

The YDPN Process and Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry is a theory of positive organizational change developed by David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva in 1987. “Appreciative Inquiry is about the coevolutionary search for the best in people, their organization, and the relevant world around them.” (<http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/intro/whatisai.cfm>). It is similar in philosophy to youth development, and, therefore, relevant to informing the YDPN Process created in 2007. Below, you will find some basic assumptions about Appreciative Inquiry, a comparative analysis between problem solving and Appreciative Inquiry, and a mapping of the YDPN process to the Appreciative Inquiry process. More will be developed in the months to com.

Appreciative Inquiry Basic Assumptions (from The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry)

- ★ In every society, organization, or group something works.
- ★ What we focus on becomes reality.
- ★ Reality is created in the moment, and there are multiple realities.
- ★ The act of asking questions of an organization or group influences the group in some way.
- ★ People have more confidence and comfort to journey to the future when they carry forward part of the past.
- ★ If we carry parts of the past forward they should be what is best about the past.
- ★ It is important to value differences.
- ★ The language we use creates our reality.

Problem Solving versus Appreciative Inquiry (from powerpoint presentation by David Cooperrider)

Problem Solving	Appreciative Inquiry
Identify problem	Appreciate “What is” (What gives life?)
Conduct root cause analysis	Imagine “What might be”
Brainstorm solutions and analyze	Determine “What should be”
Develop action plans	Create “What will be”
<i>Metaphor:</i> Organizations are problems to be solved.	<i>Metaphor:</i> Organizations are a solution/mystery to be embraced.

Mapping the YDPN Process to Appreciative Inquiry

Reflect = History

Listen = Appreciating and valuing the best of “what is”

Inquire = Envisioning “what might be”

Connect = Dialoguing “what should be”

Dream = Innovating “what will be”

Act = Reality