

A Strengths-Based Approach to Transforming Your Program, Classroom by Classroom

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Objectives

- EXPLORE THE POWER OF FOCUSING ON STRENGTHS
- UNDERSTAND THE APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY (AI) FRAMEWORK
- APPLY AI TO REFLECT, CREATE, AND EVALUATE IN YOUR CLASSROOM OR PROGRAM
- LEAVE WITH ACTIONABLE TOOLS AND RENEWED INSPIRATION

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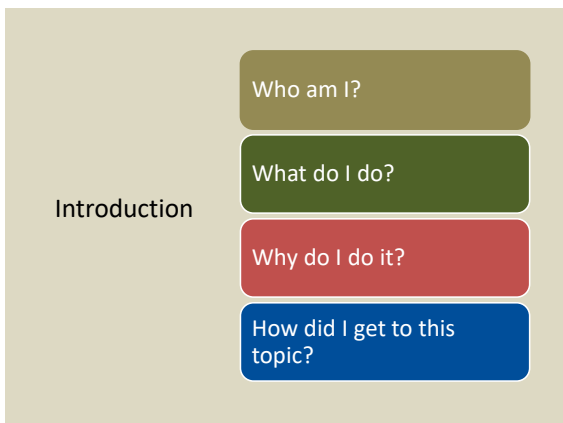
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Introduction

- Who am I?
- What do I do?
- Why do I do it?
- How did I get to this topic?

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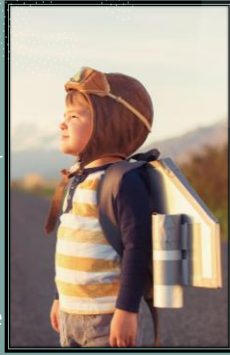
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## What is Appreciative Inquiry?

- A strengths-based, solution-focused framework
- Centers around identifying what works well
- Builds momentum for positive, sustainable change



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### Appreciative Inquiry Principles *Five original*

Constructionist

Simultaneity

Poetic

Positive

Anticipatory

### Emergent Principles

Narrative

Wholeness

Enactment

Free Choice

Awareness

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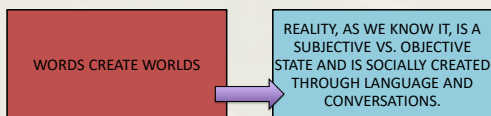
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## Constructionist Principle



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## Anticipatory Principle

Images inspire action



Human systems move in the direction of their images of the future. The more positive and hopeful the image of the future, the more positive the present-day action.

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## Simultaneity Principle

Inquiry creates change



The moment we ask a question, we begin to create a change. "The questions we ask are fateful."

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## Poetic Principle

We can choose what we study



Teams and organizations, like open books, are endless sources of study and learning. What we choose to study makes a difference. It describes – even creates – the world as we know it.

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## Positive Principle

Positive questions lead to positive change

Momentum for [small or] large-scale change requires large amounts of positive affect and social bonding. This momentum is best generated through positive questions that amplify the positive core

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## Wholeness Principle

WHOLENESS EVOKES TRUST

WHEN EVERYONE IS THERE YOU DON'T HAVE TO FEEL SUSPICIOUS ABOUT WHAT THE OTHERS WILL DO — THERE ARE NO OTHERS. IT IS COLLECTIVELY EMPOWERING. THERE IS NO ONE ELSE WHO MUST APPROVE YOUR PLAN. YOU KNOW THAT WHATEVER YOU COLLECTIVELY DECIDE CAN BE DONE."

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## AI in Action

Traditional Approach:

What's wrong? How do we fix it?



AI Approach:

What's working? How can we do more of it?



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## Analyze



- Reflect on current strengths and successes
- Recognize what's already making a difference
- Prompt: "What's going well in your classroom/program right now?"

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## Create



- Reframe challenges as opportunities
- Use strengths to inspire innovation
- Prompt: "How might we build on what's working?"

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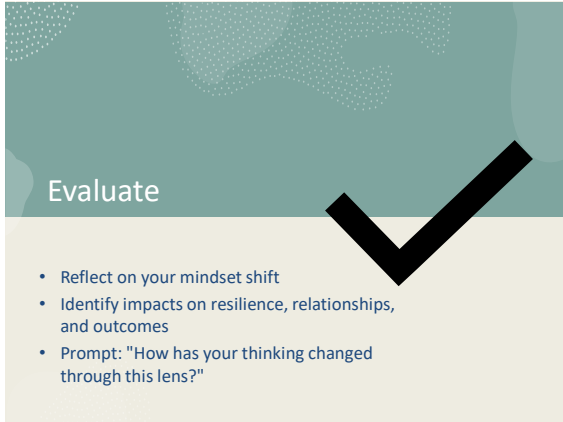
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## Evaluate

- Reflect on your mindset shift
- Identify impacts on resilience, relationships, and outcomes
- Prompt: "How has your thinking changed through this lens?"

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*A reflection tool for early childhood educators*

Check off the strengths you already use—and notice how they support your joy, connection, and impact.

- ☒ I celebrate small wins in my classroom
- ☒ I notice and name the good in others
- ☒ I use what's working to inspire change
- ☒ I model optimism and possibility
- ☒ I lead with curiosity and kindness
- ☒ I trust that I have what I need within me
- ☒ I ask questions that open up ideas and conversations
- ☒ I focus on collaboration instead of control
- ☒ I believe growth comes from building on strengths
- ☒ I take time to reflect on what brings me joy

**Reflection Prompt:**  
Which of these strengths feels most natural for you right now?  
Which one would you like to grow more intentionally?

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### SETTING INTENTIONS FOR MOVING FORWARD

**My Strengths in Action**  
What strengths have I used recently that made a difference in my classroom or program?

**My Intention**  
What is one thing I will say, do, or embody in my work moving forward?

**why this matters to me...**

**One small step I can take tomorrow:**

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### Your Next Steps

- Continue using your reflection journal
- Share success stories with your team
- Try one new strength-based strategy this week

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### Final Reflection

- Prompt: "What is one strength you will lead with tomorrow?"
- Write. Reflect. Share.

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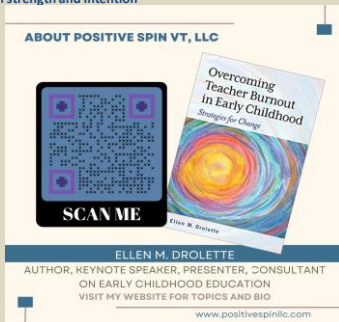
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Thank you for joining!  
 Stay connected [positivespinllc@gmail.com](mailto:positivespinllc@gmail.com)  
 Find me on Instagram and Facebook  
 Keep leading with strength and intention



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