

Annotation

A Narrative Summary of an Appreciative Inquiry conducted in the area of Professional Coaching. The Appreciative Inquiry process was used to inquire about an individual's professional career path.

Appreciative Inquiry Narrative Summary: Summit of One

Practicum/Supervised Inquiry

Lori Love, BBA, CGA Instructor, lori.love@cna-qatar.edu.qa, AIFT© training April 2012 (Doha, Qatar), AIFT© refresher training January 2014 (Doha, Qatar)

Mary Renton, MBA, MEd, CELTA, Instructor, mary.renton@cna-qatar.edu.qa AIFT© training April 2012 & AIFT© refresher training January 2014 (Doha, Qatar)

1. Background

While most Appreciative Inquiry (AI) uses positive questioning to develop, and action, a preferred vision for the future focused on an organization's goals, the topic of this summary is a personal inquiry into an individual's career. Lori Love and Mary Renton, instructors at the College of the North Atlantic Qatar, were inspired by a curious professional participant to test the possibility of applying Dr. David Cooperrider's (2000) framework for effecting large scale organizational change (the Appreciative Inquiry Summit) to inquire about an individual's preferred vision for their own career (a Summit of One). Having attended AI training in 2012 and 2014 Love and Renton intend to use this Appreciative Inquiry facilitation as evidence of practicum to achieve their AI facilitator designation.

2. Description of Participant, Focus of the Appreciative Inquiry & Objectives

The concept for this inquiry was initiated by a senior manager (participant) at the college in which the facilitators are working. The manager has had a long, varied and interesting career but has often found themselves moving from position to position based on available opportunities. The participant was interested in being more reflective and strategic about their future career decisions and being familiar with Appreciative Inquiry, they were eager to see how participation in an AI could be used to aid in career reflection with the goal of personally making more conscious future career decisions.

Both Love and Renton (facilitators) were interested in applying their AI training and intend to use this inquiry as evidence of practicum to achieve their AI facilitator designation. Love is a certified coach and was also curious to practice applying the entire AI process to career reflection and development.

3. What Was Done

A Summit of One was developed to explore the application of the AI process to individual career planning.

Sandra Hagevik outlines what a Career AI might look like in an article on “Appreciative Inquiry and Your Career” (2000). In this brief article Hagevik describes the normal Destiny Phase in a person’s career as “chasing a ball down hill; the speed and direction of the ball determine your decisions and actions” (p 44). This approach involves letting others make decisions on your behalf—very similar to our participant’s description of their past career decisions. Both Hagevik and our participant believe that AI, with its focus on “shared involvement” has the potential to make career planning more empowering.

4. Description of the Process

The process of AI inquiry involves moving through five phases, this process was applied in this Summit of One as follows: (1) Definition: Positive framing of the inquiry focus; (2) Discovery: Exploration of positive moments: the sharing of stories and identification of life-giving forces; (3) Dreaming: Creating shared images of a preferred future; (4) Design and (5) Delivery/Destiny: Innovation and improvisation of ways to create that future. A timeline of this process can be found in [Appendix A: Appreciative Inquiry Summit of One: Time-Line](#).

4.1 Definition

The Definition Phase of the AI process involved an initial ½ hour meeting with the participant in their office to discuss the participant’s initial concept for the summit. This was a fact finding mission to determine the purpose of the inquiry. Following this meeting the facilitators created a schedule of events (outlined in [Appendix A: Appreciative Inquiry Summit of One: Time-Line](#)). The schedule was created based on a desire to allow appropriate time to reflect but to still keep on a tight timeline so that the entire process could be completed within 1 month.

The initial concept meeting was followed by a 1 hour statement of purpose and guide development meeting with the facilitators and the participant. During this meeting affirmative questions were asked to gather information from which to develop the interview guide and the schedule for the AI process was discussed. The questions used in this meeting can be found in the [Appendix B: AI Summit of One, Definition and Process Design Questions](#)

The affirmative statement that resulted from that session was a desire to create a “preferred vision for their future career”, the participant was hoping AI could provide a process for reflection. “I want to be thoughtful and reflective about what I want to do with my future and I am curious to see how the Appreciative Inquiry process can help”. The participant had self-identified that their previous career decisions had been primarily opportunistic and not necessarily reflective, they were interested in stopping to explore what their vision for a really great career actually was. The participant was interested in a purely career focus and was not interested in general personal reflection.

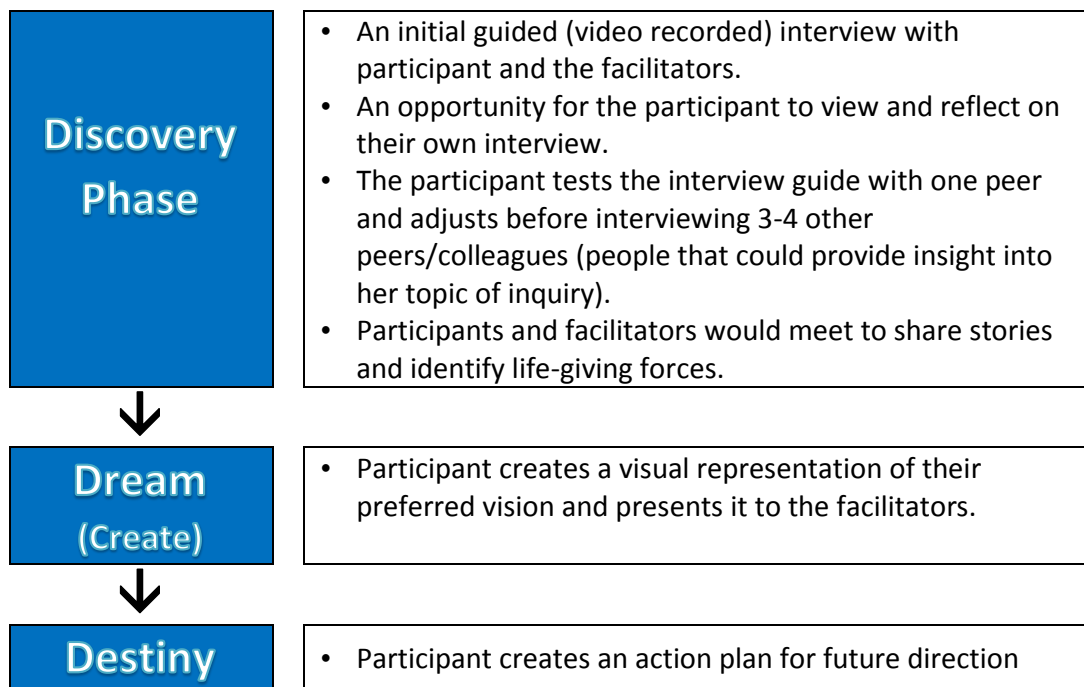
This Definition Phase meeting was also used to gather information to create the interview guides that would be used in subsequent interviews. Discussions in this meeting as well as current AI literature (Cooperrider 1995; Bushe 2007; Gordon 2008; Goldberg 2010; Watkins et al, 2011) were drawn upon to develop affirmative questions, for the Participant Interview Guide (“recall a

peak experience”, “identify values”, “identify talents” and craft “three career wishes”) and a Colleague/Peer Interview Guide. These guides can be found in [Appendix C: AI Summit of One Interview Guides](#).

The participant was tasked with identifying a list of 5-6 individuals who would provide the most useful feedback for their inquiry and whom they could logistically manage to interview given a 1-2 week turn around.

All participant/facilitator meetings were held in the participant’s office. The participant chose this location and it turned out to be well suited for this inquiry as it had a seating area with couches and generous space that facilitated dialogue and in a subsequent phase flipchart theme-ing.

Based on the Design Phase meeting it was determined that the remaining process would involve:



4.2 Discovery

a) Inquiring into exceptionally positive moments

The Discovery Phase occurred in 3 steps over the course of two weeks. It started with an Initial 1.5 hour meeting with the participant in their office.

During this first step the Participants’ Interview Guide (devised based on feedback from the Design Phase and current AI literature) was used to interview the participant. The questions were asked by one facilitator and the second facilitator was responsible for setting up the video recording equipment, both facilitator’s made notes. [Appendix D: Personal Interview Guide: Participant Notes](#).

A final question was added to the Interview “Is there something else that you would like to add that you don’t feel that we have captured?”

The second step of the inquiry involved the participant reviewing their own video recorded interview (that had been conducted with the facilitators) on their own before they interviewed their current/former colleagues and family/friends. There was discussion about whether to watch the video before or after the participant conducted their interviews. It was thought that watching their own interview prior to conducting further interviews would provide the participant with the opportunity to further focus and target their subsequent interview questions based on any discoveries made after watching their own.

At the end of the first step of the interview the facilitators presented the participant with the Peer/Colleague Interview Guide for their subsequent interviews and it was determined that a current colleague would be used to test out the guide. The participant tested the Peer/Colleague Interview guide with a current colleague. The colleague modified the guide slightly. It had originally been designed to elicit a professional and a personal peak experience, however the participant was more interested in career related reflections. The 4 remaining interviews were conducted with the 2 career related peak experience interview guides. The participant, on their own conducted their personal interviews and took notes. These interviews were conducted via telephone, Skype and in person.

b) Sharing the stories and identifying life-giving forces

Once the participant had completed their interviews, the facilitators and the participant met again at the participant’s office to share the stories and identify the life-giving forces. One facilitator recorded the ideas and quotable quotes on flip charts. These were then themed and three main themes were identified (New ideas/Paradigm shift, Doing what is right (alignment) and type of employee (positive). This process was video recorded and provided to the participant to review on their own. [Appendix E: Flip Chart Notes: AI Theme-ing Pictures](#)

The participant commented that perhaps they maybe should have chosen different people for the interviews. They noted that they had discussed career aspirations with these individuals previously and so they already had insight into their stories and reflections.

At the end of this session the Participant was given a stack of magazines a large piece of Bristol board and other materials (tape, glue, scissors, coloured paper, etc.) and was directed:

Based on the key themes identified create a visual of your preferred map of the future. Be prepared to describe and explain the motivations behind it”.

The participant was given less than a week to prepare their visual for presentation to the facilitators.

4.3 Dream and Design

The following week the participant met with one¹ facilitator and presented their visual. [Appendix F: Visual: Preferred future Career](#)

¹ Due to the death of a family member Mary Renton was unable to attend the final meeting with the participant.

After the presentation of the metaphorical image for their future career, the facilitator worked with the participant to create a plan for implementing their preferred vision of the future. During the creation of their visual the participant had already been thinking about their provocative statement for their future. The statement was written up on a flipchart.

My preferred career future involves aligning my energy, strengths and varied experience with a unique organization that wants and needs transformational positive change. This organization has or needs positive, strengths based leadership, values innovation and collaboration and aspires to be a “Great Work Place”. Employees are encouraged to take risks, think creatively and learn from mistakes. This organization likes, is proud of, and celebrates itself.

Once the statement was written on flipchart paper the facilitator worked with the participant to draw out some action items to assist them in realizing this vision.

4.4 Destiny/Delivery

The completion of the inquiry process involved the creation of a list of five action items that the participant could or already had committed to. This step was valuable as it provided an opportunity to reflect on the entire process. The inquiry and reflection work that had been conducted up until this point helped to provide a roadmap for where to go from here. Appendix G: Preferred Future Career Vision

The action items included:

- 1) Walk down Career Memory Lane
 - identify previous positions
 - visually explore those experiences
 - reflect on high and low lights
 - identify learning, growth, skills and strengths
- 2) Compile a profile of preferred skills, strengths, experience
- 3) Participate in an Ideal career vision session
- 4) Focused conversations surrounding career decisions with spouse (finances, location, timing and “non-negotiables”)
- 5) Explore alignment with current organization (explore strategic leadership potential)
- 6) Research recruitment people and companies

The final step was the addition of dates to this list:

1) Walk down Career Memory Lane	June 30-July 10
2) Compile preferred profile of preferred profile of skills, strengths, experience	July 15-August
3) Ideal career vision session	September
4) Focused conversations with spouse regarding career	September

5) Explore and understand alignment with current employer (explore strategic leadership potential)	July 14-18
6) Research recruitment people and companies	June-September

5. Outcomes of the Initiative

The process resulted in direction, in terms of action items for the participant. As the participant was highly motivated to engage in career reflection and is interested in applying their new found knowledge to actively mold their career decisions the task of completing the action items was left solely in the hands of the participant.

a) Facilitator Reflection

Mary Renton

The nature of this topic is personal and sensitive. Therefore trust and confidentiality must exist between the participant and the facilitator. A self-motivated participant would require less scaffolding and actually may better benefit from a Summit of One process, as a lot of discovery is through self-reflection. Facilitators who are trained and adept at drawing out self-reflection would be ideal in this situation. Because much of the work is done by the participant on their own it is imperative that a facilitator make themselves accessible to the participant so that they feel supported throughout the process. This could be accomplished by email contact or a daily check in, depending on the length and nature of the summit.

Hagevik (2000) suggests the creation of a mission statement for inclusion into the Dream Phase of an AI focused on career development. Upon reflection I feel that including directions to create “a mission statement” or even a “vision statement” in an AI: Summit of One would have great benefits. Such explicit directions could have provided structure and direction for this phase. In this case the participant was given some materials and asked to create a “preferred vision of their future”. The addition of requesting the participant to first create a mission statement visually or with words) would provide added structure that I think could help individuals who may not be entirely comfortable with hands on creativity. It is also possible, time permitting to encourage participants to engage in a two different types of dream activities.

Rather than an AI coaching approach which seeks to support a participant/client through the Delivery Phase the approach employed in this inquiry left the delivery stage very much up to the client. I do not think this was a problem in this particular case because the participant is a highly motivated individual who is committed to the process for personal and professional reasons. However, if you have a reluctant individual more coaching and check in would be required during the delivery stage. Even if the participant is engaged, I feel that the addition of a list of suggestions regarding how one could engage in self-monitoring during the Delivery Stage would be useful by providing a framework for reference or ideas. Barrett refers to the Delivery Phase as ‘Organizational Jazz’ (1998), in the case of a Summit of One, it could refer to it as “Personal Jazz”. A guide for navigating the jazz would be the provision of scaffolding for those individuals that might benefit from this.

In terms of facilitation, I do not feel that this style of inquiry provided me with an opportunity to practice group facilitation skills. However, as an educator and a trained ISW (2015) facilitator I am confident that I already possess those types of skills. In addition to having been an educator for 15 years, I am an Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) facilitator. Instructional Skills Workshop facilitators, facilitate teachers through a process of self-discovery in a group setting, providing constructive feedback on

teaching methods and approaches, (ISW, 2015). This Summit of One experience has provided me with a very good understanding of the key elements of the AI process. I even felt that this may have occurred at a deeper level than may have been possible during a larger scale AI because it was so personal and intimate.

Experience in facilitating this AI: Summit of One on career choice has provided me with an opportunity to further develop my skills in building rapport, being present, deep listening and questioning techniques. As well, it has actually inspired me to walk through the process as an AI: Individual Summit to see how the process would work without an outside facilitator.

The intimate AI process is empowering for the participant as the responsibility is left with them. There are opportunities to add additional check-in points for individuals who may need more guidance but for it to be successful the individual needs to be committed to the process. I find this quite significant, the Summit of One will only be successful if the participant wants it to be.

Lori Love

When the idea of conducting an AI Summit of One was brought to my attention, I was very interested in being a part of the process. Though my training in AI was geared towards facilitating sessions for groups or organizations, I did think that using the process for one participant would be beneficial, especially with this focus on career decisions. I believed that this AI process would be a unique way of combining my experience as a professional coach and as a facilitator. I felt that the participant would benefit from reflecting on her past achievements, peak experiences, best practices, values, and strengths as well as hearing these details from the colleagues, family, and friends that she would be interviewing. I believe that interviewing others is a step that is missing when coaching an individual about their future career direction. During our individual reflections on career decisions I feel that we often limit ourselves to what we know and that it can be difficult to push ourselves towards that positive change that we seek. The enlightenment and reinforcement about our strengths as we and others see them can be the impetus to envision the career of our preferred future.

My wish for this AI inquiry was that it would be a productive and beneficial experience for the participant. I feel that I and the other facilitator were really conscious of designing the process and developing the interview guide so that the participant would get the most of each phase. I believe that the use of video is a valuable element when designing the process for one participant. By videotaping the initial interview with the participant as well as the session on sharing stories and life giving forces, the participant is able to get that reflection that is present when doing an AI inquiry with a group or a team.

During this process I believe that I grew both as a coach and a facilitator. There are elements from this inquiry that I will take forward and use in my coaching practice. For me, as this inquiry was focused on one participant, I felt that there was a deeper level of trust and intimacy that will make me a better coach and facilitator. As mentioned in our report, I was the facilitator for the Dream and Destiny session for our inquiry which was an unexpected event. I learned that I have the confidence to adapt to new situations and trust in my training and experience.

My personal best experience from this inquiry was during the facilitation of the Destiny Phase with the participant. Working with the participant as she defined her preferred future career vision was a powerful experience for me in that I feel that I was able to use my skills and experience to assist the participant on getting what she wanted out of this inquiry and that the participant had trust in me and my abilities to share this experience. Being a part of this inquiry had the added benefit of helping to affirm some of my career decisions which I did not foresee.

I am always surprised by how creative participants can be when given just a few materials to come up with their visual of their preferred future. I feel that the participant in our inquiry came up with a great visual for her preferred future career vision and was very articulate in describing the image to me. I was a bit surprised by my emotional reaction to the image and her presentation. I think that I was impacted by the fact that there was just myself and her in the room and I could feel her personal motivation, feelings, and desire to create a vision that would provide direction.

For my next facilitation I would consider the timing aspects a bit more carefully. I feel that we had momentum for most of the inquiry but events and coordination difficulties made it difficult to complete the process for us as facilitators. I also feel that this type of inquiry, where only one participant is involved, really deserves a follow up on the actionable items in order to help the participant get the most from the process.

b) Participant Reflection

“Appreciative Inquiry is mostly aimed at members of a social system and only they can judge its contribution to their shared understanding,” (Gordon 2008). Therefore the most important feedback about this process would come from the participant.

The experience provided the participant with an opportunity to, in their words, “Walk down career Memory lane”. This was a useful practice because it:

- Aided in understanding career progression
- Provided an opportunity to reflect on learning and growth
- Helped to identify things and situations that were and were not personal energy givers
- Highlighted major skills and experience that could then be placed on a CV

Notes from the feedback interview with the participant can be found in Appendix G: Participant Feedback. Generally the participant found the participation in the process useful as it forced deep reflection. In particular they found that the visual component of the Dream Phase helped to bring clarity and the timelines for the destiny phase to bring accountability.

c) Suggestions for further application

The inclusion of some scaffolding tools to guide participants during the Design and Destiny Phases could be welcome additions. The Design Phase could include a description of how to create a mission statement and suggestions on how to ‘get creative’ and the Destiny Phase could include a list of suggestions on how to help facilitate the monitoring of action items. These inclusions would help to empower participants during times in which they are working ‘on their own’.

It is possible that this process could also be arranged in such a way as to provide a person with a step by step guide to engage in this inquiry on their own. It could easily be presented in a workbook format and used by individuals wanting to inquire about career options. It also might be a useful tool for career and personal coaches and HR professionals who are involved in career coaching.

We would welcome the opportunity to share our experience and materials with others to help facilitate the use of AI. Inquiries can be directed to lori.love@cna-qatar.edu.qa or mary.renton@cna-qatar.edu.qa

Resources

- Barrett, F. J. (1998). Creativity and Improvisation in Jazz and Organizations: Implications for Organizational Learning. *Organization Science*, 9(5): 605-622, Fall. Available at http://www.nps.edu/Cebrowski/Docs/jazz_improv.pdf (Accessed 9 December 2014).
- Bushe, G. (2007) *Appreciative Inquiry is Not (Just) About the Positive*. OD Practitioner, Vol. 39, No. 4 (pp 30-35). Available at http://www.gervasebushe.ca/AI_pos.pdf (Accessed 10 June 2014)
- 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. Available at <http://www.gervasebushe.ca/ai-meta.pdf> (Accessed 9 December 2014)
- Cooperrider, D. L. (1995). Introduction to appreciative inquiry. *Organization development*, 5. Available at <http://www.pdfdrive.net/introduction-to-appreciative-inquiry-training-manual-e429615.html> (Accessed 18 May 2014)
- Cooperrider, D.L. and D. Whitney. (2012) *Appreciative Inquiry: Rethinking human organizations towards a positive theory of change*. *International Journal of Appreciative Inquiry* 14 (2). Available at <http://www.davidcooperrider.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/The-Sustainable-Design-Factory-Cooperrider-Laszlo-aipmay20121.pdf> (Accessed 9 December 2014)
- Cooperrider, D.L., Sorenson, P.F.J., Whitney, D. & Yaegar, T.F. (eds.) (2000). *Appreciative Inquiry: Rethinking human organizations towards a positive theory of change*, Champaign, Illinois: Stipes Publishing.
- Cooperrider, D.L. and Srivastva, S. (1987). 'Appreciative Inquiry in organizational life', *Research in Organizational Change and Development*, 1: 129–169. Available at http://occupytampa.org/files/ai/APPRECIATIVE_INQUIRY_IN_Orgnizational_life.pdf (Accessed 14 May 2014)
- Giles, D. and S. Kung. (2010) *Using Appreciative Inquiry to explore the professional practice of a lecturer in higher education: Moving towards life-centric practice*. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 50(2) July. Available at <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ952235.pdf> (Accessed 10 December 2014)
- Goldberg, R.A. (2001). 'Implementing a professional development system through appreciative inquiry', *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 22(2): 56–61. Available at <http://www.ingrass.com/articles/appreciative.doc.pdf> (Accessed May 2014)
- Gordon, S. (2008) Chapter 6: Appreciative Inquiry Coaching, *International Coaching Psychology Review*; 3(1): 17-29 Available at: http://media.johnwiley.com.au/product_data/excerpt/19/04709872/0470987219-1.pdf (Accessed May 2014)
- Hagevik, Sandra. (2000) *Appreciative Inquiry and Your Career*. *Environmental Health*, 63 (1): 33-44. July/August. Available at <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Appreciative+Inquiry+and+Your+Career.-a064566704> (Accessed 10 May 2014)
- ISW (2015) *Instructional Skills Workshop Network*. Available at <http://iswnetwork.ca/> (Accessed 10 May 2014)
- Leaderskill (2015) *4 D's Methodology*. Leaderskill Group Australia, Available at <http://www.360facilitated.com/appreciative-inquiry/introduction-to-appreciative-inquiry/4-ds-methodology-of-appreciative-inquiry/> (Accessed 2 February 2015)
- Samuels, N. (2002) *A Guide to Appreciative Upward/360 Feedback Conversations*. London, United Kingdom Available at <http://www.leadershipthatworks.com/DocumentFiles/27.pdf> (Accessed 12 May 2014)

Appendix A: Appreciative Inquiry Summit of One: Time-Line

May 7-May 27, 2015: Process Development	
Session 1: Initial Meeting with Participant (Meeting: May 7, 0.5 hour, Participant and Facilitators)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss idea and concept for applying Appreciative Inquiry to an individual's exploration of career direction
Post Session 1: Facilitators deliberate and prepare for next session (Meeting: May 15 & May 21, 1 hour, Facilitators)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss initial approach to the process and what questions to ask during follow up meeting with Participant
May 28-May 31, 2015: Definition Phase	
Session 2: Follow up Meeting Meet with Participant (Meeting: May 28, 1 hour, Participant and Facilitators)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gather expectations and directions for the Inquiry process
Post Session 2: Facilitators deliberate and prepare for next session (Meeting: May 31, 1 hour, Facilitators)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emailed suggested process to participant for discussion Develop Personal Interview Guide, Colleague Interview Guide and Family. Friend Interview Guide
June 1-June 22, 2015: Delivery Phase	
Session 3: Interview Participant (Meeting: June 1, 1.5 hour, Participant and Facilitators)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used Personal Interview Guide to Interview Participant Video recorded the interview Provided Participant with Colleague Interview Guide and Family/Friend Interview Guide
Post Session 3: Participant reflects and conducts guided interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant viewed Video on own and reflected on interview Participant Conducts Interviews via Skype, phone and in person
June 23, 2015: Discovery Phase	
Session 4: Participant engages in storytelling (Meeting: June 23, 2 hours, Participant and Facilitators)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant engages in Story Telling, identifies quotable quotes and themes identified from their own interview and the interviews they conducted with colleagues, friends/family Flip-charting and theme-ing Participant given materials for the Design Phase
June 23-26, 2015: Dream and Destiny Phase	
Post Session 3: Participant Creates Visual representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant uses materials to create visual
Session 4: Participant presents Visual Image (1 hour, Participant and Facilitator)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action plan/milestone setting/accountability
Feedback	
Post Session 4: Feedback regarding process Solicited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email sent to participant requesting feedback about the Inquiry process

Appendix B: AI Summit of One, Definition and Process Design Questions and Responses

The following questions were used during the initial meeting with participant to determine the broad topic and structure of the inquiry. Participant responses have been paraphrased.

Setting the Task Focus

What would you like to get out of this process?

Interested in creating a preferred vision for my future, Interested in seeing if I can use AI to achieve this. Eager to engage in creativity in the design phase.

Logistics

Are there issues of confidentiality?

It is a personal topic. Confidentiality is expected.

Who will be involved?

Participants, colleagues and peers

What is our timeframe?

Before the summer holidays (mid June 2014)

Where would our meetings occur?

In participants office

Are you comfortable with video recording?

Yes for personal use

Next Meeting

Facilitators will present process and Interview Guides

Focus on Career

Appreciative Inquiry Personal Interview Guide

Interview Instructions

Using the following questions, conduct the personal interview.

Try not stray too far from the questions but feel free to ask follow-up questions, particularly if your interviewee seems excited about a particular topic. Listen careful; take some notes in the space provided. Be prepared to recall the best stories from your interview. Listen for any “quotable quotes”.

①Peak Experience

Peak Experience: Career

There are often times in our lives when we feel particularly **energized** and **positive**. Looking at your life experiences, can you recall a **peak work experience** when you felt most **alive**, most **involved**, or most **excited** about your work?

Describe the event in detail.

- **Who** else was involved?
- **What** made it an exciting experience?
- **What** did you achieve?

Peak Experience: Personal

There are often times in our lives when we feel particularly **energized** and **positive**. Looking at your life experiences, can you recall a peak **personal** experience when you felt most alive, most involved, or most excited about your work?

Describe the event in detail.

- **Who** else was involved?
- **What** made it an exciting experience?
- **What** did you achieve?

2

@Values & Talents

Values

What are the things that you value deeply? Specifically what do you value about yourself, your work and your environment?

Yourself: What do you value most about yourself?

Your work: When you are feeling your best about your work, what do you value the most about it?

Your work environment: When you are feeling your best, what does your physical work environment look and feel like, who is around you?

3

Talents

What talents are you most grateful for and how have they contributed to your success in your career?

Yourself: What talents are you most grateful for?

Your work: How have those talents contributed to your success in your career?

③ Wishes for the Future

What three wishes do you have for your career to ensure that you realize your full potential in the future?

①

②

③

“The best way to predict the future is to create it.” Peter Drucker

5

Focus on Career

Appreciative Inquiry Peer/Colleague Interview Guide

Interviewer Instructions

After reviewing your personal interview please use the following guide to conduct your personal/professional interviews. Please use a new guide for each interview.

You may want to add or change some of the questions in this guide based on your review of your own interview. Try not to stray too far from the questions but feel free to alter them if you feel that you would like specific information in one particular area. It is also encouraged that you ask follow-up questions, particularly if your interviewee seems excited about a topic. Listen carefully and take notes in the space provided. Be prepared to recall the best stories from your interview. Listen for and record any "quotable quotes".

Introduction: Explain the process to the Interviewee

I am conducting a series of interviews with people that I have interacted with professionally and/or personally who can help provide me with some insight into my future career planning. Your insight will be particularly valuable to me as I develop my preferred future vision for my career. I will ask you to reflect on some experiences and provide me with some feedback to assist me in creating my vision.

ⓈPeak Experience

Peak Experience: Career

There are often times in our lives when we feel particularly energized and positive. Thinking about work-related experiences that we have shared (or that I have shared with you), can you recall a peak experience when you felt that I was most alive, most involved, or most excited about the task or project?

Describe the event in detail.

- What was I doing that you think made me so involved and excited?
- Who else was involved?
- Where was I, describe the physical environment.
- What did we/I achieve?

Peak Experience: Personal (or Additional Career)

Thinking about personal experiences (or a second work-related experience) that we have shared (or that I have shared with you), can you recall a peak experience when you felt I was most alive, most involved, or most excited about the activity?

Describe the event in detail.

- What was I doing that you think made me so involved and excited?
- Who else was involved?
- Where was I, describe the physical environment.
- What did we/I achieve?

②Values & Talents

Values

Based on your interactions with me, what would you say are three (3) things that I highly value about my work and/or myself? Why?

①

②

③

Talents

Based on your interactions with me, what three (3) work-related special or exceptional talents do you feel I possess? Why?

①

②

③

4

③ Wishes for the Future

What three wishes would you have for my future to ensure that I realize my full potential career-wise?

①

②

③

④ Anything Else

Is there anything else that has not been captured but that you feel if I reflect on, would have a positive impact on my preferred future vision for my career?

“The best way to predict the future is to create it.” Peter Drucker

5

Appendix D: Personal Interview Guide: Participant Notes

Focus on Career : Participant

Appreciative Inquiry Personal Interview Guide

Interview Instructions

Using the following questions, conduct the personal interview.

Try not stray too far from the questions but feel free to ask follow-up questions, particularly if your interviewee seems excited about a particular topic. Listen carefully; take some notes in the space provided. Be prepared to recall the best stories from your interview. Listen for any “quotable quotes”.

Peak Experience

Peak Experience: Career

There are often times in our lives when we feel particularly **energized** and **positive**. Looking at your life experiences, can you recall a **peak work experience** when you felt most **alive**, most **involved**, or most **excited** about your work?

Describe the event in detail.

- **Who** else was involved?
- **What** made it an exciting **experience**?
- What did you **achieve**?
- **What?** *Must recently with the strategic planning process for the college, high priority had failed in the past, like planning, took an appreciative inquiry training, why did it fail in the past, outside consultants, only talked to industry, wanted to sue an inclusive and collaborative model, moral people, wanted to focus on the positive, was a lack of energy, had a meeting noted lack of energy, went away with group of people, generated lots of sticky notes was very high energy, presented back “creating magic”. Could see the energy in the room, people moved forward,*
- **WHO?** *worked closely with Elaine*, from March to June timeline, exhausted but energized, worked with someone who I trusted and respected, bounced ideas, confidence, strategic planning committee support, acting president, needed this, results = love best practices so consulted with Lane, great to have a mentor, joint learning, stakeholders,*
- **Achieve?** *feel the energy changing, naysayers saying “I want to get involved”, got a strategic plan, more the “start of a cultural change”, huge professional learning, doctoral thesis on that process, achieved a different way of looking at leadership and organizational change, department can carry this, more confidence in department*

*Names have been altered for privacy purposes

Peak Experience: Personal

There are often times in our lives when we feel particularly **energized** and **positive**. Looking at your life experiences, can you recall a peak **personal** experience when you felt most alive, most involved, or most excited about your work?

Describe the event in detail.

- **Who** else was involved?
- **What** made it an exciting experience?
- **What** did you achieve?
- ***What?*** *Early in career –registration office, programmer analyst, report back to schools how successful students were in university, people and data and connect them together, debugging things, data in ways you hadn't seen it before.*
- ***Who?*** *"solo event"*
- ***Achieve?*** *"keeping at it" Learning of data, programing language, reporting to clients ins a way they understood, it was 1989, "New Learning" "Commitment to data driven approaches"*

Values & Talents

Values

What are the things that you value deeply? Specifically what do you value about yourself, your work and your environment?

Yourself: What do you value most about yourself?

Persistent (positive & negative, relentless, value this in terms of things getting done, high energy/creativity, big picture & how things can benefit an organization, need people to carry them out, career development of ppl that work with me or for me, employee engagement, sense of humour, lack of defensiveness, takes a lot to offend me, value working alongside others who have high expectations of themselves.

Your work: When you are feeling your best about your work, what do you value the most about it?

I love new things, staying in the cutting edge, verge of new-how can we do this differently? Being involved in things? Where people want to be there and making a contribution, high expectations of myself and of people,

*Names have been altered for privacy purposes

Your work environment: When you are feeling your best, what does your physical work environment look and feel like, who is around you?

Being comfortable, like being organized and uncluttered environment, work in a house, no desk, dogs/cats, relaxed, organized, get distracted easily, have to be moving around, doing things, after another like "routine that has to do with conversation", love brainstorming, work with people you truly like to be with, on the other hand not fussy, not very aware of surroundings-didn't know countertop colour

Talents

What talents are you most grateful for and how have they contributed to your success in your career?

Yourself: What talents are you most grateful for?

Logical thought process –want to share that, understanding of numbers I high I can see trends, way of rallying people around something –generating energy, can really slowly for a really long time, endurance, can do anything for a long time if it's absolutely important to me or it's important to other people, "ability to generate energy"

Your work: How have those talents contributed to your success in your career?

Almost always been in a leadership position, even from a young age, involved in something new and energy, I can go overboard, if can't assess the value, here are the arguments, take the data and make the case, generate a good argument, like ideas that are good for career satisfaction and the organisation. Being involved in energy?

③ Wishes for the Future

What three wishes do you have for your career to ensure that you realize your full potential in the future?

①

Takes the best of everything I've done and brings it together, always been in education, nice to be "something", combine them to use in one place

②

Work for an org'n/entity so what I am doing really adds value, doing things that contribute –alignment –wanted and needed by someone

*Names have been altered for privacy purposes

③

Because it something "I" really want to do rather than make money, sense of being trapped, this is the right thing.

What is the commonality in my peak experiences, I don't work well under stress, avoid anxiety, within my comfort zone, what doesn't cause that anxiety, no area of expertise

Interviewer's Questions/Comments? Have you always worked for/advocated for change from within an organization? Have you always been an employee? Wouldn't your commonality be Higher Education and Data? Describe your comfort zone?

"The best way to predict the future is to create it." Peter Drucker

*Names have been altered for privacy purposes

AI

Appendix E: Flip Chart Notes: AI Theme-ing Pictures

Themes from Interviews		
<p>New ideas</p> <p>Paradigm shift (Dart of others Dart of rights)</p> <p>Doing what's right of making it happen</p> <p>CREATIVITY (Dart of others Dart of rights)</p> <p>creativity of innovation</p> <p>Type of ppl - similarly creative - push/challenge stretch</p> <p>Be bold</p> <p>Big picture - make things happen operationally</p> <p>Doing what you say you're going to do.</p> <p>Standards, Quality.</p> <p>PERSEVERANCE, Persistent (diligent)</p>		
Retelling Stories		
<p>Peer/Colleague #2</p> <p>Strategic Plan (CNAQ)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- both engaged & excited - in the midst of struggle- but poss toxicity - persistent change.- support relationships "nothing"- "fail if make it happen moments"- like the way express of excitement- it's creative, need behind it.- shared a culture that it would work- cultural, digital - digital level = TRUST- Tiggers- Peak 2 = things- Integrate planning process- learning push to make it happen- a story - new like minds & life energy- broken- got out of the way of the way business- Valuing- the best thing - most time - new ideas- in industrial setting - learn - make things- what you learn- industrial struggle for you	<p>Peer/Colleague #1</p> <p>RIFT PPL</p> <p>INTERVIEWS W THEM</p> <p>PROVING</p> <p>partnership</p> <p>energy - infectious</p> <p>① Peak: CNAQ strategic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Call COE - combat vs. Lane- "Right of Good" - everyone else can't help but follow along- And ppl who could really add value- resiliency of persistence - "to like"- Share, direct origin - AI touched a lot of ppl.- led to other efforts for ppl. - because @ all levels <p>② Peak: Doctrinal changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- resolve - willingness to do the work.- AI was a great way - there was an effort to do the work- finished in 2.5 yrs - a lot going on, didn't allow- M along the way.- "do what you say you will do"- Contribution to the field- positive energy.	
<p>Peer/Colleague #3</p> <p>Peak:</p> <p>Registration - whinge - support process of being clarity</p> <p>tell a story to data</p> <p>Collect most interesting about relationship where of what would be the agenda - interesting ppl doing interesting conversations</p> <p>Smiling camera of likelihood - big picture</p> <p>Windows</p> <p>low of conduct of fantasy</p> <p>genuine curiosity</p> <p>and then</p> <p>not at macro level of micro level.</p> <p>liking to "grow a dream"</p> <p>Paid employment</p> <p>maximize to ppl - don't go on your own</p> <p>probably in education</p>	<p>Peer Colleague #4 (1 of 2)</p> <p>IT projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- come to life - new, creative big - see a need.- idea - research - jump in -- startup - alive - research - new ideas- they are in the group - energy it- be around operational of center ppl- big transformational changes large scale change <p>② team working</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- alive - new things - frustrated at the time- need plus to come - when synergy - great- apply creative <p>Values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- professional - creative vision - collaborative dynamic energy- go on learning- learn it with work <p>Wishes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- direct - how ppl & resources can be connected- need communication - inspirational- "be in a library" - (not) (self)- "with ppl that think"	<p>Peer Colleague #4 (2 of 2)</p> <p>What do you value about me?</p> <p>"DWYSYWD"</p> <p>Quality work - other ppl, don't pay the price, in a way that includes them</p> <p>always followed is a solution</p> <p>mean something - making a contribution</p> <p>"Spirit of inquiry" "curiosity"</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- curiosity - productivity/quality- Value- achievement - achieving- positivity- humbleness - humility - leadership strength- goal - improve ppl. <p>Future:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- move frustration - growth - confidence- move from resp. growth scope- current there- shared the way your family work together- personal/learned - work together- [pushed confidence] And role - technical - important
<p>Self #1 (1 of 3)</p> <p>Peak: #1</p> <p>Strategic plan (CNAQ)</p> <p>imp. for inst'n, dept, used AI.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- "Energy Energy was there ... could feel the energy"- really trusted, S. committee was full in.- it was needed, road blocks were moved out of way- AI - new, joint learning.- ppl became involved.- plan achieved- seeing a culture change	<p>Self #1 (2 of 3)</p> <p>Peak #2</p> <p>Info around SI. success</p> <p>Solo "me + the data". telling a story and doing something new.</p> <p>Values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- persistent - energy - creativity - big picture - career development of others- lack of defensiveness- new cutting edge - engaging- where others want- contributions - high expectations <p>Commit. organized</p> <p>have - to ppl you want to be with</p> <p>Wishes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- logical, facilitate- energy rally ppl- talent & numbers- new emerging- look & create- energy - trust- data & logic - good case	<p>Self #1 (3 of 3)</p> <p>Wishes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- worked - merge - the best into a next step- adds value - alignment (needs to be wanted)- not just financially driven <p>OTHER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Find the commonalities- make well under pressure not stress <p>ALIGNMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- WANT & NEED - BOTH SIDES- SENIOR LEADERSHIP <p>STRATEGIC Leader = Solo & Team</p> <p>EXTROVERT - OR - INTROVERT</p>

Appendix F: Visual: Preferred future Career

Visual: Preferred Future Career Vision		
Statement for the Future: Preferred Career Vision		
<p>My preferred career future involves <u>aligning my energy</u>, <u>strengths</u> and varied <u>experience</u> with a <u>unique organization</u> that <u>wants</u> and <u>needs</u> <u>transformational</u> <u>positive change</u></p> <p>This organization has or needs positive, <u>strengths-based</u> <u>leadership</u>, <u>values innovation</u> and <u>collaboration</u> and aspires to be a "Great Work Place". Employees are encouraged to <u>take risks</u>, <u>think creatively</u> and learn from mistakes. This organization <u>likes</u>, is proud of and <u>celebrates</u> itself.</p>		
Action Items		
<p>① Walk down memory lane</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify positions visual explorer Highlights - Lowlight Learning - Growth Skills and strength <p>② Compiling list of skills, strengths, experience</p> <p>③ Ideal career vision session</p> <p>④ Focused conversation with Mike: this preference</p>	<p>Understand career progression</p> <p>Reflect on learning and growth</p> <p>Identify things that gave me energy</p> <p>Note things that didn't</p> <p>Identify major skill and experience for CV</p>	<p>⑤ Explore alignment with CNA</p> <p>Explore "strategic leadership" potential</p> <p>⑥ Research recruitment people and companies</p>

Appendix G: Participant Feedback

Reflections on "Creating My Preferred Career Future: An AI Summit of One"

A while ago, while considering both our AIFT participant certification as well as my own future career plan – the two thoughts suddenly merged together in a “both/and” type of way. I enjoy thinking about and experiencing the power of Appreciative Inquiry – and like to consider unique opportunities for its use.

The Idea Was This!

For many reasons, I am at an exciting stage in my life and career where I would like to think very “mindfully” about “what is next” from a professional point of view. I have been working in higher education and in exciting positions for many years. However, I would not call any of my career decisions particularly strategic or well thought out. My career progression, in many ways, were a series of opportunities that presented themselves and in some ways was crafted by me watching and considering new and emerging trends.

I was curious to see how Appreciative Inquiry could be used to help me be reflective about my past work experiences – to learn from my peak experiences – in order to find “more of what energizes me”! It was a bit of a different approach from a facilitated group session and more of what I like to think of as an “AI Summit of One” with the topic to “Discover and Plan my Preferred Career Future”.

I asked two of our AIFT participants, Mary Renton and Lori Love, if they would be interested in discovering this with me.

Brief Summary of the Process

In order to do this the facilitators, in conjunction with me (the core team!), created an interview guide. I identified a number of people who I have worked with or who know me well and conducted a one-on-one AI interview with them.

I shared the stories with the facilitators and we identified the identified life-giving forces and high-energy themes.

I then created a created a visual representation of my preferred career vision and presented and described it to the facilitators.

To start this process I went back to my interview notes and to the flipcharts that were created by the facilitators during our sharing of my stories. I created a “word cloud” with the major themes so that I could see the ideas jump out at me.



I used these ideas in the word cloud as I created my preferred future “vision board”.



The visual really brought out some key ideas for me that I might not have “seen” through dialogue and discussion. The visual represents the need to balance and consider the things that I love in my personal life with those things that I love in my professional life. Without question the ideas of transformational change, capitalizing on my and other’s strengths, working with new ideas and creating and being in an atmosphere filled with energy were very important to me.

In a facilitated session, reflecting on the high-energy themes and on my vision board I then created a “statement of the preferred future”:

My preferred career future involves aligning my energy, strengths and varied experience with a unique organization that wants and needs transformational positive change.

This organization has or needs positive, strengths based leadership, values innovation and collaboration and aspires to be a “Great Work Place”. Employees are encouraged to take risks, think creatively and learn from mistakes. This organization likes, is proud of, and celebrates itself.

This gave me a good idea of the kind of environment that I would be seeking in the future. We followed up this exercise with some action planning to ensure that I moved from discovery and design to destiny.

These included:

- Walk down Career Memory Lane
 - identify previous positions
 - visually explore those experiences
 - reflect on high and low lights
 - identify learning, growth, skills and strengths
- Compile a profile of preferred skills, strengths, experience
- Participated in an Ideal career vision session
- Focused conversations surrounding career decisions with spouse (finances, location, timing and “non-negotiables”)
- Explore alignment with current organization (explore strategic leadership potential)
- Research recruitment people and companies

Reflections on the Process

The facilitators asked me to reflect on two questions.

What did you enjoy and find useful about participating in this Appreciative ‘Summit of One’ Inquiry?

I was very impressed with the thoroughness and creativity shown by Mary and Lori as they designed this AI experience. I looked forward to each step of the process – and I learned a lot about myself.

I enjoyed discussing with other colleagues and friends about their experience with my “career peak experiences”. It was interesting to see so many commonalities – and well as to see differences. I especially enjoyed creating the vision board. I am not particularly “crafty”. I hear many AI participants say this same thing when the visual/creative activity is presented. However, every time I participate in the visual process I am always surprised at the clarity that comes from it.

I also enjoyed the process of determining an action plan. The facilitators ensured that timelines (mutually agreed on) were attached to the action planning. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances (a family illness,) I have not been able to follow through completely on these actions plans. Writing this reflection has brought me back to this and I will be revisiting the plans and the timelines.

Do you think you could have gone through the process on your own without the assistance of a facilitator? Please explain.

As someone who plans a lot of facilitated sessions it was refreshing to be on the other side of this process. I believe that the facilitators brought in neutrality as well as ensuring that things moved along. They both have unique facilitation skills and they designed the session in a creative and engaging way. It would have been difficult for me to get as far as I did in my thinking about my “preferred career future” without their assistance. I highly recommend this approach!