

Appreciative Inquiry

An approach to organization change developed by Dr. David Cooperrider and his colleagues at the Weatherhead School of Management at Case Western University. Find out more at Appreciative Inquiry Commons, <http://appreciativeinquiry.cwru.edu>.

The core philosophy is:

Whatever you want more of already exists in the organization or group.

The core question is:

What is working well around here?

Sample AI Question:

Think back to a work or community project or activity that you have been involved with in the last year. Think about a specific time when you felt most alive, most connected with your values, or perhaps had a heightened sense of vitality and excitement at your task. Describe that time. What was it about that time that made it so special and memorable? What are the one or two reasons you felt most engaged?

Assumptions:

1. In every group or organization, something works.
2. What we focus on becomes our reality. If we look for problems, we will find them (and make them bigger). Search for and amplify solutions that already exist.
3. The act of asking questions influences the group in some way. The language we use creates our reality.
4. Envisioning the future is more clear and possible when it is grounded in the reality of the past.
5. If we carry forward parts of the past, they should be what is best about the past.
6. It is important to value differences and to recognize that reality is created in the moment and there are multiple realities.

Appreciative Inquiry	Traditional Problem Solving
Valuing the Best of "What Is"	Identification of Problem
Envisioning "What Might Be"	Analysis of Causes
Dialoguing "What Should Be"	Analysis of Possible Solutions
Innovating "What Will Be"	Action Planning
Basic Assumption: Organization is a miracle to be embraced.	Basic Assumption: Organization is a problem to be solved.
Creative	Reactive
Make it the way we want it	Survive it