

# **Appreciative Inquiry**

## **Asking Powerful Questions**

### **Questions for Focusing Attention**

- What question, if answered, could make the most difference to the future of (your situation)?
- What's important to you about (your situation) and why do you care?
- What draws you/us to this inquiry?
- What's our intention here? What's the deeper purpose (the big "why") that is really worthy of our best effort?
- What opportunities can you see in (your situation)?
- What do we know so far/still need to learn about (your situation)?
- What are the dilemmas/opportunities in (your situation)?
- What assumptions do we need to test or challenge here in thinking about (your situation)?
- What would someone who had a very different set of beliefs than we do say about (your situation)?

### **Questions for Connecting Ideas and Finding Deeper Insight**

- What's taking shape? What are you hearing underneath the variety of opinions being expressed?
- What's emerging here for you? What new connections are you making?
- What had real meaning for you from what you've heard?  
What surprised you? What challenged you?
- What's missing from this picture so far? What is it we're not seeing?  
What do we need more clarity about?
- What's been your/our major learning, insight, or discovery so far?

- What's the next level of thinking we need to do?
- If there was one thing that hasn't yet been said in order to reach a deeper level of understanding/clarity, what would that be?

## **Questions that Create Forward Movement**

- What would it take to create change on this issue?
- What could happen that would enable you/us to feel fully engaged and energized about (your situation)?
- What's possible here and who cares? (Rather than "What's wrong here and who's responsible?")
- What needs our immediate attention going forward?
- If our success was completely guaranteed, what bold steps might we choose?
- How can we support each other in taking the next steps? What unique contribution can we each make?
- What challenges might come our way and how might we meet them?
- What conversation, if begun today, could ripple out in a way that created new possibilities for the future of (your situation)?
- What seed might we plant together today that could make the most difference to the future of (your situation)?

Vogt, E., Brown, J., and Isaacs, D. (2003), *The Art of Powerful Questions: Catalyzing Insight, Innovation, and Action*.



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