

Training Interviewers

Developed by John Robinson, Email: john@wensumlodge.demon.co.uk
Used with Permission

Notes for Interviewers

1. Agree a place and time when you will both be comfortable and have at least an hour for the interviews.
2. If the person is new to the Appreciative Inquiry Process and why its is being used, explain briefly that the purpose is:
 - to discover by inquiring of everyone, what this church is like at its best, what gives it life and energy, and what is valued most by individuals.
 - to use this information to imagine how the church could be in the future.
 - to find creative ways of helping the church to move nearer to that vision.
 - in particular to design redevelopments of parts of the church to support the vision.
3. Thank the individuals for being willing to help. Tell them how important their contributions are to the process, and to the future of the church.
4. Tell them how the information will be used. Ask whether they want to have their comments identified or given anonymously. Honor their agreement.
5. Introduce and ask the questions as they are written
6. Let the interviewee tell his/her story, without influencing them, try to refrain from telling your story.
7. Be a generous listener. Listen attentively, be curious about the experience, the actions, feelings and thoughts.
8. If necessary, use additional questions to encourage or probe to better understand the interviewee's thoughts "Tell me more about ..." "How did that happen?" "What was your involvement?" When you say it was a success, in what ways was it a success?" "I'm not sure I understand, Let me tell you what I heard you say, and you correct me so I get your exact thoughts"
9. If the interviewee does not want to answer a question, it's okay.
10. Have fun.
11. Personal excitement, commitment and care are qualities that are present when the interviewer and the person being interviewed are sharing stories of their personal peak experiences.
12. Make notes using key words and phrases about what was brilliant, creative, life-giving and valued, so that the meaning is clear.
13. What if the person identifies negative events and stories? These have to be heard and acknowledged. Also say to them that "When you say that things are wrong, broken, unworkable, it means that you have images in mind of how things would be if they were right, whole and working well, can you describe your image of that? In difficult situations also ask: What has kept you going despite the difficult time, where do you get strength and support?
14. When people give three wishes get them to state them positively. i.e. If some has a wish for less conflict, respond by asking: If there was less conflict what would the church be doing? or So I understand that you wish people would get along and cooperate with each other?
15. At the end of the interview take some time to talk about what the interview was like for your interviewee. Please make notes when something important occurs to you which we could learn from either about the process or about the church. (Make notes on the back, or write to us.
16. Check that your notes are clear, and bring them to the summit meeting.

Thank you for the time and care you have taken over this, I hope you enjoy and are blessed by the experience!