

Appreciative Inquiry Facilitators Exchange Webinar
Facilitator: Julie Marcy
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Hello everyone, this is Julie Marcy. I work at the ERDC Environmental Lab and I welcome you to the first in a series of quarterly webinars on facilitation topics.

Today's topic is Appreciative Inquiry being presented by Doug Davis of the Rock Island District. This series of quarterly Web meetings on facilitation topics is intended to support competencies in facilitation and collaborative processes across the Corps, and to provide an open forum where facilitation questions and insights may be shared.

The Web meetings are recorded and the archived files will be posted on the Facilitators Exchange Web page. You should see that address on the opening slide of the blue slide appearing in front of you. You may also sign up for facilitator exchange notifications on the Web page if you aren't currently receiving them.

Just a few notes before we begin today's session. We will have time following the presentation for questions on the topic before we go to our open forum section, but Doug also welcomes your questions during the presentation. So, remember that you can either ask questions verbally or you can use the chat feature. If you're asking a verbal question, remember to take your phone off of mute so that we can hear you.

If you have a content question and you want to use the chat feature, please send it to everyone so we can see it. If you have a logistical/technical type issue you can just send it to me privately.

We're going to cover as many questions as time allows, but if we get short we'll make some arrangements for follow-up after our session. Remember to keep your phones on mute when you're listening to eliminate some of the background noise, but please avoid putting us on hold since background music can be a distraction.

To help us get a better understanding of the participants, if it isn't already apparent in the participant list, please indicate where are you from using the chat feature to give your name and location, for instance, Julie Marcy, ERDC. This gives us an idea of where you're calling in from.

At this time, I'll give you today's speaker on Appreciative Inquiry. Doug Davis is the current Deputy for Small Business Programs for the US Army Corps of Engineers Rock Island District. Doug is a member of the Iowa and Illinois Entrepreneurship Network Advisory Board, and he has more than 35 years' experience in government contracting, small business programs, procurement, policy review and compliance, total quality management, and organizational development.

Doug has many competencies to include Appreciative Inquiry practitioner and graphic facilitator. More information about Doug may be found in his bio posted on the Facilitators Exchange, and you may have also discovered that we provided a couple of additional files from Doug. One is an Appreciative Inquiry interview guide and also a video link for some AI work on the Indian River Watershed in Iowa from Doug.

So Doug, we're very happy to have you with us today and if you give me just a moment, I'll assign you presenter rights, and you may take it away.

Doug Davis: Okay, thanks for that great introduction, Julie. Appreciate it. And welcome to the participants that I see so far. It looks to me like we have a half dozen or so and this may grow as we move forward.

Let me just kind of lay the groundwork for this conversation, if you will. Let me tell you a little bit more about me. My background, as Julie said, I spent about 40 years government service and I've also had some experience as a private consultant -- organizational development consultant.

I spent about five years working for State Farm Insurance as an organizational development change management professional there which is really kind of where I got my start in the Appreciative Inquiry process and the practice of Appreciative Inquiry.

So I'll talk a little bit more about that as we move forward but one of the things that I kind of like to do when I'm facilitating what I call a dialogue or a conversation about a particular subject is kind of a set container for that conversation to occur.

So I'll start off with saying that webinars, because of their technical limitations, are not my favorite format for engaging in conversations about a subject that is as complex and kind of broad-spanning as Appreciative Inquiry is.

So what I'll ask you all to do is kind of change your perspective a little bit and visualize yourself sitting in a smaller room than the Web provides in a closed circle and then kind of try to visualize yourself in that kind of an environment

as we talk about it -- Appreciative Inquiry, and the Appreciative Inquiry process, what it is and how it might be used in some of the ways that I've used it, others have used it around the world.

So I'll give you a bit more of a background about AI as well. But I want to kind of set the mood, if you will. People who have had me as a facilitator before will say, boy, is this guy wordy. Why doesn't he just shut up and move into this context and the subject that he wants to talk about. And usually by the end of the conversation they get why I do what I do, so I'll ask you to be patient and just kind of "trust the process."

So, what I would like to do first in order to kind of set the mood is just read a short story and while I'm reading the story you might want to think about, you know, who some of the characters in the story might represent in your organizations or our organization at large. And it's kind of Q'uran-type of story so the object of the story is just really to set the mood and to get you thinking about what might be going on here.

So without any further ado I'll begin the story. Does anybody have any questions at this point? Okay, great. So here's the story.

Once upon a time there was a traveler who went from village to village and performed services according to village needs. At one particular place there was a wise chief who wanted the villagers to be happy and the village to be prosperous. The village was full of good people yet they experienced turmoil in their work as a community.

The chief asked for the traveler's services and he accepted. He told him, "there is a box that I think might be useful to you. It lies 2-1/2 days from here and in order to get it your whole village should be invited to go with you." The chief

was intrigued and he agreed. The traveler had a reputation for wisdom. The chief replied, "ask my people and they are free to go as they choose."

The traveler obliged and invited the villagers who soon began to worry and fret. They started coming to the traveler in frustration with their questions. What color is this box? Why is it 2-1/2 days from here? Who will do my work when I am gone? What if this box is dangerous? Why must everyone go? What if the new box doesn't match our old ones?

The traveler said very little except commenting on how the villagers seemed to have a need to know, before they would commit to go. Soon the village was rife with differences of opinion. Even the chief's advisers afforded different advice. Eventually the chief was called upon to make a decision. He told the traveler that he would have the villagers seek out a treasure in their own houses rather than journeying afar for one.

When a local box was found the villagers all lined up to see inside it. They were not surprised to find that its contents were strangely familiar. As the traveler prepared to leave the chief joined her walk to the edge of town. "What was in that box far away?" he asked quietly. "Nothing," said the traveler.

The chief stopped in his tracks. "Nothing?" he frowned, and thought how glad he was to have his own counsel. "Well, then why did you tell us we needed it here?" The traveler looked at him, smiled and said, "What you needed was the journey."

And that's kind of where I want to set this whole idea of Appreciative Inquiry. So, end of the story. So, I'll talk just a little bit more about where I come from with Appreciative Inquiry. And now we'll actually get into what is this thing Appreciative Inquiry, how does it work?.

So, I first began my journey into the Appreciative Inquiry process back in about 2000. My training came directly from two individuals who are past chairs of the National Training Laboratory Institute for Applied Behavioral Science. They both had in excess of 30 years of practice and they have been in over 50 countries with over 600 organizations practicing Appreciative Inquiry around the world.

Their names are Jane MaGruder Watkins and her husband Ralph Kelly. Both of them are co-founders and members of the Taos Institute in Taos, New Mexico and they worked with a guy by the name of David Cooperrider who was from Case Western Reserve University in Ohio who developed this whole idea of Appreciative Inquiry and the practice of Appreciative Inquiry as an organizational development tool or a collaborative tool to help organizations join together and take that journey to a different place and how they practice being able to get people together and create provocative propositions for the future that everyone will be compelled to go to. So that's kind of it in a nutshell, how I came to Appreciative Inquiry.

So, I will go to the slides now and ask individuals to feel free to stop me and ask questions about any of the slides. I'm not going to read the slides; I'll just let you read them. I'll kind of try to talk around them a little bit.

So what is Appreciative Inquiry? It's a co-evolutionary or a co-creative process or search that we ask people to engage in when we're working with them that begins a conversation about number one, what is already working really well in our organization or communities or teams or our district or our division, whatever. The container for that conversation is what gives life to that system or what is most live about it. And how can we begin a

conversation that harnesses or anchors us in that part of our organization or district or whatever it is we're talking about that had been effective in the past.

So, it obviously has planning steps that we take and it has at its heart what we call the creation of shared vision. Many organizations have visions for the future -- ours included -- the Grand 200-year vision for the Watershed. And then there are always organizations within organizations or sub-organizations that also have their own unique kinds of shared visions that dovetail or nest inside the larger organizational vision.

And so one of the things that's very powerful about AI is that it begins with a shared visioning process. In fact it's the creation of that shared vision in the conversation, in the process of AI, that is central to the actual inquiry itself.

It is about setting and prioritizing goals which is really kind of on the tail end of the Appreciative Inquiry process. My favorite tool to help do that, is known as the McKinsey 7 "S" model. And we can talk about that if we get to it, or we can talk about the McKinsey 78 "S" model as a separate webinar if you would like.

It talks about creating some tactics for actually accomplishing objectives that are tied to the shared vision. And those are - those you probably have already heard in our organization, what we call SMART goals, that is, they're specific, they're measurable, they're accessible, they're realistic, and they're time-bound or they're time-constrained.

So what is an Appreciative Inquiry approach to collaboration? Well, you know, it wouldn't be just necessary to collaboration. It could actually be an approach to just about anything you wanted to tackle. But for collaboration in

specific, it's about a process that builds those shared visions that we just talked about.

It's about focusing on those positive qualities that already exist in our organizations, and it's about being able to leverage those qualities to number one, enhance performance, but more importantly, to generate the provocative propositions that we can actually project into the future that will compel and draw our organizations towards that, towards realizing that new place that we want to go to.

So if you can imagine having a group of 100 people in a room together and they are engaged in a process of designing that shared vision together then they have what I call ownership. The cliché I always like to throw out there is “people don't wash rental cars.” What that really means is that individuals who have a part of, and a practice of engaging each other in the building of that shared vision together, have ownership of that vision. Pretty much, “wild horses” can't keep them from going there. And that's kind of how important that central piece of the Appreciative Inquiry process is.

So the approach is purposely positive and usually we talk about an appreciative process reaching every level. So the way we engage in Appreciative Inquiry is by making sure that we have as many people as we possibly can that are involved in whatever it is we're trying to create that “positive proposition for the future” for or part of is so that we have broad ownership across every level of that particular organization or effort.

So it's highly participative. Everybody gets involved in developing the vision and creating “the way” together. It stimulates vision and creativity. People actually get engaged into the process of designing that future together and

they learn by actually engaging or doing that. It's an active learning, or active research kind of process.

It leads to stories. Stories are kind of the foundation upon which Appreciative Inquiry leans. We actually build the Appreciative Inquiry guideline or the interview guide as a way to make sure that we engage those individuals in telling the stories of their past and identifying the really strong and powerful life-giving kind of forces that were important in their history so that we can anchor that and use that anchor as a way to move forward.

It recognizes that “inquiry” and change are simultaneous. If we think about Appreciative Inquiry's principles we actually - there's actually about five principles that Appreciative Inquiry is based on. One of them is the constructionist principle which really says we create what we imagine or change is actually occurring as we imagine it.

The other principle is the poetic principle and what that says is that an organization's past is an endless source of learning, of inspiration, of possibility and that we can actually inquire into anything in any living human organization and tap into that particular principle.

The other principle is simultaneity. That really means that inquiry “is” change. The seeds of change are actually part of the process itself and they are imbedded in the first questions that we ask.

One of the things that we say in Appreciative Inquiry is that “the first question is fateful.” It's really important that we ask that first question in a way that helps us to and kind of guides us through the rest of the inquiry, and because everything is kind of based upon that.

The other principle is what we call the principle of anticipation or the anticipatory principle. That principle really says that the habit of collective imagination and the habit of our hearts and our images are really dialogical habits. They're about having conversations and that the power of those conversations comes from those positive questions that we ask.

And then finally it maintains that the more powerful our images of the future is, then the more capable we will be of achieving that positive future and having effective action towards it. So if we are all engaged in building those provocative propositions for the future the more capable we will be of achieving them.

So the essence of the Appreciative Inquiry approach to collaboration or anything else for that matter is based upon two broad aspects. One is that individuals and organizations that have done well in the past and what are they doing well in the present and then finally what are the possibilities for a more vital and successful and effective future based upon that.

So the approach is framed by what we call the 4D model -- that's the model we'll talk about now. You'll notice in this model that I have collaboration as a topic. That is really a matter of convenience. It could be any topic. It doesn't necessarily have to be collaboration. It could be sales, it could be leadership, it could be our married life, it could be our children's future, those kinds of things. What's important is that we have created that collaborative topic through a shared visioning process.

And our shared visioning here -- I'll give you an example might be our vision for the future is to develop a watershed that is sustainable for 200 years. That would actually be the topic rather than collaboration. And we got to that by

starting with the top part of the 4D model which is the discovery phase where first all began an appreciation of what is.

Or what has happened in our past and how have we been effective before. And as I said, 'we do that through a "storytelling process" using an Appreciative Inquiry guide. And then we move to the second D which is looking at what might actually be. Well, how can we envision a future based upon what we've already done to -- for example -- achieve that 200-year vision for our watershed, whatever that vision might be?

And then we move through the design process. We actually look at - now that we've considered what we've really done well and we've imagined a future that might actually occur, then we need to kind of get realistic about it and say, well, let's really figure out what it should be rather than just about, you know, dreaming our lives away and looking at, you know, great grandiose schemes for the future and get down to what might actually be able to be done.

And obviously, the final D is to begin that process of looking at how we will actually get to where it is we want to go, designing and developing those smart objectives in those tactical plans to help us get there.

So that kind of covers the general model of AI. So the question is always why would we want to go do that? What is it that makes it say, I think this collaboration or whatever effective? Well number one, is that you actually engage people in new ways. How many of us have most recently had someone ask us about an event in our past that was powerful or provocative, or actually was a good experience.

So that's kind of where AI begins. And then having them tell us that story. Engaging in that process is really important. So it's kind of like the first time you decide to join the Peace Corps, you have this great belief that you are going to go out and do wonderful things and have this huge effect on people. And then when you actually get there you realize that you can change the world only one person at a time. And it usually it begins with you.

And then finally it moves the collaboration participants in a positive direction. Everyone gets moving together in that place that they want to be. And it works towards building the strong positive outcomes that are built on what we've already been able to do well in the past.

So what's best about using that kind of an approach? Number one, it's a “win-win” proposition. Everyone is engaged. They feel like they learned, they've been honored, they've been appreciated, they've been heard. It encourages us to meet people and get to know them in ways that we have not before. It creates a positive working environment because we're actually beginning to do something we don't typically do, that is – “listen” to them.

And it appeals to us even though we don't see an immediate outcome. People are an important part of the process and everybody appreciates that. So would an Appreciative Inquiry approach to collaboration create more effective outcomes? I believe the answer is yes, because it will instill a sense of excitement and engagement in the people who are participating. They will be more passive and respond in more positive ways, and that will translate into other kinds of things that they do in the future.

And so once you have actually engaged in or been immersed in an appreciative process, you actually become what I call “appreciative for life” because everything you look at in the future is about, well how about if we

start with looking at what's already working well? So we don't get tied to our typical deficit-mindedness as we move into the future.

So some of the assumptions is that a participatory process is desired, that is, we actually desire or we want to engage people in a process of participating in defining their future or helping them to see in kind of an outline where it is we want to go in whatever kind of practice it is we're looking at.

It is co-creative- it makes cohesiveness a primary goal. We want to do it together. We want to all be part of it. It creates that shared vision of the future which is what as I said, is the primary objective. My favorite cliché is, as long as you don't care where you're going, any map will get you there.

But if you had a place to go and you've got a roadmap to get there together, the chances of you arriving the way you want to is exponentially larger. Success will depend on everybody being fully engaged -- that's one of the assumptions. We'll be successful if we get enough people to create that critical mass to actually get us there.

And time is a major factor. We're not planning to do this 100 years from now; we'd actually like to see it happen, you know, in three years, five years, whatever the case might be. And that planning must be accomplished while the system is in motion. That piece of it is really important because most of us are on the train, and if the train has a broken wheel we got to fix that wheel while it's going down the road. So in order for an organization we'll use the Cedar Rapids Watershed for one. We can't stop the river or the rain. We've got to fix the watershed while we're engaged in that system. So there are planning steps, first of all to have an agenda. This is just a sample agenda of what an Appreciative Inquiry process might look like over a day's time. And

then this is just a list of the activities that might take place as we engage people in an appreciative process.

I think you can read them yourself without, we're not going to go through each one of those point by point. Obviously the next thing is creating the shared vision which is Activity 3 of the task.

And then we ought to set and prioritize goals. So this is the McKinley 7S model I talked about earlier. If you look in the middle of it, the "shared vision" is the larger of the 7 "S's" in the model and the rest of them are around it. What you have to do is once you have that shared vision described is you have to make sure that the strategy is connected to that shared vision and that it actually helps us, leads us, to where we want to go.

We have to make sure that the structure -- the structure is the organizational structure and that includes the policies, the regulations, the way of doing business that we use to follow that strategy to get us that shared vision. Here is where we want it to be. And if isn't we need to do something about it, so that we can do that.

Same with strategy, if the strategy we have in place does not get us to that shared vision we need to re-strategize, we need to look at the systems that supports the structure and align with the strategy to get us to that shared vision.

We have to make sure we have the right skill sets available to use those systems and within that structure to achieve that strategy so that we can get to that shared vision. Make sure we have the right staff that can use the skills and the right style -- that is, the management style -- is in place so that that staff

will feel compelled to use those skills within that system and follow those structures and the strategy to get us that shared vision.

So you notice the model actually is divided into the hard stuff and the soft stuff. The hard stuff is the things that are REALLY hard to change -- the systems, the computer systems, the processes we use; the structure is the organizational structure, the policies and rules; and the strategy obviously those are the "hard stuff."

But let me just say that it is actually the "soft stuff" that's really the "hard stuff" to change but you have to have all those together connected to each other to help you get there.

So here's just a set of questions that you'll ask as you use the 7S model to make sure that you have your objectives and your goals and everything lined up with your vision for the future. Again we're not going to walk through all that but what that does, is it helps you make sure you have your goals, objectives intact, it's all in line, to help you get to that shared vision.

Okay, I think I've covered this pretty quickly. I did a lot of talking and didn't get a lot of questions so I think at this point we will open it up for those kinds of things.

I wasn't lucky, I wasn't like a water hose.

Julie Marcy: You covered a lot of ground, Doug, because you not only covered Appreciative Inquiry, you gave us the 4D model tool and the 7S model too. So we actually had a threefer today.

Doug Davis: Right.

Julie Marcy: Does anyone have a question for Doug? Do you want some additional detail perhaps on one of those models or some of the processes used?

(Cindy Barger): Hi, this is (Cindy Barger) of POD. I've done Appreciative Inquiry or participated in Appreciative Inquiry mainly for team building, kind of a partnering activity. We did one within one of the district's civil works projects for getting the project management planning and technical folks all in one.

Then, we did another one that was more inter-agency, an inter-agency team to get us aligned. I was wondering about your experiences in using this more in a project setting like a project planning setting rather than a team building setting?

Doug Davis: Okay, well, I've used it in all different kinds of settings from helping a group of senior leaders create a vision for - for example I worked with what is known as the Iowa League of Cities, which is a group of mayors from around the state of Iowa, to work on creating a vision for all to work as a governing body. Very successful. I used it to help the Department of Human Services Inspector General Staff create a vision for the future for that organization.

And I've used it for the Iowa Asian Alliance which is a group of about 150 Asian-Americans in the state of Iowa who decided that they needed to establish an Eastern Iowa Chapter to tie into the Central Iowa Asian Chapter and ultimately to build a Western Iowa Chapter for a Total Iowa Asian Alliance which includes probably 500 members and I helped them design their way forward to manage their organization.

So what specifically would you like to know about?

(Cindy Barger): Yes, I was just thinking more of one of the things with Civil Works - the SMART Planning and Modernization - I was thinking that Appreciative Inquiry might be a good tool for individual projects to use to...

Doug Davis: Absolutely

(Cindy Barger): ...kind of get some folks in line and I was wondering if you had done in that way because I've done it in more of a program setting rather than a specific activity setting.

Doug Davis: No, I have not done it that way, but I can see no reason why whatsoever that would not be effective. The hard part, as I see it, is getting them engaged in going down a different road to do that. You know, it's always managing expectations that's difficult.

The thing I always tell my constituents that I work with is that you must “trust the process”, that the process will actually get you there. And the reason I say that to them is because I've used it for so many different types of work and it has always been successful and because I know that when you harness the hearts and the minds of a significant number of the individuals engaged, that they will ultimately be more strongly leaning towards where it is that they want to go together.

Julie Marcy: This is Julie. (Mary), you had your hand up earlier. Do you have an additional question for Doug?

(Mary Gauker): I'm not sure how to phrase this, but I think it's along the same lines. Often we're in meetings where we need to solve a problem quickly and everyone

comes in looking for a quick answer, looking to move on, you know, up-tempo is very high.

How do we move on - how do we solve this and move on to the next issue? And I see a socialization challenge because often, especially, at headquarters we get a lot of people in the room who are busy -- not that everyone isn't busy everywhere -- and they want to solve this and move on to the next issue.

Doug Davis: Right.

(Mary): And we do tend to look at what's the problem and what's wrong and how do we fix it instead of what's going right.

Doug Davis: Right.

(Mary): And I'm just wondering if you could speak to that and maybe it's not appropriate for every situation...

Doug Davis: Right.

(Mary): ...and I'd like to focus on positive and the past and the anecdotal stories, but I'm wondering if that can transfer to some of the issues that we're facing. I'm not sure what my question is.

Doug Davis: Yes, no, I agree. I know exactly where you're coming from and I'm 100% in agreement with where you're at in that it is not necessarily the right answer for everything. And you're exactly right. We are to a default deficit-minded in our organizations, but let me just caveat that: we're certainly not the only organization on the planet that's deficit-minded and are always looking to fix things. We have a "fix-that-thing" mentality in the world today.

(Mary): Yes.

Doug Davis: And so getting out of that “fix-it” mentality is certainly a challenge and I think you pinpointed that very succinctly but the bottom line is that “as long as you always do what you've always done you'll always get what you've always gotten.”

So if you want to get something different you have to do something different. And conveying that can be really tricky. In fact I have heard people say, well, you're going to be stirring the waters if you do that and my response to them is I have always believed this and I learned it early on as a young sailor that “if you're not making waves you're probably not underway.”

Julie Marcy: (Mary), this is Julie again. You've kind of given us a segue into our open forum, so we'll kind of go back and forth between that. Some of the things that I thought of that I think resonate with what Doug talked about with Appreciative Inquiry is that when you have groups like that, there are some tools that I like to use. Like having the group focus on what is within their sphere of influence and control.

A lot of times participants or groups want to go all over the board, but if you can rein them back in to what do they really have power to influence or power to control, that can be helpful. I think another thing that ties in with the AI philosophy is one of the things we teach in the 2-day classes, the Army's OMR model with objectives, methods and resources. So often, we want to jump into the problem solving part, the method, or say we only have X dollars or X people or whatever.

And instead, if you can get the participants to start up with the O, the objective, and come to a common understanding of the problem or the challenge and where they're trying to get. Then, only when you reach that point, do you then start to talk about how we might get there and then what resources are available to help us implement those methods. So Doug, don't you see that kind of tailoring to AI as well?

Doug Davis: I do, yes. It's really interesting because the most difficult part, at least in my opinion, of the AI process is taking the time up front to design that questionnaire, that inquiry guide that everyone uses. It's really almost the most important thing you do is as you work with the people that are interested in going some place different and pulling that guide together. Obviously, I've done that, like I could create one, but if you do it for them they have no buy-in.

So you have to engage them in a process of designing the questions there. You know, typically the questions there is, "think about a time when you" - I'll just try to give you an example. Let's say that we were a group of people who are having difficulties with our marriage life. I mean everybody pretty much can identify with that.

If we ask the question – "think about a time when our marriage was really great." You know, way back when we first got married, what was that like? You know, what made that successful? What was powerful about that? And based upon that, what if we could harness that power today what would it look like? You know, if we could dream 10 years in the future and see our marriage as the best marriage on the planet. What would it have looked like to get there?

Those are the kinds of questions that you have to construct in an Appreciative Inquiry to get you to where you need to be. So, for example, one of the questions that I always like to ask, you know, groups of people that I'm working with whether a project team or an organization is, "what is the world calling for our organization to be?" You know, "what are the most enlivening and exciting possibilities that there might be for us?"

"What is it that's wanting us to go there?" Those kinds of questions. So putting that questionnaire together is hugely important.

Julie Marcy: Doug, this is Julie. When you've used AI with groups within the Corps, what's some of the typical feedback that you hear from participants? Is it the first time they have encountered it?

Doug Davis: Yes, it's great question. When I tell you this you're probably not going to believe it. But I actually have people emotionally break down. And some of my AI classes, they go, my god, I have been waiting for someone in my organization to ask me this question for 20 years.

That's how powerful it can be. They say, oh, I've been trying to get somebody to ask me this question ever since I've been here. I'm so glad that you did and here's my answer. And now that we have my answer will you please roll my answer into the solution to the problem that we're trying to solve. Or the place we're trying to go.

Because then I will help you go there. So I know it sounds really esoteric and really kind of -- how do I say it, mind blowing if you will -- but that actually occurs. But honest to goodness, it does.

Julie Marcy: Let's talk a little more about the specific example that we've been able to post on the Web page with the Indian River Watershed in Iowa. What are some of the outcomes that you saw from that effort?

Doug Davis: Great, great question. I wish (Jason) would have been on the line with us today. (Jason) could answer that question better than I can.

Doug Davis: Yes, he was kind of instrumental in helping to pilot that first round of those things but what I think we found was that had we not used Appreciative Inquiry we would not have got the response that we got and we would still be struggling today to create that shared vision for the watershed.

People were highly engaged in identifying their ownership of that process, their ownership of the way forward. They felt like they were actually heard and listened to. And because of that they were committed to do the hard work of setting up, you know, what it is to get there.

(Courtney Chambers): I've got a question. This is (Courtney Chambers). How do you transition from having a good conversation with your participants and getting everybody to share and have a shared vision and everything to leaving that place and then putting those suggestions or putting that into motion?

Or is it simply - I guess it depends on your goal. Maybe the goal is just to get everybody on the same page. How do you make it into an active solution after the fact? Is that your job or is that up to the leaders - the people who initiated the meeting?

Doug Davis: Well, typically it's up to the people who initiated the meeting. I just work as the facilitator to help facilitate the conversation, but that doesn't mean I would not be interested in being engaged in helping them identify the way forward to

actually design that strategic plan and look at those items on the 7S model that would help them get there. Obviously those are important things to do and someone has to do it.

You know, if you say, look we want to have a - we want our family to be happy and prosperous and intelligent and have great jobs in the future, you have to say, okay, what do we have to do to make that happen. First of all we have to invest in that future, you know, we have to learn to communicate with each other better, we have to make sure that we take into consideration everyone else's kinds of desires for where they want to be, you know, and then lay out a plan to make that happen.

(Courtney Chambers):Right.

Doug Davis: You know, and then you actually have to monitor the implementation of that plan and find out where you're being effective, where you're not being effective and how you can make that happen.

So, yes, obviously the AI piece of that is the upfront piece and much more has to be done afterwards to actually achieve that vision that you create together.

(Cindy Barger): Hi, this is (Cindy). In the Appreciative Inquiries we've done here in Hawaii, that was actually part of the outcome of the Appreciative Inquiry Workshop to end up with two priority goals, actions, objectives and champions.

Now what we've seen is -- I think I've been involved in four of those. In three of them, the participants really all bought into it and when the champion was kind of slacking off, then the other team members helped to keep it moving forward. And there was an internal one we did when the champion moved or

wasn't focusing on that, and they hit a standstill because nobody else on the little sub-committee really stepped up.

Doug Davis: Wow.

(Cindy Barger): And I think that was probably a lack of senior leadership buy-in to the process. There was buy-in to the process at a lower level, but not necessarily the senior leader. He didn't necessarily agree with what was being voiced by everybody else in the room which was kind of a disappointing...

Doug Davis: Yes, no. That is hugely important. I'm so glad you brought it up. But you're exactly right. What that really is, is a Change Management issue, that is, you know, if you don't have the requisite level of sponsorship to be able to move forward in the face of adversity then the chances of your AI initiative being successful becomes exponentially less likely.

So, you know, it's very important that you have the -- we'll call them champions or executive sponsors or leadership, whatever you want to call it, they have to be on board. You know, if they're not on board, you know, all you're doing is dreaming.

(Cindy Barger): And, I have to accept the outcome because I think that what was difficult was that what group participants identified as the key problem was not what the leadership thought was the key problem. And they chose not to cure it.

Doug Davis: Right. Which is - my main contention is that in order for an Appreciative Inquiry to be maximally effective it needs to have a broad base, including senior leadership. They need to be involved in the Appreciative process itself.

Julie Marcy: Doug, this is (Julie). I see that (Maria) has a question as well. (Maria)?

(Maria Placht): Thanks (Julie). Doug, this is (Maria Koftet).

Doug Davis: Hi (Maria).

(Maria Placht): I have a question for the Iowa Cedar case because it is my understanding that the group also incorporated the visioning component through drawing...

Doug Davis: Yes.

(Maria Placht): ...and that they had sort of a drawing session where they drew - each of them drew their vision.

Doug Davis: Right.

(Maria Placht): ...And this was sort of a different technique that was combined with the Appreciative Inquiry technique.

Doug Davis: Yes.

(Maria Placht): I was wondering how that worked.

Doug Davis: Well, that is a good question and I'm really glad you answered. Because I think that one of the things that we probably could have done better in many of those Appreciative Inquiries is harness that collective inspirational process of...

Doug Davis: of trying to engage the individuals and somehow expressing that vision of the future graphically which is hugely important because as we all know people tend to remember what they see more than what they hear.

So if you're able to create a graphic representation of that future state and use that as a kind of a projection tool that people can look at ahead say, yes, that's where we want to go, it's usually powerful. And so many times I have done that and what I have done is I'd ask people to bring magazines and provide them with pencils and crayons and things like that to create that vision for the future.

I actually have some photographs of some of Iowa Asian Alliance people's graphic representations of their future state put up on a wall. That's really powerful because you can actually look at those collages that they created from magazines and stuff and understand where it is they wanted to go in the future just by looking at them.

So I think - do I answer your question or not?

(Maria Placht): Yes, yes. I mean basically I think it was incorporated really well and I'm imagining that was part of the story-telling session, to ask them to try out that exercise as part of the sharing.

Doug Davis: Yes, that was actually part of the Appreciative Inquiry interview guide was to complete that process to do that.

Julie Marcy: Doug, this is Julie. If you have a couple of photo examples you wouldn't mind sharing, we can post those on the Exchange...

Doug Davis: Okay, sure I can do that.

Julie Marcy: ...as examples of both graphic facilitation and supporting the AI process. That would be great.

Doug Davis: Sure.

Julie Marcy: If you have additional questions for Doug on AI please feel free to ask those, but also we can continue our open forum. If anybody else has any general facilitation questions or challenges they're facing or if you have a good-news story of success that you want to share with us, please go ahead and do that at this time.

Doug Davis: Let me just ask a question. Who was the individual that was in Hawaii that had experience an AI. I didn't catch the name.

Julie Marcy: That was (Cindy).

(Cindy Barger): Hi, this is (Cindy Barger). I'm with POD. I'm a Regulatory and Environmental person, and until January I was down at Honolulu District.

(Doug Davis): Okay.

(Cindy Barger): Yes, I was essentially kind of following with the visioning process you did for Iowa Cedar River. The other one that we did where we were combining two processes was working with an inter-agency team to help the state develop a climate change framework. And, it was the state's idea but we combined with an alternative futures scenario process...

Doug Davis: Great.

(Cindy Barger): ...that was done by the Manila School of Future Studies. So we had one day where they essentially showed the participants three, four different scenarios of what the future could be like.

Doug Davis: Sure.

(Cindy Barger): They were actually living in that future, and then based on that experience, we did the Appreciative Inquiry process. It was a really good process. It worked out really well and what was interesting is there was a lot of reluctance in the role playing between the engineers and scientists, but afterwards they loved it.

Doug Davis: Yes, that is outstanding. You know, the scenario planning process actually was developed by Arie de Geus in the Royal Dutch Shell group many years ago. I actually got a chance to work with the Royal Dutch Shell at the learning center at the Shell Learning Center at the Woodlands in Texas many years ago.

And they were using, you know, they were way back then even using the scenario planning process and integrating AI with it. So that's a kind of a common practice that is being done around the world to (do that) so kind of refreshing to hear someone in the Corps actually having an opportunity to engage in that process.

Julie Marcy: This is Julie. This reminds me of something. There is a publication I'm referencing in a curriculum I'm working on right now. Periodically, the National Intelligence Council comes up with global scenarios and their latest report is Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds that has four different future scenarios. So, if you're interested in that publication, just let me know and I can send it to you.

Doug Davis: I definitely am.

Julie Marcy: I'll just go ahead and send it to folks on the call.

Doug Davis: Yes, that'd be great.

Julie Marcy: It can be a very helpful document. When the Corps does its Civil Works strategic planning updates (and also in military programs) they usually tap into existing scenarios like this that other national agencies have created and then also tweak them to be more Corps-centric.

So, we used four different scenarios in the last civil works strategic plan update and it's being updated again now.

Doug Davis: Outstanding.

Julie Marcy: Any other questions or best practices/ insights from anyone on the line that you would like to share? Or challenges? You can ask a question if there's a conundrum that you're dealing with that you'd like some feedback on or share some insights.

(Cindy Barger): This is (Cindy) again. I'll raise my challenge in the example that I raised before where we went through the Appreciative Inquiry and came up with a vision, goals, and actions. And then there's sort of just stagnation. Do you have recommendations or ideas to help kindly encourage them to revisit what they've already accomplished.

Doug Davis: Right, absolutely. Now one of the things that I have been just for your edification purposes one of the things that I've been trying to do wherever I go but most important here in the district is to try to get this district to engage in an Organizational Change Management practice, you know, getting some idea about how do you manage change constructively. What do you need to do to

make sure change “sticks”, you know? What does it mean to be a change sponsor, those kinds of things?

I have to admit I have not been very successful in getting their ear here but because I know how important that is I continue to run up against that wall. And hopefully someday they'll actually hear what I'm saying and engage in an Organizational Change Management process that does that.

My schooling comes from (Conner Partners) which originally was (ODR). At that time they were the number 1 Organizational Change Management consulting firm on the planet. And they're still highly regarded, but they have always very succinctly stated that organizational change, especially if it's major change, simply must be “orchestrated”. And it must be orchestrated from the top and cascaded down.

Julie Marcy: Cindy this is Julie. Something that helped with some of the groups that I facilitate, is if you can get the coordinator or the sponsor of the meeting to help. Typically, you'll have some action items that result from your meeting or workshop.

If you can have that key person that was the sponsor of the meeting have the folks sign up to some interim step, some interim goals, particularly if they're only going to get together quarterly or twice a year and so forth, that can help.

What they'll do is like once a month, they'll send just a little quick email message out that will have an update like here's Action 1 Update and what's been happening. That kind of keeps everybody reminded and engaged.

And, it also brings in a little bit of competitiveness because it shows the action and the person assigned. So, you can see who has been active and who hasn't.

And that seems to have been helpful for some of the groups that I work with as well.

Doug Davis: Good point.

Julie Marcy: Any other thoughts before we close out our session?

Doug Davis: Just wanted to thank everyone for participating. There was lots of really great responses to questions and also want to let people know that I am a resource, I'm also open to helping people put together those guidelines if they're actually going to facilitate an AI process themselves or to help them facilitate an AI process if possible so.

Julie Marcy: Doug, we really appreciate you being with us today and sharing your expertise with us.

END