improved profile through increasing community awareness and fostering relationships: MHCHS is known, understood and appreciated as a valuable entity by the residents of Medicine Hat.
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A.I.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>DETAIL</th>
<th>Most Responsible Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What have we done so far that has worked?</td>
<td>Activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can we improve?</td>
<td>Target or goal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What can we do to make this happen?</td>
<td>Activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who will be involved and how?</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions

“if we can create a collective sense of what needs to be achieved, create new models or theories of how to achieve that, and align those with the inherent motivation people have in relation to their organizational life, then a great deal of change leading to increased organizational performance can occur if people are allowed and encouraged to take initiative and make it happen.”

- Bushe & Kassam, 2005
Concluding thoughts

Let go of control in planned change efforts and nurture a more improvisational approach . . . Improvised planned change seems at first glance to be an oxymoron but in each case of transformational change that used an improvisational approach, leaders were able to accomplish their change goals and do so within time frames, way beyond what many who work at and study organizational change would expect as reasonable.

- Bushe & Kassam, 2005
Questions?

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References (cont)


