

# The Rhetoric of Relational Leadership: A Qualitative Case Study Analysis on the Influence of Appreciative Inquiry

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# Purpose of the Study



The purpose of this research study is to explore the importance of mentoring based on the pillars of relational leadership and appreciative inquiry.



The study is intended to provide relevant inputs to enhance the professional development of students and faculty by seamless transformation of their educational relationship into mentorship.

# What informed the Study?



Perspectives  
by Dr. Rao

Perspectives  
by Dr. Scott

Presentation  
Goals

# The Successful Learning Experiences of African American Male Student-Athletes and the Successful Learning Experiences that Support Them

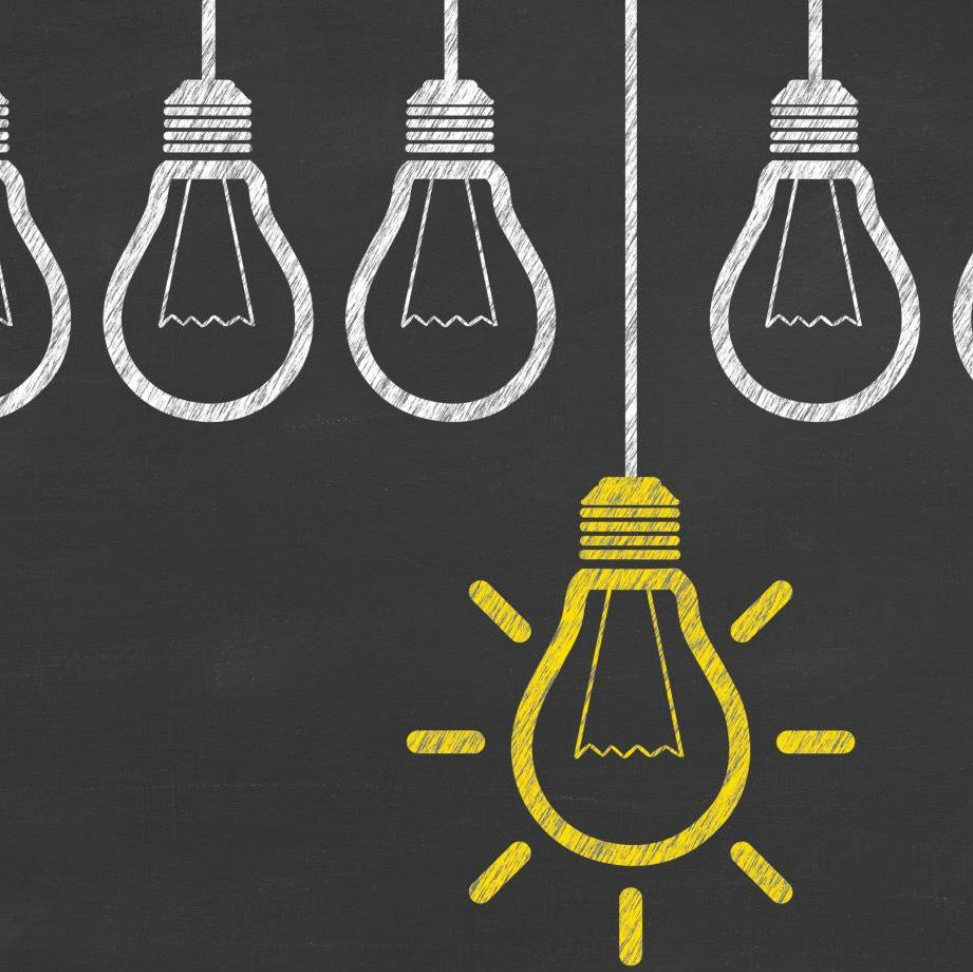


# Relational Leadership Theory (RLT)

- Relational Leadership Theory (RLT) defined.
  - Leaders and followers are not viewed separately
  - More than a transaction process
  - The process of leadership-What are we making together?
  - Investments by the leader and follower in each other
  - Each motivated by this reciprocal process

# Relational Leadership Theory (RLT)

- RLT is used as a conceptual lens understand the leader/follower relationship between students and instructors (Ospina & Uhl-Bien, 2012)
- How does one use RLT to develop better leader/follower relationships?
  - Focus on the goals and improving the process and communication



# Relational Leadership Model

- Purposeful
- Inclusive
- Empowering
- Ethical
- Process- oriented



Through the  
Lens of  
Relational  
Leadership

Building relationships

Supporting and encouraging

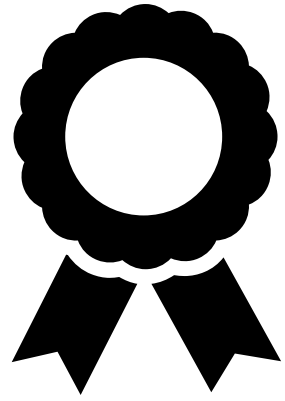
Positive affirmation

Valuing contribution

Creating opportunities



# So what does it look like?



Respect



Listen



Agenda  
planning



Collaborative  
decision making

# Appreciative Inquiry

- Philosophical Approach our Research is Qualitative
- Involves the passionate search for what is best in everyone (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008).
- Positive questions which contrasts many of the traditional deficiency approaches
- Focus on the outward and inward discovery of what gives life to the living system (Reed, 2007).
- Assists a person to understand the specifics that make the living organism vibrant or most alive (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005).

# *Peter Drucker*

The most serious mistakes are not being made as a result of wrong answers. The truly dangerous thing is asking the wrong question.



# Appreciative Inquiry Cont.

## Appreciative Inquire: Paradigm Shift

### Problem Solving Appreciative Inquiry

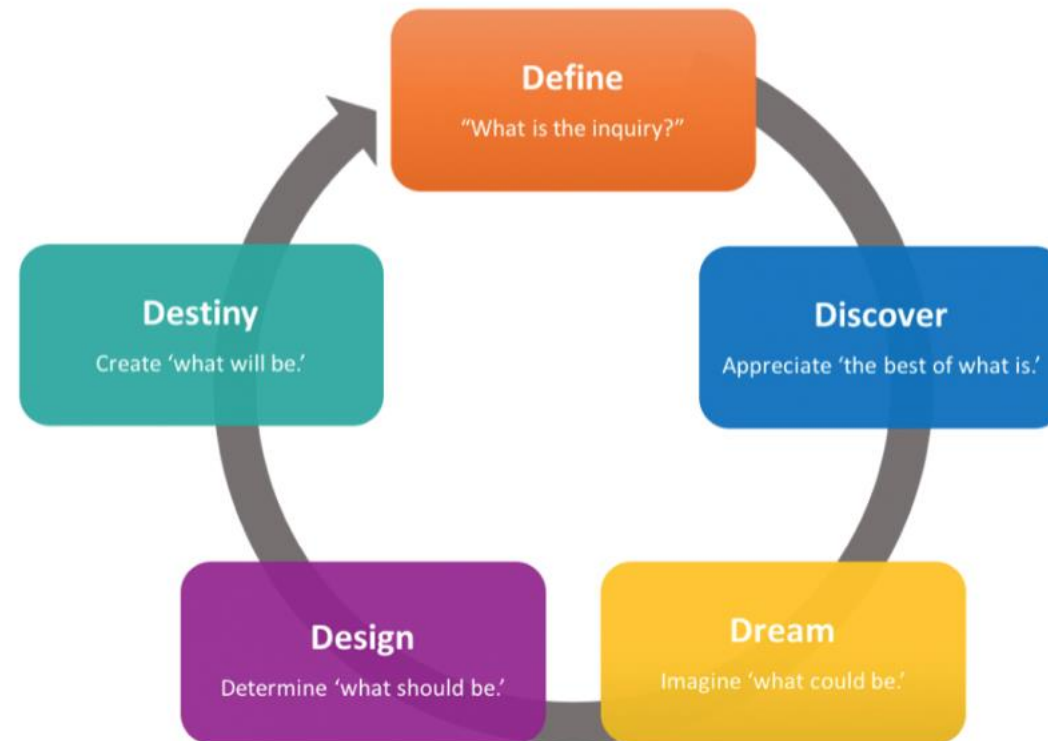
- Analysis of causes
- Leading with answers
- Blame and division
- Analysis of possible solutions
- Top-down approach

Fixing a Problem

- Appreciation of what's working
- Leading with questions
- Ownership & collaboration
- Envisioning what might be
- Open conversation

Leveraging the  
Positive

# AI – 5 D Cycle



# Art of Positive Questions



Motivate



Constructive



Optimistic



Prudent

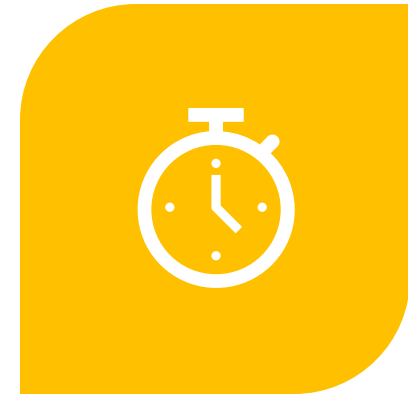
# Aiming at the Extra-Ordinary



WHAT WAS THE PEAK EXPERIENCE  
OF YOUR ACADEMIC LIFE?



WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR A  
HEALTHY LEADERSHIP?



IDENTIFY A TIME IN YOUR  
EXPERIENCE WHEN YOU WERE  
MOST PRODUCTIVE AND ENGAGED



# Activity

Share your thoughts with a neighbor:

- Describe successful mentor experiences.
- What do you do to enhance learning your mentees ?
- What can mentors do to better facilitate learning?



# Leader Takeaways

- High Beliefs
- High Expectations
- Relational Leader/Mentorship
- How can we ask more positive questions about successful learning?
- How can we be more relational in our connections with those who we mentor, teach, and train?

# References

- Ospina, S. M., & Uhl-Bien, M. (2012). Advancing relational leadership research. Charlotte, NC: Information Age
- Reed, J. (2007). Appreciative inquiry: Research for change. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Razzetti, G. (2018). Appreciative inquiry: A positive approach to change (driving transformation through co-creation). Retrieved from <https://www.theladders.com/career-advice/appreciative-inquiry-a-positive-approach-to-change-driving-transformation-through-co-creation>
- Cooperrider, D. L., Stavros, J. M., & Whitney, D. K. (2008). Appreciative inquiry handbook for leaders of change (2nd ed.). Brunswick, OH/San Francisco, CA: Crown Custom/Berrett-Koehler

Q and A