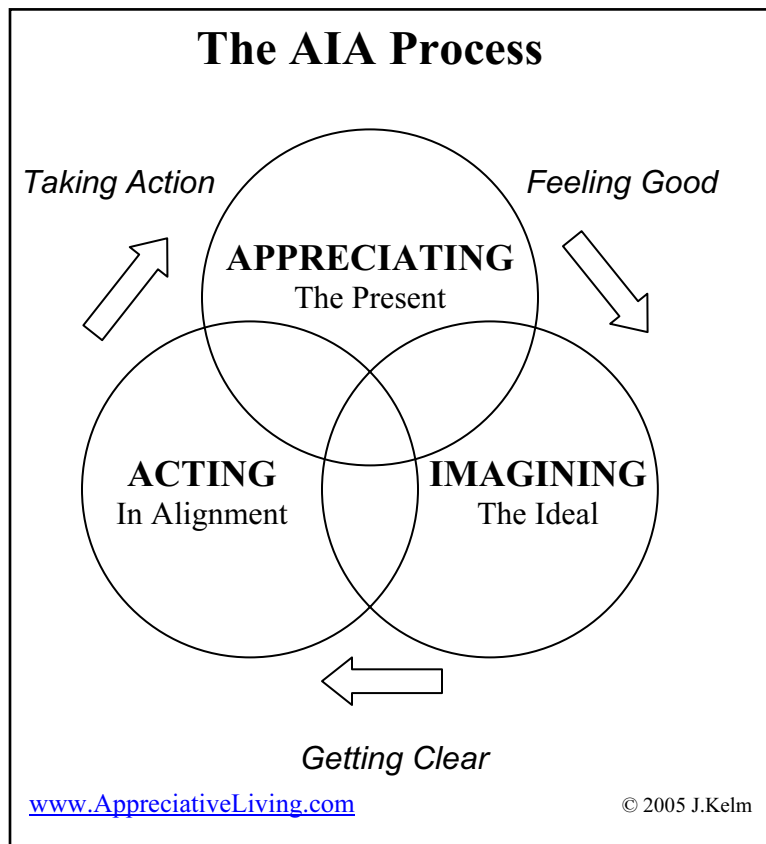


The Appreciating-Imagining-Acting (AIA) Process

By Jackie Kelm

The AIA Process is a simple way to think about integrating the principles of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) in our personal lives. This section was excerpted from the book *Appreciative Living: The Principles of Appreciative Inquiry in Personal Life* by Jackie Kelm, and more information can be found on her website at www.AppreciativeLiving.com:



Appreciating

- Finding what's right with the present situation or person
- Ask: Do I feel good about this person or situation?

Imagining

- Creating inspiring images of the ideal future
- Ask: Am I clear about what I want?

Acting

- Taking small steps to move forward
- Ask: Do my thoughts and actions align with my wants?

The steps in the AIA process are: Appreciating the present, Imagining the ideal, and Acting now in alignment. The purpose of these steps is to help us feel good about the current situation or person, get clear about what we want, and take action that aligns with our ideal future. The AIA process keeps us on course by asking three things in our daily interactions and experiences:

1. **Appreciating:** Do I feel appreciative or good about this situation or person? If not, I know I am not focusing on what I want in this situation. How can I shift to see more of the good or more of what I want?
2. **Imagining:** Am I clear about what I want and is this where I'm giving my attention? My feelings again provide helpful information, because if I'm not feeling good, I'm not focusing on what I want.
3. **Acting:** Do my current actions and thinking align with what I want? Is what I'm saying, thinking, and doing consistent with what I desire? If not, what small action can I take that would help move me just a bit closer to my ideal?

The first step is appreciating the present. It suggests that we learn to see the good attributes, the available learning, and the positive possibilities of our present experience. Exercises include things like "Gratitude lists," "Finding the Positive Core," "Shifting Focus," and "Reframing." In this step we learn how to appreciate what we have right now.

The next step is imagining the ideal. On a grand scale, we create an image of what we want most, or what things would look like if they were exactly as we'd have them. We learn to create visions that are so provocative and meaningful, we feel excited and inspired in our everyday lives. On a smaller scale, we decide what we want in the moment. Imagining includes such exercises as "Gaining Clarity," "Envisioning the Ideal," and "Surfacing Assumptions."

The last step is acting now in alignment. This means taking a small step forward to think or behave in ways that are consistent with our greatest future images. The change can (and should) be something small, and does not have to be a physical action. It can be a change in our focus, our questions, or our ways of perceiving. Exercises include "Enacting," "Acknowledging the Good," and "Developing Conversational Awareness."

For more information on the AIA process, including the exercises mentioned above, examples, and underlying theory, please see the book *Appreciative Living: The Principles of Appreciative Inquiry in Personal Life* by Jackie Kelm. There is also more information on her website at www.AppreciativeLiving.com where you can purchase the book.