

DREAM AND DESIGN YOUR 2023

This worksheet provides you with a series of questions and exercises that will help you dream and design your year using an appreciative inquiry approach.

What is Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

- AI is an approach that focuses on what is working well, counterbalancing the brain's natural negativity bias
- Studies have shown that the most exceptional change efforts put the deficit-leaning tendency in reverse, focusing instead 80% on *what is working* and 20% on *what is not*
- Furthermore, studies have found that by discovering the true, the good and the possible in your situations it fuels courage, confidence and commitment and shapes your ability to imagine, plan and create your future reality.



By answering the following questions focused on what is working well, you will establish the launchpad and provide the fuel you need to help your dream become reality.

Discover 'The Best of What Is'

In the past year, where in your personal or work-life did you feel the most alive? These are high-point moments where you felt engaged, energized and effective. What strengths were you harnessing in those moments?

You may choose to use a values or strengths assessment (check out www.viacharacter.org) to help you identify with what energizes you and then reflect on moments where you were using those values or strengths.

Dream ‘What Could Be’

Imagine what might be possible if everything in your future went as well as it possibly could and you were developing your strengths every day. Write expressively about your future best self.

- Why are you leaping out of bed in the morning?
- What impact are you having?
- How is your approach at work and strengths positively influencing others?
- What are the things others notice, comment on, and value in you?

Try to imagine this new future as vividly as possible.

Design Your ‘Should Be’ Pathways

This hope map exercise is based on the work of Shane Lopez (2013) and can be used to help you identify different pathways to play with your strengths. On a piece of paper or visual board:

1. On one of the sides, draw a ladder with 10 steps: the top of the ladder represents the best possible future self and the bottom represents the worst possible life for you.
2. Identify on which step of the ladder you are currently standing.
3. Identify on which step of the ladder you would be excited to stand 12 months from now.
4. What clear, specific, purpose-focused goal or pathway(s) does this suggest you should set for yourself? Write down on the page 2-3 pathways you want to focus on, each drawing upon a strength you want to develop.
5. For each pathway, think about the small, manageable, concrete steps you can take to develop and fan your strengths that will move you closer to your desired goal and add them to your drawing.
6. For each pathway, note the obstacles that will prevent you from moving forward, and what you will do if you encounter each obstacle to overcome it.
7. Around the edges of the page, record what you can do to maintain your willpower for this journey. How will you monitor and celebrate your progress? What support do you need?

Deliver ‘What Will Be’

What first steps can you take in the next week to develop your strengths and turn your hopes into reality? Look for ways that you can take small, daily steps along your chosen pathways and develop habits. Keep a journal and record your progress. Make your steps small, concrete and manageable and revisit your hope map and progress every week to keep yourself moving forward.