

## 3.3 When inquiring appreciatively handout<sup>1</sup>

'Belief rather than doubt is the stance to adopt. This is not a time for scepticism or for questions that imply a need for "proof".'  
(Magruder Watkins and Mohr, Appreciative inquiry:  
Change at the Speed of Imagination)

---

- **Assume wellbeing and strength rather than deficit**

You are looking for examples and incidents of things at their best.

---

- **The inquiry is the intervention**

You are not just gathering data. The questions you ask affect the emotional state of the person you are asking them of and the ongoing, ever-changing image they have of the organisation and the process of change.

---

- **It's not just the questions, it's the way you ask them**

As you will know, the way in which you ask the question influences people and shapes their expectations about the value and genuineness of the interview. When you are focused and interested the interviewee will experience being fully heard.

---

- **You are after stories, not opinions or analysis**

You want the person to be almost reliving the experiences they are talking about and telling you about; what they thought or felt at the time rather than examining them in a more detached way and telling you what they think of that experience now. This way you are more likely to get the genuine experience rather than a refined official line or something that the person thinks you want to hear.

---

- **Once you have the story you can move on to values, life-giving factors and wishes**

The motivating power of values and wishes comes from their emotional charge. The emotions that the stories evoke will allow the person to identify what is really important about the experience and what they want in the future.

---

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Practical Appreciative Inquiry, Coaching Leaders 2015