

## What is an Appreciative Inquiry Evaluation?<sup>1</sup>

An Appreciative Inquiry evaluation is based on the principles of Appreciate Inquiry (AI), an organizational development method which is focused on building on what an organization does well. The principles of AI are summarized below.

An AI evaluation has a fundamentally positive orientation. Evaluators and participants work together, sharing their views and “co-creating” the future.

Evaluators will often combine traditional qualitative and quantitative methods with the essentially positive, collaborative approach of AI. In this way, the evaluation is an opportunity for people to reflect, share their stories, and change the organisation.

## Principles of Appreciative Inquiry

The following core principles of Appreciative Inquiry have been taken from Jill Howieson’s article<sup>2</sup>. According to Howieson, the principles are:

1. Constructionist principle:

People’s realities are “constructed” through their social interactions.

2. Simultaneity principle:

Change and inquiry are simultaneous. Inquiry can itself effect change.

3. Poetic principle:

The “story” of an organization is a product of the ongoing narrative of its members and others.

4. Anticipatory principle:

Envisioning a positive future can help to guide people towards one.

5. Positive principle:

Focusing on the positive can help create a positive energy for the future.

6. Wholeness principle:

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<sup>1</sup> This is drawn from Howieson, Jill, “A Constructive Inquiry approach: blending Appreciative Inquiry with traditional research and evaluation methods,” *Evaluation Journal of Australasia*, 11(2) 2011.

<sup>2</sup> As above.

Wholeness brings out the best in people, so supporting people to share the whole story from a position of individual wholeness can build a “collective capacity for change.”

7. Enactment principle:

Positive change occurs when people create the future through their words, images and relationships.

8. Free choice principle:

Free choice stimulates positive change and liberates personal and organizational power.