



AI MODEL QUESTIONS

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Overview

Appreciative Inquiry is an exciting philosophy for change that was created by Professor David Cooperrider and his associates at the Weatherhead School of Management at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland Ohio. The assumption is that positive change can be ignited through looking at what works in our lives and what values and dreams motivate us. Something else happens in this process as well. David calls it “being surprised by friendship.” It is a surprise of liking one another, feeling the attraction to the goodness in another that supersedes cultural and religious differences... The URI has used AI interviews at its gatherings since 1996. AI interviews are helping to create relationships which are at the heart of the URI’s growth and appeal. Appreciative interviews used by the URI are based on carefully crafted questions designed to help people connect on a deep level and lay a foundation for the work ahead. Here are two examples of AI questions. If you want more information, please contact the URI office, San Francisco.

First Time Gathering

Directions and Sample Questions - Who Are We? What Do We Bring?

The gifts needed to begin are within us and are within this group here. Our purpose is to appreciate and welcome each other, and to learn about the special experiences, commitments, capabilities, and resources we bring here.

DIRECTIONS: Find a partner, preferably someone you don't know well already. When you have a partner, find a comfortable place to sit to be able to listen well. Take about 30 minutes to interview your partner. Take notes of the highlights you hear. When one interview is complete, take about 30 minutes for your partner to interview you. Use the questions below as guidelines.



GUIDELINES FOR INTERVIEWS: The following questions are offered as guidelines for interview conversations. Feel free to adapt them or add your own questions. It is not necessary to include every question in the interview. Keep track of time so that each partner has an equal amount of time to be interviewed.

AFTER INTERVIEWS, GUIDELINES FOR INTRODUCTIONS: Go around the group, take a few minutes to introduce your partner to the group and share a couple of key highlights of your interview. Everyone gets introduced, (if it is a big group, have each table introduce their partners to each other. Appoint reporters to introduce the people at each table to the larger group) As people are introduced, listen for themes or connecting ideas and experiences. When the introductions are finished, either at each table or in the group as a whole, summarize the themes you heard. What are some of the ways the gifts and interests of the people in this group might bear upon future work together?

CLOSING: The facilitator may summarize the themes you heard and offer thanksgivings

Sample Appreciative Interview Questions

1. To start, I would like to know a little about who you are. What draws you to this group? What interests you and compels you to this work?
2. To get to know you better, I would like you to reflect upon a high point in your life - a time when you were involved in something meaningful to you and felt most alive, proud, creative, and effective. Please tell me about this high point experience. What made it a peak experience? Are there lessons you have learned that might be brought to our work together as a group?
3. There are many different qualities and skills and resources that can be drawn upon as a United Religions Initiative vision is given birth and grows. We need to value these diverse resources. Many qualities, skills, and resources will be needed for the URI vision to be born and grow. Without being too humble what gifts and skills do you most want to bring to this group and the work of interfaith cooperation?
4. As you think about your community of faith, what are some of the most positive qualities or gifts that make it capable of entering into cooperation with others to build the United Religions Initiative? Are there special texts or passages that stand out for you? A story? A symbol? Historical experiences, values?
5. From your vantage point, what are some of the high points and low points in this story of interfaith cooperation? What is happening in the interfaith world that you want to see continue to happen, even as things change in the future?
6. What are your hopes and dreams for what the United Religions Initiative could offer?

First Gathering Appreciative Inquiry Questions (shorter version)



Listen to One Another

Engage one person in the following interview questions. Listen with appreciation.

The Vision

The URI is exploring a dream- something unprecedented for the religions and spiritual communities of the world - religions respecting each other and cooperating with each other in a way that the world has not yet seen. We are inviting you to participate by sharing your reflections and highest aspirations. What touches your heart about the URI vision?

Bring Who You Are

In your own life, think of a time when you were a part of making something happen that made a difference? Tell me the story. Without being too humble, what were the special qualities, gifts, talents, values that you brought?

Values and Dreaming

Imagine a world where religions cooperated for peace and justice and healing instead of killing each other. Put your thinking about thirty years into the future. Begin to visualize the kind of world you want to see for your children and grandchildren? Please share your visions.

From Dreams to Realization

Imagine people all over the world really doing things that make the URI real. What do you want to do?

Sample Appreciative Interview from URI City of Angels CC

Creating a Collective Vision, September 2000

1. Reflecting back on your experiences with URI-LA, describe a time that stands out in memory when you felt really proud to be a member of URI-LA. What was happening? Who was involved? What made it such a peak experience?
2. What do you value most about being a member of City of Angels URI-LA? In your experience when have we been our best?
3. Imagine that a wonderful genie will grant you three wishes that reflect your highest hopes for the City of Angels URI-LA. What are your three wishes?
4. It is now the year 2005 and your wishes have all been granted. We have realized our highest hopes for the City of Angels-URI LA! Looking back on the past five years, what are some of the key things that you really enjoyed doing to help make that happen? What did others do?