

# Helping the Good to Get Better

## Using the principles of appreciative enquiry to drive quality improvements and organisational change

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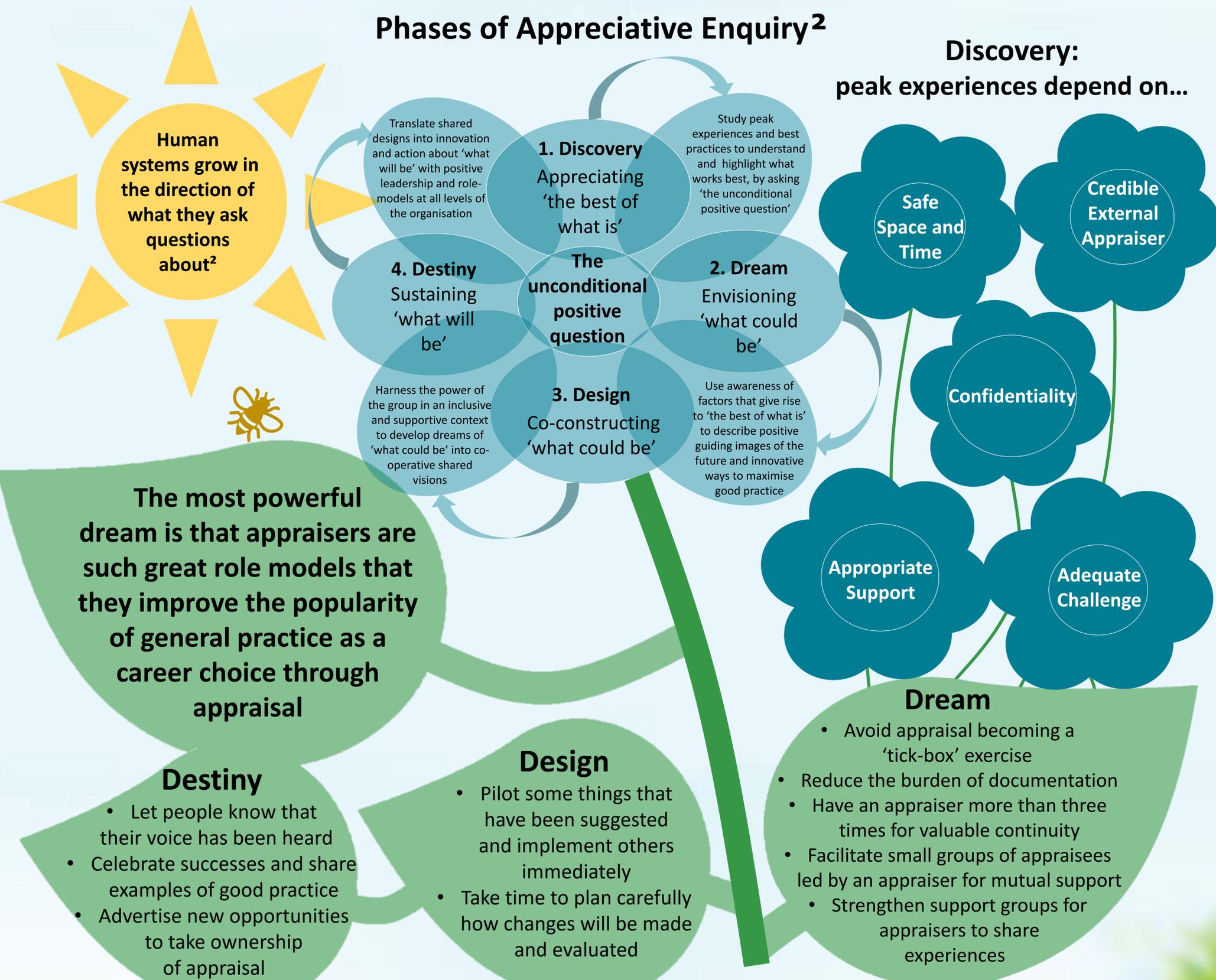
### What is appreciative enquiry?

It is an 'effective and sustainable way for fulfilling potential and maximising effective performance.'<sup>1</sup>

Using the principles of appreciative enquiry stimulates organisations to make continuous quality improvements. It is easier and more effective for human systems to grow in directions that generate ownership and enthusiasm. Positive changes are made more rapidly by identifying and building on strengths than by identifying and addressing weaknesses. This appreciative enquiry into the benefits of medical appraisal for revalidation in the UK, sought to find the 'best of what is' in appraisals facilitated by the Wessex Appraisal Service. Asking the unconditional positive question drove the discovery of common factors in peak appraisal experiences. Doctors, appraisers, and leaders came together to dream about 'what could be', and designed strategies for 'what will be', to be implemented in the quest for ever more valuable appraisals.

### Phases of Appreciative Enquiry<sup>2</sup>

### Discovery: peak experiences depend on...



**Helping the good get better:** Looking at 'the best of what is' in the Wessex Appraisal Service has shown that medical appraisals done well are valued by both doctors and appraisers. Peak experiences are generally affirming, empowering and transformative, they signpost ideas and resources, and make doctors feel supported and listened to. By embedding the principles of appreciative enquiry in our continuing work, this research will achieve far more than informing a few changes now. It will add richness to our ongoing work, allowing the organisation, and those working within it, to flourish and grow. By using discovery, dream and design explicitly in appraisals, doctors can be moved from dissonance, denial and self-affirmation<sup>3</sup> to reflection, insight and growth.



<sup>1</sup>Elliot, C. (1999). *Locating the energy for change: an introduction to appreciative inquiry*. International Institute for Sustainable Development, Manitoba, Canada

<sup>2</sup>Ludema, J.D., Cooperrider, D.L., and Barrett, F.J. (2001) *Appreciative Inquiry: the Power of the Unconditional Positive Question* in P. Reason and H. Bradbury (eds) *Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice*. London: Sage Publications

<sup>3</sup>Brennan, N., Bryce, M., Pearson, M., et al. (2017) *Towards an understanding how appraisal of doctors produces its effects: a realist review*. Med.Ed. DOI: 10.1111/medu.13348