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Appreciative Inquiry: Offshoots and Innovations

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The Poetic Principle

Poems by Anne Radford

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) was a lifeline when I first came across it in the early 1990s, and it continues to be a gift as circumstances change and new interpretations follow.

It's appeal was the new way of working. My consulting practice became more joyful and beneficial than the deficit-based practices common at the time.

AI went from being a consulting practice to a way of life, one that stayed with me as I left work behind and moved to a different age and stage.

Its as though nothing changed, but everything changed.

Life now is about living life slowly. Where each breath and step is an important micro-moment.

Appreciative Inquiry: The Gift That Keeps on Giving

Thank you, AI, for finding me,
This gift that keeps on giving.

Along my path from cynic to enthusiast,
Where doubts became narratives,
Dissonance harmonies.

Tender steps towards being a practitioner;
A new world opened up.
The surprise of mystery.
An openness beyond predictability.
New constructs
Disrupting years of traditional thinking.

Risking the walk
Alongside mystery
As a regular companion.

Sometimes a stroll.
A scary leap
With a comforting quotation to lean on.

In this new phase,
Without plans or agendas,
The knowns and unknowns
Bring new meanings
Into the essence of what gives life.

Each moment emerges:
A gentle improvisation,
A newness,
A connection to a larger consciousness.
A different knowing
Where timeless concepts
Of Interbeing,

Interrelatedness
And interconnectedness
Become the new guides.

Each moment
A carefulness, kindness and
worldliness.

AI is still present
With rich surprises,
Continuing the mystery.

Walking the Way 2023, p. 28

Indra's Net: Ancient Image of Oneness, Wholeness and Diversity

David Cooperrider brought the metaphor of Indra's Net to those of us working on the AI Consulting Charter in the early 2000s. He offered it as a vision for AI Consulting, as a creative matrix of generous opportunity and rich relationship. It is a metaphor that stayed with me and connected even more powerfully when I started studying the interbeing and interconnection work of [Thich Nhat Hanh](#).

Interbeing, Interconnection and Indra's Net

Living slowly,
Step by step,
Breath by breath.

The subtle and silky joy of being in Indra's Net.
The knot of interbeing.
The web of interconnection.
Being aware of the spaces.

A different consciousness,
A wider dimension
Of humility and influence.

An infinite net.
No beginning.
No end.
Nothing exists by itself.
Everything reflects everything else.

The story of such a special gift
Becoming an image.
Transcending.
Linking
All our cultures,
Where every moment is a beautiful moment.

Walking the Way, 2023 p. 32



This image of [Indra's Net](#) was used in *Walking the Way*. Anne Radford (1944–2025) lived in London. [Walking the Way](#) and *Walking the Way: A Coda* give glimpses into her thoughts and musings on living life slowly.

Cook, F. (1989) The Jewel Net of Indra. In J. B. Callicott & R. T. Ames (Eds.), *Nature in Asian Traditions Of Thought: Essays in environmental philosophy*, pp. 213–229. SUNY Press.

Poems by Joan McArthur Blair

Blue Water Bridge

Look down into the blue, blue water,
Stand close
The eddies powerful as they curve in delight
Rounding the struts and racing off
Strive to see where the water has been
And where it is going
The curiosity relentless,
The imagination unfurling
A moment
Just yours

Wonder

I believe in wonder
Simple, jaw-dropping wonder:
The rainbow after the rain
The hang glider floating
The ocean still and blue
A human smiling
So much wonder – just there.
I call out to you
See the wonder
Let it feed you
Let it slake your thirst
Let it salve your sad soul.
Believe in wonder.



Poems by Ada Jo Mann

Words Create Worlds

Words create worlds.
What you focus on grows
as mysteries unfurl
to enhance what you know.

Shine the light on what works,
Watch the problems recede.
Find what underneath lurks
and you're sure to succeed.

Then celebrate strengths
with all who have played
and have gone to great lengths
for a future that's brave.

Follow the Sun

With AI as your guide
you'll Discover the light,
For everyone knows
what you focus on grows.
Leave the weight of the past
behind us at last,
Try just for fun
to follow the sun.
Shine your sight on what works,
Lay aside all the quirks,
Find strengths galore
for your Positive Core.
Pick several key themes
to enact as your Dream,
Find peak moments to tap
as you Design your roadmap.
Now Delivery is key
with results all can see:
By keeping it real
Destiny will prevail.

Positive Image, Positive Action

Behind every complaint
there is the positive opposite
yearning to be seen.

If you choose to
you can turn
any problem
into
an Opportunity.

People and flowers
turn their heads
toward the light.

If you strive for change,
first create a bold image
of the Future
you most desire.

Then set your compass
in the direction of
your dream.
Positive image, positive action.



Villanelle for Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry saves the day,
just as a sunflower follows the light
by shining on positive forces at play.

Focus on strengths and don't let them say nay,
often you'll find them right in plain sight-
Appreciative Inquiry saves the day.

Some folks hold back with their feet in the clay,
others envision a future that's bright
by shining on positive forces at play.

Gather your stakeholders, please don't delay,
Though there might be some who put up a fight.
Appreciative Inquiry saves the day.

You may find your problems will soon fade away
as if they have vanished during the night
by shining on positive forces at play.

Celebrate your successes in multiple ways,
Insure this new found roadmap will stay.
Appreciative Inquiry saves the day
by shining on positive forces at play.

Thanks to Jane

With love from Ada Jo, August 12, 2019

Thanks to Jane,
Almost 30 years ago
I flew to Cleveland
to meet a man named David.

Thanks to Jane,
We created a different paradigm
for international development
building on existing strengths
and celebrating local successes.

Thanks to Jane,
We travelled the world
for seven years spreading
Appreciative Inquiry from Africa
to Asia, Latin America and beyond.

Thanks to Jane,
My life and the lives of
thousands around the world
is blessed with the will to first
Find the best and go from there

When the sun shines
I will feel Jane's smile,
When the moon rises
Look for her among the stars.



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