

## Appreciative Inquiry: The Need of the Hour

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### Introduction

Appreciative inquiry (AI) is a tenet that helps to instill positive vibes in the individual, working towards developmental changes in a system and promotes new ideas.<sup>1</sup> It is not a nascent topic. It was developed by Cooperrider and Srivastva in 1987 to introduce changes into a system through collaborative efforts [1]. Instead of taking individuals as machines, it considers humans as universe of strength, which is the exact need of the hour. It is based in the “hope theory,” which suggests that change is seen in individuals when they have: (1) an elevating purpose, (2) a sense of collective confidence to accomplish it and (3) a set of practical steps for moving forward [2,3].

### AI during times of COVID

“.....times of crisis nearly always reveal or strengthen the “true colours” of an institution, converting it into a moment to go either backwards or to move to an exceptional elevation”.

-David Cooperrider

The unprecedented health crises due to the COVID-19 pandemic has shaken societies and economies to their core and dental organizations are not an exception. The dental community forms an integral component of a dental organization; be it a dental hospital or a private dental practice. The progress or failure of the dental community is interlinked with the fate of the dental organization. Urgency demands an exceptional response; so, amidst this crisis when the very credibility of global health institutions is under siege, these organizations have to stand the test of time and should be able to evolve effectively and efficiently.

The entire dental community is undergoing an enormous turmoil during the current pandemic. The dental economy has crashed catastrophically. In addition to this, loss of our colleagues and family members has left us in grief and despair. The dental structure and our entire service of care has undergone major shifts and coping up, is nothing, but difficult. And at these difficult times, we are focusing on our failures, our loopholes and our devastations. But, is it worth it?

Albert Einstein once said, “If I were given one hour to save the planet, I would spend 59 minutes defining the problem and one minute resolving it”. So, the simple answer to solve this complex situation is our approach and the way of thinking. Our problem-based approaches do not offer a long-lasting solution but give rise to negative coping [4]. We need to focus on change for betterment rather than lingering to the limitations prevalent in the system [5]. And this is where Appreciative Inquiry comes into play.

Substantial studies in the literature have been reported in this topic with favorable outcomes. The appreciation of the staff during the process reassures better effort, which adds endeavors in the performance of their assignment. During the process of AI, the exposure and confrontation of damaging dynamics creates an opportunity for the destruction of procrastinating, altruistic, and ignorant behaviours [6].

It is imperative to understand that AI is not directing towards the ignorance of the existing problems, but choosing a different trajectory by constructive principles [1].

This adversity should be used as an opportunity to redress the dental care workforce, as they form the most critical factor driving the entire dental organization. The organization should also consistently demonstrate strong leadership, be fair and empathetic enough to motivate each staff members, so that they harness commitment and purpose far beyond the call of duty. Unlocking the current crisis demands a mutual responsibility of all, which is possible by the galvanized action by all actors to strengthen human resources for health-both to combat crises and to build sustainable systems [7].

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