



The Consulting Team, LLC
Facilitating Positive Change

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Request A Consultation

Leadership Tips February, 2021: It's Time for Appreciative Inquiry

**A proven powerful, positive approach
to managing, problem-solving and team-building**

Message from Dr. Marilyn Manning



Dear Friends,

We have all had to face numerous challenges, negativity, public criticism, and pessimistic forecasts this past year. More than ever, I encourage you to use the power of positive thinking or what is also called Appreciative Inquiry. AI, as it is usually called, is a way of looking at problems from a place of openness and inquiry. It's asking ourselves and others "What's working?" versus "What's wrong?"

I invite you to examine your self-talk, to catch yourself when you are feeling judgmental and critical, and to simply ask "What's going well that I can build on?" or "What am I grateful for in this moment?"

We can all contribute to creating an optimistic environment if we pause, catch our own tendencies to criticize and judge, and instead, look for the possibilities. Let's take this fun adventure together.

Warmest Regards,

Dr. Marilyn Manning
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(Above is my direct email — please remove M@MManning.com from your address book.)

P.S. I really want to invite you to experience Susan Schwartz's exciting complimentary webinar *[Energize Remote Brainstorming](#)*. Reserve your seat today for this 30-minute program next Tuesday, February 9 (see item 2 below).

You can also reserve your seat today for our complimentary March 9 program of Kathy Citron's, *[Delegate Successfully Virtually — With or Without Authority](#)*. (See item 3 below.)



In this issue of Leadership Tips...

1. Article: It's Time for Appreciative Inquiry
 2. Tuesday February 9 Zoom event: Energize Remote Brainstorming 1:00-1:30PM Pacific (No Charge)
 3. Tuesday March 9 Zoom event: Delegate Successfully Virtually — With or Without Authority, 1:00-1:30PM Pacific (No Charge)
 4. Our new on-line trainings
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It's Time for Appreciative Inquiry —
A proven, powerful, positive approach to
managing, problem-solving, and team-building

It's a New Year, so apply new, proven approaches to your leadership, mentorship, coaching, problem-solving, and strategic planning. Learn about the Appreciative Inquiry model and how you can use it to build on past successes and forge a fabulous future.

What is Appreciative Inquiry?

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a strengths-based, positive approach to leadership development and organizational change. Simply put, it focuses on the best of what is, and how to generate more of the same.

Traditional Approaches vs. Appreciative Inquiry (Problem vs. Positive)

In organizations of all sizes and levels a traditional problem-solving model is commonplace, solving problems by first identifying weaknesses. Yet a more positive approach exists.

Problem-Solving Model	Appreciative Inquiry Model
Comes from a place of JUDGMENT	Comes from a place of INQUIRY
Uses the lens of what's NOT working	Asks "What's already working?" or "What are we proud of?"
Focuses on fault-finding	Explores how to generate more of the same positive returns and outcomes

Rather than the traditional problem-solving approach, inquiry will lead you to discover, dream, design and determine new possibilities. Unleash the power of your and your group's positivity.



Who uses AI?

AI is used successfully by individuals, teams, organizations, and even at a societal level. In each case, it helps people move toward a shared positive vision by engaging others in creative thinking and strategic innovation.

How does The Consulting Team use Appreciative Inquiry?

AI is the cornerstone of our [team-building](#) and [strategic planning](#), [facilitation](#), retreats, and organizational development work.

When we were hired to facilitate a three-day team building retreat, the District Attorney

asked us to try a whole new approach. We applied the main tenants of AI to every discussion we had. Creativity, laughter, and innovative solutions abounded. The participants all agreed that it was the most positive and productive retreat they had ever experienced because it forced them to look through a different lens and surface many opportunities.

AI is also a key component of our coaching methodology — to build on strengths of our coaching clients at all levels and build confidence rather than seeing what's broken.

Timothy was a reluctant public speaker who was required to deliver reports to his City Council. Yet he was adept at thinking well on his feet. We coached him to revamp his report to a Q&A format which allowed him to simulate being asked questions for which the answer was the report. Council members were more engaged by this conversational style of hearing his oral reports and still had the written documents to refer to. This win-win was a boon to Timothy's confidence.

We use AI when we facilitate brainstorming sessions. This builds on past triumphs with “yes and ...” thinking for workgroups, departments, and organizations.

How can customer service levels remain high during the pandemic? The process we used began with a compilation of the many best service practices prior to the shutdown. Appreciating all that was achieved, the department re-imagined how to translate winning strategies to include chat, email, Zoom, and MS Teams communications. Then they explored new possibilities these technologies made available. Satisfaction ratings soared.

We also apply AI when mediating conflicts.

We were hired to resolve a personality clash between a department head and her direct report, a supervisor. No matter what the supervisor tried, her boss found fault. The supervisor kept trying to “fix” herself. When she applied AI, she realized that she needed a different environment where her strengths would shine. She soon found a much better job and a boss who believed in her.

Applying Your Appreciative lens, in seven easy steps

Are you ready to employ the Appreciative Inquiry lens at your next staff meeting, one on ones, retreat or team-building session? Here are the steps:

1. Introduce the concept of AI
2. Invite others to use their “what's already working” lens in regards to a particular problem, process, initiative, protocol, or campaign under scrutiny
3. Collaborate to make lists of all the things that are working well or that you are proud of.
4. Analyze what's been successful in the past and what you'd like more of.
5. Strategize how to bring forward or expand upon what's working.

6. Join the positivity posse and refrain from dwelling on what's wrong, broken, or just not working. If you lapse into the trap of judgment, just flip the negative view 180 degrees, finding its upside: opportunities for positive change.

7. Relish and celebrate the new discoveries, energy, and excitement as you craft a future of success.

Let 2021 be a year of positivity and possibilities for you and your team.



[Food vector created by macrovector - official - www.freepik.com](https://www.freepik.com)

If Your Glass is Half Full...

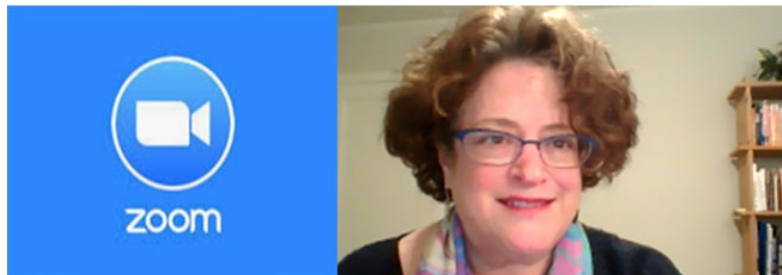
Having an optimistic outlook on life was associated with living significantly longer, according to findings from two NAS research projects of more than 71,000 people over 30 years.

Optimism is specifically related to an 11 - 15 % longer life span, on average.

Optimistic people fall asleep faster, sleep better and longer, and are generally better rested than their less-optimistic peers, according to a study of more than 3,500 people ages 32-51 from Birmingham, Alabama; Oakland, California; Chicago; and Minneapolis.

Click here to register for our free February webinar

**FREE 30-min. online event Tuesday February 9, 1PM:
Energize Remote Brainstorming**



Facilitated by Senior Associate Susan G. Schwartz, PMP

Remember how energizing it was when we brainstormed in the same room, drawing on flipcharts and moving sticky notes around? Especially

when great ideas and solutions emerged.

The two-dimensional aspect of remote meeting platforms does not need to limit the energy and ideas that come from group brainstorming.

Join us Tuesday, February 9th at 1pm to explore how you can use Zoom tools that will expand two-dimensional screen windows to create a three-dimensional brainstorming experience.

- Learn how to set ground rules for success.
- Unlock breakout rooms and brainstorming
- Unleash the power virtual flip charts

**Tuesday, February 9
1:00-1:30PM Pacific**

Limited space: confirm your seat and receive log-in details when you register using the button below.

Register for this free 30-min. online event next week

Click here to register for our free March webinar

**FREE 30-min. online event Tuesday March 9, 1PM:
Delegate Successfully Virtually —
With or Without Authority**



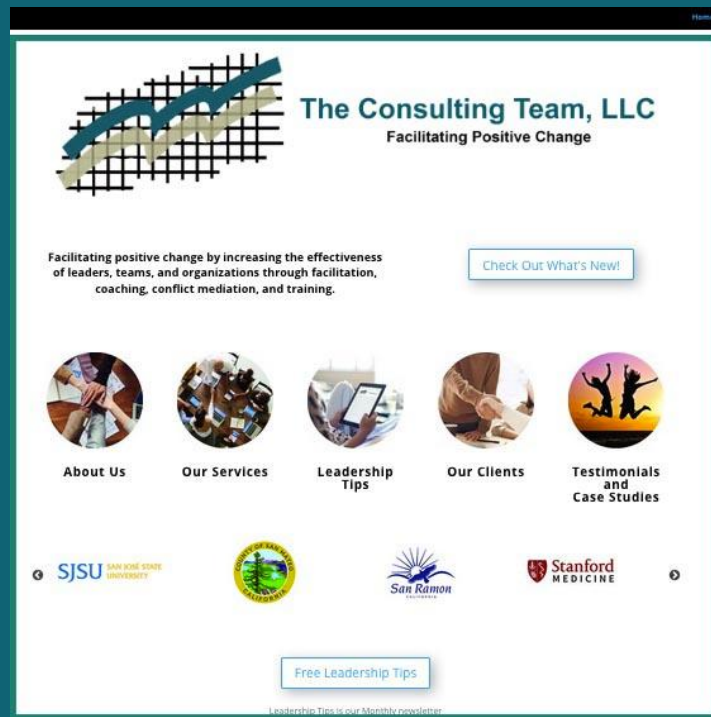
Facilitated by Senior Associate Kathye Citron

- Ever end up doing the work yourself that you had delegated to a staffer?
- Are you giving the right job to the right person?
- Are you consistently clear in delegated expectations and goals?
- Do you follow-up enough for successful outcomes?

Tuesday, March 9

Limited space: confirm your seat and receive log-in details when you register using the button below.

Register for this free 30-min. online event March
9



Our new On-line Trainings for Today's Virtual World:

Customized for you...from 90 Minutes - 3 Hours

All training offerings on www.TheConsultingTeam.com are now virtual!

Best Practices for Managing Remote Workers and Teams

Would you like help communicating one-on-one with direct reports working from home? This program offers tips for conducting crucial conversations remotely, helping coach your staff in prioritizing timeliness and self-management, and strategies for increasing online engagement and motivation.

Managing Crisis and Change: Surviving in a State of Flux

This session provides the tools you need for transitioning through change and self-care to embrace the new reality. Learn how to proactively navigate and smoothly embrace uncertainty by using the stages of processing change to know where you are and what's next.

How to Stay Fresh and Relieve Stress

More than ever, employees, supervisors and managers are experiencing disruptions, frustrations, and stress from illness, technical challenges, economic pressures and the uncertainties of this current pandemic. Learn techniques for self-care, stress reduction, creating a nurturing and soothing environment, and how to look out for

each other to remain healthy, productive and upbeat, while future-focusing.

Applying Emotional Intelligence in Uncertain Times

During times of uncertainty people look to their managers to provide clarity that will enable them to deal with chaos, overcome challenges, and achieve shared goals. Emotional Intelligence equips managers to recognize their own and others' behaviors and make choices to improve workplace performance and productivity. This session provides you with easy-to-implement tools you can apply immediately.

Listening Amid Endless Distractions

During shelter-at-home we're more distracted than ever. This training helps you pay attention to paying attention. Learn to avoid common listening mistakes, deepen your ability to "go deep" as a listener, discerning what is being said, implied, unspoken and more. You will learn to understand the "listening gap" and how to overcome it, and how better listening leads to increased trust, enhanced credibility and better team cohesion.

Managing Multiple Demands and Priorities While Working From Home

Learn proven techniques for prioritizing your projects, time and energy while working remotely. Receive help managing distractions, remaining focused, dealing with internal and external pressures while getting back into your flow state while having your out-of-office experience. Discover ways to optimize your environment to increase productivity and peace of mind.

For information contact [Dr. Marilyn Manning](#)

You can also reach us by phone: (650) 965-3663

Get A Boost From Our Team of Trainers, Facilitators, and Coaches



[Stewart Levine, J.D.](#)



[Dr. Marilyn Manning](#)



[Kathy Citron](#)



[Craig Harrison](#)



[Susan G. Schwartz, PMP](#)



[Victoria Smith-Raymond](#)



[Richard Lonergan, MA, CFO](#)

Contact The Consulting Team to learn more about our online training, group and one-to-one virtual coaching, and consulting assistance for leaders and employees.

The Consulting Team

— FACILITATING POSITIVE CHANGE —

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Get In
Touch

