


International Journal of Appreciative Inquiry

November 2014

Volume 16 Number 4

ISBN 978-1-907549-21-2

 dx.doi.org/10.12781/978-1-907549-21-2

AI Practitioner



www.aipractitioner.com/subscriptions



Spirituality and Appreciative Inquiry

Edited by

Duane Bidwell, Ph.D.

Katherine Rand, MPP

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Spirituality and Appreciative Inquiry

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Welcome to November 2014 issue of AI Practitioner

Spirituality and Appreciative Inquiry celebrates the spiritual dimension by exploring its connections with AI theory and practice. Editors Duane Bidwell and Katherine Rand bring together articles that reflect on how spirituality, spiritual practice and AI flow together to shape the experiences of practitioners and participants. Articles highlight new practices, offer case studies and provide insight into ways of integrating spirituality and AI principles.

Kristen Crusoe, Annette Garner, Kathlynn Northrup-Snyder and Sarah Wallace describe an innovation in nursing education in the Feature Choice article "Using Motivational Interviewing in Nursing for Improved Professional Development: Moving from Appreciative Inquiry's Dream to Destiny Phases."

In Research Review & Notes, Ottar Ness highlights first-person perspectives in dual

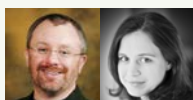
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We would like to thank Joep C. de Jong and JLS for sponsoring this issue.

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Spirituality and Appreciative Inquiry

This issue of AI Practitioner celebrates the spiritual dimension by exploring its connections with AI theory and practice. The articles reflect explicitly on how spirituality, spiritual practice, and AI flow together to shape the experiences of practitioners and participants and to bring transformative meaning into whatever context AI is being applied.

Helping people and organizations move into positive futures, created through relationship, has been a focus of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) since its earliest inception. In the process of implementing AI, many practitioners have noted the synergy created when people attend to possibilities and interconnections. These practitioners intuit a spiritual dimension of AI that is seldom addressed explicitly in research, writing and training. The contributors who have written the ten articles in this issue highlight new practices, offer case studies of AI practice in religious communities, and provide insight into the ways that practitioners integrate spirituality and AI principles.

What you'll read

Three authors reflect on the resonance between AI and their own spiritualities. Jan Reed, a UK-based gerontologist, explores the parallels in her experiences with AI and her Buddhist practice, and how they enhance her work with older adults and other caregivers. Alex Reed, a psychotherapist in England, reflects on the ways that Zen Buddhism and AI shape his practice and understanding of the therapeutic relationship. And US-based consultant Diana Whitney offers insight into the role of humility, a deeply spiritual value, in AI practice with organizations.

Another three articles offer case studies at the intersection of spirituality and AI practice. Joan McArthur-Blair and Jeanie Cockell, Canadian educators, describe the "graffiti paper" assignment they have used to create "magic" in an introductory AI course. Amanda Trosten-Bloom, a US consultant, explores her use of AI to transform the future of Unitarian-Universalism on a national scale. US practitioners Ray Wells, Page S. Morahan, Erik Bus, and Jennifer Pronesti describe how the use of AI resolved conflict and established strategic priorities for the future of the Bryn Athyn Church in Pennsylvania.



Ray Wells, Page S. Morahan, Erik Bus, and Jennifer Pronesti describe the use of AI in the Bryn Athyn Church in Pennsylvania. Read about it on page 39

Two authors propose practices that emerge from AI theory. Samuel Mahaffy, a US consultant, describes how he adds “discernment” to AI’s traditional “5D process” to bring AI effectively to church communities. Dutch consultant Hans Uijen reverses the typical AI outward orientation and proposes appreciative ways of attending to a person’s inner world – especially the inner world of the AI practitioner.

Finally, two research articles explore the intersection of spirituality and AI. Heike Aiello, a German AI consultant, and Dutch professor Hetty Zock describe how spiritual caregivers use AI principles to increase vocational awareness among healthcare providers in the Netherlands. And US pastor and scholar Vicki Hammel describes how the use of AI in congregations shapes the leadership of pastors.

What is ‘spirituality’?

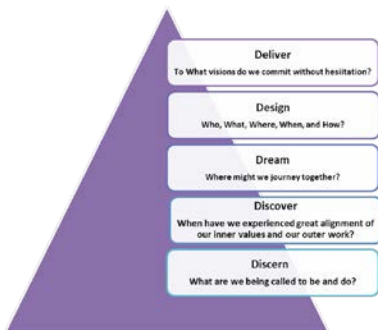
As editors, we did not explicitly define “spirituality” for authors, but instead invited expressions that fit within a broadly existential understanding of the word. Most simply, we think of spirituality in terms of ultimate goals and values. It refers to individuals’ relationships to one another, to self and to the sacred (whatever that might be). Spirituality is concerned with the fundamental human pursuit of meaning making. When deeply engaged, spirituality promotes practices that help individuals and communities to both appreciate “what is” and to transform themselves into “what can be.” Spirituality, for us, is earthly and transcendent, particular and universal. It nurtures and realizes wholeness, community and transformation.

Thus, the articles in this issue do not define or promote one kind of spirituality. Instead, they describe spiritualities formed in and by specific contexts. These spiritualities simultaneously reflect an aspect of human diversity; describe a limited consensus about the real, the good and the valuable; provide a way of talking about awareness or knowledge of ontological realities; recommend practices or guidelines for human transformation; and detail a shared existential experience as expressed by particular people and communities.

Editing this issue of *AI Practitioner* has been a generative, joyful and compelling experience for us. We learned a lot from the authors, and we are grateful for the guidance of Anne Radford, whose careful attention to trends in AI practice led to this issue.

Enjoy!

Duane Bidwell and Katherine Rand
Editors, November 2014



Read Samuel Mahaffy’s thoughts regarding the addition of ‘Discernment’ to the AI process on page 47



Dora Fried Schnitman, Ph.D.

International professor, author of books and papers in five languages. Director of Fundación Interfas, co-founder of the Network for Productive Dialogues and the International Diploma Program on Dialogical Practices. Developed a generative model for change based on strength, dialogue and new paradigms, utilized in different fields.

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About the February 2015 Issue

Appreciation and Generative Dialogues: Reflections and Appreciative Inquiry Practices from Ibero-America

This special issue about AI's contributions from Ibero-America (Latin America, Puerto Rico and Spain) presents recent theoretical developments and experiences of working in very diverse settings.

Ibero-America has been a fertile ground for Appreciative Inquiry. Teams, groups, people and networks – including the Latin American Network of Appreciative Inquiry (www.redindagacionapreciativa.com) and the Productive Dialogues Network (www.dialogosproductivos.net) – have embraced AI's ideas, principles and methodologies, and have been developing and adapting them to the particular characteristics of our countries.

Although Ibero-America is one of today's largest and most cohesive linguistic regions in the world, our history is really a story of multiple encounters (and clashes!) between cultures. The "mestiza" society is the result of these forces coming together, a blending of traditions and cultural perspectives searching for meaning and a sense of shared identity within the diversity from which we emerged.

This dialogue stands as a metaphor for what is our continent, as well as a hopeful invitation to reconnect with our core life.

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Purpose of AI Practitioner

This publication is for people interested in making the world a better place using positive relational approaches to change such as Appreciative Inquiry. The publication is distributed quarterly: February, May, August and November.

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ISSN 1741 8224

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