

## WORDS CREATE WORLDS.

The discussion with ASTD Alaska in October was a brief introduction into Appreciative Inquiry (AI). Developed by David Cooperrider out of Case Western University, AI is a way of looking at the world, people and systems that encourages a lense of possibility. As the title suggests, AI is about examining and discovering what is working. It is a way to look at any human system that does not embark on a course of solely fixing that which is broken, rather appreciating the working and looking toward an alternative future for working and not. It is neither a method nor tool, insomuch as a way to view people, processes and systems. It has been the foundation of many tools and methodologies that are common to training and development and Organization Effectiveness Work.

The members present at the meeting, engaged in a mini AI experience which explored the primary vehicle within AI...the conversation. The conversation is considered to be the place where future is co-created through the conscious choice of words that are about expansion and possibility....inquiry. Two principles that guide the AI thinking include: The image/ action connection and Social Constuctionism.

AI is an approach to the development of human systems that recognizes that we can choose the view that either 1) human systems are primarily constellations of problems/obstacles to be analyzed and overcome, or (2) human systems contain mysterious life-giving forces to be understood and embraced.

AI recognizes that whichever assumptions that we make about the nature of reality, the choice will lead us to a certain focus in our conversations. And those conversations will lead to certain images being dominant in our minds. Those images will in turn lead to action at both the conscious and unconscious levels.

AI uses the power of inquiry to engage our imagination, which in turn influences our actions. By focusing through inquiry on that which is life-giving, that which is energizing, that which is joyful and fun, and by amplifying those qualities by involving the "whole system" in co-construction and co-innovation based on the findings of the inquiry, AI enable systems to transform themselves.

**For more information about  
Appreciative Inquiry or Organizational Effectiveness,  
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