

# Appreciative Interview Examples

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One of the most powerful steps of the appreciative inquiry process is during the “Discovery” phase, which focuses on splitting people into pairs to interview each other about the most positive experiences they had about the appreciative topic that has been chosen. In the appreciative inquiry facilitations I have led or experienced so far, I have always seen people finish these interviews filled with excitement about the possibilities of a new way forward.

The best part is that appreciative inquiry scales amazingly well, and you can use it in your organization for everything from a full exploration of your organization’s future or using it for strategic planning, all the way down to individual coaching sessions, or quick check ins during staff meetings.

Below you will find four examples of appreciative interview guides you can use in your organization.

## 1. Staff Meeting Appreciative Interview

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This is a quick and easy way to start creating an appreciative mindset in your organization. This can be used at a staff meeting, as a start of meeting checkin with the whole group, or pair people up to interview each other as an activity. You can also use this when having a quick check in with someone on your team.

1. Tell me a story, with as much detail as possible, about the best experience you have had at work this week.
2. What do you value about yourself in this story? What do you value about the other people in this story?
3. List the three most important actions, ideas, or factors that you think made this your best experience this week.

## 2. Coaching Appreciative Interview

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Coaching the people on your team can be an important part of supporting the success of your team members. You can use this appreciative interview weekly/monthly/quarterly (or whatever frequency you choose) to support team members in the work they are doing in the organization.

You may not use all the questions in this interview guide. Select the ones that match up best with the conversation you are having with the person.



1. What's going on for you since the last time we talked?
2. What possibility/project/task would you like to focus on this week/month/quarter (whichever timeline you are using).
3. Tell me about this possibility/project/task?
4. What are your strengths as they relate to this possibility?
5. What opportunities do you see in this situation?
6. What do you most aspire to achieve with this possibility/project/task? What is your vision?
7. What action/goal are you willing to commit to?
8. What results will indicate your progress?
9. When you complete this possibility/project/task what becomes possible?
10. What action will you commit to for this week/month/quarter (whichever timeline you are using).
11. What resources do you need?
12. Who could you connect with to further this effort?

### 3. Using a SOAR Appreciative Interview to Work Through a Challenge

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This interview guide can be used to help you or a team member work through a challenge they are facing, or reflect on a challenge that happened and think about how it can be handled in the future. This interview guide uses "SOAR" which stands for: Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results.

1. What is the challenge you are currently facing (or reviewing)
2. Which of your strengths could you use to work through this challenge? Do you have colleagues with strengths different from your own that could help you with this challenge?
3. How can you reframe this challenge to be seen as an exciting opportunity? What opportunities do you see for working through this challenge? What opportunities for learning and growth does this challenge provide for you? For the organization?
4. If you looked into the future and this challenge has been resolved successfully, what does this success look like? What is the best solution for this challenge you can dream of?
5. What results will tell you that you have been successful in resolving this challenge?
6. Using the strengths, opportunities, success image, and results think of the different actions you can take to make that future image of success a reality.
7. What next step will you take to move forward with this challenge?

## 4. Internal Belonging Appreciative Interview

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This interview guide was used by the RAFT team to do a full appreciative inquiry facilitation to help the team determine what RAFT needed to do, as an organization, to ensure everyone on the team feels like they belong and can be themselves in the organization.

1. Tell me a story about a time when you felt like you truly belonged while working at RAFT. If you cannot think of a time at RAFT, tell me about a time when you felt like you truly belonged somewhere else.
2. What made you feel a strong sense of belonging?
3. Who was involved?
4. What were others doing to create this sense of belonging?
5. What were you doing to create this sense of belonging?
6. Let's talk for a moment about some things you value deeply; specifically the things you value about yourself, about the nature of belonging, and about RAFT as an organization.
7. Without being humble, what do you value most about yourself – as a person and as a member of RAFT?
8. When you are feeling the best about your work at RAFT, what is it about your work that you value?
9. What do you value about RAFT as an organization?
10. What is the single most important thing that RAFT has contributed to your sense of belonging? Your life? To the world?
11. Thinking about feeling like you belong at RAFT, what do you experience as the core value(s) of RAFT? Give some examples of how you experience those values.
12. What three wishes would you make to heighten the sense of belonging at RAFT?