



SUPPORTING THE HEALTH
AND WELLBEING OF THE
ARMED FORCES
COMMUNITY AND CIVILIAN
FAMILIES IN CORNWALL



Purpose and Goal Setting



Appreciative Inquiry is a process tried and tested since the mid-1980s. For the purposes of coaching it is a 4 -stage process whereby Purpose and Goals logically emerge as an outcome of considering one's character strengths, unique skills, values and beliefs, identity and dreams.

Discovery – the first stage

Generally, people are not aware of their character strengths, making it impossible to utilise them effectively in their relationships, their hobbies and their careers. To discover your character-strengths you can go onto the website, authentichappiness.org, register, and then complete the VIA Character Strengths questionnaire. It's all free but you will need to complete the questionnaire in one sitting, which will take between 30 -45 minutes. Once completed, you receive a printout identifying your top strengths. Initially, it will give you only 5 strengths and if you click the icon that says 'more', it will print out all 24 strengths. This done, you can authenticate your top 3-5 strengths with your coach, family and friends. Using your strengths more, and in different ways, together with your values/beliefs, unique skills and identity, can then be used to the fullest extent in your life at present and also in setting your vision and mission for the future.

Dreams – the second stage (PURPOSE)

In this stage, try to visualise your dreams without getting stuck on any obstacles which emerge. To assist with this process, imagine you get into your own personal time machine and you travel to a day in your **ideal** future. It can be a week or a year from now, but it is your **ideal**. Visualise the detail of this, what are you doing? Who is around you? What are the associated colours,

smells, sounds and feelings? How do you feel? What is your environment? It is important to employ **all** your senses and make the vision as vivid as possible. Write this down in the present tense as though it has already happened, and you are describing how it is now. Now look back (to the old days) , what obstacles did you have to overcome to get to this ideal? How did you meet those challenges, what had to change in your life and who helped?

During this stage, you should consider writing down a description of 'The Best Possible Me'. Contemplate, given your resources, what is the best you can achieve in life? Include all aspects of yourself and aim to improve them (health and wellbeing, relationships, spirituality, career, etc.) Do this exercise 3 times a week for 20 minutes. At the end of the week, observe any themes emerging. They might be your; environment, behaviours, strengths, capabilities, beliefs/values and/or identity. 'Best Possible Me' should provide you with a Purpose/Vision. Consider how your resources can assist you to achieve your dreams?

This work engenders Purpose/Vision and once that has been established you can consider the pathways (ways and means) towards your purpose and then an action plan.

Design – the third stage (GOALS)

This stage involves thinking and documenting the different pathways towards your dreams. It builds positivity and hope. It manifests resources and a vision into clear and realistic goals. These goals are the backbone of your future planning and it will stand or fall depending on how strong, achievable and well-formed they are. Any future planning should anticipate challenges and obstacles as these are part of life. Should an obstacle be too big, another pathway could be chosen. Once a specific pathway has been selected, an action plan can be written to measure progress against Purpose. Remember a vision is not a blueprint, it is the star that guides us.

Destiny – the fourth stage

To assist in this stage, it can be useful to stand at the point of success/accomplishment and start to walk backwards along a timeline and ask yourself what needs to be achieved by that point. So, if the purpose is to get a certain job in May 2021, what do you need to have completed by April 21, then by March, Feb, Jan? Once you have planned this all the way back to the present moment, you should know what to do each week and month to reach your goal. This is an alternative method of future planning and is useful when

a goal must be completed by a specific time. It prevents a ‘concertina’ effect at the end of the process.

Once this exercise has been completed, an action plan should be written with due consideration of, who is responsible and who will support. A key timeline for specific, measurable, achievable, and realistic action points will also need to be completed.

For a consistency check, once the action plan has been completed, ask the question, ‘Will my resources, dreams and **Purpose** be fulfilled?’

This is the Appreciative Inquiry coaching process, which needs the individual and coach to ask the appropriate question at the right time and at the right stage. Once Purpose has been established, the rest of the work seems to fall into place, and that’s why **Purpose is Power**.

For further information on Purpose, you can watch the following:

1. <https://youtu.be/bE4BPC-UPqE> - story of Shaun Thomson, world champ surfer. (click on ‘open hyperlink’ to view video) – a useful exercise leading on from this videoclip is to write 10 statements beginning with ‘I will.....’. This is an immensely powerful exercise and has the potential to commit you to your goals.
2. Netflix – ‘Resurfaced’ – documentary on returning soldiers and their venture into surfing.

Nick Banfield (MSc, CPsychol)



Surf Action, Room 6, Carnon Building, Wilson Way, Redruth, Cornwall, TR15 3RS
T: 01209 210350 | Email: info@surfaction.co.uk
www.surfaction.co.uk | Registered Charity No. 1140191

