

Appreciative Inquiry



Asking Questions to Get the Best Responses

The way you ask a question determines the response you will get. If you ask a question in the positive, the responder is able to respond with creativity and innovation which results in better problem solving and outcomes. Appreciative Inquiry turns human potential into positive performance.

Appreciative Inquiry was used by Cleveland Clinic to transform its organization and is still used today. Also being taught at the University of Virginia Medical School.

4 Primary Types of Appreciative Inquiry Questions:

1. **Best Experience:** Tell me a story in detail about a time when you were part of a (Project) that really worked.
2. **Values Question:** What is it that you value most about (Project)
3. **Life-Giving Force Question:** From your experience and observations, what do you consider the core value, the life-giving force of a successful (Project)?
4. **Wishes and Images of the Future:** Imagine that you are part of a successful (Project) that fulfills all your expectations for excellence. Describe that (Project) in detail.
(Rothwell, Stavros, Sullivan, and Sullivan, 2010.)

In “Leading Positive Performance: A Conversation About Appreciative Leadership,” the authors demonstrate five ways individuals can effectively utilize appreciative leadership. (Whitney, Trosten-Bloom, Rader, 2010.)

1. **Practice inclusion:** appreciative inquiry is based on the concept of wholeness and inclusion.
2. **Lead with inquiry,** asking what the desired goal will be and how to reframe the question positively.
3. **Illuminate strengths.** Appreciative leaders become “strength spotters” within their organizations.
4. **Inspiration.** Inspiration includes three things: a strong vision for the organization, a clear path forward, and the belief that the organization has what it takes to accomplish the vision. Appreciative leaders are able to provide inspiration. Inspiration includes three things: a strong vision for the organization, a clear path forward, and the belief that the organization has what it takes to accomplish the vision. Appreciative leaders are able to provide inspiration.
5. **Demonstrating integrity and personal authenticity.** Effective leaders know themselves well and accept themselves. They are able to speak from their minds and their hearts because there is congruence between the two.

Examples:

- High Employee Turnover Rates: Study employee retention and find out what’s working, rather than study employee turnover, which is a problem.
- Low Patient Satisfaction: Study what areas patients are satisfied at your facility, what are you doing right? How can you apply those concepts to where scores are low? Build on strengths.

Have questions or would like more info? Email Monica Bourgeau at MBourgeau@mchospital.net. Thanks!