APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

The process of Appreciative Inquiry has more to it than what I saw at the beginning. It allows you to uncover the real issues without focusing on anger and resentment. It centers on what could be not what hasn't been. Unknowingly, I use this concept in my work with clients while using different language. I appreciate the focus being on what the potential and future could be not on what is missing.

However, my concern with this methodology is the next step. How do you work through potential organizational resistance to implement the possibilities? If an organization engages in dialogue with team members and stops at envisioning, my perception is it could be more detrimental than not asking in the first place. Translating the dream into a map and following it with action is a significant challenge. Anyone can dream, but it takes a different skill set to realize the goal.

Tin Jo was an ideal client to practice AI. Maria was open to suggestions, responded well to pointed questions, and maintained an open mindset. The feedback we received as a group was extreme gratitude. Maria, Robert, and the staff all seemed genuinely grateful. It felt good to be a part of the experience.

Maria was willing to give us the space to ask questions that needed to be asked yet do it in a way that felt natural. The process unfolded the way I expected. What was said and expressed was helpful, but my concern is it will stop at lip service. I’m concerned for the ongoing operations of Tin Jo. Maria verbally expressed a desire to change but I’m not sure she is willing to do the work needed to make that happen. When we asked questions about this, the responses were mixed. She recognizes she has personal work to do to overcome mental barriers in her head. This was a good step in the right direction that has the opportunity to lead to a better environment at Tin Jo.

Personally, I focused on how I framed questions. I’ve realized framing questions has a lot of impact on the way something is heard and the potential outcomes that can come from it. I actively worked on removing the bias from my questions and practicing humble inquiry. I felt that it allowed for a more pure version of the future to emerge.

Collectively, I felt our team interacted and performed well together. We gave each other the space needed to work effectively. We trust each other and results showed our effectiveness as confirmed by the client.

REFLECTION

This session was remarkable. My mindset has shifted a lot. It was not in the way I expected either.

A few days before coming down here, I called Jill to talk about my SLC. Through the conversation, we revealed that a key area I wanted to work on was seeing the value in others. I took that to heart and it has already transformed how I see the world. I’m focusing on people as people, not on what they can provide for me. I’m seeing them as children of God with a significant impact to be made on the world around them. I’m magnifying my efforts to be an encourager and support people in the area of their giftedness. It feels amazing to do that. I love seeing the faces of classmates and others who feel like I genuinely listened to them and validated them as a person. During the session, I had people tell me that I visibly show up different when I’m focused on being present and seeing value in others. It is amazing and very rewarding. I’m glad to be in this state of mind.

When I am focused on connecting with others for a deeper purpose, I see my progress move forward in a new way. I have a deeper connection with them and care about them as humans. It shifts the mindset to one of empathy and concern rather than a task to be completed. I’m seeking to understand their mindset and how they view the world based on the experiences they have had with their company and family.

As I reflect upon La Carpio, my big realization is I was comparing La Carpio to all of the other slum areas I've been in. Compared to Talisay or Port-au-Prince, this was very nice. However, this doesn't diminish the environment of the people living here or those trying to help them in different ways. While to me it looked like a decent community as far as basic human services was concerned, it was still a community seeking connection and increased opportunities. I can't compare my past experiences to La Carpio. I can only appreciate it for what it is and learn from it.

POINT OF VIEW

My POV can best be described as Authentic Momentum. I define Authentic Momentum as a state of being where the purpose of your organization is directing your strategy and actions. When these are in alignment, you experience progress towards goals that have significance personally and professionally.

This is a term that has emerged through this program as I reflect on what matters to me and how I show up. Authentic Momentum is more than a phrase; it is a way of living. It is a deep connection to what matters to me, how I choose to live my life, and the strategy I use to achieve it.

Additionally, I’ve discovered I prefer working with individuals and small teams to large groups. My desire is to work with founders and executives to help them gain clarity personally and for the organization. Through this type of intervention, I enable a chain reaction that leads to many others being impacted through the clarity of the founder or executive. If I can help one founder uncover the purpose of their organization and align a strategy with it, the results affect employees, family members, and the community they are apart of.

While this continues to emerge, I’m glad to say I am currently experiencing Authentic Momentum.