

Valencia Students Into Random Acts of Listening

I was happily invited, for a second time, as sometime-professor at the University of Valencia to work with students in the Erasmus program “European Master in Work, Organizational and Personnel Psychology (WOP-P) 2024” for the course Intervention in Organizations, Organizational Change and Development (see photo). My three-day lecture is about contemporary methods of organizational change and development: Appreciative Inquiry interventions.



This [LinkedIn post](#) by Bishal Sala gives an impression of how it went. AI, of course, is the perfect practice for a process of “learning by doing”. We designed our own AI-summit on the self-chosen – and essential – topic of Work-Life-Balance.

Fast forward to the individual assignment I created, inspired by Nick Heap and Random Acts of Listening initiative, which turned out to be a great success, highly rewarding for both teacher and students.



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Appreciative Inquiry Reflection with a Stranger

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Preparation

Since I was going to Turia Park, my goal was to choose someone who seemed approachable. I wanted to focus on strengths, successes and possibilities through my questions, rather than on problems.

Possible questions for an appreciative inquiry

1. “Hi, I’m a master’s student of organizational psychology in university of Valencia, and I’m doing a project on how people create and try to maintain positive changes in their lives. Would you mind if I ask you a couple of questions about this topic?”
2. **Life moment** “When you felt you were at your best? Was it special for you?”
3. **Specific experience** “How did your strengths shape your experience?”
4. **Future goal** “What’s something positive you hope to achieve in the future? What will help you get there?”

5. **General** “How could you focus more on positive outcomes rather than on obstacles?”

After the conversation

Before going to Turia Park, I felt both curious and hesitant.

I felt uncomfortable asking if I could take a picture because it seemed a bit intrusive. By focusing on creating a respectful and meaningful exchange, I chose to prioritize the connection over the photo, which allowed the conversation to flow more naturally and authentically.

My overall impression of the conversation was as follows: I introduced myself and described my project to a person seated on a bench. The stranger was open to talking, so we talked about a time when she felt most herself. We started a conversation about her strengths with her sharing a story of her own personal development. Generally, the conversation had a smooth and upbeat flow. Even though I was a bit anxious, it was simple to keep going because of the emphasis on advantages and positive elements.

From this experience I took away the importance of posing inquiries that prompt individuals to consider the positive parts of their lives. The talk flowed more naturally than I had expected, and it felt more like an interaction than an interview. Plus, I found out, it's also not too difficult to strike up a (positive) conversation with a random girl at Turia Park.