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Appreciative Inquiry Handbook

For Leaders of Change

2nd Edition

Foreword by Ronald Fry

an excerpt from

***Appreciative Inquiry Handbook:
For Leaders of Change***

by David L. Cooperrider, Diana Whitney and Jacqueline M. Stavros
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Foreword

“Be the change you want to see in the world.”

—Gandhi

This second edition of the *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook* signals a period of tremendous growth in the application and dissemination of AI throughout the world. No fewer than 20 new books on AI have appeared during the four short years since the Handbook first appeared—books ranging in focus from organizational capacity building to building of dynamic relationships, from peace making to knowledge management, from leadership to coaching and program evaluation, and from socially responsible enterprises to multistakeholder strategy creation. A steadily growing number of workshops, certificate programs, and master’s degree programs emphasizing AI and related strength-based change methods are being conducted in most continents and in multiple languages. There is no doubt that AI has established itself as a maturing community of practice that carries on the legacy of Kurt Lewin’s memorable notion that nothing is so good as a practical theory.

As the praxis of AI matures, so does our understanding of the theoretical underpinnings that remain valid and that provide confidence for the practitioner, as well as our recognition of new frontiers for thought and action. This *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook* instructs and guides us in both areas. I would like to offer a few observations on the healthy “state of the discipline” as we receive the second edition of the Handbook:

- **The fundamentals are sound.** I believe the core principles (Chapter 1) and their theoretical roots (mini-lectures) remain the bedrock of this practice. Fundamentally, AI is still about changing attitudes, behaviors, and practices through appreciative conversations and relationships—interactions designed to bring out the best in people so that they can imagine a preferred future together that is more hopeful, boundless, and inherently good. It is still about socially constructing a shared future and enacting human systems through the questions asked. And it is still about anticipatory learning—finding those positive, anticipatory images of the future that compel action toward them. Even the academic critics (another sign of a maturing science!) of AI avoid any serious debate of the basic principles; these basic assumptions still signal a verifiable way (not *the* way) to understand and activate positive change in human systems.

- **The scale is limitless.** From pairs to populations, from a team to a global network of thousands of stakeholders, the scope of AI in practice is ever-expanding. The advent of the AI Summit methodology and other adaptations of large-group interventions using AI combined with today's information technology enable global systems to connect in ways never imagined. World Vision can engage nearly 5,000 of its members and stakeholders to create strategic goals in four days, working 24 hours a day in three languages. The BBC can engage all 22,000 employees worldwide in the design and creation of a culture for innovation. In ten summits, the U.S. Navy can engage thousands across seven different commands to foster a culture of engaged and empowered leaders at every level. A cadre of more than 1,000 appreciative leaders throughout Nepal can mobilize to shape a peaceful and prosperous future for their country (including the voices of more than 150,000 village women!). Those are just a few examples. Every day AI practitioners are discovering more effective way to engage all stakeholders—the whole system at once—in the center of strategy formation, planning, and implementation.
- **A greater scope is calling.** One of the great scholars of leadership and management over the past century, Peter Drucker, has said that all of the world's greatest challenges are business opportunities. Since AI has become an established means for designing, transforming, and growing effective organizations, it is well suited to help address the more difficult issues and/or questions of our time. This is an important frontier for AI—to increasingly tackle the difficult questions that will require engaging stakeholders and parties with wildly opposing world views, mental models, learned values, and the like. The methods, tools, and insights in this Handbook enable the reader/learner to find the strengths (positive core) of organizations (particularly businesses) and to apply those strengths toward shaping business to be an agent for world benefit, toward eco-innovations, toward business as an agent of peace, toward business models to eradicate poverty, and so on. They have helped the United Nations Global Compact and the Academy of Management create a new, enduring partnership to merge research of consequence to assist the aims of businesses in fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals. For Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, AI has been instrumental in its record setting economic growth and its continuing recognition as one of the world's most socially responsible organizations.
- **The focus is on generativity.** As with any maturing phenomena, there is a danger of superficial understanding or application that manipulates for an outcome rather than that opens for inquiry and searches for new

understanding. I believe the field of AI is at that stage, particularly with respect to the tendency for many to be drawn to the “positive-ness” of AI as an end or outcome. There is little doubt that one of the attractions to AI is that it honors or privileges the experience of positive effect—and that our need for this, or attraction to it, is a commentary on the state of today’s social systems that tend to provoke the opposite (vicious) effect much of the time. However, the place of positive effect in AI is more a means than an end. The burgeoning fields of Positive Psychology and Positive Organization Scholarship are revealing that human systems are not entropic; rather, they are capable of virtuous acts resulting from members finding more energy to cooperate with each other—that the desire to put more effort, more time, and more attention toward an activity of mutual benefit is the consequence of certain kinds of inquiry and conversation. Negative, critical, radical, or fringe voices are not excluded from this formula. AI choreographs dialogic inquiry to increase the likelihood of generating new cooperative acts. This is the meaning of the use of positive in labeling a type of scholarship, a field of psychology, or a type of change.

- **The inquiry is what really counts.** Similar to the “trap” of seeking just to be positive is the tendency for those using AI to seek only to be acting or engaging in appreciative ways. So often I hear of AI “exercises” being used to begin key meetings, strategic planning workshops, and so on, as warm-ups to get all of the voices in the room to reconnect with some high-points and to begin on an “appreciative note.” It would be a tragedy for this Handbook to serve merely for that purpose. Rather, let it be your guide to *inquiry*, to a particular type of search and exploration for shared meaning that can lead to powerful images of the future that then call for action to realize that preferred future. In other words, AI is more about learning and understanding something (the affirmative topic, Chapter 2)—and thereby *valuing* it—than it is about expressions of appreciation.

This Handbook remains the best and most complete and practical set of materials for anyone wanting to read about AI and to begin to practice the AI 4-D methodology. It remains the basic primer for “what to do,” “how to do it,” and “why to do it” and for using AI theory and methods. This second edition contains more examples of applications and measured impacts, more evidence of positive change from longitudinal interventions, and more tools and new insights about the *Design* phase of the AI process (4 Ds) in Chapter 6. The resources brought forth are a rich companion to anyone engaged or wanting to engage in AI. I expect no matter your prior experience with AI ideas and processes, you will want to reference this book again and again. Once again

the authors have amassed in one place all of the foundation concepts and latest concepts, cases, and resources necessary to learn and apply AI at any level.

However, there is one shortcoming of this great foundation book about AI in that it cannot really convey what the authors model in their practice: the “be-ing” of AI. David, Diana, and Jackie are great practitioners and teachers, not just because of what they know, but because of how they “be AI” in their everyday lives. When, in their company, you experience the gift of their ability to be what they write about, as I have, you suddenly realize the essence of this wonderful idea of appreciative inquiry—that we can actually be in the moment we are in, working toward the change we want to realize, and that this be-ing with each other is the change happening, as we engage. We do not have to plan for it, measure it, wait for a date to have it, or announce that it is here; positive change is what life—living—can be all about. It is not a Cartesian concept to be objectified or even measured as much as it is a quality of experience—of being connected to others in shared hopes, activities, and exchanges that help each of us to flourish in the moment.

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Fall 2007

Preface

"The ageless essence of leadership is to create an alignment of strengths in ways that make a system's weaknesses irrelevant."

—Peter Drucker

Better ways of leading change are spreading throughout the world. Could it be, as Drucker's provocative manifesto so clearly implies, that the leadership of change is *entirely* about the discovery and elevation of strengths? Certainly we know that *strengths perform*. But what about the idea that strengths do far more than perform—that *strengths transform*? As many are now experiencing, an exciting nondeficit model of positive change is rapidly spreading that puts something powerful and full of life deep inside the heart of every type of business and organizational change.

Some call it the "strengths revolution"—a movement that has profound implications for everyone interested in leading with hope and optimism and winning the future through the highest engagement of human strengths. Fascinating questions on this topic are many. Why, for example, would discovering and moving from strength to strength in human systems activate, energize, and elevate change? What would it mean to ignite an entire change paradigm around new combinations, configurations, and chemistries of strengths? What good are positive emotions, words, images, inquiries, and constructions as we seek to understand the positive psychology and expansive economy of human strengths—especially in turbulent, difficult, and complex times? And what if we took the strengths logic to the hilt: where are all of the new tools, and where would we—as managers, change leaders, parents, and friends—start? Equally important, what becomes of all of the "deficiencies," "threats," "breakdowns," "gaps," and "problems" if we truly explore what's involved in Drucker's ever-curious phrase in *ways that make a system's weaknesses irrelevant*?

This book is that invitation to an imaginative and fresh perception of organizations and the process through which they change. Its "metacognitive" stance is choicefully affirmative. Its central thesis—as an extension of the Lewinian premise that human action depends on the world as constructed rather than the world as it is—is pragmatic and hopeful. This book teaches how to build and sustain an organization from its strengths—positive core. This book offers a fresh approach to using the contributions of any and all stakeholders to design and redesign the systems within organizations for a more effective and sustainable future.

In its most practical construction, Appreciative Inquiry (also referred to as AI) is a form of transformational inquiry that selectively seeks to locate, highlight, and illuminate the life-giving forces of an organization's existence. It is based on the belief that human systems are made and imagined by those who live and work within them. AI leads these systems to move toward the creative images that reside in the positive core of an organization. This approach is based on solid, proven principles for enabling creativity, knowledge, and spirit in the workplace. These principles call people to work toward a common vision and a higher purpose.

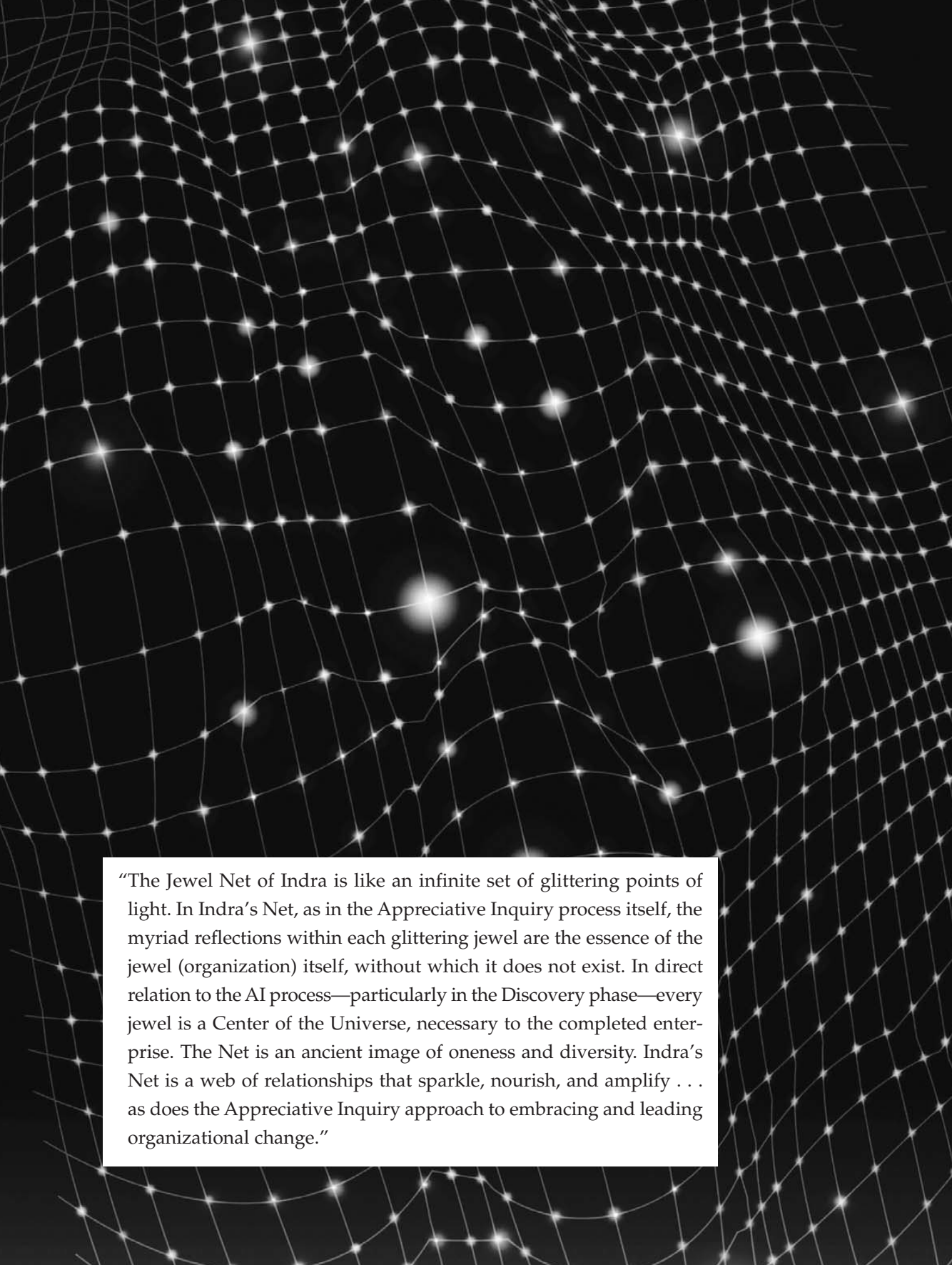
AI seeks out the best of "what is" to help ignite the collective imagination of "what might be." The aim is to generate new knowledge that expands the "realm of the possible" and helps members of an organization envision a collectively desired future. Furthermore, it helps to implement vision in ways that successfully translate images of possibilities into reality and belief into practice. The methodology results in a win-win situation.

This book provides a comprehensive presentation, the theory and the practical application of AI methods. Theories and activities in this book have been developed from the work of small and large corporations, government organizations, and international organizations working on issues of sustainability. Research on AI has been conducted in organizations in more than 100 countries around the world.

Material in this book is designed to facilitate theoretical understanding and the effective use of AI by organization leaders, managers, members, and consultants. This book is the expanded second edition that provides new developments of AI, updated case information, new worksheets, additional resources, and new case applications. It contains everything needed to plan, design, and lead an AI initiative. We invite readers to adapt it to their needs, in accordance with the copyright guidelines.

As Goethe reminds us, "Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it." When you are prepared to believe in people, trust them, and acknowledge that they know best about what needs to be done—at work and in their lives—Appreciative Inquiry is for you.

David L. Cooperrider, Diana Whitney and Jacqueline M. Stavros



"The Jewel Net of Indra is like an infinite set of glittering points of light. In Indra's Net, as in the Appreciative Inquiry process itself, the myriad reflections within each glittering jewel are the essence of the jewel (organization) itself, without which it does not exist. In direct relation to the AI process—particularly in the Discovery phase—every jewel is a Center of the Universe, necessary to the completed enterprise. The Net is an ancient image of oneness and diversity. Indra's Net is a web of relationships that sparkle, nourish, and amplify . . . as does the Appreciative Inquiry approach to embracing and leading organizational change."

Introduction

Welcome to the second edition of *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook*, the comprehensive resource for learning and creating an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) initiative. This material is usable as is or may be customized to meet specific needs. This section of the book will:

- Provide background information about AI.
- List what is new in the second edition.
- Describe the contents of this book.
- Set the stage for launching an AI initiative.

The Focus of Appreciative Inquiry

AI is a philosophy that incorporates an approach, a process (4-D Cycle of *Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny*) for engaging people at any or all levels to produce effective, positive change. Currently, AI is used throughout the world in both small- and large-scale change initiatives. It has been used as an adaptable change method in combination with other organizational processes such as strategic planning, coaching, leadership and management development, redesign of structures and systems, mergers and acquisitions, cultural transformation, team building, valuing diversity, and social and sustainable development issues.

AI is an exciting way to embrace organizational change. Its assumption is simple:

Every organization has something that works right—things that give it life when it is most alive, effective, successful, and connected in healthy ways to its stakeholders and communities. AI begins by identifying what is positive and connecting to it in ways that heighten energy, vision, and action for change.

AI begins an adventure. Its call to adventure has been experienced by many people and organizations, and it will take many more to fully explore this emergent paradigm. Current practitioners and organizations sense an exciting direction in AI's language and theories of change; they sense an invitation to "a positive revolution."

The words *positive revolution* were first used by GTE (now Verizon) to describe the impact of years of work to create an organization in full voice, a center stage for a positive revolution. Based on significant and measurable changes in stock prices, morale survey measures, quality/customer relations, union-management relations, and so on, GTE's whole system change initiative

was given professional recognition by the American Society for Training & Development (ASTD). GTE won the National ASTD award for best organization change program in the country. AI was cited as the backbone of that change.

AI has exhibited staying power and longevity within organizations such as Hunter Douglas, Tendercare, British Airways, and Roadway/Yellow Trucking—all of which are highlighted in this section and discussed in more detail in other chapters. Long-term applications of AI are iterated in Table I.1. Recently, the AI process has undergone change, particularly in the *Design* phase, where the concept of altering an organization's "social architecture" has been somewhat refined and broadened, consistent with the broader notions of design as a discipline.

Approach of the Handbook

This book provides an approach to launching an AI initiative. It is written to help people and their organizations take a long-term view of current activities and to achieve positive results by involving stakeholders. AI has proven to be a positive experience of a new way of living and organizing at work. Through the 4-D Cycle, people can transform the present state of their organization into a future state by building on a "positive core" of strengths to create its destiny. AI is an engaging participative process that, once begun, moves quickly to remarkable results.

Audience

This book is for trainers, executives, consultants, and students who want to be catalysts for organizational and social change. AI has been used by senior executives, line and staff managers, specialists in human resources and organizational development, leaders of nongovernmental organizations, and union management teams. The book is designed for those familiar with AI and its potential, as well as for those just beginning to explore the possibilities of AI.

The first edition of this book has been a valuable resource in many MBA and doctorate programs in business, organizational development, organizational behavior, and human resource development. This second edition also serves the needs of students who will be leading strategic change efforts, as well as practitioners.

Because the AI focus is innovation and creativity, its effectiveness is not limited to organizations of a particular type, size, demographic, or industry. Both for-profit and nonprofit organizations have found AI to be effective, and it works equally well at all levels of an organization. AI is ideal for anyone who wants to be part of a positive revolution in change.

What's in This Book?

This book contains the following:

- 11 chapters of text material and resources
- Exciting examples of AI topic choices, interview guides, reports, and cases
- An AI reference and bibliography list
- “Appreciative Insights” by AI users
- Contact information
- Sample participant worksheet handouts
- Course outlines and agendas
- Detailed description of the 4-D Cycle: Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny
- Customizable training workshops
- A series of the original classic published articles on AI
- A glossary of terms
- An invitation to be a member of Appreciative Inquiry Consulting, LLC

This book contains everything needed to understand the principles of AI and the way they apply. It includes a complete set of tools to design and deliver AI initiatives as well as detailed instructions and agendas for setting up multiple types of AI sessions:

- One-Hour AI Introduction
- Two-Hour Executive Overview
- Four-Hour Introductory Meeting
- Two-Day AI Program and Detailed Project Plan
- Detailed Project Plan

Each session can be used by itself or in combination with a planned initiative. Although this book covers a great deal of material, it is not exhaustive. The reader is encouraged to develop an appreciative learning library (refer to the bibliography).

What's New in the Second Edition

- Table updates are provided on new and existing uses by organizations, demonstrating the sustainability of AI.
- An expanded resource section provides new worksheets and an updated bibliography with 125 additional sources and more than 45 doctorate dissertations and master theses completed on AI.
- Chapter 1 includes the mini-lecture “Why AI Works.”
- Chapter 9, made up of case applications, is new and consists of nine

case studies on for-profit, nonprofit, and government applications using AI.

- To exemplify sustainability in the AI process (in the sense of longevity of the initiative), all Case Clippings in Chapters 4–7 have been updated.
- *The Fairmount Minerals Sustainable Development Appreciative Inquiry Summit Workbook* is offered in Chapter 8.
- Throughout this book, the larger meaning of sustainable enterprise has been referred to in terms of the “triple bottom line,” rephrased in AI terms as “people, prosperity, and planet.”
- Chapter 3 provides a detailed employee development and health-care project plan, an agenda, and an interview guide.
- Chapter 3 offers an expanded list of questions (up to 71) to consider when getting started.
- Chapter 6 provides two new powerful ways in which the Design phase can unfold to allow for creativity and innovation.
- Chapter 10 provides a complete illustration of all worksheets by the EPA ORD Summit on “Igniting Leadership at all Levels.”
- Chapter 11 includes a soon-to-be classic article, “Strategic Inquiry with Appreciative Intent: Inspiration to SOAR!” This is a seminal article on AI and strategic planning.

How to Use This Book

This book contains everything needed to launch an AI initiative—background information on the topic, sample project plans, designs, agendas and interview guides, overheads, participant worksheets, and resources.

Before starting an AI initiative, the reader should review the structure and content of the entire book in order to understand the complete process. Chapter 3, *Introducing, Defining, and Planning an Appreciative Inquiry Initiative*, provides several illustrations and agendas that can help in designing a project plan. Part 2: *Application of the 4-D Cycle of Appreciative Inquiry*, evolves chapter by chapter to fully explain each phase: Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny. The bibliography presents new and updated information that has appeared in books, newsletters, and articles and on Web sites—an ongoing process.

AI is a robust intervention that can be molded to fit any organization’s situation. While the reader or organization is going through the process, comparing Part 2 and Part 3 (*Learning Applications and Resources*) can help show how various organizations have used AI. However, the examples in the book are just that—examples. Creativity and innovation in developing or modifying the existing materials are encouraged and are a natural offshoot of an evolving process.

This book is designed for the novice as well as the experienced AI practitioner. For those just starting out, developing the first AI intervention will likely prove to be a time-consuming task. Sufficient time must be allowed to prepare and modify the plan. New practitioners should be patient and flexible and experience fun in embracing change. Experienced users will find this book a useful reference for further developing their AI initiatives.

This book details the transformational process needed to design, lead, and implement an AI initiative anywhere in an organization. The process starts with four simple, powerful questions being asked in an appreciative interview:

The Appreciative Interview

1. What would you describe as being a high-point experience in your organization, a time when you were most alive and engaged?
2. Without being modest, what is it that you most value about yourself, your work, and your organization?
3. What are the core factors that give life to your organization, without which the organization would cease to exist?
4. Assume you go into a deep sleep tonight, one that lasts ten years. But while you are asleep, powerful and positive changes take place, real miracles happen, and your organization becomes what you want it to be. Now you awaken and go into the organization. It is 2018, and you are very proud of what you see. As you take in this vision and look at the whole, what do you see happening that is new, changed, better, or effective and successful?

Those questions start a dialogue to discover and dream a new, more compelling image of the organization and its future. From anecdotal images, the future of the human systems within the organization is designed and the organization begins to move toward its destiny.

An AI initiative is more than just a training program. It is an opportunity to create an exciting and *dynamic* organization. To explain, the following definition is offered:

*Dynamic: characterized by continuous change, activity, or progress; characterized by vigor and energy.*¹

AI recognizes that every organization is an open system that depends on its human capital to bring its vision and purpose to life. AI focuses on what gives life to an organization's system when it is operating at its best. An organ-

¹ Stavros, J., & Torres, C. (2005). *Dynamic relationships: Unleashing the power of appreciative inquiry in daily living*. Chagrin Falls, OH: Taos Institute Publishing.

ization will cease to exist without a human system to lead and support it. AI identifies and leverages the positive core of an organization to ensure its ongoing success.

The outcome of an AI initiative is a long-term positive change in the organization. AI has helped many organizations increase employee satisfaction; enhance productivity; increase levels of communications among stakeholders; decrease turnover; stimulate creativity; and align the whole organization around its vision, mission, objectives, and strategies. AI is applicable to any profit, nonprofit, or governmental organization.

To be effective, business leaders need to move away from the traditional problem-solving approach to organizational change and move toward viewing organizations as a mystery to be embraced. AI provides a fresh approach to organizational change that motivates all stakeholders to contribute to the organization. When an organization uses AI to solve problems, embrace challenges, create opportunities, make decisions, and initiate action, the whole system works toward a shared vision.

AI is a powerful approach to positive change. The process is simple, and it can engage everyone in the organization. Through collaborative inquiry and a connection to their positive core, many organizations have cocreated **whole systems processes** to:

- Create a common-ground vision and strategy for the future.
- Accelerate organizational learning—speeding the spread of innovation and amplifying the power of even the smallest victories.
- Unite labor and management in new, jointly envisioned partnerships.
- Create dialogue to foster shared meanings.
- Improve communications.
- Strengthen implementations of major information technology changes.
- Work toward sustainability.
- Demonstrate positive intent and trust with stakeholders.
- Build dynamic relationships and high-performance teams to facilitate change.

AI can revitalize virtually every process or program that may have been deficit-based, such as quality programs, focus groups, surveys, and reengineering efforts. AI is important because it works to bring the whole organization together to build on its positive core, one that allows for engagement in both transactional (action planning) and/or transformational change (values-vision-mission identification and alignment). AI encourages people to work together to promote a more complete understanding of the human system, the heartbeat of the organization.

AI Insight

Appreciative Inquiry can get you much better results than seeking out and solving problems. That's an interesting concept for me—and I imagine for most of you—because telephone companies are among the best problem solvers in the world. We troubleshoot everything. We concentrate enormous resources on correcting problems that have relatively minor impact on our overall service performance When used continually and over a long period of time, this approach can lead to a negative culture. If you combine a negative culture with all the challenges we face today, it could be easy to convince ourselves that we have too many problems to overcome—to slip into a paralyzing sense of hopelessness.

And yet if we flip the coin, we have so much to be excited about. We are in the most dynamic and most influential business of our times. We ought to be excited, motivated, and energized. We can be if we just turn ourselves around and start looking at our jobs (and ourselves) differently—if we kill negative self-talk and celebrate our successes. If we dissect what we do right and apply the lessons to what we do wrong, we can solve our problems and re-energize the organization at the same time In the long run, what is likely to be more useful: Demoralizing a successful workforce by concentrating on their failures or helping them over their last few hurdles by building a bridge with their successes?

Don't get me wrong. I'm not advocating mindless happy talk. Appreciative Inquiry is a complex science designed to make things better. We can't ignore problems. We just need to approach them from the other side.

*Thomas H. White
President, GTE Telephone Operations
Vital Speeches of the Day, 1996*

Hundreds of organizations are embracing this positive revolution through AI. Table A.1 highlights some of these organizations and their initiatives.

Table A.1 Appreciative Inquiry Initiatives

Organization	AI Initiative/Award
Academy for Educational Development, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	More than 100 educators, government ministers, donors, and NGOs reflected on their many accomplishments and envisioned the future of education in Ethiopia for the next ten years.
ANZ Bank, Melbourne, Australia	ANZ Bank launched an inquiry into its purpose, involving more than 1,000 people—the largest engagement activity ever at the bank. Within a month, the bank crafted its purpose and had it adopted by the board of directors.
Avon Mexico	Avon Mexico addressed the issue of gender equity and a pilot project for Avon globally. It won the 1997 Catalyst Award as the best place in the country for women to work.
BAE Systems	BAE Systems created a five-year strategic plan for its Armament Systems Division with internal stakeholders and customers using the SOAR framework.
Boulder County Aging Services Division	This organization was awarded the 2007 Local Government Award “Planning with Vision” by the Denver Regional Council of Governments.
British Airways North America	British Airways created and sustained delivery of “Excellence in Customer Service.”
City of Longmont, Colorado	Longmont completed the AI Core Project of the Year by the International Association for Public Participation and was awarded “All America City” by the National Civic League (2006).
Cleveland Clinic	The Cleveland Clinic discovered what made the clinic function successfully (first AI initiative).
DTE Energy Services	Its employees created a culture of choice.

EcoLogic Development Fund

This firm guided a participative strategic planning process that made it a world leader in collaborative, community-led conservation of biological and cultural diversity.

Fairmont Minerals

This firm launched a Sustainable Development Summit that created a vision and plan for 3 Ps: people, profits, and planet. It included a sustainable development design of the organization's purpose and principles in day-to-day operations, products, and services in addition to employees' personal lives.

FCI Automotive

It improved supply chain management and inventory quality.

Green Mountain Coffee Roasters

The firm increased its *Positive World Benefit through Phenomenal Sustainable Growth* while making a profit. AI is being used at all levels by providing employees with a process that fits with the strategy and culture.

Group Health Cooperative

This healthcare organization improved performance of its healthcare delivery system in the areas of cost, quality, and service.

GTE Telecommunications

GTE received the Best Organization Change Project Award from the American Society of Training & Development, 1997.

Guyana Democratic Consolidation and Conflict Resolution (GDCCR) Project—Guyana, South America

This agency inspired peace building and community development initiatives through increased citizen participation in policy reform and decision making, specifically targeting youth education, inter-religious collaboration, and participative governance.

Hunter Douglas Window Fashions Division

The company created shared vision and reinstalled the "positive core" factors (creativity, flexibility, intimacy, and sense of community) that had contributed to the division's original success, while building a sustainable leadership within the organization. It was ranked in the "Top Ten Places to Work" in Denver, Colorado (2004) and in Colorado (2006).

Imagine Chicago

This organization was the first to use AI intergenerational interviews, where young people interviewed elders to discover civic engagement and to nurture hope. Imagine Chicago has received many awards and today is helping to spawn "Imagine" projects on six continents focused on long-term sustainable development in large cities.

Imagine Nagaland (India)

This organization brought various ministries together with young people to discover the future they wanted to create. UNICEF helped guide the project, and a major film producer created a movie documentary showing the movement from hopelessness and conflict to new vision and collaboration.

Jefferson Wells

Jefferson Wells created a strategic operational plan that resulted in accelerated growth and performance, moving the selected office from rankings of sixth in the firm in revenues and eighth in profits to first in both revenues and profits with a turnover rate of 30% moving to under 10%. The office won the 2006 Global Office of the Year Award given by Manpower.

John Deere Harvester

To break through years' worth of apathy and distrust, John Deere initiated a five-day summit, the last two days focused exclusively on "tactical implementation." Participants selected ten projects they believed were most critical to organizational effectiveness and long-term performance.

Lancaster County, Pennsylvania Historical Society

The Society created a strategic plan to guide the institution for the next five years. The initiatives focused on twentieth-century history, affirmed Lancaster County's diversity, and championed the growth of technological capabilities to increase presence in the community.

Lawrence Technological University

The school completed an environmental scan and identified the core values of the university in support of the strategic plan.

Lovelace Health Systems

It improved nursing quality and retention.

Managua, Nicaragua

Nicaraguan citizens from a variety of political persuasions sponsored a two-day, 500-person AI event on civil society to create a society around shared interests, purposes, values, and vision. One of the projects resulted in a 100,000-person peaceful march (with all political parties represented) through the streets of Managua to draw attention to citizen responsibility in the electoral process.

McDonald's

McDonald's applied the Appreciative Inquiry approach in the Human Resources area and became among the best employers in each community around the world by putting "People First."

Milton Hershey School

This school designed a pioneer program that enables seniors nearing graduation to experience an advanced level of independence in life outside the residential school setting. AI is also used in the evaluation of this program.

Myrada

This organization built capacity within a network of Southern India NGOs.

NASA

NASA created a strategic plan for its OHR division to align with the larger NASA vision. This resulted in a more inclusive, participative culture.

Newark Beth Israel Medical Center

The hospital increased patient safety by redesigning the process of handing off patients from one nurse to another in a 670+ bed hospital. The staff built on their most effective handoff experiences, resulting in a 23.3% increase in patient satisfaction.

North American Steel, Inc.

This company celebrated its 40th year and tapped into the positive core of its history. The information was used for strategic planning, as 250 factory workers and managers were interviewed relative to positive experiences.

Nutrimental

The company created an innovative whole-system approach to strategic planning and decision making to achieve qualitative and quantitative outcomes; for example, a 600% increase in profits as well as a 75% reduction in absenteeism rates. The company has used the AI Summit method to do strategic planning for the past six years.

PA Community Hospitals

This group enhanced patient care delivery by improving the retention of nurses—Program: Building Capacity for Better Work and Better Care.

Princeton Group Health

Five hundred medical people—doctors, nurses, administrators, union leaders, patients, and many others—participated in whole-system planning by using AI and Future Search.

Roadway Express

This company engaged its unionized workforce to strategize about its future and increased throughput and productivity to move it from being a good organization to a great organization. The initial initiative was to reduce costs and rapidly increase business. Unionized workers, management, and staff worked together on this plan.

Save the Children

The organization changed how it could be re-created and achieved and sustained its mission.

Scandinavian School System

It received the Award for Educational Achievement, 1998.

Star Island Corporation

This firm obtained widespread, substantial involvement in the strategic planning system by including the Star Community in the process.

Syntegra – 109

The firm built a new leadership team and strategy to better approach and service its market.

Tendercare, Inc.

The company identified the positive care core needed to increase census while placing the residents in the center of the circle of quality care.

United Nations

The UN supported the Global Compact through a Leaders Summit that included more than 1,400 organizational members from business, civil society, and government to constructively engage in cocreating action plans in support of its principles.

United Religions Initiative

This group created a global interfaith organization dedicated to peace and cooperation among people of different religions, faiths, and spiritual traditions.

United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

This organization offered innovative management and leadership training to Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs) to understand how NGOs built their capacities.

United States Navy

The focus of the initiative was to create enlightened leadership at every level of the Navy. The Navy brought together admirals and sailors at all levels for an AI Summit that included more than 250 people, and 30 projects were created to support the vision. A film was created of the event. Currently, AI Summits have occurred throughout the Navy, including the entire Pacific Fleet, to build leadership at every level.

Unity

Unity created a high-performance organizational culture congruent with its spiritual “new thought” philosophy.

Utah Education System

The teacher’s union (UEA) has been using AI for more than three years. A statewide summit with legislators, media, people from the community, the board of education, teachers, administrators, university faculty, parents, and students joined together for a “Leap of Learning” facilitated by members of the Positive Change Core. In 2007, the school district committed to infusing the AI philosophy in classrooms.

World Vision Relief and Development

The organization built collaborative alliances to bring help and developmental assistance to thousands of children in hundreds of orphanages across Romania. More than 300 organizations were connected in a partnership, building on a strength-based analysis of each. Many papers were written about the effort, making possible the new “knowledge alliance” and resulting in millions of dollars in medical support.

Structure of the Book

AI Insight

AI was first used in 1980, when David Cooperrider, a doctoral student at Case Western Reserve University, was helping Al Jensen undertake his dissertation on physician leadership at one of the top tertiary care medical centers in the world, the Cleveland Clinic. They asked physician leaders to tell stories of their biggest successes as well as their biggest failures. But when Cooperrider looked at the data, he was drawn only to the success stories. Listening to their narratives of strength and strong leadership, he was amazed by the level of positive cooperation, innovation, and egalitarian governance at the clinic—by consensus, this was when organizational members were most effective. With the intellectual collaboration and prodding of his adviser, Suresh Srivastva, and the permission of the clinic’s chair, David decided to look at the data exclusively in search of the positives—everything that served to give life to the system and to people when they were most alive, effective, committed, and empowered. Everything else was considered irrelevant.

The method of analysis was to systematically and deliberately “appreciate” everything of value, then use the positive analysis to speculate on the potentials and possibilities for the future. A theory of future possibility was created, and momentous stories were used to vivify the potentials. History was used as a source of positive possibility. In a report to the board of governors, Cooperrider and Srivastva called their method Appreciative Inquiry (AI). Thus, this was the first organizational analysis using AI. The results of the study created such a powerful positive stir that the board requested that this AI method be used at all levels of the 8,000-person organization to facilitate change. Cooperrider wrote his dissertation on the holistic process and created a scholarly logic for this, a new form of action research. This experience set the stage for the AI learning community!

To facilitate conceptual understanding and effective practical use of AI, the material in the book is presented in three parts. *Part 1: Essential Elements of Appreciative Inquiry* provides a powerful learning approach to (1) gaining an understanding of basic AI principles, (2) selecting an affirmative topic on which to build from the positive core, and (3) starting an AI initiative. The material presented in this section is a call to working with people, groups, and organizations in a more positive, collaborative, and constructive approach than perhaps they have utilized in the past. It provides all of the essential ingredients to design and lead strengths-based positive change in one's organization or community.

The 4-D appreciative learning model is the focus of *Part 2: Application of the 4-D Cycle of Appreciative Inquiry*. The process is dynamic and interactive. It builds on imagination and flexibility for its success. It starts with Discovery. At this stage, the "best of what is" in a system is identified as the positive core. The second stage is Dream. This stage teaches a visioning process to suggest "what might be." The third stage is Design. The Design chapter outlines the steps to create the ideal system for an organization. It builds on the positive core and the envisioned results of the first two stages. It allows for coconstructing the ideal design, "how it can be." The final stage is termed Destiny. The Destiny chapter covers the implementation and model for sustaining an appreciative learning environment, "what will be." Thus, Part 2 moves through the phases of discovery, dream, design, and destiny—the "4 Ds."

The tools needed for an AI initiative or training program are included in *Part 3: Learning Applications and Resources*, along with several case applications. A glossary, index, and a list of additional resources are also included. Today more than 500 scholarly papers pertaining to AI have been published worldwide; in addition, a dozen books and many Web sites are devoted to the practice of AI.

How Can AI Make a Difference?

This book is not a recipe; it is an adventure. AI is an effective way to get members of an organization involved in unleashing a positive revolution in today's dynamic global environment. The objectives of the book are to teach the founding principles and theories of AI, present a wide range of applications of the theory and the AI 4-D Cycle, and facilitate the training of trainers who will introduce and use AI. Therefore, the final section of this book includes resources to facilitate group teaching, learning, and application.

An organization's guiding force is its people. This book offers those people a framework for an appreciative learning journey that has proven to be successful in cocreating organizational systems that feature each organization operating at its best.

Where Can AI Make a Difference?

AI can make a difference with a single person or with any collective human system. To illustrate, AI has been successfully used in the following ways:

- Innovations leading toward the ideal organization
- Strategic planning
- Leadership and management development
- Work process redesign
- Team development
- Organizational culture change
- Employee development
- HR practices: staffing, orientation, and performance management
- Coaching
- Communications
- Collaborative alliances and joint ventures
- Community relations and customer relations
- Diversity initiatives
- Focus groups
- Generative benchmarking
- Surveys
- Meetings
- Global change initiatives
- Evaluation to valuation of performance systems
- New product development

AI is a proven paradigm for accelerating organizational learning and transformation. It can be used in any situation where the leaders and organizational members are committed to building positive, life-centered organizations.

You are ready to begin the journey.

this material has been excerpted from

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For Leaders of Change***

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