



Success Analysis Protocol For Individuals

Developed by Gene Thompson Grove from earlier versions by Vivian Johnson.

Purpose

In the spirit of appreciative inquiry,* share professional successes with colleagues in order to gain insight into the conditions that lead to those successes, so participants can do more of what works.

Roles

A facilitator who keeps time, helps participants move through the process, and also participates as both a presenter and a group member. The facilitator's role is to help the group to keep focused on how the success described by the presenter is different from more routine work.

Each person takes a turn as a presenter describing a success, and listening as the group does an analysis of the conditions that have led to that success.

Group members listen to each presenter, and work collaboratively to extend and/or deepen each presenter's thinking.

**Assumptions of Appreciative Inquiry*

1. In every society, organization or group, something works.
2. What we focus on becomes our reality.
3. Reality is created in the moment, and there are multiple realities.
4. The act of asking questions of an organization or group influences the group in some way.
5. People have more confidence and comfort to travel to the future (the unknown) when they carry forward parts of the past (the known).
6. If we carry parts of the past forward, they should be what is best about the past.
7. It is important to value differences.
8. The language we use creates our reality.

"Success" is defined as something that proved to be highly effective in achieving an outcome important to the presenter.

Process

1. Identify a Success

Write a short description of a success in some arena of your professional practice. Describe the specifics of the success. Be sure to answer the question, "What made this different from others like it that I have had?"

You might choose a success that surprised you, or that you haven't already analyzed on your own, or that you would like to get others' thinking about. It doesn't have to be a large success — people learn a lot in this exercise from relatively "small" successes as well. (5-10 minutes)

2. Presenter Describes the Success

In triads, the first presenter tells the story of his or her success, in as much detail as she/he can remember. The group takes notes. (5 minutes)

3. Group Asks Clarifying Questions

The rest of the group asks clarifying questions about the details of the success in order to fill in any information the group needs to be helpful to the presenter. (2-3 minutes)

4. Group Reflects on the Success Story

Group members discuss what they heard the presenter say, and offer additional insights and analysis of the success. The presenter is silent and takes notes. (5-7 minutes)

5. Presenter Reflects

The presenter reflects on the group's discussion about what made this so successful. The group then discusses briefly how what they have learned might be applied to all of their work. (2-3 minutes)

6. Process Begins Again for the Next Group Member

Repeat Steps 2 through 6 for each member of the group. Remember to keep the focus on the underlying principles or processes that made for success.

7. Share Success Factors

The Triad identifies and lists the factors that contributed to their successes, and shares this in the large group. The large group looks for trends across triads, and then discusses what it would mean to consciously create conditions that lead to success.

8. Debrief the Process

What worked well? What would we do differently next time?