

AIM2Flourish Classroom Exercise: Appreciative Inquiry Practice Interview

How to Use This Guide:

AIM2Flourish invites you to have a one-to-one, “Appreciative Inquiry” conversation with a business leader in your community. You will interview him or her about an innovation at their company that’s good for the world and good for business.

To get ready, try a 20-minute practice interview with a classroom partner.

Step 1: Read this guide (20 minutes)

Step 2: Interview your classroom partner (20 minutes)

Step 3: Switch roles (20 minutes)

What is Appreciative Inquiry?

AIM2Flourish uses Appreciative Inquiry—a positive, strengths-based approach—to ask questions like “What’s Working Best? And How Can We Build on It?” [Learn more here.](#)

Appreciative Inquiry has many definitions. But at its core, it’s based on the simple idea that organizations – and even individuals -- move in the direction of what we most frequently ask about. In our lives, our organizations, and even in our societies, we tend to focus on identifying all the problems we have.

Instead, Appreciative Inquiry asks us to discover what is already working and build on it. Whether in our personal lives with family and friends, to our teams at work, to our broader communities, Appreciative Inquiry is an invitation to uncover the BEST in ourselves and others, and to envision and live into the best images of the future. And it works! Appreciative Inquiry is used by organizations of all sizes around the world to create and achieve extraordinary results.

Why are we using Appreciative Inquiry for AIM2Flourish?

Appreciative Inquiry brings out the best in people and organizations. So in addition to lifting up an inspiring story about business, we can guarantee that you and the person you interview will have a positive experience. These interviews are FUN for both you and your interviewee. We know that it might seem a bit daunting to contact a business leader and ask for an interview. What you don’t realize until you conduct one of these interviews is that you are providing the business leader with an opportunity to shine a light on something they are passionate about. By the end of the conversation, they will most likely be thanking you for helping them tell a story about something they are proud of in their company.

The questions are a starting point for conversations. Feel free to invent others. Ask “What’s important, most interesting, and why?” Expect to be surprised. And at the end, simply thank your partner for a great conversation!

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1. Share a Story about Your Life...a “High Point” Experience

[This question helps you get to know the person you are interviewing, and gives you a chance to learn a positive, personal story about their life.]

Tell me about a time that stands out for you as a high point moment or peak experience—one where you felt most effective, alive, engaged, or passionate?

2. Tell Me about a Business Innovation You Admire

[These questions will help you practice asking about a business innovation, and how it is good for the world, as well as good for the business. Please refer to the AIM2Flourish Story Guide for all the information you’ll want to cover in your conversation.]

WHAT is the innovation? Is it a new product, business model, service, or technology?

HOW did the innovation emerge?

WHAT was the motivation or purpose for doing the innovation?

WHO was involved in the creation of the innovation? What did they do?

DOES the innovation relate to a sense of mission, purpose or meaning? If so, **HOW**?

WHAT is the impact of the innovation on the business, society and/or the environment?

Thank Your Partner for Sharing Their Experiences and Then Switch Roles!