

Appreciative Inquiry Reflection on Competence

Understanding and fostering the resilience and strength in ourselves and those with whom we work begins with noticing the positive and what is being done well. Appreciative inquiry is an approach to identifying and building those positives. It can help us become aware of our internal and external dialogues and shift or reframe them so that our focus is on what we want more of rather than on what we don't want, focusing on the good that is already present (that we may be filtering out!). One way to do this is to ask yourself or others questions that are framed in, and will elicit that which is good.

These questions can be used for individual reflection and/or conversations and planning in small teams or organization-wide.

1. Considering your entire time as a staff member at your organization, can you recall a time when you felt most alive, most involved, or most excited about your involvement in the organization?

- What made it an exciting experience? What gave it energy?
- What was it about you — unique qualities you have — that contributed to the exchange?
- Who were the most significant others? Why were they significant?
- What were the most important factors in your organization that helped to make it a meaningful experience (e.g. leadership qualities, structure, rewards, systems, skills, strategy, relationships)?

2. Let's consider for a moment the things you value deeply. Specifically, the things you value about 1) yourself; 2) the nature of your work; and 3) your organization.

- Without being humble, what do you value the most about yourself — as a human being, a friend, a parent, a citizen, and son/daughter?
- When you are feeling best about your work, what do you value about the task itself?
- What is it about your organization that you value?
- What is the single most important thing the organization has contributed to your life?





3. **Your organization seeks to build on “proven strengths” and has been a pioneer in a number of areas. In your opinion, what is the most important achievement that you can recall that best illustrates this spirit of “being the best”?**
4. **Can you think of a time when there was an extraordinary display of cooperation between diverse individuals or groups at your organization?**
 - What made such cooperation possible (e.g. planning methods used, communication systems or process, leadership qualities, incentives for cooperation, skills, team development techniques)?
 - How could these lessons be applied to your team/staff?
5. **In your mind, what is the common mission or purpose that unites everyone on the team/staff? How can this continue to be nurtured?**
6. **What is the core factor that gives vitality and life to your organization?**
7. **If you could develop or transform your organization in any way you wished, what three things would you do to heighten its vitality and overall health?**
 - How could these three things be brought to the Leadership Team?