Building on "The Best":

Using Appreciative Inquiry

to

Strengthen Communities

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Words Create Worlds!

(NOTE: Read this forward. Then, read it bottom up….. Amazing!)

I am part of a lost generation
And I refuse to believe that
I can change the world

I realize that this may be a shock but
"True happiness comes from within"
Is a lie, and
"Money will make me happy"

So in 30 years I will tell my children
They are not the most important thing in my life
My employer will know that
I have my priorities straight because

Work
Is more important than
Family

I tell you this
Once upon a time
Families stayed together
But this will not be true in my era
This is a quick fix society

Experts tell me
30 years from now I will be celebrating the 10th anniversary of my divorce
I do not concede that
I will live in a country of my own making

In the future
Environmental destruction will be the norm
No longer can it be said that
My peers & I care about this earth

It will be evident that
My generation is apathetic & lethargic
It is foolish to presume that
There is hope.

If we change how we talk, we change the world.

Talking in popular words/images is powerful in changing organizations because...

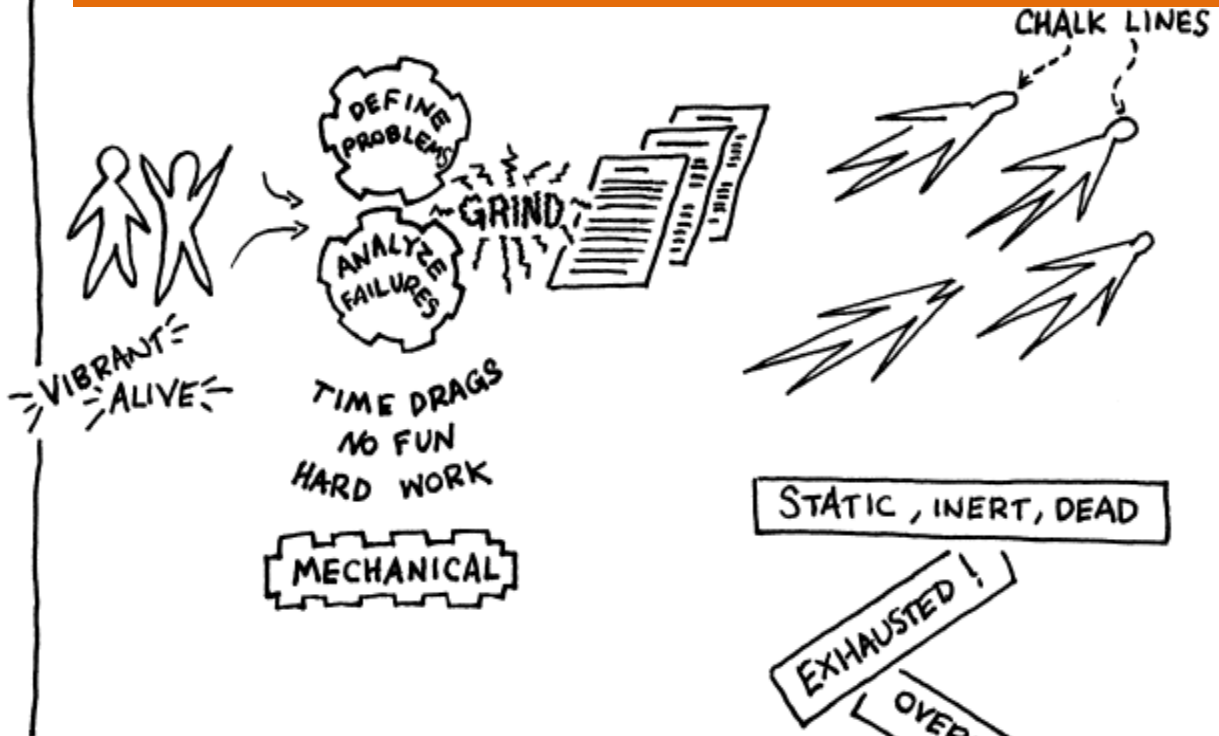**WORDS CREATE WORLDS.**

WE SEE WHAT WE BELIEVE.

Communities/Organizations
can develop with:

A Traditional Approach
(Needs-Deficit Based Models)

or

An Appreciative Inquiry Approach
(Asset-Capacity Building Model)
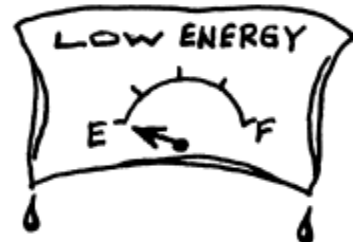
By David Potter (2001)

Traditional Problem-Solving Approach to Organizational Development

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┌─────────────────────┐
│   Identify the      │
│     Problem         │
│                     │
│    "Felt Need"      │
└─────────────────────┘
          ↓
┌─────────────────────┐
│                     │
│   Analyze Causes    │
│                     │
└─────────────────────┘
          ↓
┌─────────────────────┐
│                     │
│     Analysis &      │
│  Possible Solutions │
│                     │
└─────────────────────┘
          ↓
┌─────────────────────┐
│                     │
│    Action Plan      │
│                     │
│   ("Treatment")     │
└─────────────────────┘
```

Organizations are seen as ... Problems to be Solved

What is A.I. ?

__APPRECIATE__: *Value.*
__INQUIRE__: *Ask. Explore.*

To positively change and co-create an organization by building on its "best".

… its *best* moments
… its *best* practises
… its *best* attributes
… its *best* stories

Building on the experiences responsible for making the organization most enjoyable, meaningful and effective.

A.I. is Empowering.

Empowerment
Strengthens People.

People Strengthen Communities.

Empowerment is the degree
of Influence people have
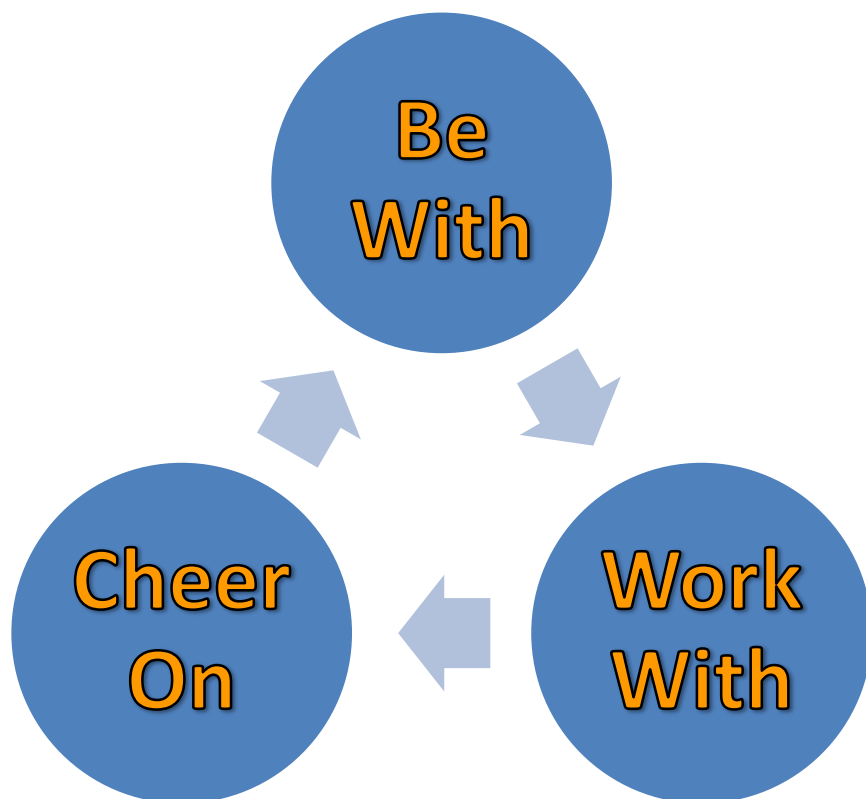over their situation ...

When a deckhand yells
"ICEBURG!"

... and the ship changes course.

How Appreciative Inquiry Strengthens a Community ?

It starts where the people are!

(Minkler, 1994)

Be With

Work With

Cheer On

5 Core Principles of A.I.

1. **<u>Positive Words</u> -** Words create worlds. We see what we believe.

2. **<u>Questions</u> -** Inquiry creates change

3. **<u>Big Vision</u> -** Imagination directs the future & projects a horizon of expectations – people share what is & what could be.

4. **<u>Vivid Images</u> -** Image inspires action

5. **<u>Positive Intention & Inspiration</u> –** Change requires positive affect & social bonding, positive interactions/images held in common.

DISCOVER …

Gather Data.
Ask Questions.
Hear Stories.

DREAM …

Expand ideas.
Amplify Assets.
Imagine Better.

Be With
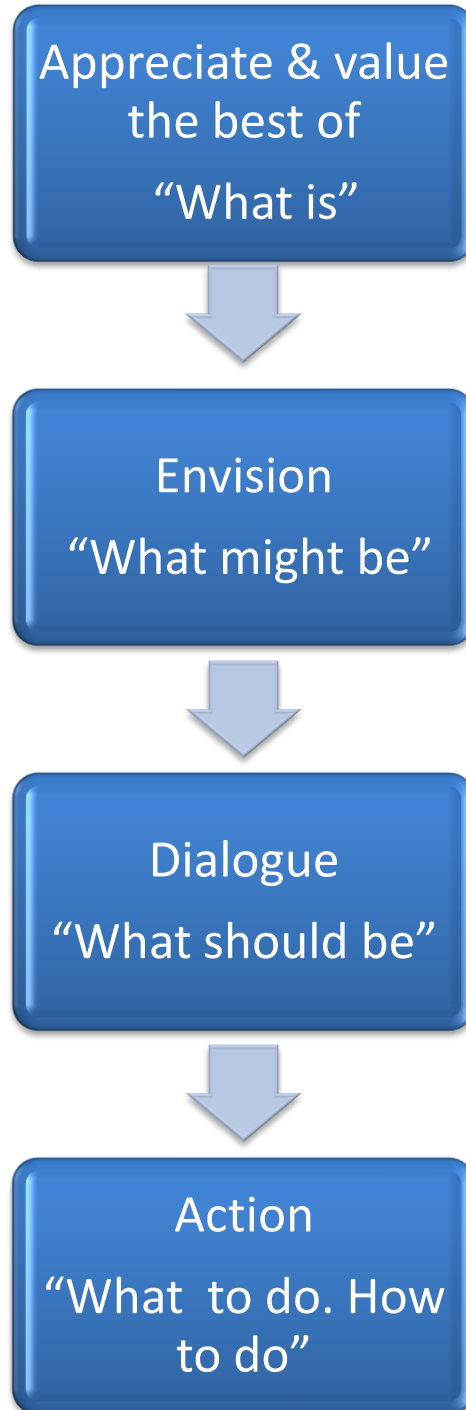
Cheer On

Work With

DESTINY …

Act.
Monitor.
Evaluate & Revise.

DESIGN …

Plan.
Craft proposals.
Identify Social Architecture.

AI Approach
to Organizational Development

Appreciate & value
the best of

"What is"

↓

Envision

"What might be"

↓

Dialogue

"What should be"

↓

Action

"What to do. How
to do"

Organizations are seen as ...
Miracles to be Appreciated

DISCOVER
The Best in our Organization!

Share Stories

Face-to-Face

Words Create Worlds

Stories of Life-Giving Forces – Successes.

Strengths
Innovations
Achievements

Passions
High Points
Hope

Resources
Positive
Traditions
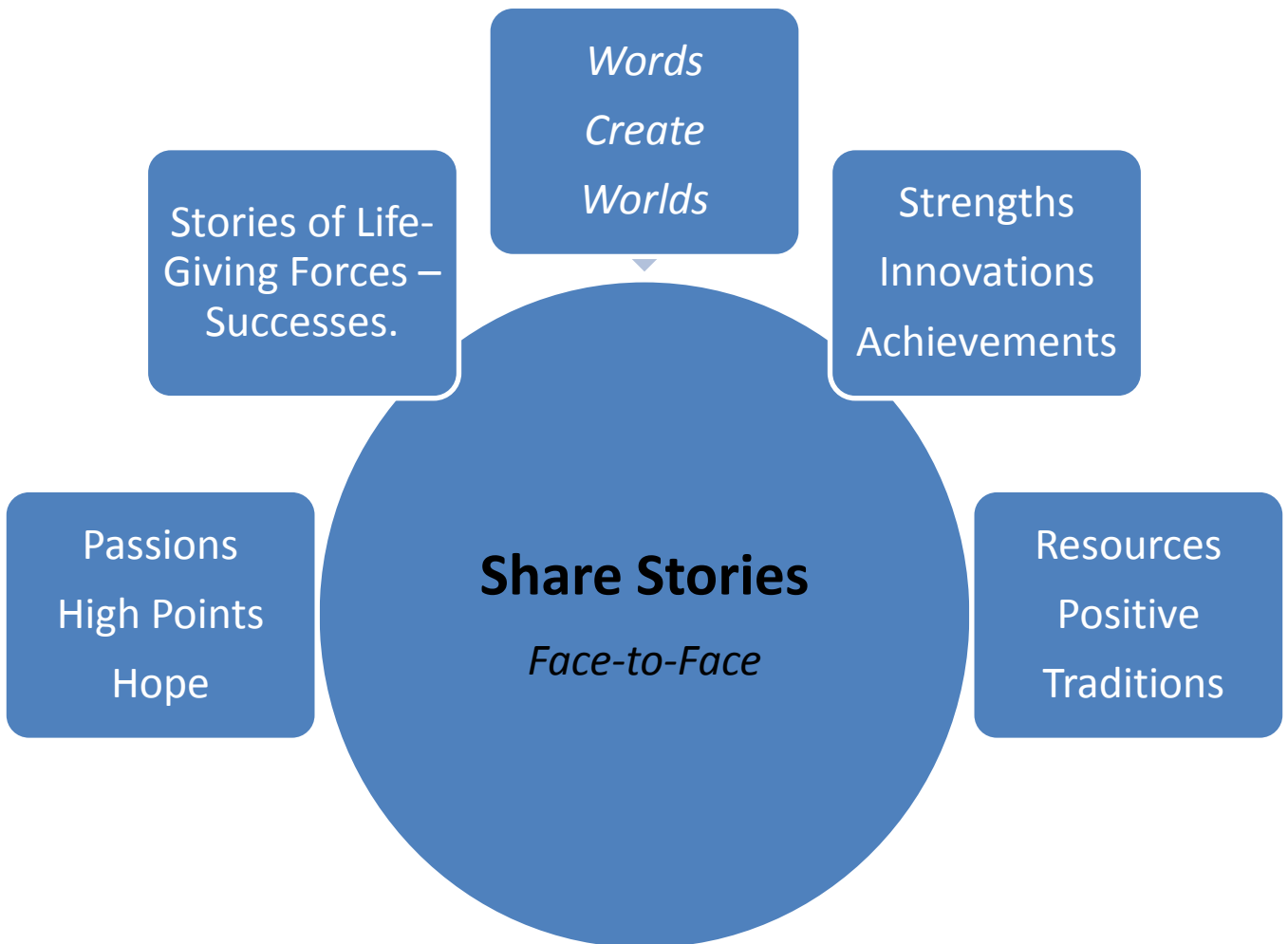
DREAM

Imagine us even better!

Share Curiosities

Creatively Imagine

Our Vision of a better world ~ What are we being called to become?

Positive Intention

Inspiration

Powerful Purpose

Find Themes

Envision a better world

Powerful Purpose

Compelling Statement of Strategic Intent

Our Common Values & Aspirations that Enliven

See & believe in the power & best in others
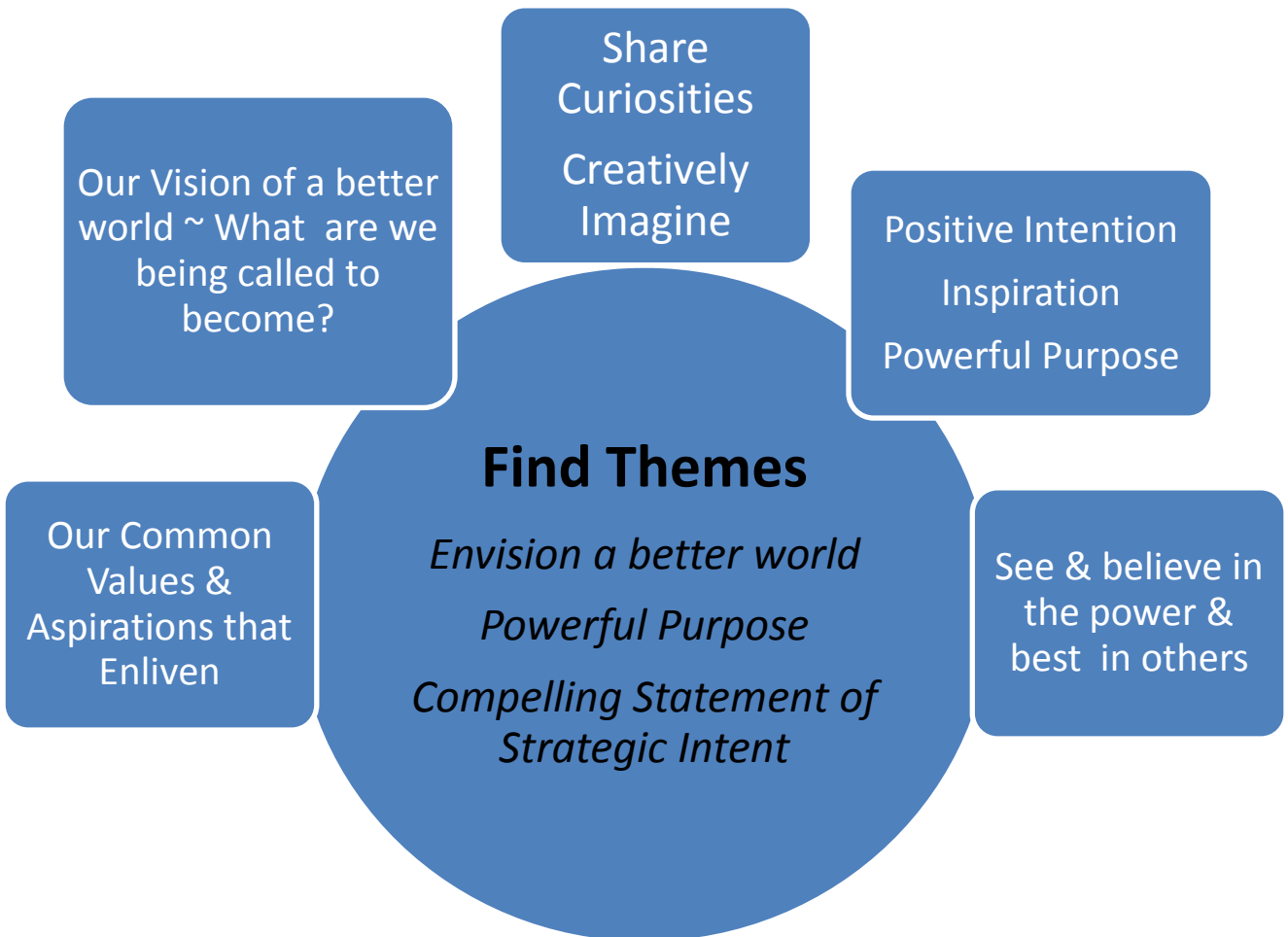
DESIGN

Connect. Cooperate. Co-create changes you never thought possible!

"Wander Beyond"

What might be...

Develop "Provocative Propositions"

See, believe & include others' assets

Co-Create & Design Images

Of the ideal organization,

the social architecture

or system design in relation to the world it is part.

Determine Social Architecture needed to actualize the values & aspirations
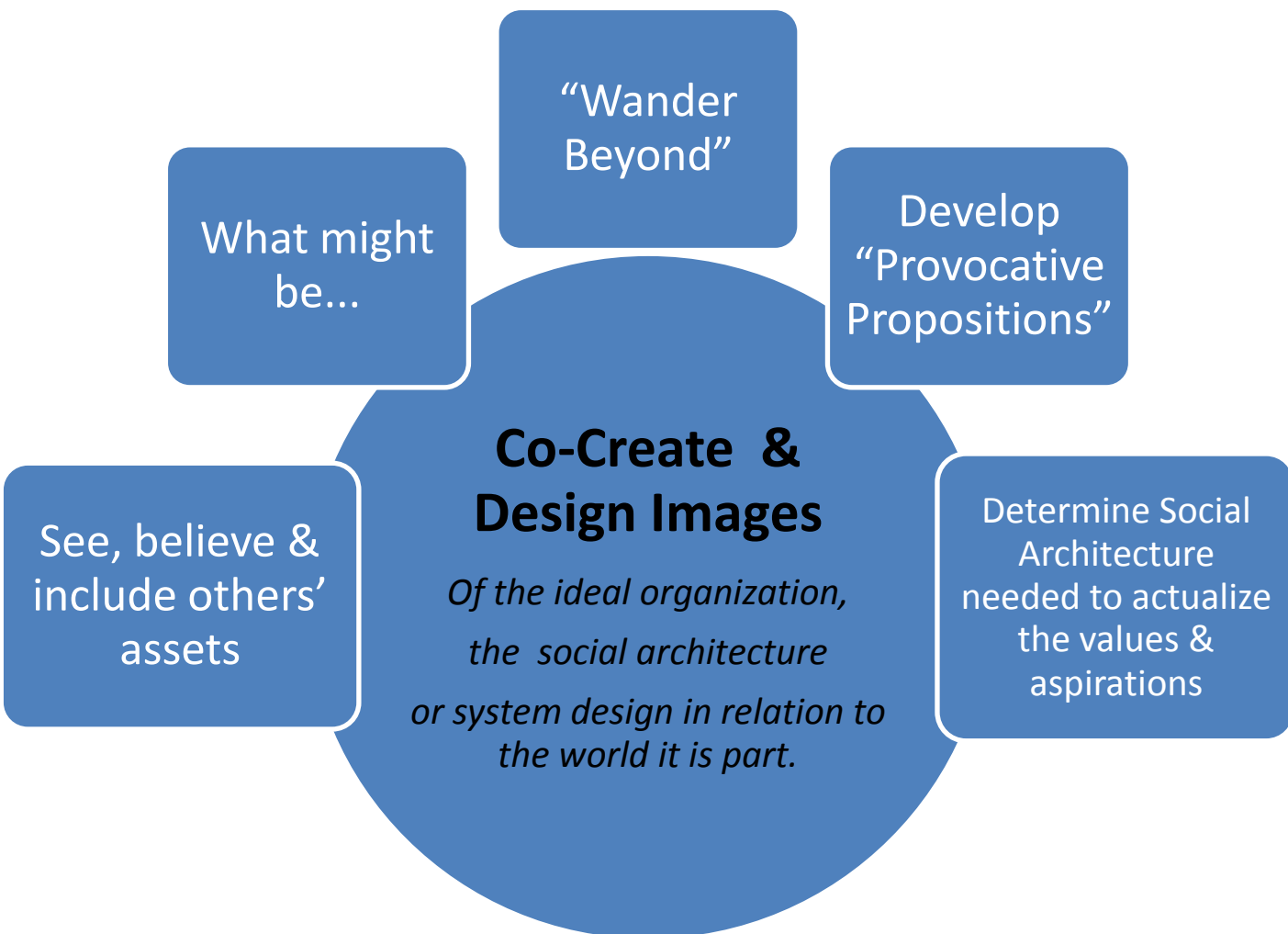
DESTINY
Deliver the Design. Sustain the Change!

Monitoring & Celebrating Successes

Act

Improvise Adjust Innovate

Organizational Change in Attitude

Deliver the Design

Action.

Deliver the new, preferred future

Strategic Intentions

VIBRANT ALIVE

SEARCH FOR WHAT WORKS AMPLIFY WHAT GIVES LIFE

TIME FLIES

NEW POSSIBILITIES

UNEXPECTED CREATIVITY

ORGANIC, EMERGENT

MORE ALIVE!

IN-SYNC

WHOLE GREATER THAN SUM OF PARTS

ENERGY CAN'T BE STOPPED

HIGH ENERGY
E — F

HOW DOES THIS HAPPEN ?!?

★ ALL (OR ALL LEVELS) INVOLVED. SOLUTIONS FROM WITHIN

★ FOCUS ON WHAT WORKS

★ SEARCH FOR ROOT CAUSES OF SUCCESS
"If you look for successes, you'll find and create more successes"

★ CREATE THE FUTURE

★ OBSTACLES TREATED AS RAMPS INTO NEW TERRITORY

By David Potter (2001)
http://ai.cwru.edu/practice/artdetail.cfm?coid=845

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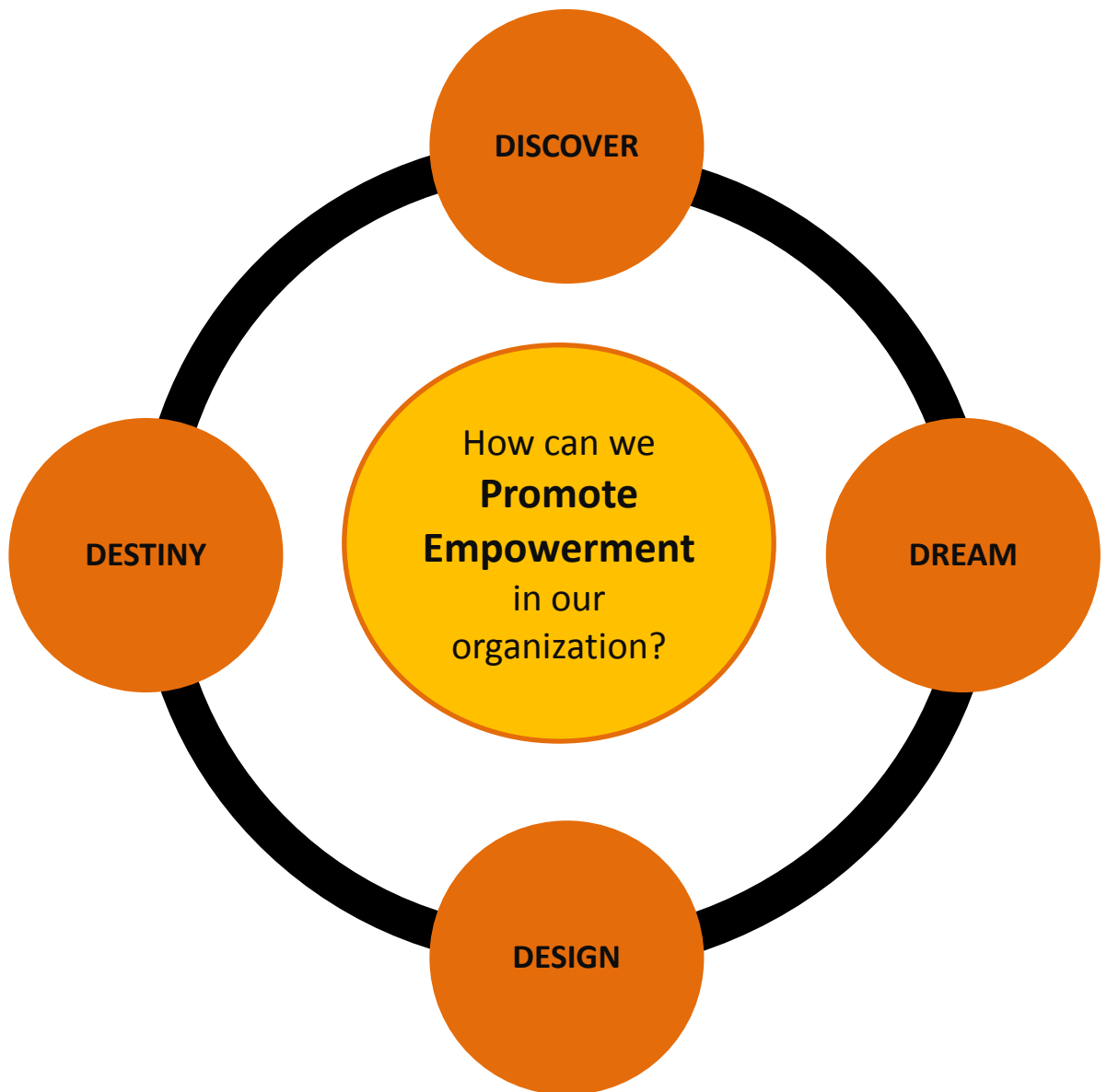
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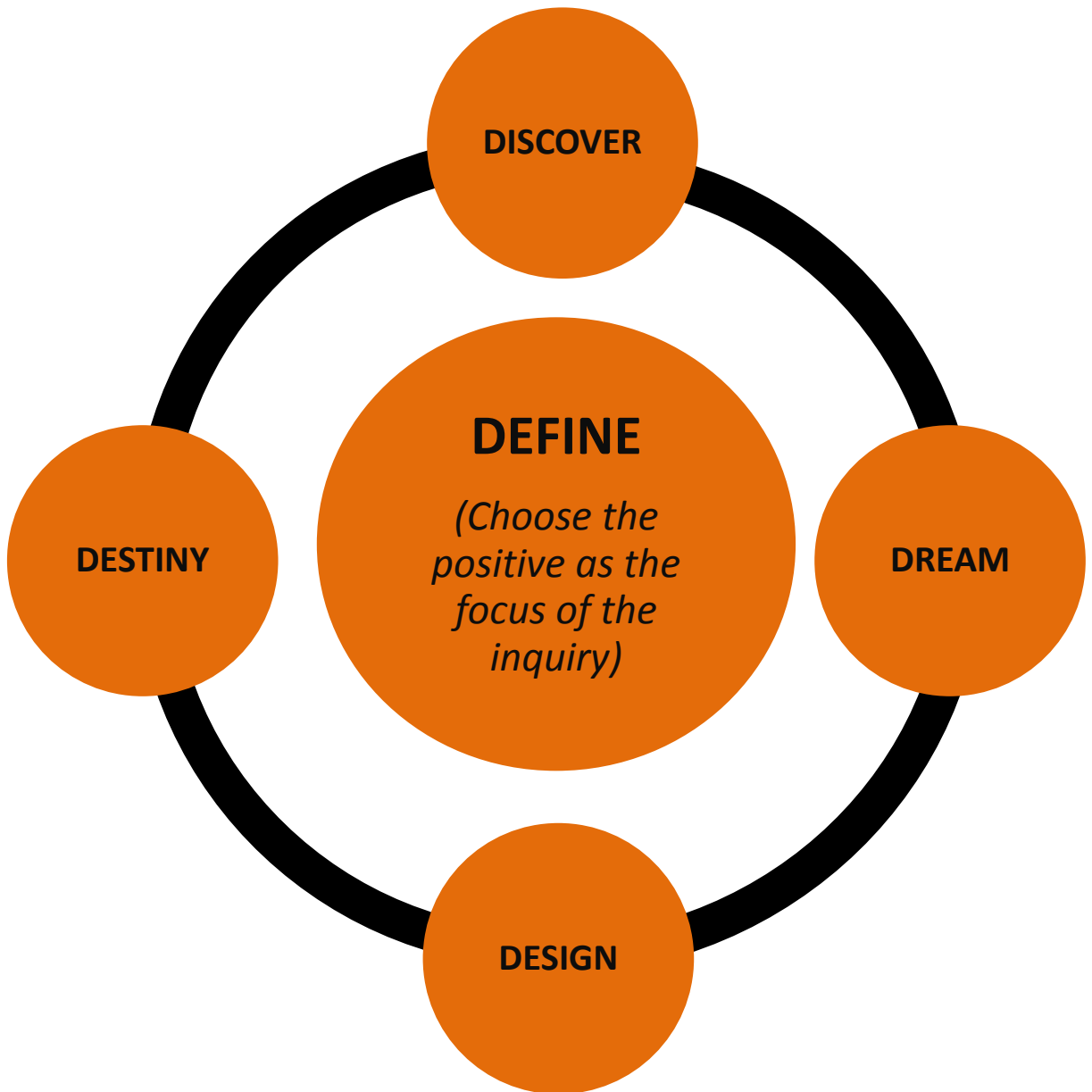Minkler, M. (1994, Vol.9 no.4 p. 527-534). *Oxford Journals.* Retrieved Feb 2, 2009, from http://her.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/reprint/9/4/527.

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AFFIRMATIVE TOPIC CHOICE

DISCOVER

DESTINY

How can we **Promote Empowerment** in our organization?

DREAM

DESIGN

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY (AI) MODEL

DISCOVER

DEFINE

(Choose the positive as the focus of the inquiry)

DESTINY

DREAM

DESIGN

Inquire = Change
(Even Innocent Questions Evoke Change)

Is not so much
"Is my question leading to right or wrong answers?"

But rather
"What impact is my question having on our lives together...is it helping to generate conversations about the good, the better, the possible...
Is it strengthening our relationships?"

Sample AI Interview Guide & Summary Sheet
(Macpherson & Stevens , 2005)

1. Tell me a story about the best experience you have ever had around Transformative Leadership, where an individual or group lead the way in a change that made a profound difference.

   Who was the leader? You? Someone else? A group? Or....? What was the situation? From What to What? When? What was your role? What made it exciting? Please give me more details.

2. Now tell me a story about your best experience as a leader of an exciting group or organizational change effort.

   What motivated you to lead the change? What did you do? What process did you use? What efforts did you make to ensure that the change would be sustained, that it would last? What impact did it have on the group or organization? Who or what supported and sustained you in the change effort? Who or what supported and sustained the change effort itself?

3. Let's talk for a few moments about what you value deeply – specifically the things you value about yourself, about the nature of your leadership and about your college.

   A. Without being humble, what do you value most about yourself – as a person & as a member of your college?

   B. When you feel best about being a leader, what is it about the task that you value?

   C. What do you value most about your institution?

   D. What do you experience as the core value of your institution? Give some examples of how you experience those values.

(Macpherson & Stevens , 2005)

<u>Sample AI Questions</u>
(for use in an Educational Setting)

What do you value most about yourself as an
educational leader?

What do you value about the educational
community of which you are a part?

Describe a positive change that you have been
involved with, possibly in your department.
What made it possible?
What was something you learned about making
change?

Describe one thing you would like to learn.

Describe something you could teach others that is
outside your regular teaching.

What small change on your committee might
make a big difference?

(Macpherson & Stevens , 2005)