*Book Review / Recension d'ouvrages*

Cooperrider, D. L., & Whitney, D. (2005). *Appreciative inquiry: A positive revolution in change*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers. 86 pages.

Xiaodong Zhang and Meng Li, Ph.D. Candidates, Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan.

*Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Revolution in Change* is an interesting, meaningful, and passionate book that is worth reading. This book introduces a new research inquiry approach called "appreciative inquiry" which can be interpreted and understood both as a methodology and epistemology. Appreciative inquiry advocates that rather than focusing exclusively on weaknesses, shortcomings, and defects, organizations, communities, and individuals need to look on their particular strengthens, advantages, and positive characteristics when encountering difficulties, problems, or dilemmas in order to initiate a positive and active change in their everyday lives. Generally, this book calls for a journey of strength seeking and pursuing instead of a process of problem-solving and fixing.

Specifically, this book has eight chapters and a conclusion chapter. Chapter One presents "An Invitation to the Positive Revolution in Change" (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p. 1). This chapter proposes "a new model of change leadership" (p. 2) for organizational improvement. Appreciative inquiry demonstrates that within organizations nowadays, many leaders, professionals, and staff members focus on how to identify and solve problems, how to overcome their weaknesses and defects, and how to cover and polish their disadvantages. In this way, everyone is surrounded by a plethora of problems, difficulties, and weaknesses that give rise to a negative feeling of their organizational environment. Within such an organization, both leaders and staff members are passive and possess a low morale. However, appreciative inquiry calls for people to "approach the problem from the other side" (p. 3). In another word, problems are not to be ignored, but to be examined from a positive perspective, because appreciative inquiry "suggests the idea that collective strengths do more than perform—they transform" (p. 2).

Chapter Two to Chapter Five discuss the contents and meanings of appreciative inquiry and how to apply appreciative inquiry in real life. Chapter Two introduces what an appreciative inquiry is about. Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) describe appreciative inquiry as "the cooperative, coevolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them" (p. 8). They further stated that appreciative inquiry "involves systematic discovery of what gives life to an organization or a community when it is most effective and most capable in economic, ecological, and human terms" (p. 8). Appreciative inquiry encourages both leaders and staff members to quest the positive core for their organization.

Chapter Three systematically introduces the "4-D Cycle" (p. 15) of appreciative inquiry. The "4-D Cycle" includes "discovery, dream, design, and destiny" (p. 16). Discovery means

"identifying the best of what has been and what is" (p. 16). Dream means "creating a clear results-oriented vision in relation to discovered potential and in relation to questions of higher purpose" (p. 16). Design means to create possible propositions of an ideal and perfect organization. Last, destiny means to strengthen affirmative capabilities of an entire organization.

Chapter Four describes the "4-D Cycle in action" (p. 15). Researchers are able to conduct appreciative interviews to search for the positive core of an organization, and dream and design the organization's future. Finally, researchers will examine how to empower and sustain the positive change based on appreciative inquiry.

Chapter Five explains how to apply appreciative inquiry in everyday life. The two methods of applying the "4-D Cycles" (p. 15) are "the whole-system inquiry" (p. 37) and "the AI Summit" (p. 37). Within a whole-system inquiry, every staff member, customer, leader, and other interested individuals can participate in the discussion process in which meaningful stories, best practices, and valuable experiences can be collected, shared, and interpreted. People can envision their future and launch initiations and innovations for positive change. In addition, AI Summit is a "large-scale meeting process that focuses on discovering and developing an organization's positive core and designing it into strategic business processes" (p. 38).

Chapter Six to Chapter Eight discuss the roles, responsibilities, relationships, principles, and conditions related to appreciative inquiry. Chapter Six specifically describes the "roles, responsibilities, and relationships" (p. 45) concerning appreciative inquiry. Since successful change requires a large number of people's "attention, focus, and commitment" (p. 45), and focusing on the positive core can attract more people and encourage them to get involved in initiations and innovations, the roles, responsibilities, and relationships related to appreciative inquiry should be clarified. Chapter Seven continuously discusses the "principles for a positive revolution" (p. 49), including "the constructionist, the simultaneity, the poetic, the anticipatory, and the positive" (pp. 49-53). Chapter Eight discusses "Conditions for Success: The Liberation of Power" (p. 55), arguing that "the liberation of power leads to positive change" (p. 60). The conditions for success are associated with six types of freedom, including "freedom to be known in relationship, freedom to be heard, freedom to dream in community, freedom to choose to contribute, freedom to act with support, and freedom to be positive" (pp. 56-59). In the conclusion chapter, Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) argued that people should see organizations through an "appreciative eye" (p. 61). The appreciative eye indicates "people see the best in one another, share their dreams and ultimate concerns in affirming ways, and are connected in full voice to create not just new worlds but better worlds" (p. 61).

With only 86 pages, this book is an easy read for those who are interested in exploring their strengths, advantages, and positive potentials. The great strength of the book is that readers can develop a general understanding about appreciative inquiry, which can be regarded as a new methodology as well as a new epistemology. Furthermore, through the descriptions of appreciative inquiry, readers can gain a new perspective allowing them to examine their own difficult situations; not from a problem-solving based process, but from a strengths-seeking and pursuing-based journey.

**Reference**

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