

Evaluation, Exploration, & Empowerment:

A “Gentle” Strategy of Inquiry

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Abstract

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) addresses **evaluation challenges** with a “gentle” strategy of inquiry. AI combines **evaluation, exploration, and empowerment** that engages stakeholders and contributes to social justice. New applications of AI also **reduce time and resource constraints**. AI provides a **flexible** and contextual evaluation tool.

Evaluation Challenges

- Lack of **expertise**
- **Time** constraints
- **Fear** of negative results
- **Irrelevant** to organizational goals

AI Advantages

- Grounded in **stakeholder meaning**
- Directly tied to **organizational goals**
- **Depth** in narrative data
- **Positive** organizational culture
- **Transferrable** to context
- Supports **evaluation interest**

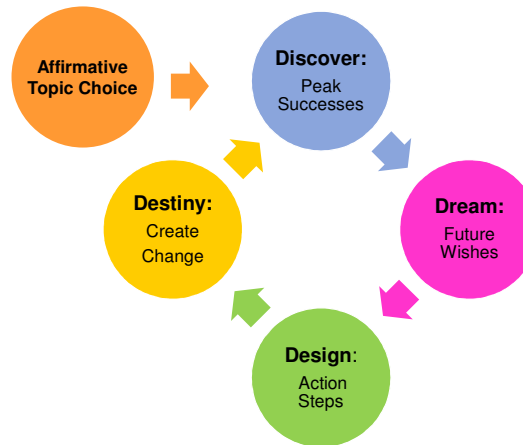
Traditional AI Disadvantages

- **Time Intensive** (several days)
- **Resource Intensive** (**ALL** stakeholders)
- **Expertise** (consultants & trained groups)
- **Not Inclusive** for marginalized groups



We live in a world
our questions create.

Exploration & Inquiry



Appreciative Inquiry Steps

Instead of fixing problems - Dream Possibilities

Use a **culture** built on **positive accounts** of **peak performance & demonstrated strengths**. The culture provides “**self-driving**” & **continuous evaluation stories** AND builds **organizational enthusiasm**.



Empowerment & Social Justice



- **Inclusive**, expands stakeholders
- **Cooperative**
- Provides **continuous** evaluation
- Includes **positive** vision
- **Encourages evaluation** interest

New Adaptations

- **Timely, Short Duration**
- **Expands** stakeholders
- **Scaffolded** to Abilities
- **Familiar & Easy** – No expertise
- **Continuous** Evaluation
- Results **useful** for multiple contexts (evaluation, planning, marketing)
- **Institutionalizes evaluation**