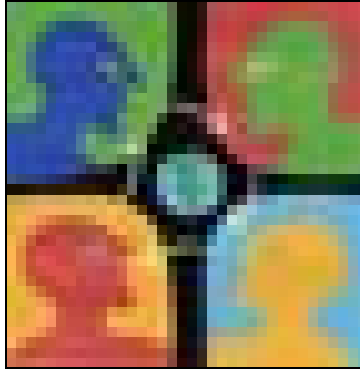


## Words Create Worlds, April/May/June 2007



### Important Dates

**June 30** . Register with a deep discount for the Third International Appreciative Inquiry Conference, Orlando, FL (see end of E-letter for important conference information)

**September 16-19** . Third International Appreciative Inquiry Conference, Orlando, FL  
**November 1-3** . Special Event at Houston Community College, Houston, TX (more later)

### Book Recommendation

**Made to Stick**, by Chip Heath and Dan Heath, explains why story-telling is a powerful way to help people, groups and organizations change.

### Newly Certified AI Facilitators

Congratulations to **Marylou Shirey** <[mshirey@mhasp.org](mailto:mshirey@mhasp.org)>, AIFT, Philadelphia; Trainers were Ray Wells and Jeanie Cockell; and **Francesca Vassalluzzo** <[fvassalluzzo@mhasp.org](mailto:fvassalluzzo@mhasp.org)>, AIFT, Greensboro; Trainers were Doug Kerr and Kina Mallard. (And congratulations, as well, to the Mental Health Association of Southeastern Pennsylvania, which now has half a dozen people trained in AI!)

**Marylou** facilitated a mini-inquiry for participants at the annual retreat of the Consumer Satisfaction Team Alliance of PA (STASP) in September 2006. It was a two-hour session that included an overview of AI as well as a mini-AI experience. Even in such a short time, the participants learned to identify the positive core of the Alliance and how to connect to it in ways that heightened energy, sharpened vision and inspired action for change. Participants included administrators, state & county employees, family advocates, psychologists, psychiatrists, parents and family members.

The session was intended to demonstrate to participants how to use a positive, strength-based approach in the work they do. After a very short paired interview that

focused on participants' experience of the retreat itself, participants identified the themes and developed Provocative Propositions.

Impact or Results: The introductory session piqued a great deal of interest; there is a request for another AI session at the 2007 retreat. This inquiry will be either a half-day or full day. The focus will be on looking at some of the best experiences that participants have had in gathering input from consumers and families about their satisfaction with the behavioral health care system and what made it work so well. This is the approach they are using in their work and their goal is to share the AI approach with other C/FST's to help spread the energy.

**Marylou** said, "I truly believe it's (AI is) a way of life, not just a work ideal. I was energized from the positive enthusiasm of the participants. They were eager to learn and then incorporate AI into the work that they do. When comments were shared, people realized that something very ordinary and simple had made an impact on someone's life in a positive way."

**Francesca Vassalluzzo** co-facilitated a session with previously certified AI Facilitator **Andrea Klein** for the staff of the Child, Adolescent and Family Division (CAFD). Francesca has requested that the details of the inquiry itself remain private. However, CAFD staff has requested more AI training for individual staff; offered to help each other in incorporating an AI approach and principles in their work with families, youth and other stakeholders; and are committed to identifying strengths as a way to make change for individuals, their programs and the division.

Also, according to **Francesca**, AI has opened up new routes for staff. Since AI was introduced, CAFD staff and programs have: developed multiple focus groups using an AI approach; worked more collaboratively and effectively with providers, administrators and other stakeholders; and developed, promoted and begun new initiatives.

**Francesca** said, "I encourage and try to facilitate the staff I supervise to celebrate the many successes we have each day. I am excited about the many levels of interest in AI at our agency as it seems particularly suited to who we are and what we do. I'll continue to support that initiative as it develops."

## Changes!

As most of you know, **Charles Miller** and I sold Company of Experts.net to **Kathy Becker** and **Jim Pulliam** in January of 2005. As co-developer of the AIFT with **Charles**, I agreed to continue being the person who certified AIFT participants and, from your stories, write and edit *Words Create Worlds* until COE.net was able to take on those roles. They are now ready to do that. So, from now on, you will send your Practicum Reports to **Kathy** at [Kathy@coe.net](mailto:Kathy@coe.net). Remember, it is never too late to send your reports to **Kathy**! And remember that your AIFT Trainers are the ones who can best coach you through your first Practicum.

I feel very blessed to have been the first person to hear your stories of success for the past four years. Some of the community college stories will find their way into a book I am writing; some of you will hear more about that later this summer. Meanwhile, thank you all very much for the privilege of serving you. Have a wonderful summer.

Best Wishes,



Nancy Stetson

Editor, Words Create Worlds  
Expert on Call, Company of Experts.net

### **Conference Details**

For all those planning to attend the AI Conference in September and stay at the Beach Club Hotel, please note the following--a bit of information that might be useful.

First - if you register by June 30th and use the discount code noted below - the individual rate will be \$1,295. For groups from the same organization, there is a significant discount as well.

From the conference organizer:

The 2007 International Appreciative Inquiry Conference is scheduled for September 16-19, 2007 at the Disney's Yacht and Beach Club Resorts in Orlando, FL. The Conference represents an unprecedented opportunity to expand the strengths-based positive change knowledge base and create an expanded appreciation for the significance of AI as a change methodology for management. We have been given an exclusive opportunity to invite our clients and business partners to the conference at a significant reduced rate. This is a very important event to the AI community; and we hope that you will be able to take advantage of this great opportunity we are able to offer you and your colleagues.

**AI Program Details:** We have been authorized to offer you a \$100 discount off the current registration fee. In addition, you will also be eligible for an early sign up discount and group discounts when register multiple people from your organization. If you register by **June 30, 2007**, you could get up to \$600 off the registration fee! This is a one time opportunity you do not want to miss for you and your organization.

For more details on the conference and travel information, go to [www.2007aiconference.com](http://www.2007aiconference.com)

**VERY IMPORTANT** - To register for the event please go to <http://www.2007aiconference.com/step1.cfm> and be sure to type in your code **LPDA11** to be properly credited for the discount you earn.

**About The Conference:** This 2007 International AI Conference represents a milestone in the evolution of the "positive strengths" movement by bringing together the strengths-based organizational change approaches of Appreciative Inquiry with state-of-the-art insights and tools of Positive Psychology. The Conference will elevate the field to new levels of impact and potential.

To reserve rooms at the hotel, the number for group reservations is 407-934-3372.

If you are flying in to Orlando and have flight info, you can arrange a shuttle from the airport by calling 407-827-6777.