

# APPRECIATIVE

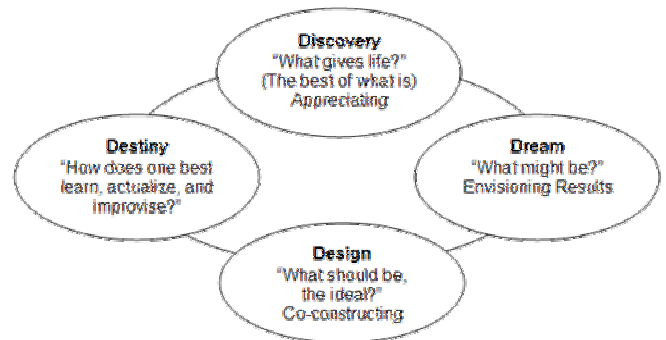
# INQUIRY



## A Better Way of Getting Results

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When any personal or organizational development initiative is taken up, the first step is generally an assessment of the existing condition or situation. Usually the first question we ask is “*What kind of problems am I / are we having?*” The focus is either on barriers or gaps – the “negatives”. Looking at the problems not only helps us find them, but more often than not, we manage to make them bigger. These “negatives” seems so overwhelming that they often leave people feeling demoralized – achieving the desired results become a daunting, insurmountable task.

Is there any other way? It is in this context that we will look at Appreciative Inquiry, which was developed by David Cooperrider, Suresh Srivastva and others at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, USA, in the seventies.

What is Appreciative Inquiry? *Appreciate means “valuing; the act of recognizing the best in people or the world around us; affirming past and present strengths, successes, and potentials;” and Inquiry means “the act of exploration and discovery, to ask questions; to be open to seeing new potentials and possibilities.”* It is about what is working well, what are the positives and then building on them.


The fundamental premise of Appreciative Inquiry is that “**human systems grow toward what they persistently ask questions about.**” As Diana Whitney writes – the Appreciative Inquiry model is a process for positive change, based on the assumption that change occurs through thoughtful inquiry and dialogue into affirmative life giving forces – through the four phases of the process: Discovery, Dream, Design And Delivery.

**Discovery** – *appreciating what gives life (the best of what is)* This is the phase where we examine what works – identifying the strengths and successes of an individual or organization – focusing on what gives life and energy. The discovery phase shifts the balance from what is not working to what is working and what may possibly work in the future.

**Dream** – *envisioning or imaging what might be* In this phase, we engage in thinking big, thinking out of the box, and thinking out of the boundaries of what has been in the past. It is a time for us to describe our wishes and dreams for the future – where / how we want to see ourselves / our organization.

**Design** – *determining what will be* This phase focuses on actionable possibilities, where we get down to exploring the choices about actions we need to take, the steps we will have to take –to realize our dreams.

**Delivery** – *implementing and sustaining what will be* Now comes the actual work – the “Action” towards making the “dream and design” happen.

When Appreciative Inquiry process is used you will find that “**When you do more of what works, the stuff that does not work, goes away. You get the future of your choice based on you already have within you!**” 

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