



What Would W. Edwards Deming Think of Appreciative Inquiry?

The Strength to Change

Presentation to:

Canadian Public Sector Quality Association

Dan Corbett

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W. Edwards Deming



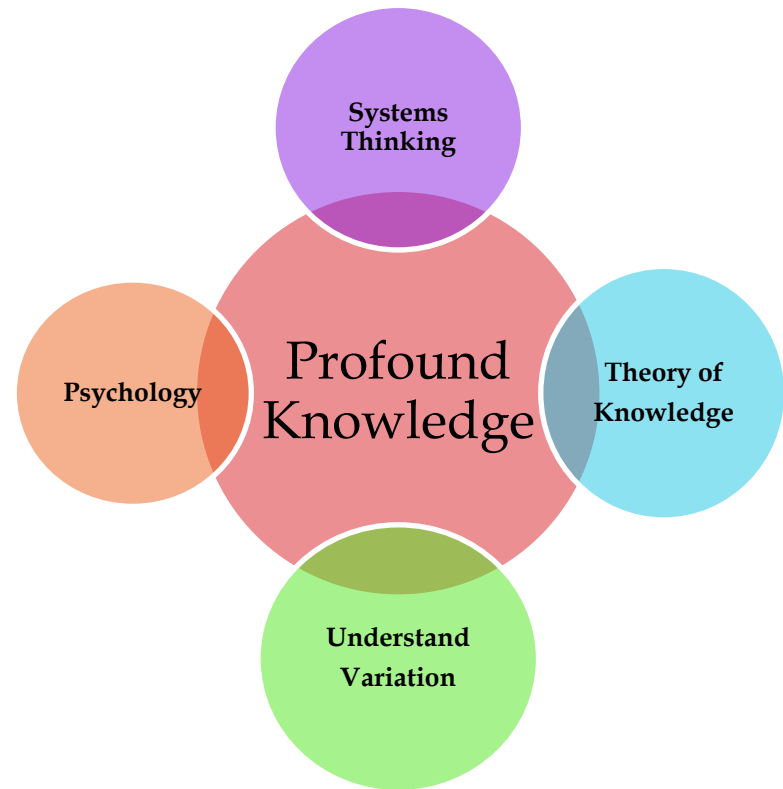
- “It is important that an aim never be defined in terms of activities or methods. It must always relate to how life is better for everyone. The aim of the system must be clear to everyone in the system.”
- “If you do not know how to ask the right question, you discover nothing.”

Quality is About Change and Leadership

Deming Quotes

- It is not necessary to change. Survival is not mandatory
- All anyone asks for is a chance to work with pride.
- Quality starts in the boardroom.
- We must understand variation.

Deming System



Quality is Changing

■ ASQ Futures Study

- Rate of change is accelerating
- What we can anticipate will be overcome by what we can't anticipate
- Immutable reality of a shrinking world

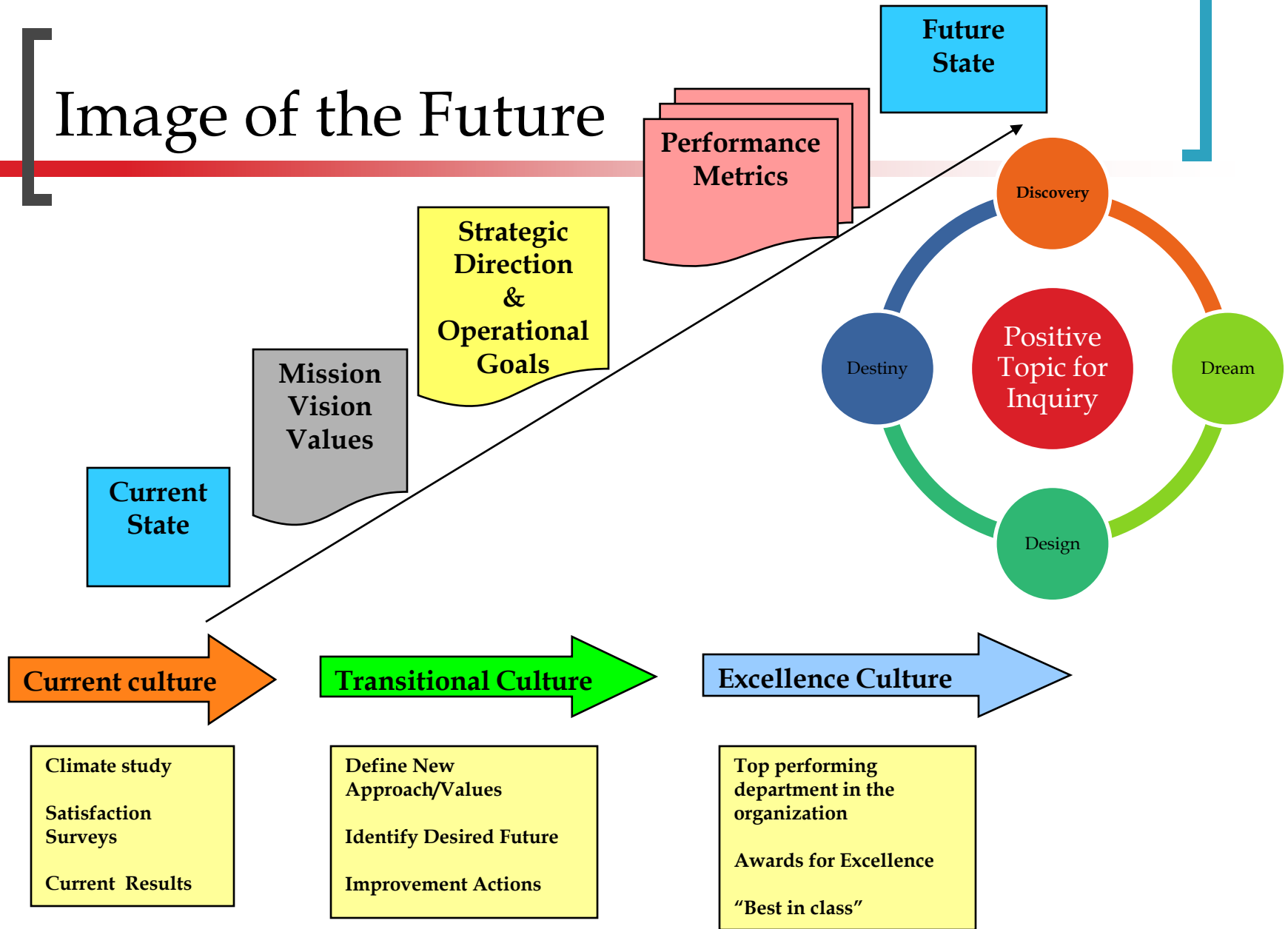
Paul Borawski
Executive Director ASQ

■ NQI Excellence

“We are breaking down the myths of quality, for example that quality improvement speaks only to process and not to philosophy and leadership engagement, that continuous improvement is too expensive and lowers productivity due to the time involved.”

John Perry, Senior Advisor and
Vice-President NQI

Image of the Future



Deming on Strategy and Performance

- “ We need to learn to work in a system by which, I mean that everybody, every division, every component is there not for individual competitive profit or recognition but for contribution to the system as a whole on a win-win basis. Management by results is confusing special causes with common causes.”
- Think about your own organization, are strategy and performance aligned so that employees act for the system as a whole?

Common Approaches to Change

- Top Down
- Bottom up
- Representative cross-section
- Pilot project
- Cascading

Capacity Building for the Future

- People want a better future, for themselves, families and their organization.
- People at all levels of the organization want to be involved in issues affecting their future and that of the organization.
- How leaders engage people in the future of their organization is a critical issue to building sustainable capacity to meet strategic goals.
- Engaging people in high performance work teams is a critical element to building organizational capacity for future success.

Do We All See The Same Things?



- How many jelly beans are in the jar?
- Do not discuss this with anyone in the room.
- Write your answer on the note paper.
- Write your name on the note and pass it to the facilitator.
- Keep a copy for your self.

What Is Appreciative Inquiry?

- “Ap-pre’-ci-ate, v.”
- ...to value or admire highly; to judge with heightened understanding; to recognize with gratitude

- “In-quire, v.”
- ...to search into, investigate; to seek for information by questioning

AI – The Study of What Works Well

- Focus: enables organizations and communities to focus on their most positive qualities to build a strengths based change focus.
- Leverage: build on the positive core, identified strengths and quality to enhance the organisation or community.
- Create: a new image of the future that builds capacity through capturing the latent positive energy that is in every organization.

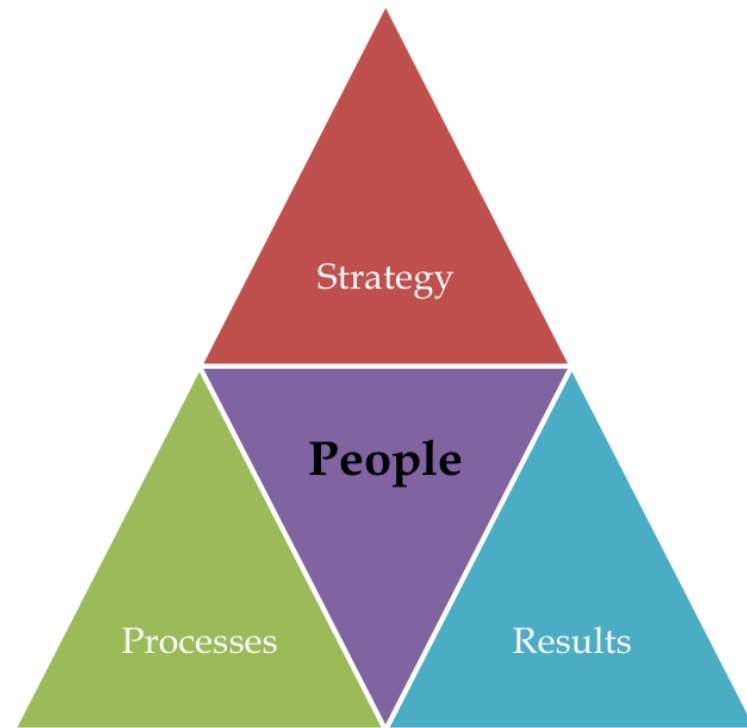
AI – Focus for Building Organizational Capacity

- Started with a Ph.D. dissertation in 1984, David Cooperrider and colleagues at the Cleveland Clinic
- Centered at Case Western Reserve University, many scholarly articles and books; Appreciative Inquiry now being taught in the school of business.
- Business as an Agent of World Benefit initiative at Case Western Reserve
- Power in the way participants become engaged, inspired and energized for building organizational capacity

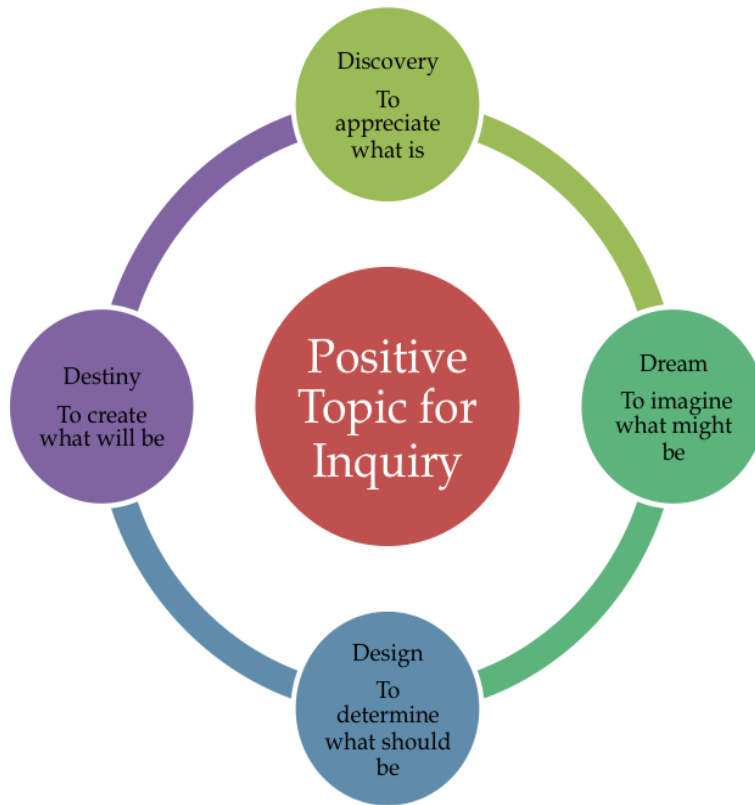
Organizations as Human Systems

“Every organization is an open system that depends on its human capital to bring its vision and purpose to life.”

Cooperrider, David L. et al., *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook: The First in a Series of AI Workbooks for Leaders of Change*, 2003.



Applying Appreciative Inquiry



- The study of what works - strengths based change
- Engagement of the whole system
- Change people's image of what they want from the future by honoring the past, appreciating what is and imagining what might be
- Action plans to implement the change momentum that come from using AI.

Appreciative Inquiry Process

- Focus on key positive topics for inquiry.
- Identify and value the “Best of What Is” using positive data collection techniques.
- Develop provocative propositions- to change the current thinking.
- Collectively imagine what can be, building on this foundation to gain alignment through the organization..
- Innovate by creating the shared vision
- Develop specific actions to bring about the change desired.

Appreciative Inquiry Assumptions

- In every organization something works.
- What we focus on, gains attention and becomes our reality.
- Change begins by asking questions of an organization
- People implement change when they can imagine a better future and connect with the past
- What is kept from the past, should be the best of what is.
- Value engagement as everyone can contribute.

What's Different About AI?

- Focus is on the positive
- Builds on past successes
- Engages the whole system
- Create the energy for change
- Build relationships and commitment
- Stimulates shared vision and innovation
- Accelerates change

Two Approaches to the Future

Problem Solving

Something not working

Identify problem

Cause analysis

Solution analysis

Action planning to fix

The organization is focused on problems to be solved

Appreciative Inquiry

Imaging the future

Valuing - understand the best of what is

Envisioning - what might be

Dialoguing - what could be

Innovating - what will be

The organization is focused on infinite possibilities to be realized

How is Appreciative Inquiry Used?

- Consult with people
- Learn from past experience
- Involve whole organisation or community in change
- Build a vision for the future that everyone can share and help put into practice
- Strategic planning
- Organizational wide improvement
- Mentoring & performance management
- Leadership training
- Community development
- Business excellence
- Customer Service / Client Satisfaction
- Culture Change & Transformation

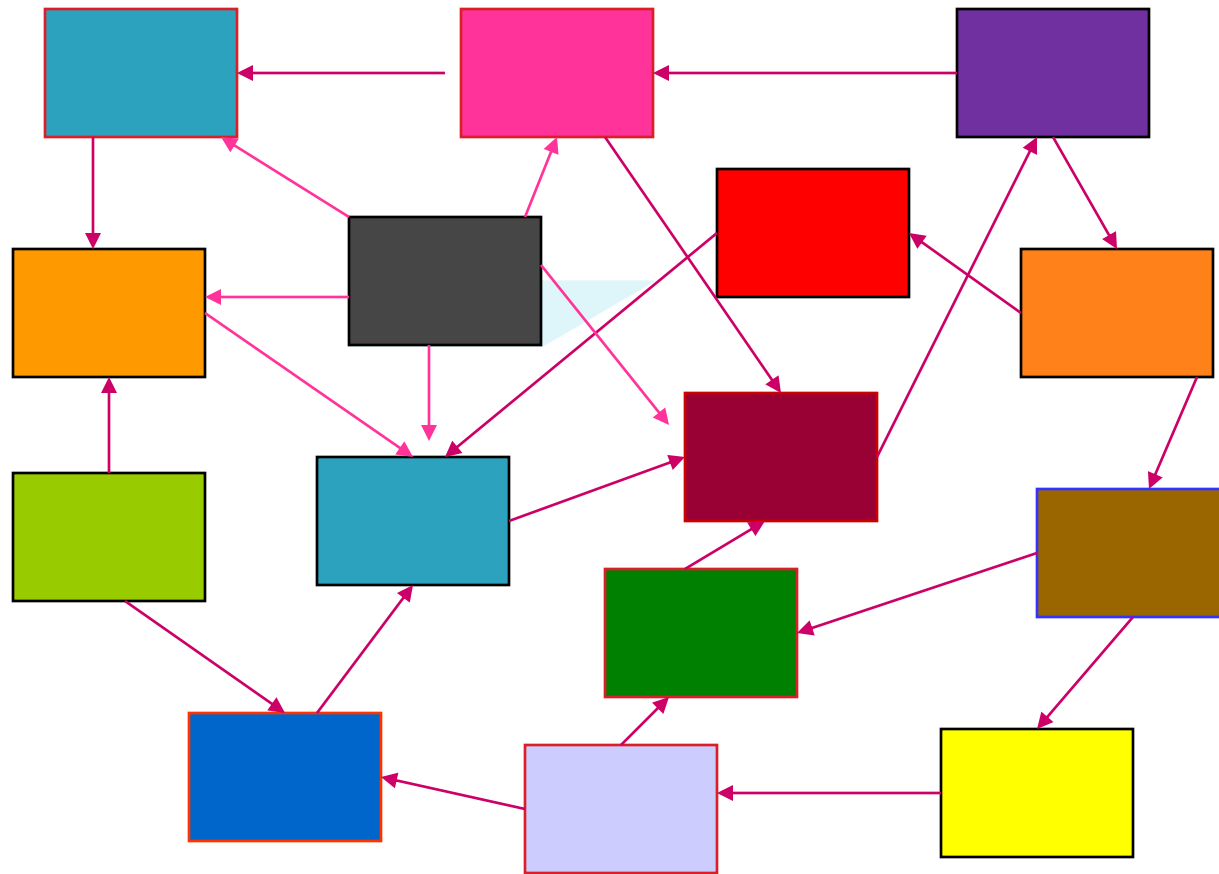
Peter Drucker on Leadership



“ The task of leadership is to create an alignment of strengths....making a system’s weaknesses irrelevant”

Interview with David Cooperrider in “ The New Society”

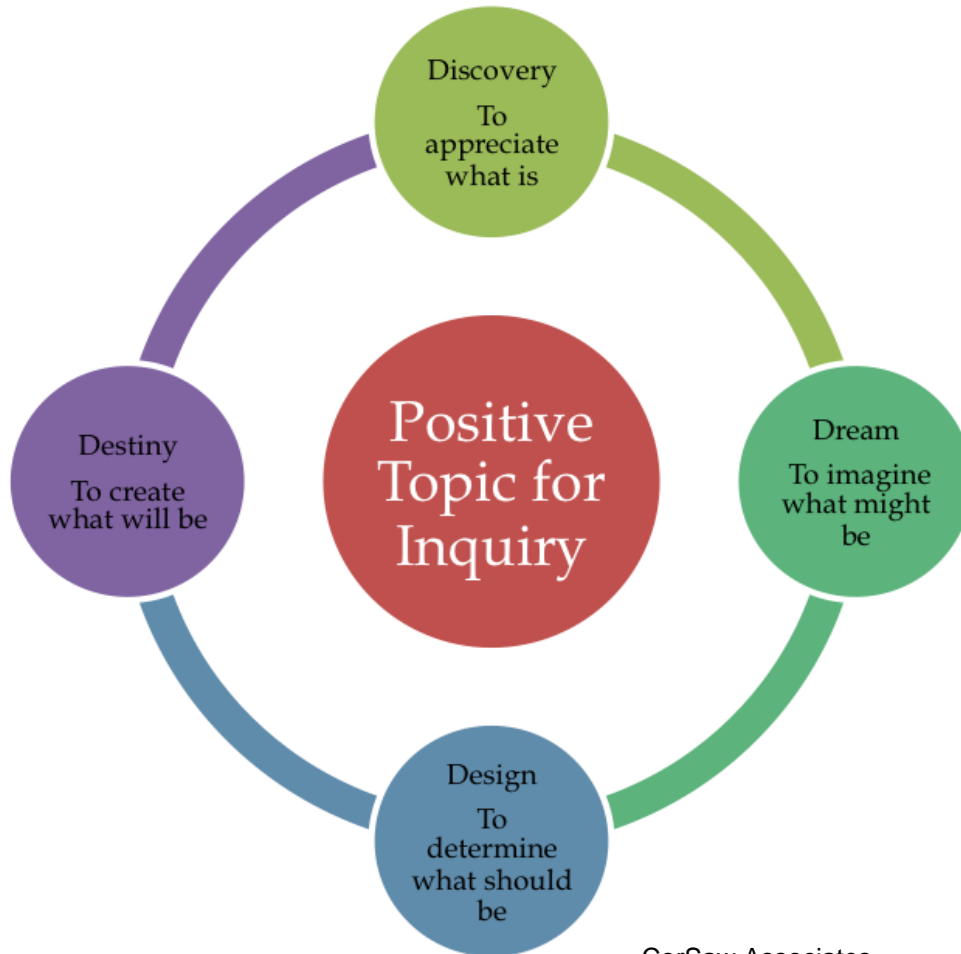
Organizations - Network of Processes/ People/Partners



Strengths Based Change

- Whole systems approach
- Creates the energy to sustain change
- Work teams playing to their strengths out perform those who don't
- Organization moves from limitations to possibilities
- From SWOT to SOAR
- Engaging people from a strengths based focus is about productivity

[Focus on the Positive Core]



Appreciative Inquiry – Shifting Focus

- Human systems move in the direction of what we most persistently ask questions about
- AI is a shift of focus to looking at a system when it is functioning at its best, most effective and capable in human, ecological and economic terms.
 - David Cooperrider-

Discovering the Positive Core

- The future is constructed on the positive core strengths of the organization.
- The positive core is that which gives meaning to the organization, defines values, and purpose.
- From the positive core - define what should never change and what should be open for change.
- The topic for inquiry is set out as what the organization wants more of.

What Do You Want to Study?

- Low morale
- High turnover
- Excessive baggage loss
- Customer complaints
- High sense of ownership
- Magnetic work environment
- Outstanding arrival experiences
- Revolutionary customer experiences

Changing the Focus Comes from the Inquiry

- What's the biggest problem here?
- What troubles you most, what keeps you up at night?
- Why do they blow it so often?
- Why am I not appreciated here?
- What possibilities exist that we have not yet considered?
- I will be most proud of this organization when..
- What's the smallest change that could make the biggest impact?

Positive Core- CPSQA

- In thinking about how things currently work with the Canadian Public Sector Quality Association, as you go forward with your plans, what are you most proud of that is the positive core that you want to keep, build upon and nurture?
- Round table exercise on the top three strengths that you want to keep.

Using AI in Developing Strategy

- “Whole System” in the room
- Aligning so that the task is clear
- Focus on positive Core and Future image of the organization
- Interactive processes and dialogue
- Agreeing common ground
- 2-3 days in a facilitated summit meeting
- Critical to have action and follow through, not just a feel good exercise with no real impact

Applying Appreciative Inquiry

- Government & political organizations
- Community & charitable organizations
- Business
- Health Care
- Education
- Non-profit organizations

Applying AI in Organizations

- Canadian Tire
- World Vision
- US Navy
- UN Global Compact
- City of Chicago
- Harris County (Houston) Behavioral Health Care System
- Avon

Deming on Change

If he could see GM now!



Learning is not compulsory... neither is survival.

Finding Our Way

“In these troubled, uncertain times, we don’t need more command and control; we need better means to engage everyone’s intelligence in solving challenges and crises as they arise.”

Meg Wheatley, Finding Our Way: Leadership for an Uncertain Time

References- used in this presentation

- Appreciative Inquiry Handbook for Leaders of Change by David Cooperrider, Diana Whitney and Jacqueline Stavros published by Crown Custom Publishing, Inc
- Appreciative Inquiry Commons:
<http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/>
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- The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry by Sue Annis Hammond, The Thin Book Publishing Co.

Reference Contact

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