



The appreciative inquiry

The appreciative inquiry book

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is an organizational development process or philosophy that engages individuals within an organizational system in its renewal, change and focused performance. AI is based on the assumption that organizations change in the way they inquire and the claim that an organization which inquires into problems or difficult situations will keep finding more of the same but an organization which tries to appreciate what is best in itself will find/discover more and more of what is good.

We would love to hear your feedback: suggestions about new topics? Ideas about improvements? Like to share your experience and make it an eBook, White Paper, check-list? Please let us know through <http://www.amareway.org/> There, you can also read more on related topics. Thanks!

Appreciative Inquiry: David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva

Appreciative Inquiry was adopted from work done by earlier action research theorists and practitioners and further developed by David Cooperrider of Case Western Reserve University and Suresh Srivastva in the 1980s. Cooperrider and Srivastva say that an organization is a miracle to be embraced rather than a problem to be solved. According to them, inquiry into organizational life should have the following characteristics:

- Appreciative
- Applicable
- Provocative
- Collaborative

It is now a commonly accepted practice in the creation of organizational development strategy and implementation of organizational effectiveness tactics.

Appreciative Inquiry is a particular way of asking questions and envisioning the future that fosters positive relationships and builds on the basic goodness in a person, a situation, or an organization. In so doing, it enhances a system's capacity for collaboration and change.

Appreciative Inquiry utilizes a cycle of 4 processes focusing on:

1. DISCOVER: The identification of organizational processes that work well.
2. DREAM: The envisioning of processes that would work well in the future.
3. DESIGN: Planning and prioritizing processes that would work well.
4. DESTINY (or DELIVER): The implementation (execution) of the proposed design.

The basic idea is to build organizations around what works, rather than trying to fix what doesn't. It is the opposite of problem solving. Instead of focusing on gaps and inadequacies to remediate skills or practices, AI focuses on how to create more of the exceptional performance that is occurring when a core of strengths is aligned. It opens the door to a universe of possibilities, since the work doesn't stop when a particular problem is solved but rather focuses on "What is the best we can be?" The approach acknowledges the contribution of individuals,



in order to increase trust and organizational alignment. The method aims to create meaning by drawing from stories of concrete successes and lends itself to cross-industrial social activities.

Sources

Special thanks to Wikipedia, which provided the backbone of the main content of this booklet, and allows to distribute it under a Creative Common licence.

Appendix – AmAre Way in more details

$$\text{Happiness} = \text{Aware (Being)} + \text{Meditating} + \text{Active (Being)} + \text{Respectful (Being)} + \text{Eating (Properly)}$$

1.1

How to calculate it?

Aware		Meditating		Active		Respectful		Eating	
W	G	W	G	W	G	W	G	W	G

Explanation of variables:

A: Aware (being) of each other and couple’s feelings, thoughts, needs and wants

M: Meditating together, or at least sharing thoughts

AI: Active (being) together, do things together

R: Respectful (being) of each other and couple’s feelings, thoughts, needs and wants

E: Eating properly and support each other healthy lifestyle, and also feed the relationship with positive feelings and thoughts

(...): if there are additional aspects considered too important to be included in the rest of the formula, they can be weighted and graded here

For each variable, please specify:

w: weight, importance given to each aspect (sum of all weights should be 100)

g: grade, rating given to each aspect (each grade is a value between 0 and 1)

If you want to use a spreadsheet, where you can insert the values and see them automatically calculated, you can use: <http://spsh.amareway.org/>

1.2

What does it mean?

AmAre formula is meant to be descriptive and preventive, but not predictive. That is, it quantifies the current situation, and the strengths and weaknesses we should be aware of and act upon. Regardless of what the number says, we are always responsible, here and now, for our happiness, so a high result means we should keep building our happiness as we have successfully done so far, and a lower result means there are aspects to act upon to improve our lives.

One of the formula’s strengths is its unlikeness to reach One, the perfect score, or Zero. This formula is useful so we can improve our awareness about the situation so far, and build a better



present. Once the formula served its purposes, we can move on. Because the ultimate happiness is not reaching number 1, it is in finding and renewing the appropriate life-dynamics. If we can accept the way life is, and the fact that different people assign different weights and grades to the pillars of their happiness, and still respect and care about all of us, doing our best for the mutual happiness, we are on the way to build together a lasting happy living.

This is a scale to interpret the overall result of the formula:

0-0.3: This is an unlikely result, so please double check each values inserted. If values are correct, it is possible the perception of your SWB tends toward emphasizing the non-positive aspects, or that there is a short-term serious issue. This means there is a need to work on all your priorities to make them more satisfying to you in the medium term.

0.31-0.60: Your level of SWB could be higher, if you are closer to 0.31 result. If you are closer to 0.5, you are near an exact average value where you perceive the same value of positive and non-positive components in your life. In both cases, by working on the AmAre variables (starting from the ones with higher weight and lower grade), you can substantially improve your well-being.

0.61-0.90: You tend towards an optimal level of SWB. You feel happy, and likely experienced most or at least many of the happiness "fringe benefits". You likely live joyfully everyday: no matter the ups and downs we all have, you can make the best of them for yourself and the people around you.

0.91-1: This result is unlikely to be reached, so please double check each values inserted. If values are correct, you are achieving the maximum level of SWB, which you can sustain by living joyfully .

To interpret the value of each AmAre variable, you can use the same scale. If a variable is high in weight, and low in grade, then it requires attention and action to improve it. If a variable is low in weight, and high in grade, then you may ask yourself if its grade is slightly over estimated.

We suggest to calculate your AmAre Index once per week for the first 5 weeks. Then, to calculate it once per month. Please make sure to start from scratch at each calculation, meaning you should not check values assigned in the past; after calculating your current AmAre Index, you can then check what changed compared to the previous calculations. If you want to be reminded about monthly calculation, you can register the AmAre newsletter on. <http://www.amareway.org/>

1.3 Where are references and further information?

<http://www.amareway.org/>

(Official website)

<http://www.amareway.org/personal-development-free-personal-development-ebooks/>

(Free eBooks: AmAre applied to blogging, social media, etc.)

[Subjective well-being blog](#)

(Review of research about Subjective well-being)



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