
*A dream is just a dream.
A goal is a dream with a
plan and a deadline.*
— Harvey Mackay

*If you don't know where
you are going, you
will probably end up
somewhere else.*
— Lawrence J. Peter

*From a change perspective
it doesn't really matter
why or how you got to
where you are.*

*What matters most is
knowing where you are,
where you want to go
next, and knowing how
you are going to get there.*

An Appreciative Model For Making Changes

To be alive means to be in a constant state of change. While many changes are imposed upon us, we also have the ability to create changes that we desire. The **Appreciative Way** is oriented to how we can design and implement desired changes.



BASIC A ⇒ B CHANGE MODEL

Creating Change

When we think of making a change we can think of it simply as moving from **"State A"** to **"State B"**. This basic model of going from **A** to **B** suggests that making effective changes requires the knowing the answers to three questions:

1. Where are you?

The answer to this question gives you a clear idea of your starting place (**State A**). You can only get reliable directions if you know where you are starting from. You also need to accept the fact that you are at **A** without any sense of blame for how or why you are there—you cannot change what you cannot accept. Note that while you need to know and accept where you are starting from, you don't need to know why or who is to blame for your being at that place in order to create a desired change.

2. Where are you going?

The next step is to get a clear idea of where you want to go (**State B**). This is also known as a "preferred future state." To maximize the probability of achieving **B**, it must be positively stated; that is, it cannot be less of **A** or less of some other undesirable condition. For the change to be welcomed and engaged in with enthusiasm, **B** must be something you value more than what you value at **A**.

3. What do you need?

Finally, you need a clear idea of what resources you require in order to get from **A** to **B**. These resources could include tangible things such as time, money, material, or personnel, or intangibles such as confidence, skills, or motivation. To identify resources we rely on a series of Appreciative Inquiry-based strategies.

Radical Acceptance and Change Processes

The core desire of the human heart is for acceptance, yet we often experience life from the perspective of alienation. We feel alienated from ourselves, our neighbors, and the Source of our existence. If alienation is the problem, acceptance is the only solution. Because alienation is often a core element of any problem situation, acceptance will be a core component of any sustainable change process.

Accept Where You Are

We cannot change what we cannot accept. Acceptance means we have to acknowledge where we are: that we are at **State A**. If we are unable to acknowledge that we are at **A**, we will be in denial and not able to change.

Accepting that we are at **A** does not mean that we have to like being at **A**. But not liking **A** is actually a poor motivation for trying to change. We need to love or value **B** more than we dislike **A** if we are to truly change. Hating **A** will actually be very counterproductive. Hate promotes short-term gain at the expense of long-term gain. Most hate-based initiatives will be difficult, if not impossible, to sustain over a long period.

We also need to accept the fact that even if we dislike **State A**, the Source of our existence has not rejected us for being at **A**. If we are still drawing breath we have not been rejected by the Source.

Does "B" Make You Lovable?

When you consider **State B** do you feel more lovable than you are at **A**? If so, you are unlikely to achieve **B**. Accepting state **A** means knowing that you are loved at **A**, that regardless of what **A** is, you are loved. It is only in the light of that love that you will have the power to access the resources you need to journey toward and achieve **B**.

Acceptance Three Step

1. Accept that you are at **State A**.
2. Accept that **State A** has not separated you from that which gives you life, the Source of your existence.
3. Accept that at this given moment **State A** is the best you know how to do, in this circumstance, to meet your needs.

From this place of acceptance learn a better way to meet your needs in a manner that is sustainable and equitable for all.

The only change outcomes that will be sustainable are those that result from greater self-acceptance.

We need to stop trying to earn God's love and just start spending it.

— Steve Bhaerman

*Love empowers action.
Love is never one thing.
On the path of life,
love is the beginning
and the end,
and the light
along the way.*
