APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a change management approach that focuses on identifying what is working well, analyzing why it is working well and then doing more of it. The basic tenet of AI is that an organization will grow in whichever direction that people in the organization focus their attention.

The Assumptions of Appreciative Inquiry are:

1. In every society, organization or group, something works.

2. What we focus on becomes our reality.

3. Reality is created in the moment and there are multiple realities.

4. The act of asking questions of an organization or group influences the group in some way.

5. People have more confidence and comfort to journey to the future (the unknown) when they carry forward parts of the past (the known).

6. If we carry parts of the past forward, they should be what is best about the past.

7. It is important to value differences.

8. The language we use creates our reality.

Appreciative Inquiry truly honors the past and that is another reason it is a wonderful way to help people manage change. Those of us who use it often use the word "magical" when we describe the power we have experienced. The magic comes from the great relief from participants that the message isn't about what they've done wrong or have to stop doing. It is an affirmation that much is well and ready to be nurtured.

The Appreciative Inquiry Process consists of four main steps:

1. **Discovery:** eliciting stories of the system at its best - best started in pairs, the stories then shared with larger groups.

2. **Dream:** collecting the wisdom and imagining the future - this includes graphically visualizing the desired future.

3. **Design:** bridges to the future based on the best of the past and the present - groups work to use assets discovered in the second phase to design a plan to create the desired future.

4. **Destiny:** Making it happen.