



HUMANE VOICE

Discover, Dream, Design, Destiny

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) – A positive approach to change and success

There's a new way of thinking which has great potential for the animal welfare community. Appreciative Inquiry, known as "AI," has been used effectively in hundreds of successful businesses and social causes from GTE and Hunter Douglas to World Vision and UNICEF. Instead of the traditional problem solving approach — finding what is wrong and developing solutions to fix the problems — Appreciative Inquiry looks for what is "right" in an organization, what is already working well, in order to build on success. Rather than focusing on what is being done wrong, it shifts our efforts on what we're doing RIGHT!

As a change process, AI is parallel to the positive reinforcement model of learning that we use with animals. AI is well-grounded in a huge body of research which indicates that by producing positive images we can produce positive actions [for example: the placebo effect in medicine, the Pygmalion effect in education, the visualization effect in sports, the heliotropic effect in biology, and the meditation effect in spirituality]. Words have the power to both destroy and heal. The words we choose directly influence the dynamics of our conversations. Think of the power of words like hope, imagination, community, transformation, relationship, connection, integrity, learning, spirit, generosity, vision, creativity, value, and possibility. AI assumes that what we focus on, and the language that we use, becomes our reality. If you envision success, you will be successful.

Making AI Happen

The first step is to get everyone to participate, to accept *all* ideas as valid, listen to each other, ask questions, and be curious. Differences should be acknowledge – not "worked". As one way of using Appreciative Inquiry in an organization, a small group might gather to study the concepts in order to gain an in-depth understanding of Appreciative Inquiry. This is often followed by a dialogue process with members of this group interviewing each other as well as other members of

the organization asking questions that elicit the creative and life-giving events experienced in the workplace. These dialogues often begin with three or four general questions such as:

(Discover) Looking at your entire experience with the organization remember a time when you felt most alive, most fulfilled, or most excited about your involvement in the organization. What made it exciting? Who else was involved? Describe how you felt about it.

(Dream) Talk about some things you value deeply; specifically, the things you value about yourself, about the nature of your work, and about this organization. Without being humble, what do you value most about yourself as a person and as a member of this organization? When you are feeling best about your work, what about the task itself do you value? What do you value about the organization? What is the most important thing this organization has contributed to your life? to the world?

(Design) What do you experience as the core factors that give life to this organization? Give some examples of how you experience those factors. –*What should be.*

(Destiny). What three wishes would you make to heighten the vitality and health of this organization? –*What will be.*

Because Appreciative Inquiry calls for a change in attitude and thinking patterns, it is far more than a technique for "fixing" organizations. It requires an organization to make a commitment to continuous learning, growth, and generative change. The AWFNJ's mission is to unite all New Jersey animal protection organizations and to work collectively to elevate the standard of care and level of knowledge related to animal welfare in New Jersey. Several of our board members were present at an Appreciative Inquiry workshop at the American Humane Conference in September and we will be using this technique to aid us in fulfilling our mission. We encourage you to contact us to be part of this movement so that we can help all animals, and the humans who help them.

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You can learn more about Appreciative Inquiry, at these websites:

Appreciative Inquiry: A Transformative Paradigm, at: www.odnetwork.org/odponline/vol32n1/transformative.html

Appreciative Inquiry: An Innovative Process for Organization Change, at: www.hhs.gov/ohr/diversity/read/aiinnovative.html.

Enabling communities to practice the best in early childhood development (ECD), UNICEF at: www.comminit.com/pdf/IECD_Uganda_AI_Workshop.pdf

The Best Possible World, at: www.cwru.edu/pubs/cwrumag/spring2002/features/world/textonly/index.shtml

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The Scott McVay

2004

UNITY AWARD Call for Entries



The AWFNJ is seeking nominees for the 2004 *Scott McVay Unity Award* which recognizes an individual or group whose collaborative efforts have made a lasting impact on improving animal protection in New Jersey. The winner of the *Unity Award* will receive a \$1,000 honorarium to be presented at the AWFNJ Conference on March 27, 2004.

Nominations are open to individuals or organizations, local or statewide. For details, entry submission requirements and form, phone the AWFNJ at: 856-740-1344; email to unity@awfnj.org or visit the AWFNJ website at www.awfnj.org.

Feel free to copy this and post it at your shelter or mail to your membership.

NOMINATIONS ARE DUE BY DECEMBER 30, 2003

FREE NJ ANIMAL LAWS CD for NEW members

JOIN THE AWFNJ TODAY AND RECEIVE A FREE
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this newsletter

PREVENTING STAFF BURNOUT

Stress is a given in animal protection work, but burnout doesn't have to be.

In this article on coping with stress, we'll look at what managers can do to create a healthy work environment that diminishes risk of staff burnout.

A quick review: Burnout is a syndrome with physical, mental, and emotional attributes that progress through eight stages of severity. There are three dimensions to burnout: depersonalization, reduced personal accomplishment, and emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion is the most debilitating and intransigent dimension of burnout and is primarily the result of job demands exceeding a person's knowledge, skills, or preparation. In other words, there's a gap between what a person knows and what s/he is required to do. This knowledge or skill gap causes even greater stress and emotional harm when the results from mistakes are potentially serious - for example, when mistakes could lead to risk of injury or death to self or others.

The stress of a knowledge or skill gap can be particularly hard to deal with because often employees are unable to identify particular skills or training that they are lacking. It's a bit of a catch 22, in that often we are unaware of how little we actually know about a topic until we begin to

learn about that topic in depth. Think, for example, of how knowledge of animal diseases influences our cleaning procedures, and yet how few of our cleaning staff are completely versed in the nature of these diseases and their transmission. If they were, these staff could not only perform their jobs more effectively, they could actually problem solve and function much more independently (think: with less supervision from you) and with greater confidence.

For years we have acknowledged a high turnover rate in animal protection and attributed it to the sad and brutal realities of the field. How then has it been possible for some organizations to maintain a stable staff for long periods of time? I propose that burnout is high in those animal protection organizations where orientation, training, and ongoing support is mediocre and minimal, and that those organizations which maintain a stable staff have learned to take care of their staff by ensuring they have the knowledge and skills to successfully perform their jobs. Indeed, current research on burnout in other high stress fields such as nursing and search and rescue clearly demonstrates that comprehensive orientation and training is critical for maintaining a stable, competent, and healthy staff.

Orientation Provides the Foundation

As a manager, you have a brief opportunity with new employees to shape their first experience in the (sometimes strange) world of animal protection. One way to think about orientation is as an interpretation tool for the employee. In addition to the standard fare of most orientations - such as personnel policies and employee parking - consider including discussions and information on anything that will help a new employee to better understand the work, the organization, and her/his role.

This includes:

- History - How and when and why did your organization come into being? How and why has your organization evolved since then?
- Mission & Vision - What is the primary purpose of your organization? What are you striving to achieve in the next five to ten years? How will that make a difference for animals, people, and the community?
- Big Picture - What's the world of animal protection all about? What are the current goals, accomplishments, philosophical questions, and debates in the field? What's the lingo of the field? How and where does your organization fit in relation to the big picture?
- Community - What are the community's needs? What is the nature of the relationship between the organization and the community? Who else is doing similar work in the community and what is the organization's relationship to them?
- Tour & Introductions - What happens in every space in

the organization and how does that function relate back to the mission and vision? Who are the incredible people who work there and what knowledge, talents, and energy do they bring to the whole team?

- Policy - What are the organization's philosophical, practical, safety, and personnel policies?
- Supervision & Training Plan - What is the personal mission and job description for the new employee? How and when will training be accomplished? Who will be the supervisor and who can the employee go to with questions?

Obviously this kind of orientation isn't accomplished in an hour or two. As long as orientation begins as soon as possible upon hire, it's perfectly OK to guide new employees through extended orientations that take place over the first few months of their tenure. The purpose of orientation is not to brainwash new employees, but to provide them with credible information and a broad context so that they can make meaning of the interactions, events, and processes going on in our organizations. A good orientation is a great way to say to the employee, "Welcome! We're glad you're here, and we're committed to helping you to be part of our team and to be successful in your job." The importance of this message in laying the foundation for an employee's success cannot be understated. People who feel valued by their organizations are more inclined to take their jobs seriously and to value the organization and other people who work there.

PREVENTING STAFF BURNOUT (CONTINUED)

Training Initiates and Facilitates Learning

Training is a process of providing information, guidance, and practice to develop a person's knowledge and skills (i.e.: application of that knowledge). Training shapes the growth of an employee within the organization. While training ideally continues throughout an employee's tenure, for the purposes of this article we will focus on the initial training provided in the first six months of a new job.

The first step in designing a successful training program is to recognize that success is defined by how well the employee learns. Initial training can be considered successful when the employee can demonstrate knowledge of:

- everything s/he is supposed to do and how,
- why it's supposed to be done that way [Knowing "why" enables employees to problem solve and function independently.]
- where and when their tasks are performed,
- who (animals, community and other staff) is impacted by what they do [This helps employees to see the importance of their role in the context of achieving the organization's mission. It also helps employees to function as effective team members.]
- what to do if something goes wrong and/or they are unable to perform one or more of their tasks ["what if" tests competency, instills personal responsibility, and creates a sense of partnership between the employee and the supervisor. Often the answer to "what if" is, "consult with my supervisor."]

Given the complexity of animal sheltering, this level of competency is easily six months in the making for nearly all animal care, handling, and adoption staff.

Unfortunately, one of the least effective methods of training is also the method most commonly used in animal protection: on-the-job-training or OTJ. While some OTJ is necessary at some point in the training, relying almost exclusively on OTJ is problematic because...

...it usually occurs too soon (often before the employee has received an orientation, i.e.: a context for interpreting events),

...it is too much information at once,

...it's with the wrong people (training is a skill; knowing how to perform a function does not qualify someone to train that function),

...it takes place in a climate not conducive to learning because it's too noisy, fast paced and stressful, and

...it occurs without adequate supervision and monitoring to see what, exactly, the employee is learning and how well they're learning.

So what's the alternative? In addition to workshops, courses, videos, and manuals offered by national organizations and humane federations, consider custom developing some specific skills modules for your own training program. Recognize that people have a variety of learning styles and have had previous experiences (both good and bad) with learning so make your training fun. Incorporate the principles of humane training into your program.

Be creative and enlist help from existing staff. Popular games adjusted to incorporate shelter knowledge can be used very effectively to train new staff and to refresh the skills of seasoned staff. For example, create Jeopardy quizzes using facts on shelter diseases, cleaning procedures, and animal nutrition. Make a matching game out of your shelter statistics. Safety procedures and practices can be transformed into a scavenger hunt for exits, eye wash stations, fire extinguishers, and MSDS forms. As you can see, this kind of training not only makes learning fun, but it enhances the team environment.

Follow a plan for developing training modules. First, clarify the purpose of the specific training (why or how will learning this skill help your organization?). Second, identify exactly which skill(s) the training will focus on (for example, reading feline body language). Third, specify exactly what the employee(s) should be able to do at the conclusion of the training (for example, to safely lift, hold, and move cats, and to recognize potential safety risks with certain cats). Next, create or design games, demonstrations, and supervised hands-on experiences to train the target skill(s) (for example, a slide show and guessing game of cat postures and their meaning, followed by a lecture). Finally, accumulate training resources - such as books, articles, videos, and audio tapes - that will provide further information for the employee(s).

Conclusion

Many staff come to this work with no prior experience in the field but incredibly eager and willing to jump in to make a difference. In essence, during the first few weeks on the job, these new employees are like sponges, soaking up everything around them. By providing comprehensive orientation and training for your staff, you can ensure they're "soaking up" the things that will best

help them and your organization. As it turns out, your best defense against burnout, is also a strategy for being a productive and successful organization.

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Contact Bert at bertt@aspc.org
Courtesy of The ASPCA

SHELTER SPOTLIGHT - PROTECTING PETS IN CRISIS

Working in collaboration with social service agencies, the Mt. Pleasant Animal Shelter provides free boarding and veterinary care for up to 90 days for animals in households in crisis situations. Project SASHA (Safe and Sound Housing for Animals) was named in memory of a dog that had endured years of neglect and abuse, but found peace in her final days at the Mt. Pleasant Animal Shelter.

How It Works

- Dogs or cats are housed for a period not to exceed 90 days.
- If necessary, the owner can formally surrender the animal to be rehomed, provided the animal has no major health issues and its temperament is conducive to being offered for adoption.
- Dogs/cats are housed in the shelter's new isolation wing, away from the general public's view.
- Whenever possible, medical records are obtained in advance (faxed by owner's vet) or as soon as possible.
- If veterinary care is not current, animals are vaccinated at the shelter to protect them from disease.
- No one other than management is permitted to handle the animals for safety and security reasons.
- Client information is confidential; however, the shelter reserves the right to advertise the program.
- The client may bring the animal directly to the shelter after arrangements have been made through a social service organization; however, the client is permitted one visit so that they may have some comfort in knowing where the animal is and the care it is receiving. Additional stress and separation anxiety occur for the pet when the owner visits and then leaves again. It also

increases the likelihood that an abuser (if that is the case) may find the location of the pet and threaten the safety of the animal and staff.

- Appointments must be made through a social service organization to temporarily surrender and/or reclaim the animal. Requests directly from members of the public will be denied. The client must sign a liability waiver and release before the animal can be placed in the care of the shelter. It is additionally recommended that the client complete a screening form.

Additional Advice

It is important to have the public go through a social service agency for screening if you do not know the individuals personally. An agency will be able to determine who can really benefit from this program and who is truly eligible.

In many cases, most of the paperwork is not completed until sometime after delivery of the animal, however, the release and liability waiver **MUST** be completed during that process.

Since there is generally no medical information on the animal, it is always best to limit exposure and quarantine whenever possible.

There have been occasions when new housing was not immediately available to the program participants, particularly for dog owners. The 90 day boarding requires some flexibility in those cases.

For more information and forms, contact Robin Buchanan, Mt. Pleasant Animal Shelter at 194 Rt. 10, East Hanover, NJ 07936 robin@njshelter.org

EDITORIAL

By Lori Noel, AWFNJ Coordinator

In September, I had the privilege of attending the American Humane Conference in sunny Anaheim, California. It was my first national animal welfare conference, and each day lived up to its theme and was "Challenging, Inspiring and Successful."

The Challenging Leadership Forum opened the conference. The theme, "The Impact of Language on the Animal Welfare Movement" was a hot topic. Guardian or Owner? Valid arguments on the legal ramifications of the term "guardian" for our companion animals was quite interesting.

Dr. Temple Grandin, the AWFNJ 2003 Conference keynote speaker, was there once again Inspiring all with her insightful vision into how an animal may think and feel.

I concentrated on the Strategic Planning Track and felt absolutely invigorated every day during the sessions led by Bert Troughton of the ASPCA. We learned how to use Appreciative Inquiry (AI). I encourage you as an individual and a group to refer to the cover story on AI and apply this effective approach to achieving your goals.

Each day began with a question or a profound statement and a recap from the day before. The atmosphere was very laid back but with tons of energy amongst 50-60 participants. Each participant introduced himself to his new group and we discovered what was already working for everyone: individually or organizationally. This allowed us to focus on the highpoints of an accomplishment. We learned to first ask what worked well? That moves the conversation to a positive experience. Try it. It really does happen.

We all dream. The trick is to turn our dreams into reality. As a cheer from my old Alma Mater goes, "You can do it, if you put your mind to it." AI helps you identify the great stepping-stones you will need to bring your dreams into focus.

Design your thoughts. "Where you think you are going is where you end up." What direction do you want your organization to go? How do you want others in your field to see you?

It was amazing to me that just about every organization in the strategic planning session had the same experiences, road blocks, passions, frustrations and goals. There were groups from California to Virginia. Some had been working in animal welfare for over 10 years, others just started; some had a not-so-pleasant shelter, while others had a newly renovated oasis. Some groups had well organized boards of directors, others less so. Both limited admission and open admission agencies were there.

We need to work together to effect positive change for the welfare of animals through legislation and education. I would like to suggest some challenges that can help your agency grow. Remember to focus on aspects that work well.

1. If you are an open admission facility, partner with a limited admission organization for animal exchanges, special events, continuing education, providing community services, or whatever is most needed in your area.
2. If your organization has run into some difficulty with management or operating procedures, call upon an organization in your neighboring community or county that is not directly involved in animal welfare but that is well respected and ask them to work with you.
3. If you know of an organization who has been successful building a relationship with their Township or County ACO and you would like to improve your relationship, call up that group or ACO and ask them about what steps they took to get there.

Let us keep in mind our mutual desires. I am sure all of our mission statements have similar, if not the same, words: animals, welfare, protection, prevention of cruelty, adoption, rescue, and companion.

Alfred North Whitehead said, "Ideas won't keep. Something has to be done about them." AI is a powerful tool to help us turn our dreams into our destiny.

The opinions stated in the editorial do not necessarily reflect the AWFNJ position.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November

Adopt-a-Senior-Pet Month

Sponsor: ASPCA and Petfinder.Com
www.aspc.org/senior pet or http://www.petfinder.org

November 1 – 8

National Shelter Appreciate Week

Sponsor: The Humane Society of the United States
202-452-1100 www.animalsheltering.org

November 10

AWA Annual Meeting

Voorhees, NJ 856-424-2288 or www.awanj.org

November 22, 23, and 30

St. Hubert's Santa Paws

Short Hills, NJ. 973-377-4962 or visit www.sthuberts.org.

November 12

Alice Woo's Pet Communicator Seminar

Sponsor: Mt. Pleasant Animal Shelter
East Hanover NJ 718 796 2627 or www.njshelter.org

November 16

Holiday Potpourri & Fleamarket

Sponsor: FOCAS (Friends of Bergen County Animal Shelter)
Teterboro, NJ 201-646-3565

November 29

Pictures with Santa

Sponsor: Mt. Pleasant Animal Shelter
East Hanover, NJ 973-386-0590 or www.njshelter.org

November 23

Evening of Giving

Sponsored: People for Animals
Edison, NJ 908 688-1073, press menu option #5.

DECEMBER

December 1 - 30

Holiday Tree of Love

Sponsor: Clifton Animal Shelter
973-470-5936

December 6 & 7

Holiday Fair

Sponsor: Mt. Pleasant Animal Shelter
East Hanover NJ 973-386-0590 or www.njshelter.org

December 7

New York City Holiday Lights Tour

Sponsor: People For Animals
908-688-8787 or 908-964-6887

December 7 & 14

Santa's Pet Days

Sponsor: Clifton Animal Shelter
973-470-5936

December 13

Tree of Remembrance

Sponsor: Animal Welfare Association
Voorhees, NJ 856-424-2288 or www.awanj.org

December 16

Lights of Remembrance

Mt. Pleasant
East Hanover NJ 973-386-0590 or www.njshelter.org

JANUARY

Adopt a Rescued Bird Month

www.aspc.org/shelters or http://www.petfinder.org

Caring for the Senior Pet

Does it seem like just yesterday when you brought that new puppy or kitten into your life? Just like children, puppies and kittens grow right before our eyes. Sometimes it is hard to believe that your pet is all grown up and has now entered his middle to senior years. The good news is that our pets are living longer, happier lives thanks to advances in medical care and nutrition. And you, as the pet owner, can take a very active role in ensuring your pet's good health well into his "golden years."

There are some general guidelines that "define" a senior pet. Many veterinarians (including the American Association of Feline Practitioners) recommend instituting a special senior wellness care program for your cat and dog.

Senior wellness programs do not differ from our own health care requirements. Your veterinarian will likely recommend a complete physical examination every 6 to 12 months. This

will enable him to pick up potential health problems at an earlier stage when the condition is more likely to be treatable.

As a pet owner, you are an integral part of your pet's health care team. Check for lumps & bumps on his body or any unusual sores or odors. Check his teeth regularly. Let your veterinarian know if your pet has any changes in his "toilet habits" such as urinating more frequently, not using the litter box, or straining to urinate or defecate, etc.

With the assistance of your veterinarian, you and your pet can enjoy more quality time together through the senior years.

Courtesy of the New Jersey Veterinary Medical Association. The New Jersey Veterinary Medical Association represents the state's 1,400 licensed veterinarians. For the complete article, visit www.njvma.org.



SAVE THE DATE
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**JOIN THE AGENCIES THAT ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR NEW JERSEY ANIMALS
APPLICATION/MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

Name of Organization or Individual

Mailing Address

Email Address

City, State, Zip

Telephone (Day) (Evening)

I agree to support the principles and beliefs of the Animal Welfare Federation of New Jersey.

Signature

Date

Membership Type: **Voting (\$40)*** **Individual (\$15)**

If Organization, please check: **Private/Non-Profit** **Governmental**

- New** (please send me my free NJ Animal Laws CD as seen on page 3)
- Current Member - enclosed is my check for \$5** (please send me my NJ Animal Laws CD as seen on page 3)
- Non-Member - enclosed is my check for \$15** (please send me my NJ Animal Laws CD as seen on page 3)

*Voting members must be 501 (c)(3) non-profits OR local state or governmental agencies. Shelters applying for voting membership must submit their most recent health department inspection report. Adoption agencies must have written pre-screening and spay/neuter plans and submit copies of these policies. Call us for fee schedule or download online at www.awfnj.org

The AWFNJ is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation. Your contributions are tax deductible to the extent made possible by the law.

Please sign this application, enclose your check and mail to:

**Animal Welfare Federation of New Jersey
816 N. Delsea Dr. #160, Glassboro, NJ 08028**



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