What it is
A method for helping teams and organizations to recognize and celebrate their own value

What it can do
This tool can assist you to:
  - Generate positive energy in a team or organization
  - Create team or organizational cohesion
  - Help groups experience, clarify, and articulate essential qualities of their organization such as:
    - The purpose of the organization
    - The unique attributes or greatness of their organization
    - Their organization’s core positive qualities

When to use it
  - At the beginning of retreats or important meetings
  - To initiate a planning or visioning process
  - Any time it would be helpful to generate positive energy and cohesion

How it works

Step 1  Participants interview one another in pairs as follows (see possible interview topics beginning on the following page):
  - Find a partner.
  - Take turns playing the role of interviewer and interviewee.
  - When acting as interviewer, support and encourage the speaker in sharing not only the facts but also their feelings surrounding their stories.
  - Timing is usually about 5-6 minutes for each person to be interviewed.

Step 2  Participants form small groups of 6-8 and do the following:
  - Each individual shares their story succinctly (1-2 minutes each)
  - Depending on the nature of the interviews and the stories, the group may chart key elements: e.g., qualities, trends, etc.
• Group collectively decides on:
  • one story (or two, depending on time) to share with the large group that best captures the essence of the interviews
  • (if relevant) identifying the key qualities/trends/etc., and writing them on a large sticky note

**Step 3**  The selected storyteller from each group shares their story (up to 3 minutes). If relevant, the storyteller or another group member can report on the qualities or trends in their group and post their sticky note on the wall.

*NOTE: Subsequent spokespersons may choose to cluster their sticky notes as appropriate.*

**Step 4**  Facilitator leads a large group discussion to pull out key insights and themes, and helps the group derive meaning from the exercise.

**Possible interview topics**

1. As you reflect on your time with _______ organization, what’s one experience that to you embodies the purpose of this organization? It could be one particular experience, or perhaps a period of time that really seems to capture what this organization is all about: its purpose and the unique contribution that makes it all worthwhile.
   • What happened? Who was involved? What did you do? What did others do?
   • Bring the story to life, with all its power and emotion.
   • What was it about this story that makes it seem like a good example of this organization living its purpose?

2. During the time you’ve worked at ______ there have probably been ups and downs, twists and turns. For our purpose, let’s focus on one high point experience. Describe a time when you felt your organization exhibited “greatness.” This may have been a time when you were directly involved or you may have been an observer.
   • What happened? Who was involved? What did you do? What did others do?
   • Bring the story to life, with all its power and emotion.
   • What was it about this story that makes you describe it as great? (Describe specific qualities of greatness)

3. Every organization has unique constellation of strengths that make it successful. We call these qualities the positive core – the root cause of the organization’s success. Think of the unique constellation of strengths of ______, those qualities
without which it would no longer be the same organization. Tell a story about a time that illustrates one or more these strengths.

- What was the situation? Who was involved?
- Bring the story to life, with all its power and emotion.
- What was positive and unique about this situation?
- What is this special essence of your organization?

4. Think about your time working in your organization. Reflecting on the ups and downs, twists and turns, recall a time that you consider a highpoint – a time when you personally felt the most alive, excited, and engaged.

- What happened? What was the nature of your involvement?
- Bring the story to life, with all its power and emotion.
- What was it about this story that made it so special and energizing for you?

5. What in your view are the most significant positive macro-trends affecting your organization and its mission?

- What trends indicate opportunity?
- What trends give you a sense of hope?
- Share an example/exemplary story

6. Without being humble, what would your colleagues say that they most value about you and the unique skills and gifts that you bring to _____? Now, tell a story about a time you made a contribution to _____ that exemplifies these unique skills and gifts.

- What was the situation? Who was involved?
- Bring the story to life, with all its power and emotion

**Things to consider/Additional benefits**

This process, with adaptations on report-outs, can be used with any size group all the way up to a ballroom with hundreds of people. It rarely fails to generate significant positive energy and group cohesion.

These kinds of interviews are drawn from a discipline of organizational development called Appreciative Inquiry. For further information on Appreciative Inquiry, go to http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** In organizations where there is built-up mistrust or resentment, people may need an opportunity to vent their frustrations before they are ready to appreciate what works.