

# Nourish to Flourish



Nourish to Flourish brings together practitioners' voices and creative practices, and appreciative reviews of resources that support strengths-based approaches to human interactions.



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## A Practitioner's Journey



## Federico Varona | USA Section editor, A Practitioner's Journey/RIPAPA

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When we read Jorge Sciupac's article "Connection in Action" through the theoretical and organic lens of the Appreciative Paradigm, six essential components clearly emerge: how he sees himself (Appreciative Ontology of the human being); how he understands the social world (Appreciative Ontology of the social world); which questions guide him (epistemology), which methodologies enable his transformation (methodology); which values sustain his practice (axiology); and which language drives change (language). This reading reveals the deep connections that exist between who we are and how we act as practitioners of Appreciative Inquiry/Intervention.

### Connection in Action: Strategic Co-Creativity to grow our professional practices

Years ago, my mentor posed a very simple yet profoundly challenging question, one that changed my career forever:  
*Why is your work important to you or to the world?*



Jorge Sciupac | RIPAPA  
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With a worldwide background in business, psychology, architecture, and environment design, Jorge has successfully led and implemented strategies for teams, departments, regional offices, and organizations around the world.

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I didn't know how to respond. Ideas swirled in my mind, but none seemed clear or meaningful.

It was the first step in my strategic history, a path marked by “bridges of tension” between what I wanted and what the world needed. I went from artist to architect, from building designer to urban planner, from Latin America to the world, from consultant to strategic co-creator.

*What have I learned in my last two decades? To connect through strategic co-creativity!*

Strategy is not an abstract concept or a lengthy document, but a compass for decisions. Sometimes, in our daily lives, we focus so much on tasks that we forget our WHY: the human connection. That energy that drives us to go further. As Federico Varona has written, the Appreciative Paradigm is about “discovering what gives life ... to build a better world”. When we are disconnected we forget our need for humans to relate.

**Why do we get disconnected?**

Although connection is a fundamental human need and a powerful motivator, I have discovered five common, sometimes almost invisible, barriers that make us feel disconnected:



1. *We get overwhelmed* Information overload or complicated tasks.
2. *We don't “understand”* Lack of clarity regarding strategy or our role.
3. *We are afraid* Fear of failures, changes, or job security.
4. *We miss the whole picture* Our work doesn't fit into the overall strategy.
5. *We feel like we don't own “it”* Confusion about our responsibility or control over the outcomes.

Studies reveal that between 60% and 90% of strategies fail not due to a lack of quality, but because people don't feel committed to them. It's a statistic that has followed me since my early years as a consultant.

I learned that the best strategies aren't necessarily the smartest. They're the ones that have connections and are co-created. When someone helps create something, they automatically become its advocate, not its critic.



### Four roots of strategic connections

Imagine your strategy as a metaphorical tree with “four roots” – roots that anchor our energy, nourish us with life, and propel us to give our best. It is like the Appreciative Inquiry Paradigm: a holistic way of living in the world.

#### 1. We are part of something bigger

*How to apply it* Connect any work to a higher purpose. “Every sale is a family gaining access to food, health and education.”

#### 2. We belong authentically

*What I learned* In my early years as a consultant, I made a classic mistake: imposing “proven” methodologies without considering each organization’s unique context. Today, I begin by asking: “What has worked for you before?”

#### 3. We have an adventure

*Example* By reframing a “growth imperative” as an “adventure to democratize access to technology in underserved markets”, one team’s motivation skyrocketed.

#### 4. We contribute with impact

*Recommendation* I urge leaders to regularly visit the “front lines” – the place where their work translates into real value for others.

### Three ways to co-create strategically

#### 1. Visualization for connecting

I traded dense reports for hand-drawn maps, a technique I brought with me from my time as an architect. There’s something powerful about the visual and the handcrafted that awakens a different part of the brain.

#### 2. Dialogue, not a monologue

My favorite questions in any strategic presentation: “What part of this strategy excites you and what worries you?” This simple double question transforms a one-way presentation into a two-way conversation where everyone has a voice.

*‘What part of this strategy excites you and what worries you?’*

### 3. Daily practice after the workshop

For a client seeking a digital transformation, we replaced a two-day workshop with twelve monthly role-playing sessions where everyone experimented and could “fail” in a safe environment. We simulated scenarios, practiced new tools, and allowed ourselves to make mistakes (practice) without real consequences. Confidence increased by 70%.

#### Further connection in action = more bridges of tension

My path has been a series of bridges between opposites: art and pragmatism, theory and action, individual and community. All co-creation involves tension. Tension is not the enemy of progress, it's the fuel; it's the exact place where growth happens.

“A strategy is not a written document, it is the story that people choose to live together.”

*Tension is not the enemy of progress, it's the fuel.*



**What can you do this week to connect strategically?**

**Should I answer what my mentor asked me?**

- “Why is your work important to you and to the world?”
- What's your next “tension bridge” - that uncomfortable area to grow in?

**Ask a customer?**

- “What excites you about this project?”
- “How do you think we can make it more meaningful?”
- Do you use visual tools in your workshops? (sketchnoting, mind maps, etc.)

Cuando leemos el artículo “Conexión en Acción” de Jorge Sciupac desde el marco teórico y orgánico del Paradigma Apreciativo, emergen con claridad seis componentes esenciales: cómo se ve a sí mismo (Ontología del ser humano), cómo entiende lo social (Ontología del mundo social), qué preguntas lo guían (epistemología), qué metodologías lo transforman (metodología), qué valores lo sostienen (axiología) y qué lenguaje impulsa el cambio (lenguaje). Una lectura que revela las conexiones profundas que existen entre lo que somos y cómo actuamos como practicantes de la Intervención/Indagación Apreciativa.



Jorge Sciupac | RIPAPA  
Autor

Con una trayectoria internacional en negocios, psicología, arquitectura y diseño ambiental, Jorge ha liderado e implementado con éxito estrategias para equipos, departamentos, oficinas regionales y organizaciones de todo el mundo.

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## Conexión en Acción: Co-creatividad estratégica para crecer nuestras prácticas profesionales

**H**ace años, mi mentor planteó una pregunta muy simple pero profundamente desafiante, una que cambió mi carrera para siempre:

*¿Por qué tu trabajo es importante para ti o para el mundo?*

No sabía cómo responder. Ideas me daban vueltas en la cabeza, pero ninguna parecía clara.

Fue el primer paso en mi trayectoria estratégica, un camino marcado por puentes de tensión entre lo que yo quería y lo que el mundo necesitaba. Pasé de artista a arquitecto, de diseñador de edificios a urbanista, de Latinoamérica al mundo, de consultor a cocreador estratégico.

*¿Qué he aprendido en mis últimas dos décadas? ¡Utilizar la co-creatividad estratégica!*

Una estrategia no es un concepto abstracto ni un documento extenso, sino una brújula para la toma de decisiones. A veces, en nuestra vida diaria, nos focalizamos en tareas y olvidamos nuestro POR QUÉ: La conexión humana. Esa energía que nos impulsa. Como dijo Federico Varona, el Paradigma Appreciatio es “descubrir lo que da vida... para construir un mundo mejor.” Cuando nos desconectamos, olvidamos nuestra necesidad humana de relacionarnos.

**¿Por qué nos desconectamos?**

Aunque la conexión es una necesidad humana fundamental y un poderoso motivador, He descubierto cinco factores, a veces casi invisibles, que nos hace sentir desconectados:



1. *Nos sentimos abrumados* La sobrecarga de información o las tareas complicadas lo hacen difícil.
2. *No “entendemos”* Falta de claridad respecto a la estrategia o nuestro rol.
3. *Tenemos miedo* Miedo al fracaso, al cambio o a la seguridad laboral.
4. *Nos perdemos el panorama completo* Nuestro trabajo no encaja en la estrategia global.
5. *Sentimos que no nos pertenece* Confusión sobre nuestra responsabilidad o control sobre los resultados.

Los estudios revelan que entre el 60% y el 90% de las estrategias fracasan, no por falta de calidad, sino porque las personas no se sienten comprometidas con ellas. Es una estadística que me ha seguido desde mis inicios como consultor. Aprendí que las mejores estrategias no son necesariamente las más inteligentes. Son las que tienen conexiones y se crean en conjunto. Cuando alguien ayuda a crear algo, automáticamente se convierte en su defensor, no en su crítico.



### Cuatro raíces de conexiones estratégicas

Imagina tu estrategia como un árbol metafórico con “cuatro raíces”: raíces que anclan nuestra energía, nos nutren de vida y nos impulsan a dar lo mejor de nosotros. Es como el Paradigma de la Indagación Apreciativa: una forma holística de vivir en el mundo.

#### 1. Somos parte de algo más grande

*Cómo aplicarlo* Conectar cualquier trabajo con un propósito superior. “Cada venta es una familia que obtiene acceso a alimento, salud y educación.”

#### 2. Perteneceamos auténticamente

*Lo que aprendí* En mis primeros años como consultor, cometí el clásico error de imponer metodologías probadas sin considerar el contexto único de cada organización. Hoy, empiezo a preguntarme: “¿Qué les ha funcionado antes?”.

#### 3. Tenemos una aventura

*Ejemplo* Al reformular un “imperativo de crecimiento” como una “aventura para democratizar el acceso a la tecnología en mercados desatendidos”, la motivación del equipo se disparó.

#### 4. Contribuimos con impacto

*Recomendación* Sugiero a los líderes que visiten periódicamente las “líneas del frente,” el lugar donde su trabajo se traduce en valor real para los demás.

### Tres maneras de co-crear estratégicamente

#### 1. Visualización para conectar

Cambié los informes densos por mapas dibujados a mano, una técnica que traje de mi época de arquitecto. Hay algo poderoso en lo visual y lo artesanal que despierta una parte diferente del cerebro.

#### 2. Diálogo, no monólogo

Mi pregunta favorita en cualquier presentación estratégica: “¿Qué parte de esta estrategia te entusiasma y qué te preocupa?”. Esta simple pregunta doble transforma una presentación unidireccional en una conversación bidireccional donde todos tienen voz.

*“¿Qué parte de esta estrategia te entusiasma y qué te preocupa?”*

### 3. Práctica diaria después del taller

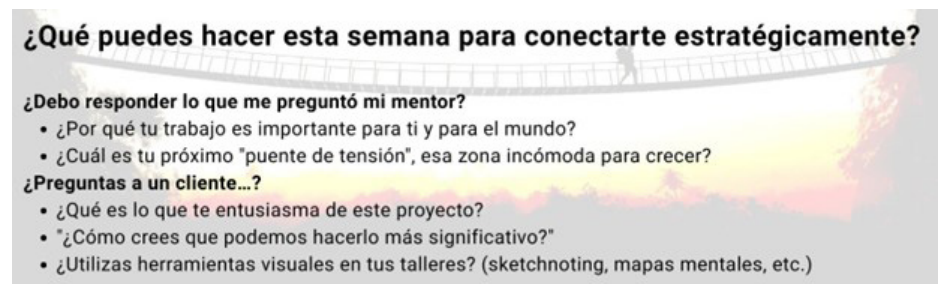
Para un cliente que buscaba una transformación digital, reemplazamos un taller de dos días con 12 sesiones mensuales de juego de roles donde todos experimentaban y podían “fallar” en un entorno seguro. Simulamos escenarios, practicamos con nuevas herramientas y nos permitimos cometer errores (practicar) sin consecuencias reales. La confianza creció un 70 %.

#### Más Conexión en acción = Más puentes de tensión

*La tensión no es enemiga del progreso; es su combustible.*

Mi camino ha sido una serie de puentes entre opuestos: arte y pragmatismo, teoría y acción, individuo y comunidad. Toda co-creación implica tensión. La tensión no es enemiga del progreso; es su combustible, es el lugar preciso donde se produce el crecimiento.

“Una estrategia no es un documento escrito, es la historia que las personas eligen vivir juntas”.



**¿Qué puedes hacer esta semana para conectarte estratégicamente?**

**¿Debo responder lo que me preguntó mi mentor?**

- ¿Por qué tu trabajo es importante para ti y para el mundo?
- ¿Cuál es tu próximo "puente de tensión", esa zona incómoda para crecer?

**¿Preguntas a un cliente...?**

- ¿Qué es lo que te entusiasma de este proyecto?
- "¿Cómo crees que podemos hacerlo más significativo?"
- ¿Utilizas herramientas visuales en tus talleres? (sketchnoting, mapas mentales, etc.)

## Practices That Deepen Appreciative Inquiry: Tuning the Human Instrument



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### The Ripple Effect of Taking Good Care of Me...

I gravitate towards challenges and uncomfortable topics. They intrigue and inspire me to step into my best self. At times, they are messy. Perhaps I should say that I face challenges in working with myself – because it really is about me and how I respond to what shows up in front of me.

Jill Greenbaum | United States

Author



Jill Greenbaum is a chaplain/spiritual caregiver in the Zen Buddhist tradition, certified Appreciative Inquiry facilitator, trainer, graphic facilitator, coach and end-of-life literacy specialist. Jill co-creates transformative experiences with her clients.  
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*I find that the steps of the Morning Altars practice align with the Appreciative Inquiry model.*

*The alchemy of being in nature, using ritual and process and adding my creativity envelops me.*

Throughout my life – whether as a teacher and principal in special education settings, as a director of two anti-sexual violence programs, as a DEI trainer, graphic facilitator and Appreciative Inquiry coach, or as a contemplative chaplain and grief coach focused on dying, death, grief, and loss – I have turned to the healing arts to support my personal and professional life. Breathwork, meditation, visual storytelling, Zentangle, and, most recently, the creation of ephemeral earth art are my primary sources of self-care.

Creating evanescent earth art is a practice that fosters a deep connection with nature, grounding me in the present moment. By mindfully arranging natural elements into intricate designs, I engage in a practice that nurtures reflection, meaning-making, and a sense of interconnectedness with the universe, supporting emotional and spiritual growth. This process encourages me to listen to myself, formulate questions or intentions, and process what is in my mind or perhaps on my heart through ritual and creation.

I find that the steps of the Morning Altars practice align with the Appreciative Inquiry model. Take a moment to reflect on what you know and understand about the Appreciative Inquiry model. In essence:

**Discover** – Appreciating our strengths/foundation without minimizing challenges

**Dream** – Visualizing the future

**Design** – Constructing the future

**Deliver** – Manifesting and sustaining the changes

Now, step with me into the Morning Altars practice: I become immersed in a multisensory experience that supports gentle inquiry into my inner landscape and offers opportunities for insights and expression.

The alchemy of being in nature, using ritual and process and adding my creativity envelops me. The rest of the world falls away for a time. I experience the seven steps of the practice seamlessly:

- 1. Wonder and wander** – Treasure hunting in nature to collect what has fallen to the ground and inspires me in relation to my query or intention.
- 2. Place** – Slowing down to arrive in the space, listening to nature.
- 3. Clear** – Making space at my feet to reveal a blank canvas so that inspiration can flow.

4. **Play** – Laying out everything I have foraged, exploring shapes, textures, and colors to develop patterns.
5. **Gift** – Dedicating my creation/art to my intention.
6. **Share** – Crafting a memory, capturing it in my mind or in a photo to memorialize the experience.
7. **Let go** – Walking away, giving up any attachment to the physical manifestation of my work and play.

Over the past year, my subjects of introspection and subsequent altar construction have included: Releasing and Readying, Many Conversations/ Listening for Other Voices/Perspectives, Becoming/Unfolding, Transforming a Gift, Letting Go, and Crossing a Threshold. My altars are created indoors or outdoors, in 15 minutes or 60, using materials ranging from all nature-based (branches, leaves, flowers, berries, shells, bark, ashes, and more) to the inclusion of my artwork and art materials, and from sizes that fit in my palm to others with a four-foot diameter.



Morning Altar  
Jill Greenbaum

#### An early morning celebration

In the early morning, following my 43rd wedding anniversary, I stepped outside into a beautiful, warm day, grass glistening with dew. My intention was to create an earth sculpture encapsulating the essence of a journey through time. The construction of this simple, radiating form became an opportunity to honor a shared past and present, and imagine a future. A patch in the backyard, and the elements – long leaves and fluffy, feathered seedheads from reeds, petals from store-bought white chrysanthemums, rich, yellow drying petals from a favorite pot of sunflowers, and a giant skunk cabbage leaf to cradle the delicate center of it all—formed a space to invite a deep and heart-opening conversation. A beautiful way to begin another year together.

I believe I have taken to this practice like a fish to water because it aligns with my background in positive psychology, Appreciative Inquiry, and a contemplative spiritual approach. In both the AI model and the Morning Altars practice, I become grounded in my foundation, self-reflective, imaginative, design-oriented, and selective, in service of manifesting a result. While there is no one-to-one correspondence between the lived experiences of these methods, they resonate with me in the same way.

*I hope it is a deep, rich, moving experience that supports your self-care.*

I invite you to immerse yourself in the *7 Steps of the Morning Altar* practice, then reflect on your impressions of the experience. How did you feel? What did you think? How would you describe it?

Lastly, make time to explore the similarities and differences between these methods. Regardless of whether we see eye to eye, I'd love to hear your thoughts. Most of all, I hope it is a deep, rich, moving experience that supports your self-care. May the effects of this practice benefit you and those with whom you live and work.

[Back to Table of Contents](#)