

Appreciative Inquiry Principle Summary

By: Jackie Kelm

Good things, when short, are twice as good. ~ GRACIAN

The following material was taken from the book *Appreciative Living: The Principles of Appreciative Inquiry in Personal Life*. For more information, or to purchase this book, visit www.AppreciativeLiving.com

The Principles of AI

In the early 1990's, David Cooperrider created the five original principles¹ of AI under the guidance of Suresh Srivastva, which describe the basic tenants of the underlying philosophy. The five principles are: the Constructionist Principle, the Poetic Principle, the Simultaneity Principle, the Anticipatory Principle, and the Positive Principle.

AI consultants have recently started adding to the principles to reflect new learning and thinking. In 2003 Diana Whitney and Amanda Trosten-Bloom proposed three additional principles in their book *The Power of Appreciative Inquiry*. They are: The Wholeness Principle, the Enactment Principle, and the Free Choice Principle.² These principles were created out of the authors' experience with large-scale organizations and community change work in an effort to further define the ever-emerging concept of AI. In addition, Frank Barrett and Ron Fry are proposing the Narrative Principle in their book *Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Approach to Cooperative Capacity Building*.³ Finally, Jackie Stavros and Cheri Torres are recommending the Awareness Principle in their book *Dynamic Relationships: Unleashing the Power of Appreciative Inquiry in Daily Living*.⁴ A summary of these principles follows.

Definitions

What Is Appreciative Inquiry (AI)?

- A positive, strength-based approach to change
- Finding the best in people and the world around them
- Co-creating inspiring future images
- Focusing on what we want more of
- Finding and unleashing the positive core
- To learn more: www.appreciativeinquiry.cwru.edu

What Is Appreciative Living?

- Applying the principles of AI in daily life
- To learn more: www.AppreciativeLiving.com

The Five Original Principles of AI

The Constructionist Principle

- Reality and Identity are Co-created
- Truth is Local. There is no absolute truth⁵
- We See Things as We Are
- We Are Deeply Interconnected
- Words Create Worlds. Reality is constructed through language

The Poetic Principle

- Life Experience is Rich
- We Have Habits of Seeing
- Whatever We Focus On, Grows
- Find What We Want More of, Not Less of
- Develop an Appreciate Eye

The Simultaneity Principle

- We Live in the World Our Questions Create
- Change Begins the Moment We Question
- The Unconditional Positive Question is transformational
- Develop Your Sense of Wonder

The Anticipatory Principle

- Positive Images Create Positive Futures
- Vision is Fateful
- Create Vision Before Decisions
- What We Believe, We Conceive
- Big Change Begins Small

The Positive Principle

- Positive Emotions Broaden Thinking and Build⁶
- The Positive Core expands as it is affirmed and appreciated
- Identify and Leverage Strengths

The Five Emergent Principles of AI

The Wholeness Principle⁷

- Wholeness Provides More Expansive Thinking Than Reductionism
- Learn to Be Present to the Emerging Whole

The Enactment Principle⁸

- Embody What You Want
- Just Try Something

The Free Choice Principle⁹

- Freedom from Internal and External Forces is one type of freedom
- The Freedom of Inner Clarity allows us to pursue life freely

The Awareness Principle¹⁰

- Awareness is understanding and integrating the AI principles
- Surfacing assumptions is important in good relationships
- Practice cycles of action and reflection, where we act, reflect, and act with awareness¹¹

The Narrative Principle¹²

- We Construct Stories About Our Lives
- Stories are Transformative

¹ Cooperrider, D.L., & Whitney, D. *A Positive Revolution in Change: Appreciative Inquiry*. Taos, NM: Corporation for Positive Change, 1999. This article was also reprinted in, Cooperrider, D., Whitney D., & Stavros, J. *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook*. Bedford Heights, OH: Lakeshore Publishers, 2003, p. 14-17.

² Whitney, D. & Trosten-Bloom, A. *The Power of Appreciative Inquiry*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler, 2003. p. 55.

³ Barrett, Frank & Fry, Ron. *Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Approach to Cooperative Capacity Building*. Chagrin Falls, OH: Taos Institute Publishing, 2005.

⁴ Stavros, J. & Torres, C. *Dynamic Relationships: Unleashing the Power of Appreciative Inquiry in Daily Living*. Chagrin Falls, OH: Taos Institute Publishing, 2005.

⁵ Gergen, K.J., & Gergen, M. *Social Construction: Entering the Dialogue*. Chagrin Falls, OH: Taos Institute Publishing, 2004, p. 20.

⁶ Fredrickson, Barbara, L. "The Role of Positive Emotions in Positive Psychology." *American Psychologist*, Vol. 56, No. 3, (2001).

⁷ Whitney, D. & Trosten-Bloom, A. *The Power of Appreciative Inquiry*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler, 2003, 69-71.

⁸ Ibid., 72-74.

⁹ Ibid., 75-79.

¹⁰ Stavros, J. & Torres, C. *Dynamic Relationships: Unleashing the Power of Appreciative Inquiry in Daily Living*. Chagrin Falls, OH: Taos Institute Publishing, 2005, 79-83.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Barrett, Frank & Fry, Ron. *Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Approach to Cooperative Capacity Building*. Chagrin Falls, OH: Taos Institute Publishing, 2005.