

## Appreciative Inquiry – It’s Lifeblood

The 5-D model of Appreciative Inquiry embodies a powerful process. As a change management method, it affirms and compels groups of people to envision an image of the future, grounded in the best from the past, thereby having the greatest potential to produce deep and sustaining change. The energy unleashed through the Appreciative Inquiry process propels incredible creativity and feats. Its lifeblood:

### The Generative Power of Questions

- The act of asking questions influences the person, group or community.
- If you inquire into problems, you will find more of what is wrong.
- If you inquire into what is going really well, you will find more of best practices.
- People, groups or communities will grow in the direction of the topics they study or inquire into.

“Inquiry is intervention. The seeds of change—the things that people think about, discover and learn, and that inform dialogue and inspire images of the future—are implicit in the very first questions we ask...and the languaging we choose to use.” --*Jane Magruder Watkins & Bernard J. Mohr*

“Be patient...and try to love the questions themselves. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer.” - *Maria Rilke Rainer*

“If you truly wish to change your world, you must change your way of asking questions. Could it be that the moment you do so, a totally different world will take shape around you?” - *Diana Whitney, David Cooperider, Amanda Trosten-Bloom, Joseph Kaplan*

### The Life-Giving Energy of Stories

- People organize experiences into stories.
- Stories shape the professional identity of the individual, work group, or organization
- Individual, team, & company identities are socially constructed through exchange of stories.
- No one story defines a person, team or an organization. All are multi-storied.
- The stories a person or a group decides to focus on become reality.

“The capacity to directly engage the heart and imagination in such a way that a deeper level of listening is activated, which opens the eyes of perception. The greatest value that arises from a story does not arise from the coherent content of the story text. That is the apparent value. The deepest learning happens in the unspoken story that is generated by the mind mixing of images called forth during the telling. And, in the space of timeless sacredness experienced in the process. The thinking mind is kept entranced by the content, while the images dip down and uncover and awaken the dreaming imagination and intuitive intelligence of the listener.” *Laura Simms, Author and Storyteller*

### The Reality-Creating Dynamics of Language

- Like questions, the words we choose to use directly influence the dynamics of our conversations. For example:
  - “What would you like to learn today” vs. “To walk out of here feeling thrilled...imagine you are tingling with unleashed energy...what would we have done together to have you feeling that way?”

“I had always thought that we used language to describe the world – now I was seeing that this was not the case. To the contrary, it is through language that we create the world, because it’s nothing until we describe it. And when we describe it, we create distinctions that govern our actions. To put

it another way, we do not describe the world we see, but we see the world we describe.” -- *Joseph Jaworski*

**The Lure of Created Shared Images & Strength of the Collective Imagination**

- People will naturally move toward a picture of the future they have imagined and created together.
- People are amazing and truly gifted at creating their future, if we create the proper forum—and if we only ask.

“Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back.... Concerning all acts of initiative there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would otherwise never have occurred.” *William M. Murray*