

**APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY:  
AN ACTION RESEARCH METHOD  
FOR ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFORMATION**

**By  
James P. Troxel  
The Institute of Cultural Affairs**

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DePaul University, Chicago, IL**

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Introduction

"Appreciative Inquiry" is a social research methodology that intends to discover those elements and factors of an organization that have enabled it to achieve success and then to build upon those discoveries a future of the organization. It is a research methodology that probes for what has made an organization vital and vibrant and then attempts to extrapolate and posit from those life-giving forces a vision of the organization's future.

Appreciative Inquiry uses an overt participant observation methodology. It combines the best of the cognitive processes through an "understanding-through-empathy" in the form of first hand interviews with the stakeholders of the organization with a form of data collection of existing historical documents of the organization. Its bias is towards the direct interaction of the organization rather than the objective examination of a foreign subject.

Appreciative Inquiry is a case study methodology and perspective that is intended for understanding and fostering innovations in organizational and managerial arrangements, processes, and techniques. As a research strategy it is explicitly aimed at attempting to isolate, magnify, and document the life-giving forces involved in cooperative action and collective existence within organizations.

It is "appreciative" in the sense that it attempts to ascertain what has enabled an organization to exist and thrive rather than to look for its problems or weaknesses. It desires to build upon the inherent "mystery, depth and greatness" of the organization, rather than to identify what is not working in order to fix it.

"Inquiry" refers to the fact that the research method relies heavily upon a close collaboration with the stakeholders of the organization as the primary source of information by drawing out from the participants themselves their own stories of involvement with the group. By depicting the reoccurring themes collected from participant interviews, examining historic documents, and immersing oneself into the life of the organization in general, a researcher is able to detect patterns and properties of the organization that have kept it in being and provides a basis of vitality for its future.

I had the privilege of participating in the "Appreciative Inquiry" research approach since my organization, The Institute of Cultural Affairs, was selected for a case study in a project undertaken by the Department of Organizational Behavior at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland during 1989. The project was designed to examine global social change organizations to determine what were the life giving characteristics common to all. Because I was selected to join the ICA team that would be the liaison with the Case Western staff, I gained first hand experience in understanding and employing the Appreciative Inquiry method of research.

The "Appreciative Inquiry" method is gaining currency as a recognized organizational behavior research modality, but it has yet to achieve the stature of others. It is my opinion, having been a subject of and participant in the method, that it is an extremely effective method to provide the groundwork for subsequent transformation of organizations. This paper will outline the philosophical underpinnings of this research method, describe its practical application in the Case Western project, and then identify its implications for Organizational Transformation.

This paper draws heavily upon my own experiences with this research method. For the first section, I relied upon the writings of David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva, two of the key architects of the Appreciative Inquiry approach as designed and implemented by the staff of the Weatherhead School of Management's Department of Organizational Behavior at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio.

## I. PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF "APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY"

### The World-View of "Action Research"

Appreciative Inquiry is a form of action research of organization and social life. Action research is designed to illuminate and discover possible implications and actions to be taken based upon the research. Appreciative Inquiry does this and goes beyond it.

The most common forms of social action research are activities like "needs assessments" and "problem-solving" approaches. The basic assumption is that whatever is learned about the organization would elucidate future steps to enhance the organization.

Action research has the potential to be to the post-industrial era what "scientific management" was to the industrial. Just as scientific management provided the philosophical and methodological legitimacy required to support the bureaucratic organizational form, action research may yet provide the intellectual rationale and reflexive methodology required to support the emergence of a more egalitarian "post-bureaucratic" form of organization.

Scientific management as a social science grew out of a "logical positivist" view of the world and as such perceived its goal being one of prediction and control. Logical positivism is founded on the assumption of the fundamental permanence and stability of life. From this perspective, a social science of administration - scientific management as espoused by Frederick Taylor earlier in this century - designed organizational forms that were based on repetitive, routine and unchangeable functional parts that could be controlled. A worker within an organization became a functionary within the social order. Problems were problems of mal-functioning and could be improved by enhancing efficiency. There was no mystery about how an organization functioned. It operated along clear lines of authority, hierarchy, process maintenance and demarcation.

Scientific management not only serves the interests of the status quo, but it also seriously underestimates the constructive role social science can have in the development of groups and organizations and society as a whole. It is based upon a physical science model and is not adequate to describe complex workings of human systems. Workers are not encouraged to look at the whole system; they are expected to do their part - efficiently. Today, modern consciousness questions this dehumanized view of the worker and asks, "Why can't the person closest to a system be the one called upon to improve it?" This has led to the popularity of more recent versions of the scientific management such as "quality control" and "total quality management" made popular by such people as Philip Crosby and Edward Demming. While relying more upon the workers to help repair and redesign organizational systems and processes, it still is predicated on the belief that problems can be remedied with the reduction of error and variance.

Another view of social science has emerged - the "social-rationalist" approach. Action research is part of this thrust. At the heart of social rationalism is the assumption of impermanence - the fundamental instability of social order. This view, being less empirical in nature, tends to look at the

larger world-view as the operating context of an organization. It suggests that in our time, a new, more-flattened organizational structure is coming into being as the primary modality of organizational life. It perceives this from the standpoint of not only a new view of the world as such, but also because it works most effectively. It gives more importance to the human factor within organizational life as the key variable in determining organizational achievement.

Action research, relying upon this view of the world, is the study of those factors that have made for an organization to be successful. It suggests that building upon those factors, rather than imposing others, will create the conditions for a more possible vibrant future of that organization.

### The Theory-Generating Capacity of Action Research

Action research has the potential to become the paradigmatic basis of a truly significant - a humanly significant - generative science of administration. However, the primary barrier limiting the potential of action research has been its romance with "action" at the expense of "theory". One of the problems with the social-rationalist approach is that it has up to now not generated any theoretical knowledge of consequence. So while it is based on a more helpful worldview, in order to gain currency within social science it also needs to demonstrate its ability to provide framework and patterns. As Kurt Lewin (1951) said, "There is nothing so practical as a good theory".

Accordingly, a bold shift is needed whereby theoretical accounts are no longer judged in terms of their predictive capacity, but instead are judged in terms of their generative capacity (Gergen, 1982) - their capacity for generating fresh alternatives for social action. Instead of asking, "Does this theory correspond with the observable facts?" the emphasis for evaluating good theory becomes, "To what extent does this theory present provocative new possibilities for social action, and to what extent does it stimulate dialogue about how we can and should organize ourselves?"

Most organizational members are not consumed with the theoretical base of their group. Nonetheless, organizations are formed - consciously or unconsciously - upon some form of contextual base with certain assumption about the world and its needs, a series of operating values that guide their thinking and acting, an "in-house" language that allows it to communicate with ease, as well as a vision of the future. This is what is meant by an organization having a theoretical base.

To clarify, the role of social theory for an organization is to:

- establish a conceptual and contextual frame;
- provide presumptions of logic and worldview;
- transmit a system of values;
- create a group-building language; and
- extend a vision of possibility.

While most organizations would be able to say they do in fact have these elements within themselves, they would not refer to them as being part of their theoretical framework. Nonetheless, these are the components of a social theory.

Effective action research needs to not only discover the theoretical base of the organization under review, but to challenge those assumptions. Further, it should take what it has learned about the organization and project into the future what it could be. Action research should not only point to the future in terms of actions to be taken, it should also disclose the theoretical base upon which the organization currently operates.

Action research has a "generative capacity", a "capacity to challenge the guiding assumptions of the culture, to raise fundamental questions regarding contemporary social life, to foster

reconsideration of that which is 'taken for granted' and thereby furnish new alternatives for social actions" (Gergen, 1978).

Part of the task of action research is to produce a theory of change which emerges from the change process itself. Appreciative Inquiry is "grounded theory building" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) in the sense that the operating framework and images of the future of the organization emerge from the stuff of the organizational life itself. The theory is discovered by entering into a deep dialogue about what makes the organization what it is.

### The Guiding Perspective of Appreciative Inquiry

Researching organizations has traditionally followed a "problem solving" approach. The typical image is that good research is to solve real problems. Similarly, the common notion of organizational diagnosis implies the existence of a basic clinical condition that characterizes organizations. The "deficiency" model of organizational research calls for researchers to develop techniques to accurately identify, diagnose and heal the problems. Even the familiar "case study method" in social science originates from a medical model where the history of the pathology is to provide valuable insights into what actions to take.

"Within an earlier view of action-research, there lies a guiding metaphor which has a powerful impact on the theory-building activity of the discipline. When organizations are approached from the perspective of 'deficiency', all the properties and modes of organizing are scrutinized for their dysfunctional but potentially solvable problems. It is all too clear then that the root metaphor of the conventional view is that 'organizing is a problem'" (Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1987).

The prospective that guides Appreciative Inquiry is different. It begins with realization that every organization operates out of an image - a mental picture or model - of itself, of the world around it and of the future. Sometimes these images are conscious, but often they are not. When an organization is founded, the images are clear. During the growth of an organization, the images are clear. In established organizations, frequently the image becomes murky. Members may have lost their anticipatory memory of why they are in being, their initial calling. Their original allure may have become opaque in the struggles for survival.

To paraphrase Polak (1973), the rise and fall of images of the future precedes or accompanies the rise and fall of organizations. As long as an organization's image is positive and flourishing, the flower of the organization is in full bloom. Once the image begins to decay and lose its vitality, however, the organization does not long survive.

The propensity, especially in these times of rapid change, is to try to figure out what is wrong with the organization and fix it. However, Appreciative Inquiry is rooted in an alternate approach. It begins with the belief that the organization by its very existence is valued for what it indicatively is. But, in order for the inherent value of the organization to become manifest, a form of examination is needed to recover that original attraction, to (re-) crystallize the image which has become murky such that the organization can become revitalized.

Kolb (1984) states,

"Appreciation is a process of affirmation. Unlike criticism, which is based on skepticism and doubts, appreciation is based on belief, trust and conviction. And from this affirmative embrace flows a deeper fullness and richness of experience. This act of affirmation forms the foundation from which vital comprehension can develop.....Appreciative apprehension and

critical comprehension are thus fundamentally different processes of knowing. Appreciation of immediate experience is an act of attention, valuing and affirmation, whereas critical comprehension is based on objectivity (which can doubtfully be obtained in social science), dispassionate analysis and skepticism."

Consequently, what the researcher looks for first in analyzing organizational life is not what are the problems with this organization, but rather, what are its gifts. In Appreciative Inquiry, this has been called the search for the life-giving forces or positive properties that have made this organization to date. Life giving forces refer to the unique values, structures and processes of the organization that makes its very existence possible. They are the building blocks of the organization. They may be ideas, beliefs or values as well as structures, practices or procedures.

Relying then upon these forces as the energizing capacity, the research extends into the future what the organization might look like. This has been termed the activity of crafting provocative propositions. Envisioning provocative new futures for an organizations relies upon that assumption that human systems are largely heliotropic in character, meaning that "they exhibit an observable and largely automatic tendency to evolve in the direction of positive anticipatory images of the future" (Cooperrider, 1990). From this Cooperrider goes on to assert that "the artful creation of positive imagery on a collective basis may well be the most prolific activity that individuals and organizations can engage in if their aim is to help bring to fruition a positive and humanly significant future."

A new view of social research is beginning to be fashioned. It has a different perspective on the nature of social life and is based upon the nature of life itself. Namely, instead of seeing organizations as problems to be solved, they are being seen as wonders to be lived. As Abraham Maslow (1968) has said, "True science begins and ends in wonder". Appreciative Inquiry has as its basis a metaphysical concern; it posits that social existence as such is a miracle that can never be fully comprehended (Quincy, 1982; Marcel, 1963; Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1987).

"The spirit of Appreciative Inquiry is to be found in one of the most ancient archetypes or metaphorical symbols of hope and inspiration that humankind has ever known - the miracle and mystery of being....In the same way that birth of a living, breathing, loving, thinking human being is an inexplicable mystery, so too it can be said in no uncertain terms that 'organizing is a miracle' of cooperative human interaction, of which there can never be final explanation.

"Serious consideration and reflection on the ultimate mystery of being engendered a reverence for life that draws the researcher to inquire beyond superficial appearances to deeper levels of the life-generating essentials and potentials of social existence. That is, the action researcher is drawn to affirm, and thereby illuminate, the factors and forces involved in organizing that serve to nourish the human spirit." (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987)

### The "Theory of Affirmation"

Appreciative Inquiry then is based upon what might be called the affirmative basis of organizing. In other words, it is grounded on a "theory of affirmation" which, paraphrasing Cooperrider (1990), has as some of its key elements the following:

1. When it comes to understanding organizational existence, there is no better clue to the organization's overall well-being than its guiding images of the future - its vision of itself, the world. Organizations exist because its stakeholders that govern and maintain them carry in their minds (and hearts) some sort of shared positive projection about what the organization is, how it will function, and what it might become.

2. No matter what its previous history is, virtually any pattern of organizational action is open to alteration and reconfiguration.
3. To the extent that organization's imaginative projections are the key to their current conduct, organizations are free to seek transformations of themselves by replacing current images with images of a new and better future.
4. Organizations are heliotropic in character. Positive imagery and hence heliotropic movement is endemic to organizational life. Consequently, organizations have the capacity to create their own realities.
5. Conscious examination, recall and creation of positive imagery is a viable option for organizations. The more an organization experiments with positive imagery, the better it will become; there is an observable self-reinforcing, educative effect of affirmation. Affirmative competence is the key to the self-organizing system.
6. The key to an organization having a hope-filled future is to be perpetually self-reaffirming. The challenge to organizational transformation is to discover the processes through which an organization's assertions of its past can be left behind and better ones for the future be developed. The process of visioning is more important than the content of the vision.
7. Every organization needs constant reaffirmation. Frequently the stakeholders of an organization have become dormant to that which has made the organization vital. The original vitality needs to be awakened by a process of affirmation through a stance of appreciative cognition. Somehow the "immensity of the commonplace" (Bruner, 1986) need to become transparently evident to all the stakeholders in order for them to believe in themselves again.
8. Creating the conditions for organization-wide appreciation is the single most important measure that can be taken to ensure the conscious evolution of a valued and positive future. Through appreciation of organizational life, members of an organization learn to value not only the life-enhancing organization itself, but also learn to affirm themselves.

### The Process of Appreciative Inquiry

The appreciative mode of inquiry is a way of living with, being with, and directly participating in the varieties of social organization. The researcher walks in with the stance of "appreciative objectivity" - value-laden with the assumption that whatever one finds, one will gravitate toward embracing it as inherently good and in so doing will be able to recognize the latent possibilities for the future.

Through one's assumptions and choice of method, a researcher - or any one - largely creates the world that is observed. Consultants tend to be so client-centered that they fail to question their clients' own definition of a problem and thereby to build testable propositions and theories that are embedded in everyday life (Argyris, 1973). They equate the felt need with the real need. The real need may be something far deeper than a superficial analysis of a problem.

Appreciative Inquiry intends to look deeply into the life of the organization to observe all of the life-giving dynamics in operation. The process of Appreciative Inquiry can be simply stated in two basic steps:

**First, the research task is to identify and value the best of what is within the organization.**

**And second, the research task then envisions what might be.**

**In the first step the purpose of valuing is to tap into the key themes and forces important to the organization. Then, when the best of what is has been identified and is valued and the values are recounted, the mind naturally begins to search beyond this; it begins to envision new possibilities. Valuing the best of what is leads to envisioning what might be. Envisioning means allowing oneself to be inspired by what one sees.**

### **The Four Principles of Appreciative Inquiry**

**From the above, the, four principles of Appreciative Inquiry as a form of social rationalist action research can be stated as such (Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1987; Cooperrider, 1989):**

#### **A. Appreciative**

**Research into the social innovative potential of organizational life begins with appreciation. This basic principle assumes that every social system "works" to some degree, that it is not in a complete state of entropy. The primary task of research, then, is to discover, describe, and explain those social innovations, however small, which serve to give "life" to the system and activate members' competencies and energies as more fully functioning participants in the formation and transformation of organizational realities. That is, the appreciative approach takes its inspiration from the current state of "what is" and seeks a comprehensive understanding of the factors and forces of organizing that serve to heighten the total potential of an organization in ideal-types human and social terms.**

**Appreciative Inquiry describes the objective situation from a posture of affirmation rather than criticism. Unlike diagnostic or problem based research which begins with a "half-empty glass" perspective, the appreciative eye begins with the assumption that the glass is "half-full. Instead of evaluation, Appreciative Inquiry begins with valuing.**

#### **B. Applicable**

**Research into the social potential of organizational life is applicable. To be significant in a human sense, an applied science of administration should lead to the generation of theoretical knowledge that can be used, applied, and thereby validated in action. Thus, an applicable inquiry process is neither utopian in the sense of generating knowledge about a vague reality, nor should it be confined to academic circles and presented in ways that have little relevance to the everyday language and symbolism of those for whom the findings might be applicable - the stakeholders of the organization itself. If the members of the society or of the organization itself have no practical benefit from the research, it isn't Appreciative Inquiry.**

**Appreciative Inquiry is pragmatic. Its results are concretely beneficial to the organization under review. In contrast to some distant or ivory tower scholarship, an applicable organizational analysis should lead to new understandings that can be used, applied and thereby validated in action.**

#### **C. Provocative**

**Research into the social potential of organizational life should be provocative. Here it is considered axiomatic that an organization is, in fact, an open-ended indeterminate system capable of**

(1) becoming more than it is at any given moment, and (2) learning how to actively take part in guiding its own evolution. Hence, appreciative knowledge of what is suggests what might be, and such knowledge can be used to generate images of realistic developmental opportunities that can be experimented with on a wider scale. In this sense, Appreciative Inquiry can be both pragmatic and visionary.

By illuminating the founding attraction of an organization as well as the best of what it currently is and then projecting that magnetism forward in a variety of realistic options, Appreciative Inquiry can help the organization's members shape the direction of the organization according to their own imaginative and moral purposes.

Consequently, Appreciative Inquiry looks for those peak moments in organizational existence when the individuals felt most alive, effective and potent. Then, by building on these experiences, it describes the ideal-type notions of what can be produced which challenge the organization to become more than they are at their current level of functioning, not by divorcing themselves from what makes them fully alive, but by visioning from the best of what already exists. Some change theory asserts one has to change in the sense of stop doing one thing and do something else. The theory behind provocative propositions is that change comes from doing more of what you are already doing when operating at one's best.

#### D. Collaborative

Appreciative Inquiry into the social potential of organizational life should be collaborative. This principle points to the assumed existence of an inseparable relationship between the process of inquiry and its content. A collaborative relationship between the researcher and the members of an organization is deemed essential. Since objective analysis of social reality is unobtainable and since the intent of Appreciative Inquiry is to identify the life-giving forces, only by working with its members, and deeply becoming familiar with the organization can it illuminate significantly those very products of the research quest.

This means that members of the organizations need to be seen and treated not as subjects but as co-researchers. It also means that every step in the research should be done as jointly and consensually as possible. By doing the research in a collaborative fashion, the other three principles are made more possible to be fulfilled.

## II. A PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF "APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY"

### The Social Innovation in Global Management Project

In order to spotlight the Appreciative Inquiry approach as well as to gain a data base on innovative management techniques, the researchers at Case Western University designed a ten year imaginative scheme to investigate "global social change organizations" (GSCOs). GSCOs are those non-profit organizations with an international focus organized to promote the well-being of the entire planet. Launched in 1989, the intent of this process was to employ the Appreciative Inquiry methodology to determine those factors that were common to all the GSCOs under study and then document those learnings as being pertinent to all international organizations, public or private.

David Cooperrider, in his March 2, 1989, letter to The Institute of Cultural Affairs, put it this

way:

"... the Department of Organizational Behavior at Case Western Reserve University is involved in a new programmatic area of action research designed to study, celebrate and learn about the success factors of transnational organizations that have emerged to manage global problems. It is the aim of this program to explore the managerial and organizational factors that heighten the potential for constructive cooperation--efforts at collective action that transcend the barriers between nations, races, disciplines, religions, cultures, and geographical distance. While we concentrate on private voluntary organizations that have a global mission, our studies are meant to include many diverse forms of organized action (social movements, networks, global projects, interorganizational partnerships, transnational professional associations, etc.) that have, as their primary task, a commitment to serve as an agent of change in the development of a healthier, peaceful world."

Part of the reasoning that fueled the interest in this endeavor is the fact that our world today is becoming more integrated at every turn, that those enterprises that can demonstrate their capacity to reach beyond assumed restrictions to formulate strategies that serve the greater whole of humanity would be important indicators of a future consistent with the way the world is in fact becoming. Importantly, as an alternative model to scientific management that has permeated organizational thought for the bulk of this century, deriving a theory from the success of organizations that have seemingly transcended fixed, bureaucratic structures, would give rise to new management principles and awareness that could assist organizational development in general.

Four organizations were selected to be in the initial pilot phase of the project. In addition to The Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA), they were:

The International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, who, after being in existence for only five years, were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985 for their efforts in raising awareness about the medical consequences of nuclear war.

The Hunger Project, established in 1977 and active in over 20 countries, and whose purpose is to transform the prospect of ending hunger from a possibility into an opportunity that can be realized.

The Nature Conservancy (Latin American Division) which has as its principle mission the global preservation of natural or biological diversity.

Because of the highly participative nature of the Appreciative Inquiry process employed in this project, it was important to clarify the benefits to the participating organizations lest valuable time be taken from the work of the organization. Cooperrider explained the benefits in this way in his letter to the ICA (1989):

"Our experience has shown that appreciative inquiry tends to create a reinforcing set of dynamics and a solid platform for envisioning a positive future. Once our data collection is completed we will prepare both a case study and an executive summary of results. Our commitment is to feedback our results to the ICA in a way that helps the organization to gain new insights into its strengths as well as a sense of its most significant opportunities or strategic possibilities. Again, our commitment is to create an 'applicable' self-study process and we will work with you to limit unnecessary or irrelevant time demands.

"Beyond the benefits to you and your colleagues, we fully believe there will be benefits to others in the world attempting to produce positive change....Our purpose is to spread important

learnings and kindle realistic hope. The task is to crystalize emergent insights into pragmatic principles for transnational collective action."

The research process itself lasted for approximately 9 months of 1989 beginning in March. It culminated with the presentation of the case studies to a conference convened by Case Western in November entitled, "Social Innovations in Global Management". The intent of the conference was to highlight the four case studies of Appreciative Inquiry and to develop insights into the evolution of global consciousness and the organizational architecture required to bring about effective transnational action.

The results of the conference and the case studies have been documented and reported in leading social science journals around the world (See Johnson and Cooperrider, "Finding a Path with Heart: Global Social Change Organizations and their Challenge for the Field of Organizational Development" and "The Global Integrity Ethic: Defining Global Social Change Organizations and the Organizing Principles which Make Transnational Organizing Possible, both 1991). Indeed, it would appear as if there is in fact a growing momentum toward the acceptance of Global Social Change Organizations as models for an alternative planetary future.

### The ICA's Participation in the Project

#### Phase I

The collaboration between Case Western and ICA began as many such things begin - quite by accident. A colleague of the Institute's was a graduate student at Case Western, and when the GSCO project was being envisioned, he mentioned the possibility of involving the ICA. Case Western interviewed the ICA's research staff based in Toronto and with the ICA person responsible for our United Nations involvement in New York. Then a Chicago staff person, paying an annual fund raising visit to the Cleveland area in early 1989, was invited to make a presentation on the work of the ICA to the Case Western staff. At that time a letter of invitation (March 2) was extended to ICA to become a part of the study. Messrs. Suresh Srivastva, David Cooperrider and Tojo Thachankary of Case Western visited with 12 staff of the ICA in Chicago on April 13, 1989. The intent of their visit was to acquaint ICA with the project and to gain our initial support for moving ahead as one of the case studies.

The initial ICA staff reaction could be described as "contained enthusiasm". We were extremely impressed with the philosophy of Appreciative Inquiry in so far as it coincided with our own internal philosophy as an organization. But we were reticent to participate because of the natural tendency among organizational consultants such as ourselves to believe that anyone from outside using different methods than ours could offer anything of value to us. There was also a fear that this project would consume too much staff time ending up with a finished product that would have little relevance or value for our future. However, we gave a tentative "yes" to proceeding, subject to an initial round of staff interviews and further briefings as to the degree of time we ourselves would need to commit to the project.

In May, Tojo Thachankary returned with a colleague, Ms. Xiaoping Tian, to do the initial interviews. Both Thachankary and Tian are doctoral candidates at Case Western. The intent of the first round of interviews was to ascertain a draft of the "life giving forces" driving the ICA and to increase the level of receptivity for the project.

About 20 individual interviews were conducted by the two from Case Western. They asked each person basically three questions:

1. What was your personal high point with ICA? A peak experience? (When did you feel most alive or most a part of the ICA? What was your most rewarding experience?)
2. What for you are the basic values that you cherish most (hold most dear) that continue to give life to the ICA?
3. What do you want the ICA in the future to be? If you could enhance one thing for further development of the ICA as an organization, what would it be?

Each interview was taped recorded and later transcribed. [In fact, all of the subsequent interviews were recorded - nearly 140 in number - and to date, about 100 have been transcribed.] In addition, each person was asked to draw a picture or image of ICA.

I remember this first interview. Tojo and I met in a conference room and I remember the apprehension I felt getting started. What was he going to ask me and how would I respond. I was guarded about what I intended to say, not wanting to reveal too much. But the first question completely overwhelmed me; I was awe-struck. I don't remember what I said exactly, but I must have gone on talking for easily a half an hour. During my rambling, Tojo seemed completely absorbed in all that I was saying, only interrupting to gain clarity. The second question was more thought-provoking. But, again, I managed to consume far more time than we had originally imagined. By the time we got to the third question, Tojo was behind in his interview schedule and I was surely missing something important as well. Nonetheless, I gave the question a response.

I still remember the feeling I had when the interview was completed: it was one of exhilaration that my involvement with the ICA had been affirmed and appreciated. I had a chance to recall and retell my own life story about what the ICA had meant to me, personally. And at the same time, I had been provoked into thinking about our future in a profound sort of way.

A quick consultation with other colleagues who had been interviewed also revealed a similar kind of response. Clearly, this research method had tapped some deep well-spring on our part. After about two days of Tojo and Xiaoping being on site in our office and living in our conference center, they had interviewed enough people to warrant a meeting with all those interviewed. They said that certain themes were emerging from the interviews as "life giving forces" (LGFs). Tojo wrote on the board the first draft of the LGFs as well as other common themes he and Xiaoping had heard from our representative sample.

We were struck at how well, within a span of only two days, these two "outsiders" had so quickly and accurately grasped the nature and spirit of our organization - not just what we do, but who we are. In this meeting, we also shared with one another our own deep appreciation for the value of the interview itself. Each person said how the interview itself had been a form of "absolution", as each person had the opportunity to tell their own story of what the ICA had meant to them.

We quickly agreed that doing the interviews alone had value for the organization and that we wanted to proceed with the full project with Case Western. Because one of the assumptions of the Appreciative Inquiry approach requires the process being collaborative in nature, we formed the Appreciative Inquiry Team (AI Team) involving approximately 8 ICA staff members and the Case Western researchers. Tojo and Xiaoping "trained" the ICA team - of which I was a member - in how to do the interview. They placed an important value in the interviewer in being non-judgmental in any response given and to only ask follow-up questions for the sake of gaining clarity as to the respondents remarks, not to criticize it. This technique resonated with us extremely well for it coincided with of our basic techniques called the "Conversation Method" that we use quite extensively in our own work (Spencer, 1989).

## Phase II

When Tojo and Xiaoping returned two weeks later to start the second phase of the project, they and the AI Team interviewed every ICA staff member as well as member of the ICA's residential community in Chicago and several volunteers and Board members. This numbered approximately 40 people, giving us a total of about 50 interviews completed. We hired a returning staff member from India who was in between assignments to transcribe the interviews for us. While this was proceeding, the AI Team met to more sharply define the draft of LGFs.

To choose the LGFs, each team member worked individually on the themes of the preliminary interview data and identified what he or she thought were the Life Giving Forces. Then the team pooled LGF themes and looked for similarities and dissimilarities among them. The 'card technique' outlined in the ICA's Technology of Participation book (Spencer, 1989) was used to finally extract the LGFs. The five Life Giving Forces that were identified at this point were:

- A. The "Faith Stance" of the ICA - of being open and affirming of all of life;
- B. The "Decision-Making Process of Consensus" the ICA employs;
- C. The "Corporateness" nature of the ICA that bonds its people together as a form of extended family;
- D. The "Missional" character of the organization seeing itself as service to the world;
- E. The ongoing "Learning Community" nature of the organization.

The next step created an interview format to probe further into the LGFs which were identified. The AI Team formulated several questions to probe different aspects of each LGF. A format was adopted for trial and after several practice sessions, a format was finalized. (See appendix). At this point ICA staff made an important decision. We decided that in order to gain the most out of this process for our own well-being, the interview process needed to include as many of the stakeholders of the ICA as possible. While the Chicago office only has the ability to garner the human resources of the staff and colleagues within the Heartland portion of the US, we felt that a concerted effort to involve as many colleagues as possible would warrant an expansion of involvement beyond our original thinking.

## Phase III

So Phase III of the process began to take shape. Xiaoping was given access to the archives of the ICA to develop a history of the ICA. Each time Xiaoping and Tojo came to Chicago, they brought their families and stayed in the ICA staff residence and joined our community life. This was an important dynamic because they had a chance to see us outside the "nine to five" routine and appreciate how our whole life was an integral part of our work philosophy and values. Eventually, they were joined in their visits by another colleague from Case Western, Naganard Kumar, and as more and more interviews were conducted, Tojo's wife, Tessy, and Naga's wife, Amita, took part.

The process really took off during Phase III. While the first round of interviews were about 30 minutes in length, the second round stretched to about 90 minutes. The intent in the second round was to have each person give fuller individual testimonies to the power of the five life giving forces as they experienced them. In addition, because we were now sending members of the AI Team across the heartland to visit our colleagues, supporters, donors, Board members and former staff members

who had not been in the first round, some of these interviews took nearly two hours. In a couple of cases, small groups of colleagues met in people's living rooms and did the interview process as a group endeavor. This proved as effective generally as the individual interviews, at least for the less involved stakeholders.

During the third phase, over 100 people involved with the ICA had been interviewed. I interviewed 10 colleagues myself. Again, profound appreciation was exhibited by all who had been given the chance to tell their stories. Rich material was collected, taped and transcribed. By now, the AI Team members were all spending time transcribing since the lone person we had hired could not keep up with the pace and length of the tapes.

A sweep of positive energy had been released through the ICA network across the Heartland. Since the ICA recently had gone through a period of self-doubt, the Appreciative Inquiry process itself gave a new sense of hope in the future. This was a period of decentralization for us where we had the options of going out of being, continuing to be plateaued or recreating our mission and direction. The AI process restored a sense of confidence in our ability to effect our destiny. In retelling what had made us great, we rediscovered within ourselves the capacity to claim our greatness for the future, albeit in new forms and manifestations.

#### Phase IV

It was now time to coalesce the data gathering performed during the earlier phases and enter Phase IV, the time of organizing and gleanings and implications. We planned to stage an "Appreciative Research Carnival" (ARC) scheduled for the first weekend in August, 1989. In preparation for the Carnival, a flurry of transcriptions were done and the AI Team met to review all of the work to date. We identified key quotes to illustrate each LGF. The quotes were arranged into each of the LGFs and further subdivided into 8 "organizational factors":

1. Strategy and Task
2. Organizational Structure
3. Operational Practices
4. Leadership
5. Decision Making Processes
6. Interpersonal Relations
7. Basic Beliefs and Values
8. Communication.

The AI Team also experimented with and planned the procedures for the Carnival. Every one who had been interviewed was invited to the Carnival. Nearly 30 staff and colleagues of the ICA from the Heartland attended.

The chief purpose of the Carnival was to gain consensual validation as to the final draft of the Life Giving Forces and to also to identify what was termed the "Provocative Propositions" for the future of the Life Giving Forces. During the second round of interviews, each respondent was asked to describe how they saw each LGF in the future. This was the basis of identifying the future of the ICA by extending the best of the past into the future. The Carnival was to gather these statements into a provocative articulation of what the ICA could look like.

The "Carnival" image was used to highlight the celebrative aspect of the research which came from ICA's basic philosophy that life itself is a celebration. During the Carnival each participant read through a sampling of interview transcripts through the screen of the 8 organizational factors and highlighted what they found significant. Then the ARC participants were divided into five groups of six people each working on a different LGF. Each of the five groups were then sub-divided into two

teams of three people whose task was to draft a final statement of the LGFs. This was done to obtain a reasonable reliability as to clarity on the LGF. The two sub-teams then would meet, talk about their similarities and differences and finally come to an agreement on their final draft. Under each category several sample quotes were selected from the transcribed interviews in order to illustrate the LGF.

The next step in the Research Carnival was to create the Provocative Propositions (PPs). Tojo defined a PP as a statement that bridges the best of "what is" with one's own intuition of "what might be". It is provocative to the extent that it stretches the realm of the status quo and helps suggest real possibilities that represent potentials for the organization. It is inspiring because it challenges one to create a new future. A Provocative Proposition builds on the LGFs and heightens the group's attention, thereby releasing powerful energy to make visions a reality. At least one Provocative Proposition was written for each of the 8 organizational factors for each of the five Life Giving Forces, giving us a minimum of 40 altogether.

As stated in the ICA's case study, a Provocative Proposition model considers three aspects of organizational life (Srivastva, et.al., 1989):

1. "Novelty" refers to the ideas that PPs should bring an element of surprise, challenge and intrigue.
2. "Continuity" suggests that whatever new strategies and changes are planned must ensure that continuity from old to the new is maintained.
3. "Transition" calls for making sure that there is a smooth transition from the familiar to the unfamiliar and that the change is not felt so abruptly that continuity and novelty are lost.

The common area where all these factors intersect is where a true provocative proposition is most likely to emerge.

Considerable energy was spent by participants to write "real" provocative propositions which was one of the most exciting parts of the research process - the "pay-off", so to speak. The participants were given an opportunity to be bold, creative and inspiring about their visions for the ICA.

Each time a team drafted a PP, members evaluated the proposition in terms of 1) the definition as provided; 2) the novelty-continuity-transition model, and 3) a check list of 10 criteria that the AI Team had prepared in advance. Then each group invited another group to look at the PPs and comment on them based on the same criteria. This was done mutually between groups resulting in several revisions of the original drafts. Then, everyone read through all the PPs and "valenced" them according to a ranking system. Based upon this feedback, 78 fully revised Provocative Propositions for ICA's future were created.

#### Phase V

Word of the enthusiasm created in the Heartland toward the Appreciative Inquiry process had spread to other locations of the ICA around the world. When Chicago staff requested to have the Case Western team interview other ICA colleagues and give a report at the ICA International meeting in Brussels, Belgium, September, 1989, permission was easily granted. I accompanied Tojo to Brussels and introduced him and the AI project at the opening session of the week-long gathering. During the week Tojo and I interviewed another 30 ICA colleagues with Tojo focusing on the non-American representatives. At the end of the week, Tojo addressed the group:

"I worked in Chicago where we did 100 interviews. I was struck by the similarities between the values stated in Chicago and those values that I see here. I expected there would be more differences because the locations are very different; therefore one ICA would be different than any other. I came with that presumption. But the interview data suggests that there is only one ICA." (Thachankary, 1989)

This came as a tremendous affirmation for all of us. We had just completed the decentralization effort as earlier mentioned and were wondering what was going to keep us together; what would be the glue. The AI process had identified that glue. Furthermore, Tojo went on to say:

"The basic values of the ICA are so powerful to each of you that it leads me to say that they are not negotiable. It is important for me to say that because what I hear here is the need to have autonomy and individuality, but the ultimate reality is that there is just one ICA. There is no way you can negotiate those values. Whenever you try to do it, people don't let you." (Thachankary, 1989)

The title of Tojo's talk and the name that came to be the title of our case study in the final report is "The ICA: the Hero with a Thousand Faces" as a take off from Joseph Campbell's book. As Tojo said,

"I really feel that ICA is a hero with multiple expressions and manifestation. The hero has one body and one mind which consists of a set of non-negotiable values that are the core of who you are." (Thachankary, 1989)

Once again, in the form of feedback from the interview process, the colleagues of the ICA represented at this global meeting felt affirmed in the very nature and thrust of what we were doing through the process of Appreciative Inquiry. The same feeling of self-confidence that had come over the ICA network of colleagues in the Heartland of the USA had replicated itself globally.

At the Brussels meeting Tojo also attempted to articulate what the AI Team had been wrestling with throughout the analysis of the data from the interviews. Eventually titled the "Core Dilemma" in the final case study (Srivastva et. al., 1989), there surfaced a set of organizational paradoxes or ambiguities that the researchers had detected throughout the interviews. While unexpected in the sense that the researchers did not intentionally seek them, the identification of these dilemma became a valuable tool for the ICA.

One of the "core dilemmas" might serve as an illustration for our purposes here. Throughout the interviews, the stakeholders of the ICA gave witness to numerous and profound experiences when the people themselves felt affirmed by the internal practices of the organization during early stages of the ICA. Recently, however, more and more respondents referred to having felt more valued by the external constituents and clients that they, as members of the ICA, were serving. Consequently, more and more ICA staff, consciously or unconsciously, sought these affirmation opportunities for their own well-being to fill the void caused by the ICA transition. This has now created a paradox: while the very resources, skills and techniques that staff have learned from their involvement with the ICA has made them successful in the eyes of the world, that success is pulling many of these people away from the ICA at the very time the ICA needs its people most. What, then, becomes of the ICA if more and more of its stakeholders gravitate away from it by virtue of the very energy base that enabled these people's effectiveness?

No answer need be provided here, but these kind of depth insights framed the work on the provocative propositions.

## Phase VI

The last phase of the research was the preparation of the case study for the November meeting of all the participating groups in the conference mentioned earlier held in Cleveland. While the authorship of the study was primarily in the hands of Tojo and Xiaoping and their colleagues in Cleveland, we in Chicago had the opportunity of editing and commenting on the developing drafts. None of us was totally pleased with the final version that was presented. Nonetheless, a great deal of interest was peaked among the other attenders at the conference when they learned that the ICA had reached over 140 people through the interview process, many times more than any of the other groups. Our delegates who attended the conference were repeatedly asked what it was about the process that had ended with it touching so many people.

I can't say for sure, of course, but I think there were several factors. First, the philosophical approach that serves as the background for Appreciative Inquiry is one with which we readily resonated. We also believe that as one looks at life or any part of it, the basic stance toward it should be one of affirmation and appreciation before criticism. This goes against the grain of most research approaches where one looks for what is wrong.

The second reason why Appreciative Inquiry process took root with us so well has to do with the timing of it. Just a few short months before we were introduced to the possibility of participating in this conference, the ICA formally dissolved many of the international structures that had kept us together as a global group. With that came a certain degree of self-doubt and cynicism on the part of many as to whether we had a future at all. The Appreciative Inquiry project revealed we had a great future, albeit one of a multifaceted nature. It allowed us to not "throw the baby out with the bath water". It gave us an opportunity to affirm the core of who we were as a group.

The third reason had to do with the team sent to us by Case Western. The dominant, unique feature was their international composition. That, in itself, allowed us to be cooperative, to want to see the process work, and probably meant that we spent more time making sure the team understood everything we were trying to say. In a sense, Tojo, Xiaoping, their other colleagues and spouses, "disarmed" us. Just by their very presence they made us work harder for the success of the project. Their willingness to live with and try to understand the unusual group that we are was affirming in its very nature.

A related key to the success of the team from Cleveland was their decision and ability to immerse themselves totally into our organizational life. They lived in our corporate residence. They brought and involved their families. They shared meals with us in our dining room. They traveled with us to the cores of colleagues around the Heartland. They were not detached observers. They intertwined themselves with us and in the process gained our trust to be open and honest with them. Frequently, we discussed concerns on the international scene.

The decision to try to be as inclusive as possible in the number of people we interviewed also was a key to the success of the project. The legitimacy of the results of the research can be related largely to the fact that we included so many of our stakeholders in the process. No one could argue that we did not have enough data to ensure that our results weren't representative of the whole of the ICA.

However, we feel that the final articulations of both the Life Giving Forces, the Provocative Propositions and the statement of the Non-Negotiable Values that Tojo listed in his Brussels speech were not crisp enough to focus our thinking. We were disappointed in the final version of the Provocative Propositions. Since they were largely the product of the Research Carnival, we have often felt like we needed to revisit the work of the Carnival and attempt again to distill them more succinctly into

a handful of statements about our future rather than the present 78.

This paper has not tried to share these earlier, much less final drafts, of the statements written during the Appreciative Inquiry process. Instead, I intend to make them the subject of a subsequent paper. [This paper is now available and appears as the first part of this whole document.]

One final step took place which was the presentation of the work of the Appreciative Inquiry process to the full Board of Directors meeting of the ICA held later in November with most of the staff from around the country. Though the final draft of the case study was not ready for distribution, those present could feel the intense pleasure being generated by those Heartland colleagues who had been a part of the process. After a briefing session on the results of the study, the staff and board members engaged in a brainstorm workshop listing and describing the philosophy and mission of the ICA. The results of this workshop will also be included in the subsequent paper referred to earlier.

### **III. IMPLICATIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFORMATION**

There are several important implications for practitioners of organizational transformation to be learned from the Appreciative Inquiry Approach.

The first is the crucial role that corporate culture and in particular "stories" or the mythological element of an organization has in maintaining and sustaining its fabric. It would seem that a person wanting to examine the possibility of occasioning some changes within an organization would sooner or later need to mine the human factor of the organization in the form of inviting its members to talk about the significance of the group to themselves. Whether this be an individual or a collective exercise, rehearsing the stories of how the organization came into being, what happened during the lean times and rearticulating the reasons why the members of the organization "stayed with it" would provide valuable information upon which to build for its future.

The second is the important role that value clarification has in maintaining and providing the basis for organizational transformation. Unless a group is clear on the key operating values that guide their organization, they will not be successful in making a human transformation of it. Changes may occur based upon an unconsciousness or presumed set of assumptions that may or may not be effective for making organizational changes. Sooner or later, an organization needs to rearticulate to itself in the form of executive declaration or participative articulation the values upon which the organization stands.

The third key learning from Appreciative Inquiry is the necessity for an organization to have a Vision of its future that is based on the human elements of the organization. If the desired future that is projected is not founded on the real aspirations of the people who are part of the organization, that desired future will not be realized. A vision has to come from the depths of the organization itself, it has to be elicited from the minds and hearts of the members of the organization lest the members undertake a quest they did not choose and will eventually not cooperatively enable. Visioning exercises - while needing executive direction and clarification - must harness the human element of the people themselves who have given their lives to ensuring the success of the organization. Their investment needs to be harvested for the sake of enabling collaborative action to occur. The time of the charismatic leader who can shape a group's will is over; now is the time of participative management where the people who have invested their lives need to be honored for that investment. Besides, who knows better how to make the changes that might be necessary?

A fourth key discovery is that appreciation is a modality that needs to be inculcated into the life of the organization as an ongoing operating mode. In the past, such things as company picnics and

award ceremonies may have been sufficient. Even Maslow recognizes the importance of recognition as a motivational technique. However, there is a new twist being made manifest by the Appreciative Inquiry approach. That twist has to do with mainstreaming appreciation as an operating modality. Frequently, appreciation exercises such as having each member of the organization relate what it is about the other members of the organization that they appreciate and how each person sees how others contribute to the whole, become rehearsals of the critical insight that it is the people themselves who make up the spirit and life of an organization, not by-laws or structures.

Cooperrider (1990) himself best sums up these first four points in the following way: "The central executive task in a post-bureaucratic society is to nourish the appreciative soil from which affirmative projections grow, branch off, evolve, and become collective projections."

As an external consultant, the mirror perception is important. Simply put, learn how to say "Yes" to the organization under review. Locate its greatness, then build on it. This needs to be the style of approach of an external consultant. Too often, consultants come in with preconceived notions of what an organization needs or else quickly acquiesces to the client's viewpoint. The Appreciative Inquiry method suggests that the consultant needs to listen a great deal before he or she designs an intervention strategy.

One last point needs to be made in regard to the Appreciative Inquiry approach relative to how a future of an organization - its Vision - is determined. Yes, it needs to be based upon the hopes and dreams of its key stakeholders. But is the method one of simple extrapolation? Real transformation - not just gradual improvements - is a "qualitative leap" - not a logical extension of the past. It will need something like a paradigm shift which may or may not come about through trying merely to extend the success of the past into the future in a linear projection. This is where Appreciative Inquiry needs to be complemented with other skills.

For us this is where we found the work on "Core Dilemmas" to be so important for they began to peel back the upbeat nature of appreciation to reveal some underlying contradictions that need to be taken into account lest the provocative proposition and Visioning exercises be based only on a "rosy-colored" view of the organization. It is important to note that this in-depth identification of the underlying issues can and did take place through the Appreciative Inquiry method. Frequently, intense affirmation of a subject reveals faults and inadequacies more readily than do intense criticism (Weick, 1982).

Lastly, because I feel the insights summarizing the case study (Srivastva et. al., 1989) were so insightful, I would like to add them here as additional considerations for facilitators of organizational transformation:

1. Making provocative propositions and transforming organizations are more possible out of an appreciative mode than out of a critical mode.
2. The commitment the organizations demonstrate towards a form of inquiry is directly proportional to the sense of ownership they experience with the research process.
3. The affirmative process of inquiry brings people together in a way that makes them more of a cohesive team and community thus enabling the success of the overall endeavor.
4. For "outside" researchers in Appreciative Inquiry, trusting the process of inquiry is more important than directing it as experts.
5. Collaborative research efforts are successful to the extent that there is a match and compatibility between the values of the two parties involved.
6. Making provocative propositions is an act of affirmation and faith in the organization.

## APPENDIX

### APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS For the Follow-up (Second Round)

#### OPENING CONTEXT

"The 50 interviews done in May identified many life-giving forces of the ICA. We have chosen five of these forces to discuss in depth relative to new directions. We anticipate that this discussion will help to shape the articulation of our vision for the 90s. As we do the interview process we will be listening particularly for symbols, images and metaphors that represent the ICA and its future."

(Use any of the following three questions to get started for those who had not been interviewed previously:)

1. To get started I would like you to share when you felt most proud of being a part of the ICA.
2. Where have you felt appreciated by the ICA?
3. What have been the most engaging, fulfilling, meaningful, involving experiences you have had with the ICA?

(Based upon their response to this question, launch into the most appropriate LGF for further probing.)

#### PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION OF THE LIFE GIVING FORCES OF ICA

##### A. SPIRIT LIFE - STORY - FAITH STANCE

Context: Some people referred to this arena using the words "secular religious" or pointed to a "meditative council" as ways of holding what this arena is pointing toward.

1. When you talk about ICA's spirit life and its enlivening power in your experience, what comes to your mind? Symbols? Metaphors? Anecdotal stories?
2. What is the story and faith stance you live by today? What stirs your imagination about the faith stance of the ICA? What are activities that illustrate what you are pointing toward? Talk about your personal involvement in these activities? What happened to your own spirit?
3. Concretely, what is it about ICA life just now that assists you in developing your own spirit practices?
4. Who are spirit men and women within ICA? What is it about them that makes them energy givers?
5. In summary you are saying, "ICA spirit life is ...." or "My spirit life is ...."

##### B. DECISION MAKING - CONSENSUS

Context: Among the themes that recurred several times was the way decisions in ICA get made with levels of commitment produced amazing achievements. People appear to have been convinced they were shaping the future, accomplishing enduring results, creating history. And they literally chose to do what was needed.

1. In your experience, what was the most important ICA event or activity that you were ever a part of? What made it exciting to you? Describe the decision making processes that went into that event. What was it about that process that was so life affirming? How were

you a part of that process?

2. What are the tendencies, values from the past, which shape the way we make decisions today in the ICA?
3. What are the strengths of present structures for consensus building that ensure its healthy functioning?

**C. CORPORATENESS**

**Context:** One of the arenas which people mention frequently as a strength of the ICA is its ability to create corporate-ness, in such areas as creative team building, community life or the family role.

1. Where have you experienced corporateness at its best? (Relate the responses to the following possible follow-up questions:
  - a. Team Building: Describe situations where extraordinary cooperation and team spirit were displayed.
  - b. Community Life: What attracted you to live in community? What is sustaining about community life?
  - c. Family Role: What is the role the community plays in relation to family life? What role does the family play in relation to community?
2. How would you describe the characteristics, features, constituents, signs of corporateness? What makes corporateness possible?
3. What do you treasure most about corporateness?

**D. SERVICE/MISSION**

1. How would you describe the mission of the ICA?
2. Tell some stories about when you felt most engaged in ICA activities, mission, programs, service?
3. What are the most exciting opportunities open to ICA currently?
4. What are symbols, metaphors or slogans that hold the ICA mission?

**E. LEARNING COMMUNITY**

1. What recent occasions have you experienced being a learner within the ICA?
  - a. What ways of learning have you found most effective for you?
2. What are recent experiences of you being a teacher within the ICA?
  - a. What ways of teaching have been most effective for you? Most creative?
3. What makes ICA a learning community today?
4. When/where has the ICA been most creative in being a learning/teaching community?
5. What special knowledge or know-how does ICA possess now that might ensure a steady growth in this arena?

**CLOSING:**

1. What other aspects, issues, factors do you want to tell us in addition to what we have asked

for? What else do you wish to add?

2. What, in summary, would you say are the key contributions the ICA is making to the world?
3. What are contributions you feel ICA has made to your own personal life?
4. What are significant contributions you would like to make within the ICA?
5. How would you talk about how ICA work fits with your overall life purpose?
6. We would like you to take a few moments to draw/write your perception of ICA. (After drawing/writing, ask them to interpret their work.)

**"The Appreciative Research Carnival is scheduled for July 31 - August 6. The first four days will be preparing the research documentation for corporate writing. We are inviting everyone interviewed to participate in the August 4 - 6 weekend for the carnival for corporate writing. Here we will be making Provocative Propositions about ICA's future. Would you be interested in participating?"**

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