

# AIFT-Certification

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*Report of my work as an Appreciative Inquiry Facilitator at The Crabbehoff Dordrecht Holland.*

Dr. Jan van den Braak  
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Participant of the AIFT Cape Town; 27-30 august 2012



### *Foreword:*

As you know or perhaps not know , I am the first one in Holland who wrote a thesis based on appreciative inquiry. From 2001 till 2006 I worked in a hospital in Holland together with Dr. Frank van Ree. I was the HRM manager in that hospital, named Zaans Medisch Centrum and I was responsible for the change of culture overthere. When I could not make any progress in the way I wanted I went to my old professor psychology on the Tilburg University: prof.dr.John Rijsman. He is a friend of Cooperrider and Gergen and has his specialism on social constructionism. Based on our discussions he suggested to help me any way with my dedication to change cultures in organizations. For that I had to go to Miami in 2014 to meet Cooperrider, Gergen, Barret and others. Rijsman went with me to Miami and invited me at the table of Cooperrider and Gergen and his wife. I had an exceptional evening over there with high level conversations on social constructionism. Back in Holland I continued my work with the support of John Rijsman. On 12th september 2005 I conferred my doctor's degree with in my hand a book of 465 pages with everything I had done during 5 years of research. Lucky for me I was inspired by John Rijsman (my promoter) and I believed in the power of AI. That is how my interest in AI was born.

After that period I worked as a consultant in several organizations but always based on the philosophy of appreciative inquiry.

The organization I will focus on for my certification is Crabbhoff in Holland. I did already send much information, films, photo's etc. to Ezelle.

### *Question 3: description of the organization I worked with:*

Two of the books I wrote are in PDF at the Company of Experts: "Gebundelde Kracht" and "appreciative inquiry". (Both written in Dutch unfortunately). After reading 'appreciative inquiry', you'll find in Gebundelde Kracht a way of practicing AI in an Institute of health care for older people in Holland. It is at Crabbhoff te Dordrecht where I worked together with drs. Nico van der Leer. Nico is a pastor and worked with me in this organization where we discribed an AI summit called 'zingevinggericht werken'.

### *Question 4: Category of stakeholders:*

We did start over there with a kick off. We worked with play-actors and we had a kick off with all the employees of this organization to let them participate in a new way of working with older people in the last phase of their lives. We inspired them and worked on the philosophy of AI.

Nico van der Leer is now writing on his thesis on that chapter.

In my book: Gebundelde kracht, you'll find all the names of CEO, MT, participants of accompaniment and participants in training groups.

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*Question 5: the positive topic:*

As I mentioned, the positive topic, chosen by the CEO and MT was: zingevinggericht werken. This topic was formulated before I'd start my work overthere and based on interviews among 80 participant cross functional chosen in the organization.

*Question 6:*

There is no special interviewguide for the definition of the positive topic. There is a mission statement in where this topic is mentioned.

*Question 7: method of interview.*

Together with Nico van der Leer we trained all the managers (120) in a 4x2 day course. During that course we talked about AI, the possibilities , problems and so on and it was very intensive I may say. Often we used pictures or music as a mind set. I introduced 'the hand metaphor' for interviewing. Ezelle did some correction work and I did allow here to use that method. It is perfect bases on the AI principles and everyone can use that method even when they are not trained in AI.

I find this method so unique that I will insert it here:

### **Using the 'hand metaphor' during Appreciative Inquiry(AI) interviewing...**

~ Dr Jan van den Braak



The hand metaphor is often used by Dr Jan van den Braak in Holland, during his Appreciative Inquiry work. It is a very simple way of interviewing employees and inviting them to participate in the complex world of managing organizations, and it is based on the principles of AI.

During an appreciative inquiry, you might notice some resistance or hesitance in the beginning stages of an interview, but after a while employees will enjoy this way of interviewing. The interview is NOT about what they always do wrong, but rather, about what motivates them. And it is an invitation to participate in the policy-making of the organization where the people work.

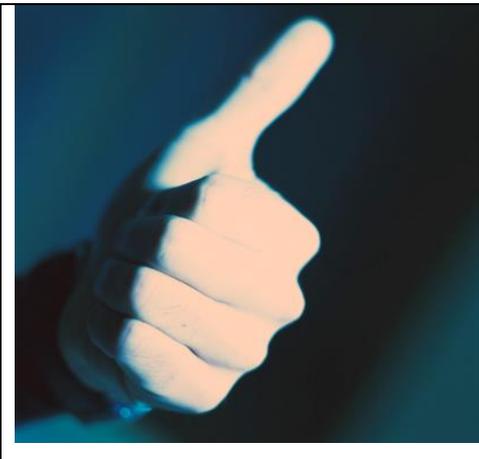
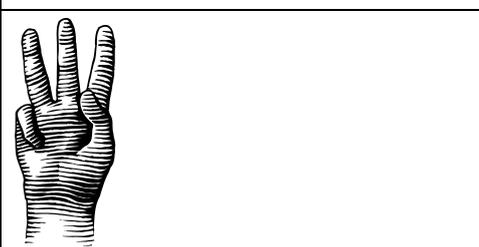
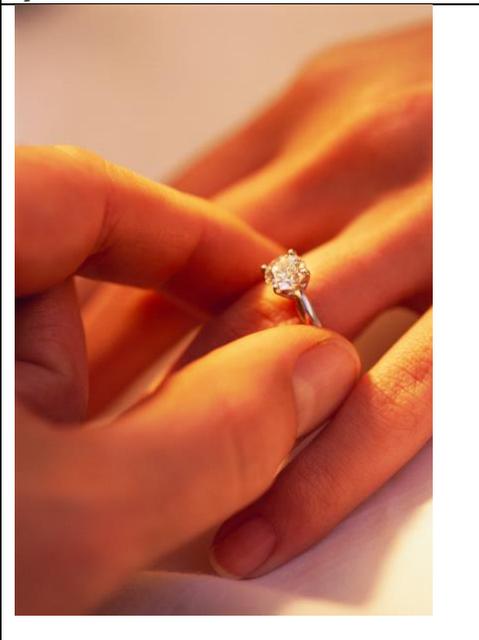
But..... the manager who is interviewing her employees, using this philosophy, has to take the answers seriously. People have to trust the manager and they have to know that the manager will use the information seriously to bring about positive changes in the workforce.

So therefore, it is very important before you start the interview to take a moment to break the ice and build a rapport with the interviewee. For example, ask the person where they live, what their hobbies are, or something about their family or holidays, etc.

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Then start the interview.

	<p><b>First</b> of all, ask questions about all the things people are <b>PROUD</b> of. It is important to start with positive questions. (When you start asking for problems, you will find problems, so the best you can do is to ask about the things which are going right.)</p> <p><b>Example:</b> Tell me something about a time you were very proud within the organization you're working in. Tell me something about a project you have worked on that was a success. What were the life forces in that project (the forces that made it come alive)? What was your function in that project?</p> <p><i>In other words, any questions that will give you information about the positive time(s) in the experience of the employee. <b>Don't ask</b> what the employee would do to make the project more successful!!</i></p>
	<p>The <b>second</b> part of the interview includes questions about <b>DIRECTION</b>. Employees can tell you about their dreams or wishes, and the things they like in their work.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> What would you do in the future, say within the next 6 months, if you were the boss over here? What is your 'dream' for making your work fantastic? In which direction do we have to go with the team, to make you proud to be a part of that team?</p> <p><i>Any questions that will give you info about their ultimate wishes.</i></p>
	<p><b>Thirdly</b> there is the "finger in the middle". You will notice that people sometimes just have to complain. Let them do that during this part of the interview. Notice that you have collected a lot of positive data up till now.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> What / who do you want to get rid of? What makes you angry at your work? What makes you worry?</p>
	<p><b>Fourth</b>, are the questions about <b>LOYALTY</b>. When you know your direction, your dream and the things you want to get rid of... the question remains: What is your fidelity to this company? Why are you still working here?</p> <p><i>This is a very important phase in your interview. Now is the moment to DESIGN. You have the most important information of the 'thumb'. You have information about the DREAM of the employee (the forefinger). And you have information about all the things people want to get rid of. (Most of the time this information is about bureaucracy, rules, authority and so on - the middle finger).</i></p> <p><i>When the answers are focused on earning money and other physical and safety needs in the hierarchy of Maslow, the best way to manage is by adopting the 'tell and sell' style. Don't spend too much time on people who are only motivated by money.</i></p> <p><i>However, when people are willing and able and have their own sense of authority, you have people who are sensitive towards self-actualisation.</i></p>

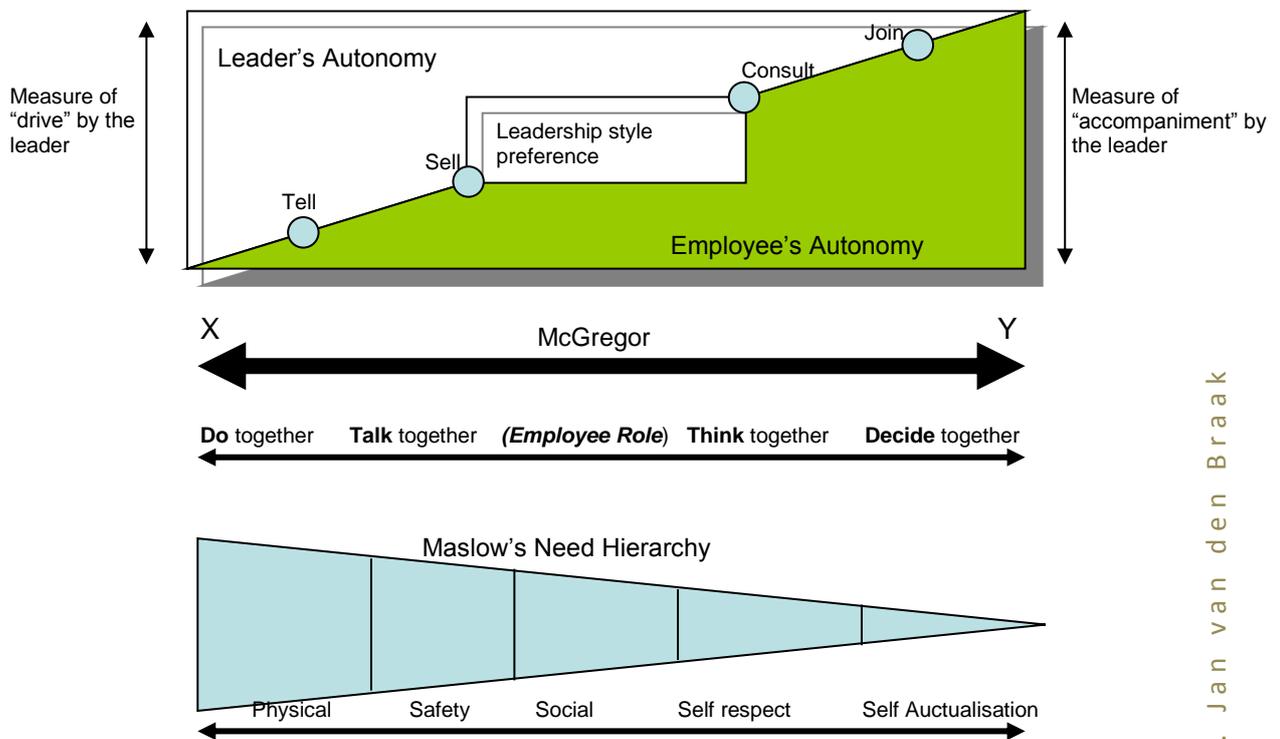




**Finally**, we turn to the little finger – **SUPPORT and DEVELOPMENT**. Here you can ask everything about helping. You have the opportunity to manage in a “consult” or “join” style, depending on the motivation of your employee.

**Example:** How can I help you? How can I be a good coach for you? What can I do to make your work easier?

Now you are able to establish an agreement with your employee. What are you going to do? What are your plans? How are you going to treat the employee. When you allow the employee to participate, giving him/her a high level of authority, choose the consult or join style of leadership.



Leadership Continuum, developed by Robert Tannenbaum, Edited by Quinn et al, "Handboek Managementvaardigheden; Third edition; Schoonhoven 2003; pagina 94.



*Question 8: The life giving forces:*

Ezelle has a slide show about: Crabbehoff'. This is a presentation of an 'at random' interview with the participants of our course. We asked them to put a quote on the question: What means zingevingsgericht werken for you. The quotes are in Dutch but you can see how serious people say there quotes in 7 seconds each. the film is now used at Crabbehoff for further courses. This film is very special for me because the first lady in this film had a stroke 3 days after I made this pic. She died at the age of 56 and this photo is used on the day of her funeral. It has made a very deep impact.

*Question 9: The provocative propositions:*

1. How can we all work in a way that make sense?
2. How can we handle in the most perfect way the palliative stage of living for our clients?
3. How can support each other in our vision?

*Question 10: strategic intensions:*

There is a mission statement of the organization and everyone knows that statement. In fact the policy of the organization is being the best. What Nico and I have started in this organization is now a way of life.

*Question 11: Results:*

All the results are to much to put in this report. You can read those in the book: Gebundelde kracht.

*Question 12: stories of succes.*

Based on my work on AI there are now 3 projects going on. Each project has a MT leader. These projects are subject for making progress and having a party. In the teams there is time for storytelling. The narrative part of AI.

*Question 13: what did I learn?*

What I discovered in my work is that the combination of theory, practicing and using pictures and music an enourmously stimulation can be for change. It is a way of listening to the hart of those who want to work in a professional way. And we all will isn't it?



*Question 14: Permission.*

I did send very much material to Ezelle and The Company of Experts has the permission to use all the material I'd send. This permission is given by me and my client.

Most of my material is written in Dutch. If the company of experts wants to translate (parts of) that, you are free to do so. In that case I'll like to receive those translations.

**Holland, Leiden  
August 2013**

**Dr. Jan van den Braak**

**With regards.**