

Appreciative Families: A Family Coaching Model for Positive Change

Jamie Lynn Gairo

Jamie@AshaInstitute.com

Masters Project Paper

Masters Program in Organization Management and Development

Fielding Graduate University, Santa Barbara, California

<http://www.fielding.edu/omd/>

December 9, 2007

*Jamie Lynn Gairo
December 9, 2007*

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my family, especially my husband, Anthony who has been my biggest fan; his continued support of my dedication to academic learning and professional development provided me the inspiration I needed to move forward. My parents, sister and brother-in-law for the unwavering love and support. My close friends who supported me and provided a relaxing outlet from academia. My dogs for spending countless hours with me in front of the computer. My EBC cohort who began my Fielding journey with me, and provided the support I needed to keep moving. My OMD cohort, especially those who shared in my Master's Project journey. Erin Kreeger and Barclay Hudson for their support and belief in me and in my project.

Jamie Lynn Gairo
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
215.824.4372 or 215.803.1972

© Jamie Lynn Gairo 2007

This project was prepared using Microsoft Word 2003 for the PC on Windows XP and Microsoft Word for Mac 2004 on Mac OS X.

Copies are available from the author: 3569 Dows Road, Philadelphia, PA. 19154 USA or Jamie@AshaInstitute.com at the cost of \$40 for a hardcopy or free for an electronic copy.

Synopsis

Gairo, Jamie L. (2007) *Appreciative Families: A family coaching model for positive change*. Unpublished Masters Project Paper, Fielding Graduate University, Master's Program in Organizational Management and Development, Santa Barbara, California.

Core Hypothesis: Families will heal and feel increased levels of happiness following participation in an AI intervention, focusing on Family Coaching.

Abstract: Having witnessed families in crisis and the emotional damage inflicted on the individual members of these families, I went on an exploration to find a successful intervention to help these families recover to brighter future. This paper is a journey into the current literature, research and practices in Appreciative Inquiry, Positive Psychology, Positive Emotions, and Coaching. This information is then adapted and applied to a family coaching model that integrates these fields. A fictional family is described along with probable outcomes if this model were applied to them. Taking the principles of the various disciplines creates long-term positive change within the family system and within the individual family members.

Keywords (*Asterisked items are covered in the thesis concept reviews, including literature review.)

*Appreciative Inquiry *Positive Psychology Family System Family Change Family Coaching Family loss

Key References

Cooperrider, D. L., & Whitney, D. (2005). *Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Revolution in Change*. San Francisco: Berrett-Kohler.

Kelm, J. B. (2005). *Appreciative Living: The Principles of Appreciative Inquiry in Personal Life*. Wake Forest: Venet.

Orem, S. L., Binkert, J., & Clancy, A. L. (2007). *Appreciative Coaching*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Seligman, M. E. P. (2002). *Authentic Happiness*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SYNOPSIS 3

INTRODUCTION 7

CHAPTER 1: HYPOTHETICAL CASE STUDY: THE GALLAGHER FAMILY 9

 1.1: FAMILY MEMBERS (SEE FIGURE 1.1) 9

 1.2: TRAUMA 10

 1.3: KEY DETAILS) 10

 1.4: ASSESSMENT OF THE FAMILY SYSTEM..... 10

 1.5: INTERVENTION OVERVIEW 12

 1.6: OUTCOMES 14

 1.7: FAMILY GOALS 17

 1.8: FAMILY IMPACTS 17

CHAPTER 2: APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY (AI) 19

 2.1: OVERVIEW 19

 2.2: THE 4-D MODEL 20

 2.3: THE AI PRINCIPLES 23

 2.4: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE AI INTERVENTION 28

 2.5: INCORPORATING AI INTO FAMILY SYSTEMS 29

 2.6: FAMILY AI INTERVENTION STAGES 32

 2.7: WHAT ARE THE ISSUES WITH APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY? 33

CHAPTER 3: UNDERNEATH THE POSITIVE PRINCIPLE..... 34

 3.1: POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY & POSITIVE EMOTIONS 34

 3.2: WHAT ABOUT THE NEGATIVE FEELINGS? 36

CHAPTER 4: THE FAMILY COACHING MODEL 39

Appreciative Families

4.1: ASSESSMENTS 39

4.2: FAMILY COACHING MODEL 40

4.3: TIMEFRAME OF FAMILY COACHING 42

4.3: WHY GROUP COACHING? 42

4.4: RESISTANCE TO COACHING 44

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION 46

5.1: LIMITATIONS OF THE METHODS 46

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION 51

6.1: IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY 51

6.2: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH 51

CHAPTER 7: EPILOGUE 53

7.1: LEARNING PROCESS 53

REFERENCES 55

APPENDIX A: INDIVIDUAL HAPPINESS ASSESSMENT 57

APPENDIX B: BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR FURTHER READING 58

TABLES AND FIGURES

FIGURE 1.1: OVERVIEW OF THE GALLAGHER FAMILY.....9

TABLE 1.1: AI INTERVENTION FOR FAMILY SYSTEMS STAGES AND EXPECTED FINDINGS.....14

FIGURE 1.2: HYPOTETICAL INDIVIDUAL HAPPINESS LEVELS.....15

FIGURE 2.1: APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY 4-D CYCLE.....20

TABLE 2.1: APPLYING THE 4-D MODEL TO FAMILY SYSTEMS.....22

TABLE 2.2: THE PRINCIPLES OF APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY.....23

TABLE 2.3: ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES IN AN AI INTERVENTION.....28

TABLE 2.4: ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES IN A FAMILY AI INTERVENTION.....30

TABLE 2.5: AI INTERVENTION FOR FAMILY SYSTEMS STAGES.....32

Introduction

This paper is a journey into a new approach to healing family systems through a positive coaching model. There are two key concepts that underlie this coaching model, Appreciative Inquiry and Positive Psychology. Appreciative Inquiry (AI) has been used in many organizations with a great amount of success. This paper discusses the principles and concepts underlying AI and then modifies the practices of AI to apply it to family systems. Positive Psychology is discussed, along with the research that has been completed on the role of positive emotions in individual life. This journey is completed by way of a simulated case study using a fictional family as the example. Appreciative Inquiry is used as part of the coaching model as an intervention *and* an approach to living. The paper will posit the following: Using an Appreciative Inquiry-based coaching model will improve family and individual happiness for families seeking increased happiness levels.

The intervention outlined includes the following components: Initial system and individual assessment; Group coaching with a family coach specializing in AI principles; and belief and commitment to the AI approach. The core to the success of an AI intervention is a shift in thinking to a positive perspective. Using literature from the field of Positive Psychology, this paper outlines the benefits of a positive mindset and how to incorporate them into daily living.

The intervention proposed in this paper is by no means flawless, and the limitations of this intervention are also discussed. The biggest limitation to this intervention is the variation of individual differences among family members and their

belief and dedication to the AI process. As part of the intervention, the family coach works with the family to define their goals as a family unit. This step is extremely important to ensure that all members of the family are in agreement of their goals for the coaching process.

This paper is organized in the following manner: (1) An overview of the family system to be discussed and an analysis of the current state of that system; (2) A hypothetical case study with the previously discussed family system and the family coaching model posited in this paper (3) An overview of Appreciative Inquiry, including its limitations; (4) Overview of the research in the Positive Psychology field; (5) Description of the family coaching model, including possible limitations; (6) Outline of the methods tested during the hypothetical case study; (7) and, a discussion surrounding the implications of this research.

The main goal of this paper is to provide an intervention structure that moves the family beyond the past and into the future with a new outlook. Using the principles of Appreciative Inquiry and Positive Psychology, the goal is to provide practitioners with a new framework to apply in family coaching.

Chapter 1: Hypothetical Case Study: The Gallagher Family

1.1: Family Members (see Figure 1.1)

Mother: Ann, age 73

Father: Joseph, age 70

Daughter: Lynn, age 53

Daughter: Ashley, age 31

Son: Thomas, age 49

Deceased Son: Allen, deceased 14 years

Son-in-Law: Ted, age 60

Son-in-Law: John, age 31

Former Daughter-in-Law: Lucy, age 49

Two Grandchildren: Thomas, Jr. & Jill, ages 19 & 23

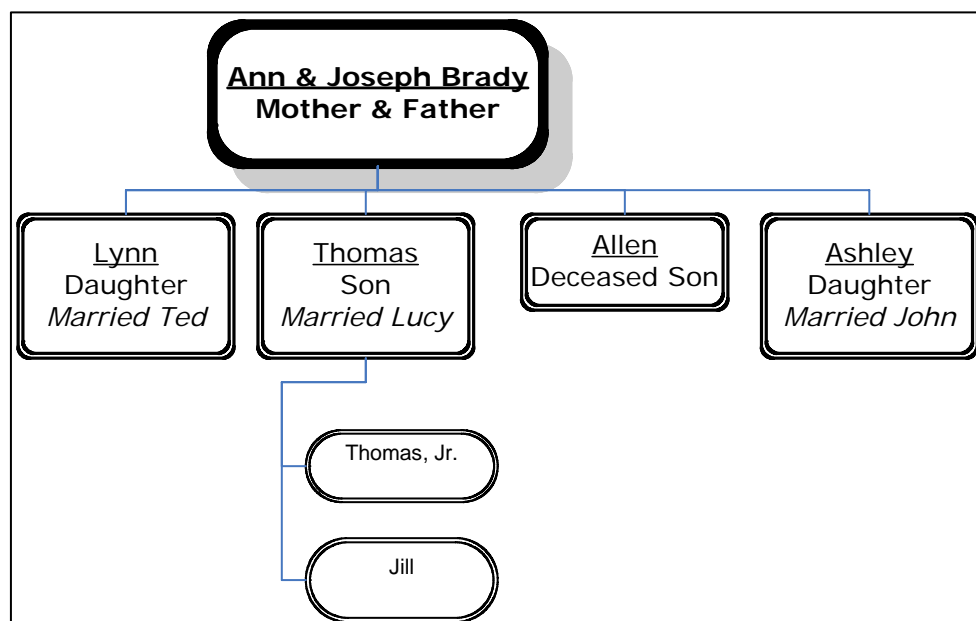


Figure 1.1: Overview of the Gallagher Family

1.2: Trauma

Loss of Allen at the age of 34, after a battle with AIDS in 1993.

1.3: Key Details)

The Gallagher Family is a Caucasian, middle-class family which resides in a suburban area of a major US city.

1.4: Assessment of the Family System

Prior to 1993, the Gallagher family was a close-knit family, often spending a great deal of time with one another. The family would gather on weekends for meals and game nights. During the summer months, the family would spend many weekends at Thomas and Lucy's home. They would swim, picnic, and party together. The Gallagher family was one that all envied and wanted to be apart of, and many close family friends would often join them. In 1992, Allen was diagnosed with AIDS and given a short time to live. The family bonded together to help one another, particularly Ann who was caring for Allen daily. Allen passed away in March 1993 and the troubles in the family began shortly thereafter.

The troubles began when Ann became recluse. Ann believed that only she suffered a loss, and that nobody else in the family can understand her pain. Ann's behavior separated the family in ways they never would have dreamed. Siblings were mourning the loss of their brother; a niece and nephew were mourning the loss of their uncle, and a father mourning the loss of his son; not to mention the many other family and friends who were also mourning. Separations and divides within the core unit began

Appreciative Families

happening, with smaller, close relationships being formed as opposed to the prior large family relationship. Family gatherings became two or three members of the family, which added to an increased sense of loss among family members. Over the four years following Allen's death, the family continued to distance and individual member's happiness levels decreased.

The Gallagher family suffered another loss when Thomas and Lucy separated in 1997. Another great divide began with the custody battle, and the loss of Lucy as a family member. The family felt that they had been deceived by Lucy for so many years. Ann referred to the loss of Lucy as losing another child, and the siblings felt that they were losing a sister.

In the ten years following the divorce, the family has reached a point where they feel as though they are going through the motions as a family. During holiday gatherings, Lynn and Ashley try to infuse the family with joy, but nobody really jumps on board. Singing Christmas Carols just doesn't receive the same response that it used to. Ann continuously refers to all that she has lost in her life, but fails to see what is still in front of her. Joseph has resorted to living in his own world and only letting people in when he sees fit. Joseph has become increasingly irritated with Ann's negativity and finds himself falling into the same patterns. Lynn and Ashley have found solace in one another, but both long for the 'good old days' when family gatherings were fun. Thomas has moved an hour away and keeps to himself. Thomas, Jr. and Jill are out on their own; Jill is married and Thomas, Jr. living the single life.

1.5: Intervention Overview

“The crises in your life are necessary, indispensable for a full and authentic life, and ultimately among the most significant and inspiring events in your life” (Pearsall, 2003, p. xvii)

The Gallagher family came to coaching with a number of issues to address. The most difficult being the many different perceptions that each family member had about the current situation. There was a lot of blame and judgment being placed on others, and little recognition of their personal contribution to the current state of the family. The members that came to coaching are the following: Ann (mother), Joseph (father), Lynn (daughter), Ashley (daughter), Ted (son-in-law), and John (son-in-law). The coaching relationship was initiated by Lynn and Ashley who stated that they “were at their wits end with the situation in their family.” The coaching relationship was contracted to last for six months, with bi-weekly face-to-face coaching sessions and phone coaching sessions as needed.

At the onset of the relationship, there was a great deal of resistance from Joseph and Ann. Ann felt that things in the family were going fine and that there was no need to go through this. Joseph, on the other hand, had lost all interest in the family and did not want to be bothered by this. Interestingly, Joseph was very protective of his relationship with his daughters, but not with his son. His loss of interest was on the family as a whole.

The son-in-laws felt distanced from the family and focused mostly on the stresses that their wives felt on a regular basis. John was not part of the family until 1999, post trauma, so he does not have a reference to the way that the family used to flourish. Ted,

Appreciative Families

on the other hand, has been part of the family since 1984, so has experienced all of the traumas with the family. In some ways, Ted does not feel that there is hope for the family to return to their post-trauma state.

The key to this intervention is to appreciate the past and present, and work together to create a new future together. The purpose is not to get back the 'good old days.' This family has been impacted greatly by the traumas and is different because of them. It is paramount that the family coach work with the family to create a new future using all of the knowledge, experience, and emotions from all that they have been through.

1.6: Outcomes

“Success is a journey, not a destination. The doing is often more important than the outcome.” Arthur Ashe

The following table is an example of what is expected if this model were applied to a family similar to the Gallagher Family.

Stage	Tasks	Reactions
Initial Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce AI to the family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skepticism • “We can’t always look at the positive, what about the hurt that I feel?”
Individual Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess individual happiness levels • Gather data on the current state of the family system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varied views on the state of the family • Happiness levels varied between members • Levels of engagement had a negative correlation with happiness levels
Initial Family Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-Introduce AI to the family • Discuss Individual Happiness levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More skepticism about the AI model • Most looking forward to coaching
Goal Setting Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set family goals • Create family mission statement or vision • Select affirmative topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differing views on the goals of the family • Levels of desired engagement varied • Concern on how to bring in members not currently participating in the sessions
Coaching Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice AI Principles to accomplish family goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As coaching progressed, levels of change increased • Individual happiness levels increased • Listening and empathy increased over time • Individual members progressed on their own curve

Table 1.1: AI Intervention for Family Systems Stages and Expected Findings

It is expected that the individual happiness levels will follow the Individual Happiness Graph (see Figure 1.2).

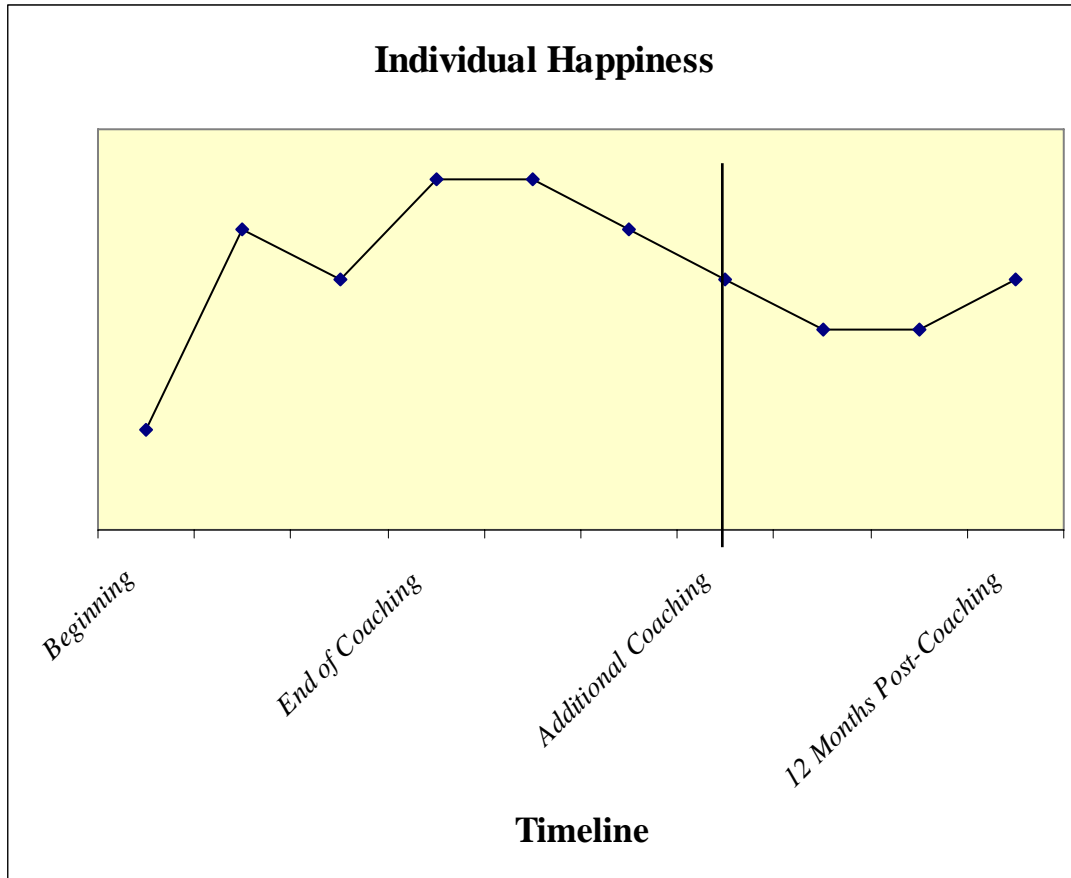


Figure 1.2: Hypothetical Individual Happiness Levels

As demonstrated in Figure 1.2, the individual happiness levels are expected to increase greatly mid-way through coaching, by decrease prior to the end of coaching, and rise again at the end of coaching. The individual happiness levels are expected to slowly decrease over a three month period. The family then returns to coaching, and the levels stay about the same or decrease slightly, then as the family reaches the one year point, they are expected to rise and stay steady.

Cognitive therapy focuses on the creation of new thinking patterns to include more positive emotions in one's repertoire (Martin E.P Seligman, 2002, pp. 210-211). As cognitive therapy continues, the thinking patterns of the patient changes to include more positive emotions (Martin E.P Seligman, 2002, p. 211). Using this same logic, the process of family coaching helps the family to change their thought and language/communication patterns in the long term. Seligman (1990, pp. 79-82) discusses how one explains the events that occur in their life and the impact on their depression rates. Seligman (1990, pp. 79-82) found that depressed individuals who underwent cognitive therapy were least likely to relapse than those who underwent drug therapy alone. The tendencies of a depressed person to dwell and ruminate are similar characteristics to those in a family system that has experienced trauma. Seligman (1990, pp. 79-82) found that depressed individuals underwent cognitive therapy for 6 months alleviated their depression and did not relapse; in addition, those individuals would return to treatment 3 months after therapy ended for 'booster' sessions. When assessing these individuals' optimism scores, it was found that their optimism scores were at their highest 12 months post-therapy (Martin E. P. Seligman, 1990, pp. 79-82). It is expected that the families who work through the family coaching model would experience the same trends of happiness levels (see Figure 1.2).

1.7: Family Goals

The Gallagher family set the following goals for their family:

- Open Communication
- Expression of Emotions
- Family Dinners once per month
- Phone Conversations twice per week

1.8: Family Impacts

Ann found herself shocked by the statements made by her daughters and was quick to judge and not listen. As coaching progressed, however, Ann began to listen and hear how her daughter's were feeling. Ann's statements moved in the positive direction by reacting with positive curiosity, instead of judgment.

Joseph's changes during coaching were not as remarkable. Joseph was quick to shut down and respond with anger, often throwing his hands up in the air in disgust. There were several occasions when Joseph left the coaching session early. Towards the end of the six months, Joseph began to listen to his daughter's frustrations; he did continue to attach judgment to their statements.

Both daughters began to feel listened to, and feel that their parents understood their frustrations. The main goal of both of the daughters is to feel connected to their family without feeling the stresses associated with that connection. Ashley stated at one session that she felt like the family was always demanding things of her, but never returning the favors. As coaching progressed, Ashley felt more empowered to say no, and to also ask for help when she needed it. Lynn also began to feel a decreased level of stress with the family and began to be more apart of the family. Instead of avoiding

Appreciative Families

phone calls and visits, she began to communicate and visit with her family on a more regular basis.

The biggest change in the family, albeit small, was the change in the parents expectations of their children. Ann and Joseph were able to see that their daughters had many obligations and responsibilities outside of them. There are still arguments and disappointments surrounding the frequency of phone calls and visits, but the family is having a more productive dialogue around those disappointments. Ann still reports that she doesn't see or talk to Lynn as much as she would like to, and feels that Lynn is angry with her.

As this family continues to evolve and create a new future together, communication will continue to increase, and satisfaction with the family and their individual roles in the family will increase.

Chapter 2: Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

“Appreciation is a wonderful thing: It makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well.” Voltaire

2.1: Overview

Appreciative Inquiry is a change management model that moves the focus from problem-solving to positive- based change. “The principles and practices of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) suggest the idea that collective strengths do more than perform—*they transform*” (D. L. Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, P. 2). Thus, it is suggested that the use of AI, as opposed to typical problem-solving methods, will do *more*. “In AI, intervention gives way to inquiry, imagination, and innovation. Instead of negation, criticism, and spiraling diagnosis, there is discovery, dream, and design. AI involves the art and practice of asking unconditionally positive questions that strengthen a system’s capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential” (D. L. Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p. 8).

AI is a four-D model (or sometimes called cycle): Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny (D. L. Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p. 16). Underlying this model are five principles: The Constructionist Principle, The Simultaneity Principle, The Poetic Principle, The Anticipatory Principle, and The Positive Principle (D. L. Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, pp. 49-53). In the following sections, each stage of the four-D model and five principles will be discussed and illustrated.

2.2: The 4-D Model

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) can be a formal process or an informal conversation, but at the core all AI conversations follow the four-D model shown in Figure 2.1.

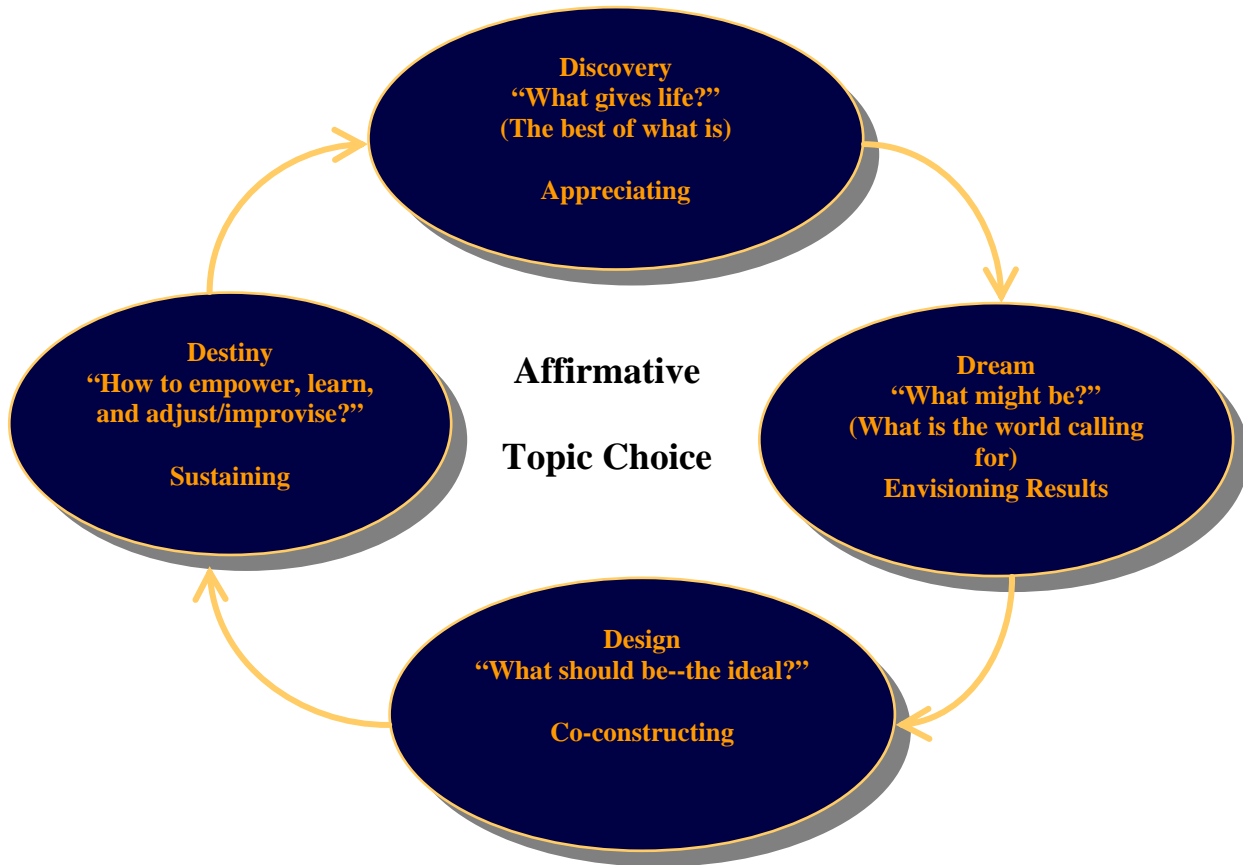


Figure 2.1: Appreciative Inquiry 4-D Cycle (D. L. Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p. 16)

Prior to an Appreciative Inquiry, a topic must be selected, which then moves the inquiry into the Discovery phase. The Discovery phase is the first step and looks at the whole system, with all stakeholders, and asks 'what is working?' (D. L. Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, pp. 25-26). The Dream phase asks, 'what are the possibilities?' (D. L.

Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, pp. 26-28). The Design phase looks at the organizational design and makes propositions on how to realize the expressed dream (D. L. Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, pp. 28-31). The Destiny phase enables the system to build hope and sustain momentum for ongoing positive change and high performance (D. L. Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, pp. 34-35).

Many of the definitions and explanations surrounding AI speak in organizational terms, i.e. how to improve productivity or maintain customer satisfaction. AI has been a powerful mechanism in invoking change at organizations, but far less is documented on the impact on personal lives. For this paper, personal lives will be defined as one's life away from professional work or community obligations; one's personal life refers to their life with their family and friends. Moving AI from the organizational perspective to a personal one is the goal of this paper. Laura Michaelson founded the center of Appreciative Parenting to coach parents on using the principles of AI with their children. Michaelson (2007) notes that she has seen the ripple effect of asking children positive questions with two foster children that lived with her for several weeks; Michaelson asked them each day what the favorite part of their day was and noticed that the use of this question changed the girls' perspectives. Jackie Kelm has written on the subject of applying AI in individual life (2005). The piece that is missing is the application of AI to family systems.

Much of the documentation that is currently available applies AI to organizational systems. A family system is a type of organization, but the bottom line is very different than the typical corporation, and the bottom line for each family varies. The bottom line

for a family is more like the goals and expectations of the system as a whole and of each individual member of the family. One family member's goal may be to grow a close tight-knit relationship with their family and each individual family member; while another member's goal is to love their family from a distance and not engage in a tight-knit relationship with the other members. The tension between the variation of expectations of the members ripples throughout the entire system. AI would open the doors to a positive inquiry into the *Destiny* of the family. See Table 2.1 for sample questions at each stage.

Discovery	What is great about our family? What is working in our family? Let's remember a very happy time in our family.
Dream	What about the happy times would you bring into the future? If you could communicate with yourself and your family members five years in the future, what would they say? As a family, if you could have three wishes, what would they be?
Design	What have you done before that you could do again that could help you move toward your dream? Thinking about your dream, what would make it come alive for you? What smaller aspects of your dream could you experiment with now?
Destiny	How are you already living your dream? What has been the most important thing that you have learned about yourself? What commitments do you make to yourself and your family?

Table 2.1: Applying the 4-D model to Family Systems

2.3: The AI Principles

The understanding of AI calls for a distinctive shift in human organization and change (D. L. Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p. 2). There are five principles that underlie AI, and each will be discussed in the following section and also see Table 2.2.

The Constructionist Principle	<i>Reality is continuously created</i>
The Simultaneity Principle	<i>Inquiry & change happen at the same time</i>
The Poetic Principle	<i>Focus is chosen, & the choice grows</i>
The Anticipatory Principle	<i>Shift the future through powerful images</i>
The Positive Principle	<i>Positive expression grows possibilities</i>

Table 2.2: The Principles of Appreciative Inquiry

The Constructionist Principle

“Human knowledge and organizational destiny are interwoven. We are constantly involved in understanding and making sense of the people and the world around us—doing strategic planning analysis, environmental scans, needs analysis, assessments and audits, surveys, focus groups, performance appraisals, and so on. To be effective executives, leaders, and change agents must be adept in the art of understanding, reading, and analyzing organizations as living, human constructions”(D. L. Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p. 49).

Social constructionism suggests there is no true reality, but that we are continuously creating our reality as we live. Since there is no true reality, each individual holds their own reality and no two people live in the same sense of reality. “Three of the assumptions underlying AI are fundamental to this principle: (1) what people focus on becomes their reality; (2) the language people use creates their reality; and (3) in every individual, something works” (Orem, Binkert, & Clancy, 2007, p. 40).

In the family system, the reality of where the system is at this moment is not always clear. The reality of the family system is created by each member of that system, each of which will be very different. If one family member likes being close-knit with

Appreciative Families

his family, multiple family gatherings will satisfy him and his reality will demonstrate satisfaction with the family system. If another family member likes to keep his distance from his family, multiple family gatherings will create dissatisfaction with the family system. Understanding these conflicting expectations will help the family set standards and goals as a family unit to ensure satisfaction in the family system.

The Simultaneity Principle

“Inquiry and charge are not separate moments, but are simultaneous. Inquiry is intervention. The seeds of change—the things people think and talk about, the things people discover and learn, and the things that inform dialogue and inspire images of the future—are implicit in the very first questions we ask. The questions we ask set the stage for what we find, and what we discover (the data) becomes the linguistic materials, the stories, out of which the future is conceived and constructed” (D. L. Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, pp. 50-51).

The key to the Simultaneity Principle is that there are no neutral questions, all inquiries take us *somewhere*. One question can cause a dramatic shift in one’s perspective or thinking. Questions run through the minds of individuals all day long, and create our experiences for that moment or that day (Kelm, 2005, p. 54). Much of internal dialogue is automatic and the impact may not be recognized. At the very moment a question is asked, change begins.

The Poetic Principle

“A metaphor here is that human organizations are a lot more like an open book than, say, a machine. An organization’s story is constantly being coauthored. Pasts, presents, and futures are endless sources of learning, inspiration, and interpretation, like the endless interpretive possibilities in a poem or a literary text. The implication is that we can study virtually any topic related to human experience. We can inquire into the nature of alienation or joy, enthusiasm or low morale, efficiency or excess, in any human organization”(D. L. Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p. 51).

Traditionally, it is thought that reality is something that is observed, but the Constructionist Principle shows that individuals create their own realities. The Poetic Principle demonstrates that individuals choose what they focus on. “As we focus on the positive aspects we help bring them to life and shift our beliefs accordingly” (Kelm, 2005, p. 32). What one chooses to focus on is a direct result of their past experiences and what one characterizes as important to them. “...we don’t observe reality, but create it through our acts of observation. In this way, what we focus on grows as we continue to notice more and more of it, expanding it into more of our reality” (Kelm, 2005, p. 36).

Each person in the family system creates a reality of their past and of the family’s past, dependent upon where they put their focus. For example, two children born and raised in the same family may have differing thoughts on what their childhood was like. One child may focus on the negative aspects and the other the positives which creates two very distinct stories of family history.

The Anticipatory Principle

“Our positive images of the future lead our positive actions. This is the increasingly energizing basis and presupposition of Appreciative Inquiry. The infinite human resource we have for generating constructive organizational change is our collective imagination and discourse about the future”(D. L. Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p. 52).

How one feels about the future and how it is visualized has a large impact on what their future will actually be. “We can shift our future by creating inspiring new images of what we want, and then making small changes in the present that align with the new images” (Kelm, 2005, p. 72). Combining a positive outlook on the future with vivid imagery can help one to create their desired future.

The Positive Principle

“Building and sustaining momentum for change requires large amounts of positive affect and social bonding—things like hope, excitement, inspiration, caring, camaraderie, sense of urgent purpose, and sheer joy in creating something meaningful together. We find that the more positive the question we ask, the more long-lasting and successful the change effort. The major thing a change agent can do that makes a difference is to craft and ask unconditionally positive questions”(D. L. Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p. 53).

Positive emotion and expression is at the core of Appreciative Inquiry. Within each principle, there is a thread of positive affect running through it. In order to create a desired future, the focus must be on positive imagery and expectations. If one focuses on the negative aspects of their reality, the negative aspects will grow. Focusing on the positive brings more positive in one’s reality. “In the long-term, the value of positive emotions is to provide durable resources that a person can draw on over a lifetime” (Orem et al., 2007, p. 46).

Appreciative Families

Barbara Fredrickson (1998) found that such feelings as joy, interest, contentment, and love can be transformational by contributing to the expansion of a person's ways of thinking and acting. Imagine the power if an entire family system focused on the positive? What an amazing power positive emotions could have on the dynamics in the family and the impact on each individual member's life.

Some may find it especially difficult to feel positive emotions when dealing with difficult issues. Martin Seligman, often named as the father of Positive Psychology, notes the following, "But I am not a default optimist. I am a dyed-in-the-wool pessimist; I believe that only pessimists can write sober and sensible books about optimism, and I use the techniques that I have written about in *Learned Optimism* every day. I take my own medicine and it works for me" (2002, p. 24). It is common to hear people remark that they are just not a positive person, in fact, humans are hardwired to focus on negative emotions, like fear (Martin E.P Seligman, 2002).

2.4: Roles and Responsibilities in the AI Intervention

Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) discuss the various roles needed in an AI intervention at the organizational level (see Table 2.3). Adapting AI for use in family system, only 2 roles are needed, the Family Coach and the Family Members (see Table 2.4).

	Before	During	After
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn AI • Plant the AI Seed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champion AI in the organization • Participate as an equal, essential voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask how might we take an AI approach to this? • Lead by affirmation
Consultants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce AI to the organization • Focus on the business case of AI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train groups in AI • Support the core team • Facilitate the AI process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist the organization to integrate AI into daily practices
Core Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn AI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select affirmative topics • Create the interview guide • Determine the interview strategy • Communicate best stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use AI as a daily practice
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn AI • Conduct interviews and be interviewed • Review interview stories and share best practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in discovery and dialogue • Dare to dream • Design the ideal organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate AI into existing processes and practices • Create new systems and structures using AI • Practice AI on a daily basis

Table 2.3: Roles & Responsibilities in an AI Intervention (D. L. Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p. 47)

2.5: Incorporating AI into Family Systems

“Your family and your love must be cultivated like a garden. Time, effort, and imagination must be summoned constantly to keep any relationship flourishing and growing.” Jim Rohn

There are two ways that the principles of AI can be incorporated into the family system: (1) Family members learn about AI principles and how to incorporate them into daily living and with interactions; (2) An intervention using a family coach skilled in AI principles works with the family using the AI approach. This paper will describe the process of using the AI intervention approach along with a family coach. The intervention approach includes the family members learning about the principles of AI and how to incorporate the principles into daily living, *and* includes the guidance of an AI professional.

Using AI as an intervention in the family system takes a different form, thus the roles and responsibilities are different. See Table 2.4 for a description of the two roles in this intervention.

Role	Before	During	After
Family Coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce AI to the family • Focus on the goals of the family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train family members in AI • Facilitate the AI process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist the family to integrate AI into their daily lives
Family Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn AI • Set family goals, mission statement or vision statement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select affirmative topics • Communicate best stories • Engage in discovery and dialogue • Dare to dream • Design the ideal family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use AI as a daily practice • Ask how might we take an AI approach to this? • Lead by affirmation

Table 2.4: Roles & Responsibilities in a Family AI Intervention (Modified from D. L. Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005)

In organizations, it is commonly stated that the consultant must keep focus on the business case for using AI. In family systems, it is posited that the coach must keep focused on the goals of the family. As part of the intervention the family must come to an agreement on goals of the family. All members of the family system must participate in the discussion of goals as the success of the intervention depends upon the full engagement of each family member.

The principles of AI usually require a mind-shift for most people, since they go against the grain of most of common language. The use of positive language is necessary to the success of AI, and takes some mental shifts in order for it to come natural. Each family member will internalize the principles at a different rate. Some may find it more comfortable to shift their language, while others may struggle. This is where the

Appreciative Families

importance of the Family coach comes in. The coach will be actively listening for the use of appreciative language during the coaching sessions.

In Appreciative Coaching (Orem et al., 2007), the authors discuss how to apply the process of AI into a coaching relationship. The key to the Appreciative Coaching model is that clients are their own agents of change and the focus on strengths and not deficits (Orem et al., 2007). Using the Appreciative Coaching model with a family system will help the family to focus on what is working right now and how to design their ideal future. Drawing on the experience of AI, Appreciative Coaching takes the model for use on an individual level, and this coaching model can be further modified to apply to a group coaching situation, and families in particular. Some of the key concepts of Appreciative Coaching will be used in the AI Intervention model will be discussed Chapter 4.

2.6: Family AI Intervention Stages

	Tasks	Outcomes	Timeframe
Initial Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce AI to the family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Meetings set 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 week prior to the start of the Individual Meetings • Approximately 60 minutes
Individual Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess individual happiness levels • Gather data on the current state of the family system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Happiness Assessment • Completion of the family questionnaire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each meeting 30-60 minutes
Initial Family Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-Introduce AI to the family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set meetings for the AI Information session and Goal Setting meeting • Discussion around data from the Individual Meetings • Distribute the worksheets for completion prior to Goal Setting Meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 week after completion of Individual Meetings • Approximately 60 minutes
Goal Setting Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set family goals • Create family mission statement or vision • Select affirmative topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family goals listed • Mission statement or vision statement created • Coaching sessions set 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 week after the Initial Family Meeting • Approximately 120 minutes
Coaching Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice AI Principles to accomplish family goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate best stories • Engage in discovery and dialogue • Dare to dream • Design the ideal family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sessions to begin 1 week post Goal Setting Meeting • Each session lasts approximately 60 minutes • Duration of coaching relationship dependent upon situation, but a minimum of 6 months

Table 2.5: AI Intervention for Family Systems Stages

2.7: What are the issues with Appreciative Inquiry?

Appreciative Inquiry focuses solely on the use of positive questions to inject whole-system change. This process is extremely powerful, but there are instances when there are negative emotions that are inhibiting progress. "...action researchers typically do ask about the positive as well as the negative, and that asking about both seems to be a fuller inquiry than just focusing on what works" (Bushe & Kassam, 2005, p. 177).

Appreciative Inquiry does focus on the positive and typically avoids the negative questions and situations, however, there are cases (such as this family coaching model), when the negative cannot be pushed aside. In the next chapter, the necessity of negative emotions is discussed.

While the literature on appreciative inquiry is slanted heavily to avoid the discussion of the negative, research has begun on discussing the negative emotions involved in an AI intervention. The discussion of how the negative emotions play into an AI intervention has been discussed as being authentic. How is one truly authentic if they are avoiding the negative emotion that they are feeling? Being authentic is key to sustainable, long-term change. If the truth around the negative emotion is avoided, the change evoked by focusing on the positive will last for a short time, but the individual/organization/family will return to the pre-change state. In order to co-create a more positive future, the current state (both positive and negative) must be addressed. In the next chapter, there will be a discussion of the research into positive psychology, positive emotions and negative emotions. This discussion will support the need to focus on the positive, but also the need to address the negative emotions.

Chapter 3: Underneath the Positive Principle

3.1: Positive Psychology & Positive Emotions

“There stood Beethoven, gravely ill and totally deaf. Eyes Closed, he kept conducting the orchestra even after they had ceased their performance and the audience had risen to its feet in thunderous applause. As a singer stepped from the choir to turn him around to see those whose shouts of ‘bravo’ resonated throughout the concert hall, tears of elation filled his eyes. Perhaps the worst loss a composer could experience had been the catalyst for a remarkably adaptive creativity that allowed him to transcend his tortures to become immersed in the thrill of conducting the premiere of his Ninth Symphony, the ‘Ode to Joy.’ At that moment, and not only in spite of but because of his adversity, Beethoven had experienced the thrill of thriving through adversity” (Pearsall, 2003, p. xi)

Appreciative Inquiry has proven to be a success within organizations, and have a great impact on those who work in organizations. For example, GTE conducted an AI intervention that resulted in an increase in stock prices, increased employee morale, and increase in quality and customer service, and they even won the ASTD award for the best organizational change program (D. L. Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p. 4). If GTE, an organization with 67,000 employees, can feel the impact of AI on that grand of a scale, what is stopping a family from doing the same?

Barbara Fredrickson’s research in positive emotions revealed that there are four main propositions in the Broaden-and-Build framework: Positive emotions broaden thinking and action; Positive emotions undo negative ones; Positive emotions build resiliency; and, Positive emotions create upward spirals (Barbara L Fredrickson, 1998). Research by Seligman shows beneficial effects of positive emotions on relieving depression and increasing happiness (Duckworth, Steen, & Seligman, 2005).

“Positive emotions create long-term adaptive benefits because broadening builds enduring personal resources, which function as reserves to be drawn on later to manage

future threats” (Barbara L. Fredrickson, 2001, p. 220). This idea lends to the model of Appreciative Inquiry, because the focus of AI is to look at what is working in the system and to build upon those successes. Appreciative Inquiry interventions in corporations have resulted in increased positive emotions by emotions and also within the structure of the organizations (Foster & Lloyd, 2007, p. 32). If increasing the positive emotions builds a reservoir of positive emotions which help to deal with adversity, using AI in corporations helps to build a more resilient corporation to deal with changes and competition in the future. In addition, using AI to build positive emotions in family systems will create a core of strength in the family to better deal with the current and future traumas. Increasing positive conversation through Appreciative Inquiry and creating awareness of the power of positive emotions has the potential of moving families through crisis and impacting the individual’s happiness levels.

C.R. Snyder’s work in the area of hope theory has applications in the area of positive psychology (2000). Snyder’s study compared High-hope individuals to Low-hope individuals and found that those in the High-hope category are better able to overcome roadblocks than Low-hope individuals (2000). High-hope individuals are more likely to look for other paths and avenues than Low-hope individuals(Snyder, 2000). Positive psychology discusses Hope theory and uses the studies conducted by Snyder to further prove the case for positive psychology (Kauffman, 2006).

3.2: What about the negative feelings?

"Adversity introduces a man to himself." Unknown

"Smooth seas do not make skilful sailors." African Proverb

It has been often stated that the opposite of positive emotions is negative emotions. This is not necessarily true, and has been demonstrated in the works of Barbara Fredrickson while studying the impact of Loving Kindness Meditation on positive emotions (2007). In this study, Fredrickson found that the absence of positive emotions did not equate to the presence of negative emotions (2007).

In all of the currently published descriptions of Appreciative Inquiry, there is no mention of dealing with the negative emotions. This raises the question of authenticity of the Inquiry or of the entire AI intervention. David Cooperrider agrees with the suggestion that more documentation is needed on Appreciative Inquiry in times of adversity and/or trauma stating that "...there definitely needs to be some work done in this area" (D. Cooperrider, 2007). Although there is limited information resource for AI in times of trauma, there is plenty of documentation on the necessity of negative emotions and how positive emotions can help to build resilience (Barbara L. Fredrickson, 2001; Barbara L. Fredrickson & Losada, 2005; Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004).

Does the positive approach ignore problems? No, the positive approach flips the problem around and looks for the opportunity to build from the existing successes or find what works and build on it. How does the AI approach handle trauma? Does AI ask practitioners and participants to ignore negative emotions? On the surface the answer

appears to be yes, however, when looking at the work that is being done with AI, this is not the reality. It appears that theoretically, AI is purely focused on the positive and what gives life to organizations. When practiced, it is impossible to sustain change when ignoring the obvious negative emotions that are occurring. More personally, when a loved one dies, it hurts and it hurts for a long time. Ignoring this hurt (and emotions like sadness, grief, anger, etc) would be counter-productive. These negative emotions are in place to tell the individual *something*, and it is important to listen and figure that out. It is not, however, productive to dwell in the areas of negative emotion. Integrating a positive approach can help individuals move beyond these negative emotions, but not ignore them. The reality is that there is suffering, but there is also prosperity. Focusing on the prosperity will help it grow. Consider a plant: putting it in the sunshine, feeding it, and watering it—will cause it to grow. There are times when pests take over beautiful plants and the gardener is dealing with mold, aphids, or rot, but the main focus on nurturing plants is to help them grow—not to avoid pests. In this case, the mold is telling the gardener something very important about the state of the plant, putting the gardener into action to combat the mold. Humans are similar; the emotion of sadness causes a human to realize that there is something going on that needs attention. The model posited in this paper suggests that the emotion is recognized, identified, dealt with and moved on from to create a new reality in the future.

“The evidence is clear from this new and more optimistic view of our thriveability that life’s worst misery can serve as a cosmic wakeup call to pay more attention to living’s profound majesty...stop languishing and start flourishing” (Pearsall, 2003, p.

xviii). Experiencing negative emotions or traumatic events have often been credited for people changing their lives. Many times, people say how such a tragedy opened their eyes to see life and to keep living. Barbara Fredrickson and Michelle Tugade found this to be true when testing resilience in individuals (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). In this study, they found that individuals who experience an increased number of positive emotions on a regular basis recover more quickly from traumatic events (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004, p. 330). This study shows that when, in general, an individual is a more positive person (experiences positive emotions on a regular basis), they are better equipped to handle traumatic situations. If a family is coached and learns how to incorporate the Appreciative Inquiry principles into their lives, they should be better equipped to handle more difficult times.

Chapter 4: The Family Coaching Model

"It takes a whole village to raise a child." Ashanti proverb

4.1: Assessments

Individual Assessments

At the beginning and the end of the coaching agreement, each individual family member will answer the following questions:

(1) *"In general, how happy or unhappy do you usually feel? Select from the following list that best describes your average happiness.*

- *10=Extremely happy*
- *9=Very happy*
- *8=Pretty happy*
- *7=Mildly happy*
- *6=Slightly happy*
- *5=Neutral*
- *4=Slightly unhappy*
- *3=Mildly un happy*
- *2=Pretty unhappy*
- *1=Very unhappy*
- *0=Extremely unhappy*

(2) *"What percentage of the happiness level in question 1 is attributable to your current family situation?"*

The goal of these questions are to gauge the happiness level of the individual family member before the intervention and then compare it to the response during, and after the coaching sessions have ended.

H₁: *The AI intervention with the family will increase each individual family member's average happiness levels.*

Family System Assessment

An assessment of the family system will be conducted by the family coach by meeting with each individual family member and during the discovery phase with the whole family. The assessment will be dependent upon the particular family's goals, which are defined as part of the AI intervention. For example, if the family is looking to spend more quality time together and feel higher levels of cohesion with the family, the assessment will gauge the current level of cohesion and amount of quality time and then compare the results post intervention.

H₂: *The AI intervention will cause families to live according to their stated family goals.*

4.2: Family Coaching Model

“In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.” Albert Einstein

The family coaching model posited in this paper is one based in Appreciative methods, and is modified from two key sources (Orem et al., 2007; Zeus & Skiffington, 2000). Appreciative Coaching (Orem et al., 2007) discusses a coaching approach based on the principles of Appreciative Inquiry focused on one-on-one coaching. Zeus & Skiffington (2000, pp. 129-150) discuss a model for team coaching within organizations. The family coaching model (and the AI Intervention discussed earlier, see Table 2.5) is a blend of the three main offerings: Appreciative Inquiry, Appreciative Coaching, and Team Coaching. The main groundwork for each of these models (as modified and discussed here) is Positive Psychology and the research in Positive Emotions (both discussed above in Chapter 3).

Demonstrating the Appreciative Inquiry 4-D Model in the Family Coaching

Model:

- *Discovery*: The discovery phase begins at the onset of the coaching relationship. Discovery occurs at the individual and family levels.
- *Dream*: The dream phase begins during the goal setting meeting in conjunction with the discovery phase. Setting the mission and values for the family is apart of dreaming.
- *Design*: The design phase occurs during the coaching sessions as the family begins to plan how they will realize their dreams for their family.
- *Destiny*: Realizing the destiny of the family will also occur during the coaching sessions, while the family is still experiencing the other three phases of the AI intervention.

The simultaneity principle is in play during the intervention and family coaching. As dreams are stated, the design begins, and then those dreams are realized. Each of the four phases are felt at the same time.

“Families move into disorganization between the past, the present, and a new confusing reality...The ongoing process demands that families continuously reassess their life situation and their roles” (Syren, Saveman, & Benzein, 2006, p. 26). Families in trauma will reach a point when they need to understand their future and how each member of the family plays into that new reality. Questions will sound like this, ‘what will our lives be like after this battle is over?’, ‘What is our new reality?’ In the case of losing a family member, the future is very different than the past, a key member of that system is gone. The family must now reassess and determine who is playing what role.

Syren et al discuss a concept coined as ‘being in continuity’, “...it is prominent in families as they express awareness of the loss death can mean. In spite of this, they are

able to live in acceptance of the present and manage to face the uncertainty of the life situation. The experience of being in continuity is embedded in the family members' will to go on living..." (2006, p. 30). Using an appreciative approach via the family coaching model demonstrates this idea of continuity by working together to set goals and move toward a new future that they have co-created. Syren et al stress the idea of living in the present with family members and being authentic in the situation (2006, p. 30). In the case of families coming to coaching post-trauma, this continuity is created after-the-fact, and should prepare families for future adversities.

4.3: Timeframe of Family Coaching

Initial coaching relationship is expected last six months, with follow up coaching approximately every three months for at least a year (or as determined by the family coach and the family).

4.3: Why Group Coaching?

Group coaching is a more cost effective way to engage in a coaching relationship, and the benefits of being apart of a group to learn are great (Zeus & Skiffington, 2000, p. 130). Group coaching is especially important for teams who are interdependent (i.e., a family system). Working as a whole system allows for increased levels of communication and understanding. If working individually with a coach, it is not possible for the coach to inject change into the whole system, as would be possible in a group coaching setting.

People choose to go to support groups for many reasons, and often it is because of the camaraderie that they feel by being apart of a group who understands what they are feeling. A family coaching situation create the same type of environment, with support, listening, and behavioral changes.

In order to inject whole systemic change, the whole system must be apart of the process in order for it to be successful. An example of this is the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Summit. The AI Summit has been implemented in groups up to 20,000 participants and includes members of the organization whole community, including external participants (Ludema, Whitney, J, & Griffin, 2003, p. 3). The goal of this process is to include all of the people that this organization (or system) that touches.

The importance of being connected and having meaning in one's life is paramount to overall happiness levels, which is linked to life satisfaction (Martin E.P Seligman, 2002). This is key to understanding that the need for the family system to undergo group coaching is that the connectedness that will be created with result in increased life satisfaction for the individual members.

Group coaching is becoming more frequent in organizations as team-based projects are becoming more prevalent (Zeus & Skiffington, 2000, p. 130). Further, group coaching benefits more than the group and the company, but also the individual (Zeus & Skiffington, 2000, p. 130).

The majority of the documentation of group coaching is based in organizations and discusses how group coaching can create high performing teams with high levels of synergy (Zeus & Skiffington, 2000, p. 130). These characteristics can impact family

systems in the same way, but using different terminology. Each family would define 'high performing' in terms of their family differently, as they would for synergy. It can be argued that families who invest in group coaching want higher levels of participation by the individual family members and increased communication. By working as a whole unit, the family is more likely to achieve these goals, as opposed to working one-on-one with a coach. In addition, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, hence the choice for group coaching as opposed to individually coaching each family member.

4.4: Resistance to Coaching

“What is needed, rather than running away or controlling or suppressing or any other resistance, is understanding fear; that means, watch it, learn about it, come directly into contact with it. We are to learn about fear, not how to escape from it.” Krishnamurti

The family may be resistant to talk about the actual issues in the family. It is the role of the coach to pinpoint those deep issues and bring them to the forefront. If a member resists the idea of discussing an issue, there is a great opportunity to look further into that resistance. The family coach should ask probing questions to determine why the individual does not want to talk about it; what is underneath that resistance?

Zeus and Skiffington (Zeus & Skiffington, 2000, p. 203-204) discuss several reasons for reluctance in coaching: Personality variables, Unwillingness to Improve, Mistrust of the organization, Fear of failure, and Drifting. Although these reasons are directed towards organizational coaching reluctance, they do apply to family, as well as individual coaching. It is the job of the family coach to recognize these when they see them and aptly deal with them.

Appreciative Families

The family coaching model is rooted in AI and Positive Psychology, so part of the response to resistance would be to question the negation emotion that the individual is expressing. The family coach should question the negative behavior, and respond to the individual in a positive manner. Most often, the resistance is not about the surface issue being discussed, but about some type of fear. If the family coach is able to properly dig into that fear, the family coaching will progress forward.

The greatest benefits of coaching will come forward when the coach deals effectively with the resistance of the individuals and helps to move them beyond their reluctance to open up.

Chapter 5: Discussion

“Everything that can be counted doesn't necessarily count; everything that counts can't necessarily be counted.” Albert Einstein

5.1: Limitations of the Methods

“Everything that can be counted doesn't necessarily count; everything that counts can't necessarily be counted.” Albert Einstein

The goal setting process is extremely important in this model. It is key that all family members be involved in setting the goals, so that they internalize the goals and feel passionate about achieving them.

This model, like all others, has benefits and costs associated with it. It is the responsibility of the family coach and the family system to discuss the full requirements of entering into this intervention. If there is a seed of doubt with either party, an alternate intervention model should be recommended and discussed. It is the professional responsibility of the family coach to recognize when another professional should be contacted.

Time and Money

Engaging into a family coaching relationship will require a great deal of time. It is expected that this model will be modified for use in different families. The recommendation is that the coaching sessions take place in person, but do to time and budget constraints, meeting via conference calls may also be accepted. In addition, a modified version of the Family Coaching Model to occur in an intensive environment is also a possibility.

Appreciative Families

It is expected that there would be a large monetary investment needed to engage in this process. This raises the questions of who would be responsible for the financing of this process? How will the family coach handle that?

The Need for AI Experience

The more that I got into this intervention, I realized the importance of the practitioner having significant experience in AI. It is easy to invalidate someone's feelings when using only positive experiences and emotions. This is especially true when working with individuals/families who have experienced trauma. In the case of the Gallagher Family (fictional case study in my paper), the loss of Allen was very painful and if a family coach pressed too hard for the family to only focus on the positive, the authenticity of the intervention would decrease and the family's faith in the family coach would decrease significantly. I can envision the body language that would occur with individuals shutting down because they didn't feel truly heard.

Individual Personality Factors

Individual personality factors of the family members greatly impact the effectiveness of the family coaching, as well as the family system's overall personality factor. A family that is willing to invest the time, money and emotions into the family coaching process are more likely to benefit from the process. The individual personality types within the family will differ, resulting in varying levels of engagement in the process and willingness to change. The individual characteristics also play into the goal

Appreciative Families

setting stage of the Family Coaching Model. Each individual's personality types and goals will impact the setting of the family goals.

In order for family coaching to progress, the family must set agreed goals that are in line with the goals of each individual member. Personality types may play a large role in setting those goals. Individual personality types will also impact the individual's belief in the family coaching process, including AI and Positive Psychology. In addition, the selection bias may show that the individuals who engage successfully in the Family Coaching Model are more likely to want to spend more time with their family, which may vary greatly from the general population of families and individuals.

Maturation

As people age, they grow and change. When a person is involved in a long-term coaching process, changes they experience will be attributable to maturation. That being said, the experience of coaching will change other parts of their lives without their knowledge. In the spirit of AI, individuals are will experience the Simultaneity principle, meaning that the inquiry that takes place during the coaching will begin the change process in their life. Individuals come to family coaching as whole people, not just the family aspect of them. With that, they bring their personal and professional selves, and the family coaching can create changes in those aspects of their lives. On the same token, changes in their personal and professional lives can (and will) bring on changes in their family lives. Human beings are unable to switch off any one piece of themselves; all of the many pieces are running together and separately at the same time.

Events Outside the Family System

There is no guarantee that increases in happiness levels are due solely to the family coaching. The assessment questions are listed as, “Rate your overall happiness levels at this time, and what percentage of this happiness level is attributable to your current family situation?” Since this is a self-assessment, there is always room for error and can vary greatly from day-to-day. Events that occur within the individual’s life outside of their relationship with their family can greatly impact their happiness levels, and the individual’s self-report may not actually account for this. For example, a promotion at work may increase an individual’s happiness levels, and this happiness may trickle into their family life, but the individual may not see the distinction, hence report higher family happiness levels than are actually true.

The Hawthorne Effect

Changes in the happiness levels of the individual family members may actually be due to the fact that they are receiving attention from other family members and the family coach and not directly related to the family coaching process itself. The Hawthorne Effect may show that if the family engaged in *any* type of coaching, not just the Family Coaching model, they would have increased levels of happiness. Do these increased levels of happiness correlate to *actual* improved familial relations?

As these limitations demonstrate, it is never fully clear if the intervention *is* the cause of the changes seen. In this case, does the AI Coaching really increase happiness levels? There is clear evidence showing the power of positive emotions (Barbara L

Appreciative Families

Fredrickson, 1998; Barbara L. Fredrickson, 2001, 2007; Barbara L. Fredrickson & Losada, 2005; Martin E. P. Seligman, 1990; Martin E.P Seligman, 2002; Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004), and this model emphasizes the building and use of positive emotions by each of the individual family members. These limitations may have an impact on the happiness levels, but the family coaching model definitely impacts the family system in a positive way. Having a positive impact on the family system, gives great opportunities to the future of family coaching and the lasting family change process.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1: Implications of the Study

There are some great implications of this research project, especially the creation of a new model for creating change within a family system. By using a model based in Appreciative Inquiry and Positive Psychology, coaches can create change within a family system, and change the language used within that system. This study further advances the scholarship of AI and Positive Psychology by embarking into the family coaching world.

It is the hope of the researcher that this model will be advanced and utilized in various family coaching scenarios. Coming together as a family unit, learning a new language together, dealing with the past and moving into a new reality is a very powerful prospect.

6.2: Recommendations for Further Research

Further inquiry into varying personality types within the family system and how they impact the model. As discussed in the limitations section, personality differences can play a big role in the success or failure of the family coaching. Further research could determine what initial assessments could be used to determine the varying personality types within the family system and how to work with them. Are their specific personality characteristics that are not successful in family coaching? Are their specific personality characteristics that are unsuccessful when combined in family coaching? Are their specific personality types that are better suited for individual coaching?

Further research with the fields of family therapy and grief counseling in conjunction with the family coaching model would provide valuable insights to the family coach on dealing with specific family issues. The grief process could be integrated into the family coaching model with some great results; perhaps a mapping of the stages of grief with the intervention stages of the family coaching model.

It would also be interesting to research how resistance plays out successfully in the family coaching scenario. There are some obvious gaps to apply organizational research to the family system. First, there is no manager in control of the individual's career or professional future; Second, there is a lot more personal history that plays into the family cases, than organizational cases; and, Third, the expression of emotions is vastly different in a family coaching group, as opposed to a organizational coaching group.

Using the Family Coaching Model in an actual coaching situation would prove to be the most valuable piece of additional research. Documenting the best practices of the model, what needs improvement, what changes the family coach made along the way would be valuable tools as the field of family coaching continues to evolve.

Chapter 7: Epilogue

7.1: Learning Process

“That is what learning is. You suddenly understand something you've understood all your life, but in a new way”. Doris Lessing

*“Learning without thought is labor lost; thought without learning is perilous.”
Confucius*

“We now accept the fact that learning is a lifelong process of keeping abreast of change. And the most pressing task is to teach people how to learn.” Peter Drucker

“Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.” Mahatma Gandhi

At some point during the last 7 months, I thought I would see a bright flash of light and suddenly everything would become clear. Well, that has never happened and if anything, I have more questions now than when I started. Learning is a journey and not a destination, and I have simply found a new path to travel down.

I am very familiar with using AI interventions, using AI and positive psychology in my coaching practice, but this intense process of questioning whether these models are worth working with, worth researching, and worth my time. I end this process with a resounding YES these are great models and I can't wait to use them more in my practice. As with any framework, theory or model, modifications are always possible. I am excited to be apart of this field and taking this knowledge to impact change on the family level. This process of conducting an experiment, without actually conducting an experiment has changed me as a scholar and as a practitioner. There were times during the process when I felt my resistance to question what I thought to be true. These times were the greatest learning moments for me and I had to unravel my personal attachment

Appreciative Families

to a particular idea. I am now a more confident coach, understanding how I can use frameworks and modify them for my and my client's needs. I have come to view published works with a critical eye, and always thinking "Yes, but..."

Aside from the professional ties that I have to this topic, it is also a very personal one for me, and I have been able to take a step back and look at the many angles objectively. I am excited about this model and the possibility that it has in the family coaching world. I am also excited about the possibilities that it holds for me and my family.

References

- Bushe, G. R., & Kassam, A. F. (2005). When is Appreciative Inquiry Transformational: A Meta-Case Analysis. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 41*(2), 161-181.
- Cooperrider, D. (2007). Paper presented at the Appreciative Inquiry Conference, Orlando, FL.
- Cooperrider, D. L., & Whitney, D. (2005). *Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Revolution in Change*. San Francisco: Berrett-Kohler.
- Duckworth, A. L., Steen, T. A., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2005). Positive Psychology in Clinical Practice. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology, 1*, 629-651.
- Foster, S. L., & Lloyd, P. J. (2007). Positive Psychology Principles Applied to Consulting Psychology at the Individual and Group Level. *Consulting Psychology Journal, 59*(1), 30-40.
- Fredrickson, B. L. (1998). What good are positive emotions? *Review of General Psychology, 2*, 300-319.
- Fredrickson, B. L. (2001). The Role of Positive Emotions in Positive Psychology: The Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotion. *American Psychologist, 56*(3), 218-226.
- Fredrickson, B. L. (2007). Paper presented at the Appreciative Inquiry Conference, Orlando, FL.
- Fredrickson, B. L., & Losada, M. (2005). Positive Affect and the Complex Dynamics of Human Flourishing. *American Psychologist, 60*(7), 678-686.
- Kauffman, C. (2006). Positive psychology: The science at the heart of coaching. In D. R. Stober & A. M. Grant (Eds.), *Evidence based coaching handbook: Putting best practices to work for your clients*. (pp. 219-253). Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.

Appreciative Families

- Kelm, J. B. (2005). *Appreciative Living: The Principles of Appreciative Inquiry in Personal Life*. Wake Forest: Venet.
- Ludema, J. D., Whitney, D., J. M. B., & Griffin, T. J. (2003). *The Appreciative Inquiry Summit: A Practitioner's Guide for Leading Large-Group Change*. San Francisco: Berrett-Kohler.
- Michaelson, L. N. (2007). Retrieved July 13, 2007, from www.appreciativeparenting.com
- Orem, S. L., Binkert, J., & Clancy, A. L. (2007). *Appreciative Coaching*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Pearsall, P. (2003). *The Beethoven Factor: The new positive psychology of hardiness, happiness, healing, and hope*. Charlottesville, VA: Hampton Roads Publishing Company.
- Seligman, M. E. P. (1990). *Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Seligman, M. E. P. (2002). *Authentic Happiness*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Snyder, C. R. (2000). Hope Theory: Rainbows in the mind. *Psychological Inquiry*, 13(4), 249-275.
- Syren, S. M., Saveman, B.-I., & Benzein, E. G. (2006). Being a Family in the Midst of Living and Dying. *Journal of Palliative Care*, 22(1), 26-32.
- Tugade, M. M., & Fredrickson, B. L. (2004). Resilient Individuals Use Positive Emotions to Bounce Back from Negative Emotional Experiences. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 86(2), 320-333.
- Zeus, P., & Skiffington, S. (2000). *The Complete Guide to Coaching at Work*. Australia: McGraw Hill.

Appendices (50%)

Appendix A: Individual Happiness Assessment

Name: _____

Date: _____

Coaching Stage (select one):

- Beginning
- End of Coaching
- 3 Months Post Coaching
- 6 Months Post Coaching
- 12 Months Post Coaching

(1) In general, how happy or unhappy do you usually feel?

Select from the following list that best describes your average happiness: _____

- 10=*Extremely happy*
- 9=*Very happy*
- 8=*Pretty happy*
- 7=*Mildly happy*
- 6=*Slightly happy*
- 5=*Neutral*
- 4=*Slightly unhappy*
- 3=*Mildly un happy*
- 2=*Pretty unhappy*
- 1=*Very unhappy*
- 0=*Extremely unhappy*

(2) “What percentage of the happiness level in question 1 is attributable to your current family situation? _____

Appendix B: Bibliography for Further Reading

- Arcoleo, D. (2001). Underneath Appreciative Inquiry: The Power of Positive Conversation. Fielding Graduate University.
- Balestracci, D. (2003). Handling the Human Side of Change. *Quality Progress*, 36(11), 38-45.
- Boyatzis, R. E., & Akrivou, K. (2006). The ideal self as the driver of intentional change. *Journal of Management Development*, 25(7), 624-642.
- Bruck, W., & Weber, S. (2000). The Appreciative Inquiry Summit is the Next Step of the Evolution in the Work with Large Groups. In: Klett-Colta.
- Buckingham, M. (March 2005). What great managers do. *Harvard Business Review*, 70-79.
- Buckingham, M., & Coffman, C. (1999). *First, Break all the rules*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Bushe, G. R. (2005). Five theories of change embedded in appreciative inquiry. In D. Cooperrider, P. Sorenson, T. Yeager & D. Whitney (Eds.), *Appreciative Inquiry: Foundations in Positive Organization Development*. Champaign, IL: Stipes.
- Carruthers, C. P., & Hood, C. D. (2004). The Power of Positive: Leisure and Well-Being. *Therapeutic Recreation Journal*, 38(2), 225-245.
- Cooperrider, D. L. (1996). The Child as Agent of Inquiry. *Organization Development Practitioner*, 28, 5-11.
- Cooperrider, D. L. (2000). Positive Image, Positive Action: The Affirmative Basis of Organizing. In D. Cooperrider, P. Sorenson, T. Yeager & D. Whitney (Eds.), *Appreciative Inquiry: Rethinking Human Organization Toward a Positive Theory of Change* (pp. 29-53). Champaign, IL: Stipes.
- Fox, J. (2008). *Your Child's Strengths: Discover Them, Develop Them, Use Them*. New York: Viking Adult.
- Gable, S. L., & Haidt, J. (2005). What (and why) is Positive Psychology? *Review of General Psychology*, 9(2), 103-110.
- Gergen, K. J., & Gergen, M. (2004). *Social Construction: Entering the dialogue*. Chagrin Falls, OH: Taos Institute Publishing.

- Goldberg, R. A. (2005). Resistance to Coaching. *Organizational Development Journal*, 23(1), 9-16.
- Grant, S., & Humphries, M. (2006). Critical Evaluation of Appreciative Inquiry. *Action Research*, 4(4), 401-418.
- Hackman, R. J., Wageman, Ruth. (2005). A Theory of Team Coaching. *Academy of Management Review*, 30(2), 269-287.
- Hammond, S. A. (1996). *The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry*. Bend, OR: Thin Book.
- Hay, L. L. (1987). *You Can Heal Your Life*. Santa Monica: Hay House.
- Johnson, K. N. (1999). *Making Meaning of Loss: An Appreciative Inquiry*. Royal Roads University.
- Kets de Vries, M. F. R. (2005). Leadership Group Coaching in Action: The Zen of Creating High Performance Teams. *Academy of Management Executive*, 19(1), 61-76.
- Ludema, J. D. (2001). From Deficit Discourse to Vocabularies of Hope: The Power of Appreciation. In D. Cooperrider, P. Sorenson, T. Yeager & D. Whitney (Eds.), *Appreciative Inquiry: An Emerging Direction for Organization Development* (First ed.). Champaign, IL: Stipes.
- M., E. T., & Lancaster, C. M. (2005). Comparing Appreciative Inquiry to Action Research: OD Practitioner Perspectives. *Organization Development Journal*, 23(2), 29-49.
- Max, D. T. (2007). Happiness 101. *New York Times*. Retrieved September 26, 2007, from http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/07/magazine/07happiness.t.html?_r=1&oref=sl ogin&fta=y&pagewanted=print
- Miller, E. D., & Harvey, J. H. (2001). The Interface of Positive Psychology with a Psychology of Loss: A Brave New World. *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, 55(3), 313-322.
- Roberts, L. M., Spreitzer, G., Dutton, J., Quinn, R., Heaphy, E., & Barker, B. (January 2005). How to Play to Your Strengths. *Harvard Business Review*, 75-80.
- Rogers, J. (2004). *Coaching Skills: A handbook*. New York: Open University Press.
- Rosenzweig, J., & Van Tiem, D. M. (2007). An Appreciative View of Human

- Performance Technology. *Performance Improvement*, 46(5), 36-43.
- Ross, J. A. (2005). How to Be the Best Coach for Your Team. *Harvard Management Update*, November 2005, 3-5.
- Salopek, J. J. (2006). Appreciative Inquiry at 20: Questioning David Cooperrider. *T&D*, 60, 21-22.
- Seligman, M. E. P. (1990). *Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Seligman, M. E. P., Parks, A. C., & Steen, T. A. (2004). A balanced psychology and a full life. *The Royal Society*, 1379-1381.
- Seligman, M. E. P., Steen, T. A., Park, N., & Peterson, C. (July-August 2005). Positive Psychology Progress. *American Psychologist*, 60, 410-421.
- Welshons, J. E. (2003). *Awakening from Grief: Finding the Way Back to Joy*. Makawao, HI: Inner Ocean.
- Whitney, D., & Cooperrider, D. L. (2000). The Appreciative Inquiry Summit: An emerging methodology for whole system positive change. *Journal of the Organization Development Network*, 32, 13-26.
- Zemke, R. (1999). Don't Fix That Company! *Training*, 36, 26-33.
- Zubery, E., Binsted, N., Zifman, N., & Jecsmien, P. (2005). Adolescents Resisting Treatment: Exploring the Resistance in Eating Disorder Patients to Treatment Within the Family System. *The Journal of Psychiatry and Related Sciences*, 42(3), 146-153.