

# DAVID COOPERRIDER

*David Cooperrider ignited a movement for change around the world. The professor of organizational behavior at the Weatherhead School of Management developed appreciative inquiry, a management theory that had its formation during his doctoral studies at the school, from which he graduated in 1986. Appreciative inquiry, which focuses on an organization's strengths, has generated more than 500 scholarly papers worldwide, as well as dozens of books. In the early 1990s, the United States Agency for International Development awarded Case \$6.5 million to use appreciative inquiry in more than 200 countries. Last June, Prof. Cooperrider and Case doctoral students used AI methods during the United Nations Global Compact Summit in New York City. In September, more than 1,000 people were scheduled to gather in Miami for the Second International Appreciative Inquiry Conference. Prof. Cooperrider's ideas about strength-based change are the core of Case's new Center for Business as an Agent of World Benefit, a university-wide initiative launched this summer.*

As a young college student, I was not happy about what I was seeing in society. Increasingly, I didn't want to grow up and be an adult where we were inheriting a global complex of problems, from issues of global warming to the disparity and grinding poverty of billions of people.

On a visit to Hiroshima, it was like an atomic bomb went off inside of me, and there was this paradoxical feeling—it wasn't so much a feeling of dismay, but gratitude of the miracle of life on this planet that is now in our hands as human beings. At that moment, a question was born: What in the social sciences—I was studying social psychology at the time—will be invented and discovered that will be as powerful to human relationships and society in a positive sense as the atomic bomb has become in the negative and destructive sense?

At Case, I was assigned to be an assistant to a senior doctoral student.

He was studying the forms of leadership at the Cleveland Clinic, where physicians are in every major leadership position. It was the place where the beginning of theory and vision for appreciative inquiry began to take root.

The power of positive emotions is necessary in sustaining long-term change.

If we define the world in mechanical terms, like a car engine that needs to be fixed, then the world is a problem to be solved. If we have a different metaphor of the world, as a miracle of human interaction and existence, then a simple shift like that begins to change your questions. Instead of asking what is wrong with this picture and world, you begin to ask questions of life: What gives life to this system?

We need to learn the art of the question.

I'll bring doctoral students with me on our work in East Africa, Brazil, India.



