

Steps for Appreciative Reflection (version 2.0)

This tool is based on David Cooperrider's Appreciative Inquiry method.

With this tool an ideal picture of the future is created on the basis of participants' concrete, peak experiences in relation to a theme or question. The method consists of four phases: *discover*, *dream*, *design* and *deliver*.

Step 0 Preparation: the facilitator defines a specific theme or question and explores the kind of questions which can be used to elicit concrete, peak experiences. The facilitator continually emphasises the positive aspect.

PHASE 1: DISCOVER

Step 1 The facilitator describes the theme or question and demonstrates the first step with one of the participants. The facilitator asks the participant to give a concrete example of a peak experience. In doing so, the facilitator pays attention to the following:

- He or she keeps on asking until a real peak experience, which has made a deep impression, is described, even if it is in a different context and long ago.
- He or she directs attention to positive experiences; no attention is paid to negative experiences in this method.
- He or she makes sure that the example is concrete and personal.

Step 2 The participants form pairs and ask each other about their peak experience as described in Step 1. Allow seven minutes for each person in the pair. This is the '*discover phase*', in which participants search for peak experiences.

Step 3 The participants retell their partner's experience to the group. The facilitator writes the characteristics of each story on a flip chart, and at the same time asks the other participants to capture the essence of the experience in a keyword. A number of keywords are written next to the experience (in a different colour). After a few, or if time all, experiences have been elicited, a list is made of the most important keywords.

PHASE 2: DREAM

Step 4 The facilitator now asks the participants to imagine how it would be if the situation in these peak experiences was the norm. In this '*dream phase*' participants can really 'dream' what this would be like, without any practical or organisational limitations. What would be needed to make these peak experiences the *norm* rather than the *exception*? This step can be carried out in pairs and reported to the whole group, or it can be carried out directly with the whole group. The main themes of the *dream phase* are noted down.

PHASE 3: DESIGN

Step 5 In the same pairs, participants translate elements from the *dream phase* into practical ways of making these operational. It is important to keep an atmosphere of positive experience here as well. These ideas are written on post-its, stuck on a flip chart and discussed in the group. It is also possible to make clusters of ideas.

PHASE 4: DELIVER

Step 6 In pairs, the participants discuss concrete plans for implementing these practical suggestions in their daily practice. They can make commitments to support each other in this. A plenary follow-up appointment can be made to check progress, again on the basis of peak experiences.