

Theory of Appreciative Inquiry: The Art of the Question*

*material from "Appreciative Leadership", 2008, Diana Whitney

Appreciative Inquiry: Create a positive question habit... Questions are fateful:

These questions can set the tone of the "inner dialog of the organization". Appreciative leaders have a habit of choosing topics and questions that "invite members of their organization to focus upon, talk about, learn about and act on best practices, strengths, and successes" (pg. 32)

- **Ask more, talk less** (you give people the space for reflection, wisdom sharing, connecting to strengths & positivity, and to have their own "a-ha" moments)

- **Put Your Values in Your Questions** (both your personal values/strengths, and your organization's values)

What 3-4 things do you stand for as a leader? (surfacing your core leadership values)

What gives you the most satisfaction at work?

What do you feel good about your work?

What are others able to do as a result of your leadership?

What do you value most about yourself as a leader?

Why do people respect you as a leader?

- **The Flip:**

1. When presented with a complaint or a problem, listen carefully. Repeat what was said to be sure both that you understand it and that the other person feels heard.

2. Ask, "What is it that you really want? I understand that you are not happy with the way things are, but tell me what it is that you want instead?"

3. Reflect what you heard--The Flip. Describe what the person really wants in a two-or three-word phrase--an affirmative topic.

Other Sample AI questions:

What's working well?

What are 3 wishes I have for this organization?

Share a success story when you used one of your strengths

What is a core factor/value that gives vitality and life to your organization/group/team & how?