2012

Using appreciative inquiry in the 360-degree survey feedback process for leaders

Aaron C. Herbert

USING APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY IN THE 360-DEGREE

SURVEY FEEDBACK PROCESS FOR LEADERS

_____

A Research Project

Presented to the Faculty of

The George L. Graziadio

School of Business and Management

Pepperdine University

_____

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

in

Organization Development

_____

by

Aaron C. Herbert

August 2012

This research project, completed by

AARON C. HERBERT

under the guidance of the Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been

submitted to and accepted by the faculty of The George L. Graziadio School of Business

and Management in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

Date: August 2012

Faculty Committee

Committee Chair, Julie Chesley, Ph. D.

Committee Member, Miriam Lacey , Ph. D.

Linda Livingstone, Ph. D., Dean
The George L. Graziadio School of Business and
Management

Abstract

This study identified how an appreciative 360-degree leader survey enhanced the feedback process for leaders. The qualitative study was conducted at a 1500-member Protestant church in Virginia. The two senior-most leaders (pastor and executive associate pastor) were evaluated by 10 subordinates. Examination of the impact of the appreciative process on the implementation and use of survey results identified risks, benefits, and suggested interventions. The study found that the appreciative process generally enhanced subordinates' willingness to participate, although some concerns did arise. Pastors and subordinates stated they did not have sufficient time to absorb the feedback or to identify deliberate action steps. However, the process was described as thought-provoking, which enhanced the meaningfulness of the feedback. It was concluded that Appreciative Inquiry added value to the 360-degree feedback process because it provided subordinates with an easier forum for feedback as well as providing leaders with affirming feedback.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1

Introduction

Significant resources are spent on surveys each year with the hope that obtaining

feedback from employees will lead to changes in the work environment. Ultimately,

companies want to see improved productivity, team dynamics, or leader-employee

relations, among other outcomes. Yet, it is difficult to measure return on investment from

these surveys and results are difficult to guarantee (Peters, Baum, & Stephens, 2011). In

addition, Seifert (2003) "concluded that there is little evidence that such feedback

consistently results in behavior change or performance improvement" when referencing

multi-source feedback (as cited in Smither, London, Reilly, & Flautt, 2004, p. 456).

Unfortunately, surveys are not always utilized effectively and can lead to a significant

form of waste for organizations.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is defined as "an organizational transformation tool that

focuses on learning from success. Instead of focusing on deficits and problems, the

appreciative inquiry focuses on discovering what works well, why it works well, and how

success can be extended throughout the organization" (Johnson & Leavitt, 2001, p.129).

AI has been built into action research and other change methodologies. In turn, these

approaches have offered organizations the ability to shift from traditional problem

solving to building on strengths (Bushe, 2011; Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008;

Johnson & Leavitt, 2001; Kelm, 2005).

A novel application of AI that has received limited, attention is using it as part of

a leadership development program—specifically, as a framework for gathering 360-

degree feedback. The aim of 360-degree feedback is to enhance leaders' self-awareness

by gathering feedback about the leader's strengths, development areas, and behaviors

from the leader's supervisors, peers, and subordinates (Hart, Conklin, & Allen, 2008; Herold & Fields, 2004; Kelm, 2005; Sloan, 2008; Wilson, 1997).

An appreciative 360-degree survey would blend the philosophies of AI with the approach of 360-degree surveys by gathering feedback about the leader's outstanding past performance. Some natural synergies may exist between these two approaches of AI and 360-degree feedback, as they share the aim of generating new insights for the leader by helping them to examine their past performance. This approach is predicted to be beneficial due to the generative nature of positive feedback (Atwater & Waldman, 1998; Peiró, González-Romá, & Cañero, 1999). That is, positive feedback tends to influence future changes in the same positive direction, whereas negative feedback tends to have a negative effect on future changes or performance. These effects are partly the result of leaders' tendency to engage with the process and seek more information when feedback is positive and to disengage and discard the information when the feedback is negative (Atwater & Waldman, 1998). Atwater and Waldman explained, "favorable reactions to the process cause feedback recipients to seek additional feedback from raters and to set developmental goals, both of which may be necessary to ensure leadership development" (p. 424). Appreciative 360s also might enable users to overcome the shortcomings of both traditional 360s and AI interventions.

Although several studies examined the intersection of AI and leadership development, little has been written about how AI could be used in 360-degree surveys. This is a notable opportunity, as an appreciative 360-degree survey may produce a balanced set of feedback that the leader would use and benefit from (Atwater & Waldman, 1998; Samuels, 2002). This type of survey has the potential to overcome the shortcomings of traditional 360s, which generate critical feedback that may be discarded,

and AI interventions, which may neglect alternative viewpoints and negative emotions in favor of consensus. Thus, the appreciative 360-degree survey may allow all respondents to speak freely about their unique opinions and also enable leaders to build upon their positive past performance. The present study examines the impacts of an appreciative 360-degree leader survey.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify how the use of AI in a 360-degree leader survey enhances the feedback process for leaders. Four specific research questions were defined:

1. Does the AI process impact the implementation and use of survey results?

2. What is the nature of participants' willingness to engage in the process?

3. In what ways is action planning in response to the feedback supported by the process?

4. To what extent does this process generate meaningful feedback for the leaders?

Study Setting

The setting for this study was Great Bridge Presbyterian Church (GBPC) located in Chesapeake, Virginia. GBPC is a 1500-member, protestant church offering programs in the areas of worship and music, adult ministries, children and youth ministries, and service and mission programs. The organization employs a 21-person staff with specific positions listed in their organizational chart Figure 1. The following 12 positions were involved in the study: pastor (head of staff), executive associate pastor, secretary/receptionist, membership and media secretary, director of children's ministry, small group coordinator, sexton, treasurer, director of music, director of contemporary

worship, children's ministry assistant, and service and mission coordinator. These positions included the majority of the organization's full-time employees.
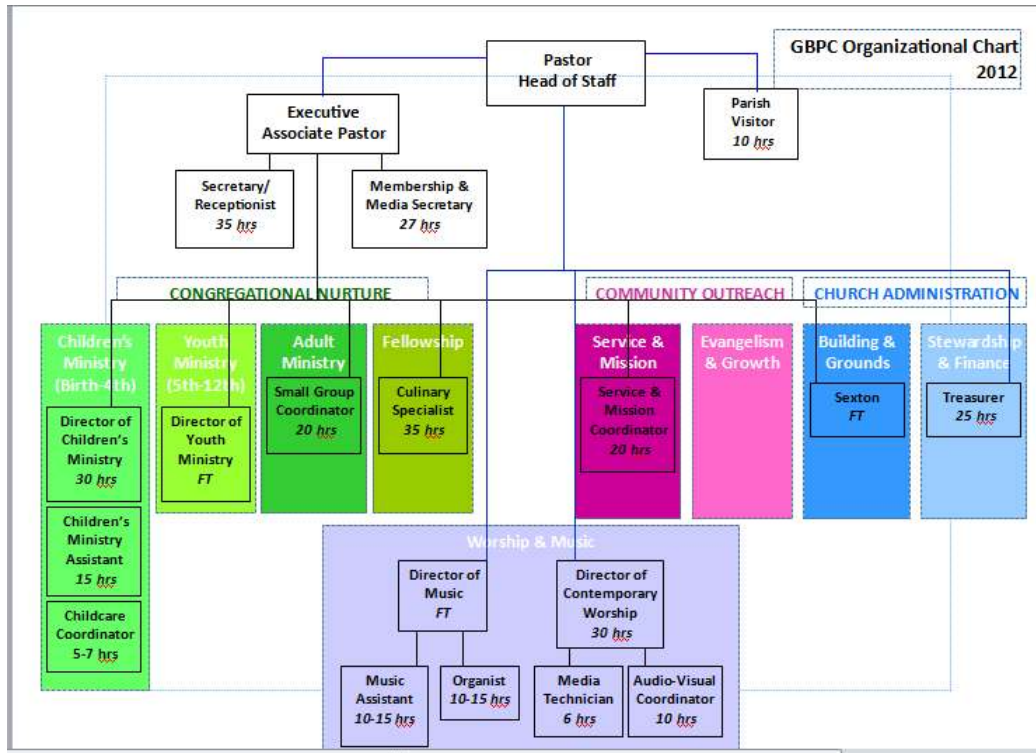
Figure 1

Great Bridge Presbyterian Church Organization Chart

The organization seemed to be aligned with appreciative principles, as it recently started a workshop series entitled, "Living Your Strengths," based on book of the *Living in your Strengths* (Winseman, Clifton, & Liesveld, 2008). The workshop series' aim was to help the congregants understand their strengths, notice and honor others' strengths, see others as partners in the church's efforts, and see the church as a place live out their strengths. The organization posits on its webpage,

> What the Living Your Strengths supports us in being able to do, however, is to become even more effective in our level of engagement. As individuals discover their strengths and are empowered to use them in God's service, our impact for God's kingdom is multiplied. (GBPC, n.d., para. 9)

Furthermore, "each ministry team at GBPC is engaged in identifying which strengths could be used in their ministry areas" (para. 10). The organization's commitment to employee engagement and having members serve where they are at their best demonstrates alignment to the tenants of AI which seek to ask where are we are going well and extend success throughout an organization.

This setting was suitable for exploring the research question because leaders told the researcher about their high job satisfaction at GBPC and the subordinates communicated to the researcher that the work setting is one of high morale and health. Therefore, an appreciative approach is well aligned with the organization and its members.

Significance of Study

This study examines one application of an appreciative 360-degree leader survey. Examination of the AI literature has suggested that several benefits could emerge from this application, including improved use and implementation of survey results, enhanced participant willingness in the process, improved action planning, and the generation of rich feedback (Cooperrider et al., 2008). These benefits correlate with some perceived weaknesses in traditional problem-based 360-degree survey approaches. The present study examines the effects of an appreciative process related to these specific areas through one case. The insights gained through this study help inform the work of organization development (OD) practitioners, leaders, and organizations that want to examine alternate approaches to 360-degree feedback. Thus, these results make a valuable contribution to literature and practice related to both AI and leadership development.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 reviewed the background of the problem, presented the research purpose, described the study setting, and outlined the study significance. Chapter 2 examines the literature on AI and leadership development. The third chapter describes the methods used to answer the research question, including the research design, participants, AI intervention, measurement and data analysis procedures. Chapter 4 presents the study results, and chapter 5 provides a discussion of these results, including the conclusions, recommendations, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to identify how the use of AI in a 360-degree leader survey enhances the feedback process for leaders. This chapter provided an overview of AI, including the definition, principles, process, benefits, critique, and applications of AI. Next, leadership development is discussed, including feedback and 360-degree surveys and appreciative 360-degree surveys.

Overview of AI

The origins of AI trace back to the Cleveland Project, which was initiated in 1980 through a collaboration between Case Western Reserve University doctoral student David Cooperrider and faculty member Suresh Srivastva. Although performing a traditional diagnosis of what was going wrong in an organization, Cooperrider became fascinated by the degree of positive energy in the organization. Srivastva encouraged Cooperrider to further examine this positive energy and he launched a "life-centric analysis of the factors contributing to the highly effective functioning of the Clinic when it was at its best" (Watkins & Mohr, as cited in "AI History and Timeline," n.d., para. 1). Cooperrider's (1986) dissertation later articulated the philosophy and process of AI. The first public workshop on AI was held in 1987 and in 1990, The Taos Institute was founded by Ken and Mary Gergen, Diana Whitney, David Cooperrider, Suresh Srivastva, Sheila McNamee, and Harlene Anderson as a major center for AI training and learning.

The National Training Labs, a leading provider of OD practitioner training, also began offering AI workshops in 1993 (Watkins & Mohr, 2001). Awareness, knowledge, and practice of AI continued to develop throughout the decade, culminating in important

milestones such as a collaboration between Cooperrider and the Dalai Lama in 1999 and a 2000 millennium edition in the *OD Practitioner* on the topic.

Definition. Foundationally, AI is both a philosophy and change methodology (Bushe, 2011; Cooperrider et al., 2008; Johnson & Leavitt, 2001; Kelm, 2005). Several authors have described AI as an approach that focuses dialogue on what works well in the organization. The aim is to uncover how success in one area could be extended to other areas of the organization (Johnson & Leavitt, 2001). Thus, best practices are identified and applied to unleash synergy and innovation. Cooperrider et al. (2008) summarized AI as:

> the cooperative co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. It involves the discovery of what gives "life" to a living system when it is most effective, alive, and constructively capable in economic, ecological, and human terms. (p. 3)

Thus, through shared storytelling of positive experiences, AI participants learn to divert attention away from problems and redirect their focus to what they truly desire. This enables AI participants to address workplace issues by building on organizational strengths and the power of positive affirmation (Bechtold, 2011). Cooperrider et al. (2008) added that this approach leads to a stronger sense of commitment and engagement.

Due to its innovative, strengths-based approach, AI has been described as an alternative to traditional problem solving, which views the organization as a "problem to be solved" and involves tasks such as analyzing causes, fixing problems, and planning next steps (Cooperrider et al., 2008, p. 5). Instead, AI views the organization as a "solution to be embraced" (p. 5) and focuses on inquiring into the best of what was,

envisioning what might be, and dialoguing about what will be (Zolno, 2002). The next section outlines the five principles that characterize AI.

Principles of AI. Cooperrider and Srivastva articulated five interrelated principles that underlie AI and speak to the mechanics of how change is created in social situations. The principles are: the constructionist principle, the anticipatory principle, the principle of simultaneity, the positive principle, and the poetic principle (as cited in Kelm, 2005).

The constructionist principle posits that people's social interactions create their own unique and subjective reality. Social constructionism means that people—together, through conversation and other forms of interaction—determine who is who and what is what (Fitzgerald, Murrell, & Miller, 2003). For example, if the employees construct through their conversation that the chief executive officer is the best thing that has ever happened to the organization, all subsequent events and all the leader's subsequent actions will be filtered through that perception and adapted to support their view of the leader. For example, the organization's record sales may be attributed to his or her amazing leadership (rather than to inflation) and the organization's failures may be attributed to external forces (rather than to a failure of leadership). Cooperrider et al. (2008) emphasized that "social knowledge is fateful" because the discussions that occur at the group level form the basis of the organization's reality (p. 8).

The anticipatory principle says what we do today is guided by our image of the future (Bushe & Kassam, 2005). For example, if an employee anticipates that an upcoming one-on-one meeting with a coworker will be contentious, he or she may imagine the terse words, guarded body language, and uneasy nonverbal communication that may be exhibited in the upcoming meeting. Once the meeting begins, the employee tends to consciously or subconsciously act in response to the imagined confrontation,

thus, precipitating confrontational reactions from the coworker, confirming the employee's earlier prediction (Fitzgerald et al., 2003). Due the power of anticipation, AI proponents urge people and organizations to focus on positive images, as they argue these will lead to positive action.

The third principle is the principle of simultaneity, which states that "change begins the moment we ask a question" (Kelm, 2005, p. 53). Even the simple question of "How are you?" can be an intervention in that it invites another person into a moment of self-reflection, heightened self-awareness, and disclosure. As a consequence, the person might gain new conscious awareness (e.g., realizing that he or she feels anxious because of an earlier heated debate with a friend), which inspires the person to call his friend and make amends. This example illustrates how inquiry in itself is an intervention and can be the cause of change (Bushe & Kassam, 2005).

The fourth principle of AI is the positive principle, which asserts that change "requires large amounts of positive affect and social bonding, attitudes such as hope, inspiration, and the sheer joy of creating with one another" (Cooperrider et al., 2008, p. 10). Consequently, AI interventions focus on creating positive affect and bonding by engaging them in discussing positive-based questions (e.g., "What are your three greatest wishes for the future?") and inviting participants to co-create a positive, emotional image of the future (Kelm, 2005, p. 56). These activities form a bond, similar to one formed when two people discover a shared interest or characteristic. In addition, the positive focus of the activities cements the bond in hope and positive, forward-moving energy.

The final principle, the poetic principle, holds that the organization is a story that is ever unfolding and, like a page in a book, is connected to both its past (previous pages) and its future (subsequent pages). This principle also touches upon the constructionist

principle in that an organization's story is co-authored by all its stakeholders (Bushe &

Kassam, 2005; Cooperrider et al. 2008).

Combining the five principles, proponents of AI argue that organization members

should collectively focus on and inquire into (constructionist and simultaneity principles)

the life-affirming aspects (positive principle) of a situation because they can write a

positive future (anticipatory and poetic principles) for the organization by being staying

aware and being intentional (Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Cooperrider et al., 2008; Fitzgerald

et al., 2003; Kelm, 2005). The next section describes the process of AI.

Process of AI. Several specific frameworks for AI have been created to lead

participants through the AI phases. Two examples include the 4-D (Cooperrider et al.,

2008) and 4-I (Stavros, Cooperrider, & Kelley, 2007) models. The 4-D model involves

four steps: discover, dream, design, and destiny (Srithika & Bhattacharyya, 2009),

whereas, the 4-I model refers to inquire, imagine, innovate, and implement (Preskill &

Catsambas, 2006). For this review, the 4-D model will be used due to its wider use in the

literature.

The discover stage invites participants to reflect on their peak experiences, "best

of" moments, and what gives life to people and the organization. The aim is to identify

when processes, relationships, and values were most effective (Cooperrider et al., 2008).

Johnson and Leavitt (2001) pointed out that collecting data through interviews and

determining common themes are key steps in this phase. Outcomes of this stage include

key themes and stories that reflect the organization's positive past. These form the

foundation that will be built upon in subsequent stages of the AI process.

The dream phase involves "envisioning what the organization might ideally look

like in the future" (Srithika & Bhattacharyya, 2009). Importantly, these dreams are to be

based on the positive themes and ideas identified in the previous stage. At the same time, participants are challenged to look beyond the past and to break traditional boundaries (Johnson & Leavitt, 2001). Participants articulate provocative statements or positive possibilities which will serve as beacons for the group's desired future state and provide clear direction for the organization's activities (Watkins & Mohr, 2001). Consistent with the constructionist and anticipatory principles of AI, the act of articulating these possibilities consciously and subconsciously compels participants to attain them. Watkins and Mohr posited that the positive nature of the possibility statements create further energy for participants to fulfill them.

In the design stage, the participants evaluate the organizational value of each provocative statement articulated during the dream phase (Johnson & Leavitt, 2001). The authors also urged participants to conduct a support analysis by specifically identifying the existing organizational supports and resources that need to be in place for success. Examples of such resources include funding, support from upper management, or workforce capabilities.

The final stage is the destiny or delivery stage, which focuses on implementing the designed plan in order to deliver and sustain the desired results as articulated in the possibility statement (Cooperrider et al., 2008; Srithika & Bhattacharyya, 2009; Watkins & Kelly, 2007). Johnson and Leavitt (2001) explained that this stage focuses on action planning, cultivating commitment to the change, and evaluating the process to determine its effectiveness. The next section reviews the benefits associated with AI.

Benefits of AI. Three benefits have been discussed as emerging from the practice of AI. First, AI generates new ideas, models, and possibilities (Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Johnson & Leavitt, 2001). It does so by serving as an alternative to problem solving and

helping to capture the tacit knowledge within the group (Fitzgerald et al., 2003). Second, AI encourages people to think and focus on the positive in the organization (Bushe & Kassam, 2005), thus, leading to positive action (Barrett & Cooperrider, 2001). Kelm (2005) added that "our attention will create our experience, and if we focus on what we lack we create more lack" (p. 64). This suggests that focusing on the best aspects of the organization leads to more of these desired traits and outcomes, whereas focusing on problems or gaps in the organization leads to more issues and deficiencies. Third, the AI process tends to produce social bonding, commitment to change (Fitzgerald et al., 2003), and effective relationships (Bushe & Kassam, 2005). These can further support organizational productivity.

AI's effectiveness in changing culture is largely found in the power of storytelling. Whitney, Cooperrider, Garrison, Moore, and Dinga (1999) explained, "It is through the stories we tell about an organization, its employees, its leadership, its customers and its ways of operating that an organization is known" (p. 11). This means that employees' sense-making about the organization based on the stories told give meaning and life to the organization as the conversations unfold.

Similarly, the stories told about leaders reveal those leaders to the organization. Importantly, these stories can be more influential than a person's personality traits or past experiences. Whitney et al. (1999) emphasized, "the stories we tell about who we are . . . truly constitute our identity" (p. 11). These concepts underscore the importance of focusing the conversations on the life-giving forces within the organization to heighten employees' positive views of the organization, its leaders, and its future. The analogy Whitney et al. offered to this idea is that an individual's positive self-talk is linked to mental health, well-being, and general success.

Bushe and Kassam (2005) evaluated the results of 20 AI-focused interventions. Each case was evaluated against a set of criteria of whether the intervention was transformational, whether it generated new knowledge or processes, and whether it involved improvisation or implementation. The researchers concluded that 35% of the cases described transformational results (defined as changes to the fundamental pattern or identity of the organization).

Organizations showing transformational change included Avon Mexico, GTE, Hunter Douglas, Loghorn Western, Medic Inn, Southview West Agency, and United Religions. At Avon Mexico, the "executive makeup changed to reflect new assumptions that women must be represented at executive levels" (Bushe & Kassam, 2005, p. 173). GTE experienced "higher levels of performance and morale" (p. 173) and the "smoothest [labor] negotiations in the history of the company's union relations" (Whitney et al., 1999, p. 17). Loghorn Western saw changes in the relationships between their workers, noting they were more symbiotic (Bushe & Kassam, 2005, p 173). Both Medic Inn and Hunter Douglas launched initiatives to align themselves to the positive core identified through the AI process. Southwest View Agency created processes and positions that were aligned to the newly created mission. United Religions saw the establishment of a representative organization.

Additionally, Bushe and Kassam (2005) concluded that even the cases that were not considered transformational still were successful. Results in these cases included the creation of a broadly accepted strategic plan, an altered approach to leader-follower relations, and increased store management retention (by 30%). Although these results are impressive, it is recognized that it is difficult in most cases to quantify the impact of AI in

financial terms. This reveals a need for more research regarding how the impacts may of AI may be quantitatively assessed (e.g., financial impact, turnover and retention).

Critique of AI. A leading criticism of AI is that it ignores negativity. Critics call it a shadow process, wherein the positive is allowed, but negativity and problems are censored (Bechtold, 2011; Bushe, 2007; Fitzgerald, Oliver, Hoxsey, 2010). Fitzgerald et al. (2010) explained that in the quest to focus only on those things participants find positive, other qualities such as "the full spectrum of censored feeling and cognition, ranging from repressed strengths and capacities to fragilities and abhorrent characteristics" may be missed (p. 221). The authors elaborate that these unacknowledged elements can exert considerable force in the organization and erect roadblocks to forward movement. For example, "AI does not magically overcome poor sponsorship, poor communications, insensitive facilitation, or un-addressed organizational politics" (Bushe, 2007, p. 30). Bushe (2010) acknowledged that the positive focus could become a problem if AI was used as a means for avoiding problems, fear, or anxiety. He countered that critics who believe this is true AI do not understand it or are critiquing poor quality AI interventions.

Critics also allege that AI fails to employ critical inquiry in that it fails to explore conflicts and alternative or minority viewpoints. Due to the focus on consensus and harmony oftentimes present in a group setting, ideas may be discouraged or even stifled. To overcome this weakness, Boje (2010) suggested that AI add three new Ds to the 4-D model: *Dialogic processes,* wherein people "from the side shadows [would be brought into] meaningful conversation," *Differences,* wherein various standpoints would be embodied and explored, and *Deconstruction,* wherein "narratives of dominance for monologism and linearity" would be dissected and understood (p. 239). Another means

for allowing for minority viewpoints may be to administer appreciative interviews or surveys in a one-on-one format without the group component.

A third criticism, lodged by Bushe (2007), is that AI often falls short of its generative intent and instead becomes "action research with a positive question" (p. 30). Bushe (2010) explained that an AI intervention can be considered "generative when one or more new ideas arise that compel people to act in new ways that are beneficial to them and others" (p. 2). Bushe argued that the core and distinctive competence of AI was generativity. Bushe (2007) explained that generativity, thus, needs to be built into every activity of the intervention. For example, one tactic is to use generative questions, which create an element of surprise, touch the heart and spirit, lead to relationship building, and shift one's view of reality. Another practice is to involve as many people from the system as possible in the interviewing.

This section provided an overview of AI, including its definition, principles, process, benefits, and criticisms. The next section examines how AI has been applied in organizations.

Applications of AI. AI has been used successfully "in combination with other organizational processes such as strategic planning, coaching, leadership and management development, redesign of structures and systems, mergers and acquisitions, cultural transformation, team building, valuing diversity, and social and sustainable development issues" (Cooperrider et al., 2008, p. xv). AI has been widely applied across a variety of organizations including Hearthside School (Samuels & Willoughby, 2002), Avon Mexico (Morris & Schiller, 2003), GTE (Whitney et al., 1999), West Springfield Public Schools (Positive Change Corps, 2002), and Imagine Chicago (Chien, Cawthorn, & Browne, 2001) to name a few.

At Heathside School, students and teachers were involved in the AI process as a means to improve teaching quality through a 360-degree evaluation that gathered teacher and student feedback (Samuels & Willoughby, 2002). This represents a form of leadership development in a school setting. Glyn Willoughby, principal of Heathside Schools, decided to launch an AI intervention based on her desires to achieve enhanced organizational performance and to more actively include students and other stakeholders in the future of the school. Appreciative questions were posed to both students and teachers. Students were asked: "Think about the best teacher you have had at Heathside. Tell me about a time you were having a brilliant experience in his or her classroom" (p. 5). The teachers were asked: "Will you please tell me a story about the class you most enjoyed teaching?" (p. 5). Both groups were asked, "If you came to school tomorrow and one small thing had changed making the school better, what would it be?" (p. 5). As a result, 50 staff and students were involved in the exercise to create a powerful proposition for the school that turned even the cynical teachers into energized advocates. In phase two of the project, the use of AI was credited with helping the school work through a trauma involving a missing student and help them see the positive in a seemingly bleak situation.

AI also has been applied specifically to addressing issues of culture and leadership in a variety of organizations, such as Avon Mexico (Morris & Schiller, 2003), GTE (Whitney et al., 1999), and West Springfield Public Schools (Positive Change Corps, 2002). At these sites, AI was the primary vehicle through which the culture change was initiated and designed. To begin, AI was introduced to the front-line employee participants through a series of two-day workshops or trainings (Morris & Schiller, 2003; Whitney et al., 1999). The action of including front-line employees

communicated the importance of employee involvement in culture change. At GTE, front-line employees were trained in the principles of AI and given the latitude come up with their own ideas on how to become an advocate for the company (Whitney et al., 1999).The leadership demonstrated commitment by not being involved in the training but by actively listening to and encouraging new ideas.

A case of using AI to shape civic culture is found in the example of Imagine Chicago, a nonprofit that was appreciative at its very core. Bliss Browne founded the organization in 1992 with the aim of "helping people imagine and create a positive future for Chicago and its children" (Chien et al., 2001, p. 1). Its first project was a citywide AI intervention wherein 50 at-risk youth interviewed more than 150 adult community builders in Chicago "about the highlights of their lives as citizens and their hopes and plans for the city's future" (p. 1). Chien et al. shared their results:

> Intergenerational appreciative inquiry proved very inspiring and motivating. Adult commitments were refreshed. Hope came alive. New possibilities for engagement were imagined and shared. And the process was successful in establishing a lively sense of shared civic identity, creating effective methods for constructive intergenerational dialogue, and expanding the sense among the young people that they could make a difference. (p. 1)

Additionally, at GTE and West Springfield Public Schools, positive images and questions were emphasized because "holding a positive image of people, and asking them to tell stories about when they are at their best, enhances their willingness to participate" (Positive Change Corps, 2002, p. 19), whereas "asking people to change behavior more often than not prompts resistance" (p. 21).

Each of the cases reviewed for this study exhibited substantive positive outcomes after the AI intervention. For example, West Springfield Public Schools held an AI summit and observed the following outcomes: shared positive experience, and renewed

energy and commitment. The cases described in this literature review also suggested that involvement of the front-line employees (and citizens) is a success factor for change using AI (Johnson & Leavitt, 2001; Morris & Schiller, 2003; Newman & Fitzgerald, 2001; Positive Change Corps, 2002; Samuels & Willoughby, 2002; Whitney et al., 1999). Additionally, research suggests that it is helpful for executives to help lead the workshops, as their involvement demonstrates top-level buy-in and support for the AI intervention (Whitney et al., 1999). In this regard, the success of AI interventions are enabled through the same leverage points of employee involvement and executive support as are other forms of change (Cummings & Worley, 2008).

In summary, AI is an innovative alternative to traditional problem solving that is grounded in five core principles that emphasize the power of story, inquiry, positivity, and social interaction (Kelm, 2005). A popular framework for administering AI is the 4-D model, although other variations exist. Benefits include its ability to create generative and transformational power (Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Johnson & Leavitt, 2001), unleash positive thought and action (Barrett & Cooperrider, 2001; Bushe & Kassam, 2005), and foster social bonding and commitment to change (Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Fitzgerald et al., 2003). It has been widely applied across nonprofit, for-profit, and government organizations for strategic, operational, and personnel development purposes, including in Hearthside School (Samuels & Willoughby, 2002), Avon Mexico (Morris & Schiller, 2003), GTE (Whitney et al., 1999), West Springfield Public Schools (Positive Change Corps, 2002), and Imagine Chicago (Chien et al., 2001). However, it has been criticized for ignoring negativity, silencing alternate views, and falling short of its generative aim (Bushe, 2007). The next section examines leadership development, the central focus of the present study.

Leadership Development

Cummings and Worley (2008) define leadership development as "a training and education intervention aimed at improving the competencies [and effectiveness] of managers and executives in an organization" (p. 751). Conger (1992) identified four elements of leader development: personal growth, conceptual understanding, feedback, and skill building. Even though a given effort may fall under multiple categories, for purposes of discussion, the programs will be discussed in one category based on its primary objective.

Personal growth programs are programs that "induce participants to reflect on their behaviors (such as their orientation toward risk or personal intimacy), values, and desires" (Allen & Hartman, 2008, p. 11). Examples include individual reflection, teambuilding, and developmental relationships. Individual reflection could be the act of journaling on past experiences or goal-setting about future aspirations. Teambuilding oftentimes involves setting team goals, evaluating how the team is working, or to examining relationships of team members. Developmental relationships are the network of relationships that allow a person to feel supported and receive the necessary information for growth. The overall goal in personal growth programs is to make the leader more self-aware so that the leader is potentially better positioned to lead others (Garrett-Howard, 2012). Possible drawbacks to these approaches are the inability to measure return on investment or the difficulty of facilitation (Peters et al., 2011).

Leadership development focused on enhancing conceptual understanding aims to give the leader exposure to leader theory and concepts (Allen & Hartman, 2008). Instances include self-paced learning, classroom-based learning, and degree programs. Self-paced learning is an individual activity of reading a book or watching a leadership

video. Classroom-based learning is a popular form of learning that teaches concepts based on a prescribed curriculum. Degree programs are formal programs with exams, projects, and papers to measure learning. The overall result for these programs is that they build the leadership awareness of the leader. However, the effectiveness of these programs is difficult to measure (Hamill, 2011).

Programs focused on skill building strive to identify the most important leadership skills and give participants an opportunity to practice and obtain feedback on their performance relative to those skills (Allen & Hartman, 2008). Examples of these programs include developmental assignments, personal development plans, and action learning. Developmental assignments are easy, cost-effective ways to challenge a leader to learn. Personal development plans are plans for which the individual is held accountable; however, the main drawback is poor follow-through. Action learning is a project where a group of people work to address real workplace problems and learn as a result of the process (Sofo, Yeo, & Villafañe, 2010).

Feedback-oriented programs are when participants receive feedback on their strengths, development areas, and leader behaviors (Allen & Hartman, 2008). Examples of these programs include executive coaching, assessment centers, and 360-degree feedback. Executive coaching is when an individual participant receives coaching and feedback from an authority on leadership. The benefit of this method is the ability to individualize the experience for the leader. The challenges are having clear objectives, standards, and getting a return on investment (Peters et al., 2011). Assessment centers formally observe participants and provide the leader with feedback on strengths, weaknesses, and suggested learning opportunities. Using 360-degree surveys, feedback is gathered from multiple coworkers to help examine these coworkers' perceptions. These

programs are extensively used but can be difficult to measure return on investment. Schmidt (2004) offers one approach to measuring the return of investment in her book *The Leadership Scorecard.*

This section discussed the primary frameworks used for leadership development. Feedback is a focus of the present study and is explored in more detail in the next section.

Feedback and 360-degree surveys. Gathering feedback is one approach to leadership development (Conger, 1992). Although 360-degree surveys have been widely used and researched as a method of providing and soliciting feedback (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1998; Atwater & Waldman, 1998; Wilson, 1997), Drew (2009) added that 360-degree surveys also are used for performance appraisal and performance management (processes that influence compensation and advancement decisions). The following sections discuss design, analysis, and reporting issues related to 360-degree surveys. The uses of these surveys also are discussed.

Design. Various 360-degree surveys have been developed (Hart et al., 2008; Kelm, 2005; Sloan, 2008). The specific design of the survey should be based on whether the aim is for developmental feedback or performance appraisal (Wilson, 1997). Developmental feedback usually focuses on feedback general to leaders' behaviors, giving examples of strengths and weaknesses. A 360 appraisal would focus on specific performance results in a time-bound performance period. It is important to note that the specific method for gathering, analyzing, and processing information used for leadership development is different than the method used for performance appraisals. Despite these differences, some basic elements are consistent. These are discussed in the paragraphs below.

A primary focus of a 360-degree survey is to gather observations, perceptions, and information about the leader's behaviors from the leader's supervisors, peers, and subordinates, who are termed *observers* or *raters* (Herold & Fields, 2004; Wilson, 1997). The leader typically also provides self-ratings (Carless, Mann, & Wearing, 1998; Drew, 2009). The specific items typically ask respondents to rate the frequency with which the leader exhibits certain observable behaviors and skills (Herold & Fields, 2004; Wilson, 1997). Items may be rated on a 5-point Likert scale (Bradley, Allen, Hamilton, & Filgo, 2006). Although the specific topics examined on the surveys may vary based on their purpose and the individual being reviewed, Bradley et al. advocated for examining the core competencies of communication, leadership, adaptability, relationships, task management, production, development of others, and personal development.

Analysis. After data collection, the ratings from all the observers typically are averaged to provide an observer score for the leader (Herold & Fields, 2004). The leader's self-ratings also are calculated. The observer and self-rated scores are then compared to each other (Carless et al., 1998; Drew, 2009). In some cases, the scores also are compared to normative scores based on leaders in the rest of the organization or leaders surveyed by the instrument's publishers (Herold & Fields, 2004).The composite view then forms a comprehensive assessment of the leader's behaviors, including his or her strengths and development areas (Carless et al., 1998; Smither et al., 2004; Wilson, 1997).

Reporting. After analysis, the survey results are fed back to the leader (Herold & Fields, 2004). In the case of performance appraisal 360-degree surveys, the purpose of the feedback is primarily to justify performance management decisions. In the case of 360-degree surveys for leadership development, the purpose of the feedback is for use in

coaching conversations and development planning (Wilson, 1997). Drew (2009) explained that the focus of the feedback conversation is to fortify the leader's belief in his or her performance potential and ability to make positive changes.

Uses. Due to the way that the data are collected, analyzed, and reported, 360-degree surveys may be useful for helping leaders design a self-development program (Herold & Fields, 2004). For example, several authors pointed out that greater self-awareness can be achieved when someone obtains feedback from others on one's own performance and, importantly, has meaningful discussion about the feedback (Hart et al., 2008, Kelm, 2005; Sloan, 2008). These surveys also can give leaders a method for monitoring their own behaviors, determining their impact on others, identifying gaps in their own perception, and understanding what aspects of their performance are contributing to superior results and what aspects are leading to negative feedback (Drew, 2009; Wilson, 1997). Herold and Fields (2004) cited studies that showed that managers seem to pay attention to feedback from subordinates and use this feedback to modify their behaviors and their performance so that subsequent subordinate ratings are more favorable.

Appreciative 360-degree surveys. Appreciative approaches to leadership development can be found throughout the literature. For example, Sloan (2008) advised leaders to begin by examining the "smartest aspects of your existing performance as a leader" (p. 66), which suggests alignment with AI. In other cases, the use of AI for enhancing leadership is explicit. For example, Newman and Fitzgerald (2001) examined fear and mistrust within the executive team and the change team at a 120-person nonprofit metropolitan healthcare facility. The organization usually used traditional action research approaches to solve their issues. However, the executives wanted more

creative, non-linear solutions and decided to involve employees in the change process. A retreat was planned using the 4-D model. A series of questions, such as: "What are our most effective leadership practices, strengths, and qualities—things we want to preserve even as we change and grow?" (p. 39). As a result, the AI approach succeeded in developing an action plan to with methods to foster respect and empowerment. These included the inclusion of multiple levels of leadership in staff meetings, recognizing employees for their "hero" moments, and the development of leadership programs.

Other AI interventions have similarly encouraged participants to reflect on or to envision positive leadership experiences (Chien et al., 2001; Newman & Fitzgerald, 2001; Samuels & Willoughby, 2002; Silbert & Laliberte, 2010). For example, Silbert and Laliberte, partners at Innovation Partners International, instructed participants at a community of long-term healthcare facilities to complete a "visioning exercise to identify positive leadership experiences from their pasts and examples from history and current events. Then the students created personal visions and learning goals based on these real-life examples" (p. 80). As a result, the leaders worked with one another on their learning goals and saw marked improvements in their development areas.

Despite the numerous articles that have discussed the use and application of 360-degree surveys for leadership development, little has been written about using AI for this purpose with the exception of Samuels' examination of using AI for upward feedback in 2002. This reveals a substantial gap in the literature. An appreciative 360-degree survey would blend the philosophies of AI with the design and approach of 360-degree surveys. It appears that some natural synergies may exist between these two approaches, as they share the aim of generating new insights for the leader by helping them to examine their past performance.

Summary

This chapter examined literature on AI and leadership development in support of the present study that will examine how AI could be used to enhance the survey feedback process for leaders. AI methodology enables organizations to shift from traditional problem solving to building on strengths (Bushe, 2011; Cooperrider et al., 2008; Johnson & Leavitt, 2001; Kelm, 2005). It is grounded in five core principles that emphasize the power of inquiry, stories, positivity, and social interaction (Kelm, 2005). The popular 4-D framework guides people through a four-stage process of reflecting on positive past experiences, envisioning an ideal future, creating an action plan to achieve the vision, and implementing the designed plan (Cooperrider et al., 2008; Johnson & Leavitt, 2001; Srithika & Bhattacharyya, 2009; Watkins & Kelly, 2007). Although success with AI has been reported—particularly when front-line employees are involved (Johnson & Leavitt, 2001; Morris & Schiller, 2003; Newman & Fitzgerald, 2001; Positive Change Corps, 2002; Samuels & Willoughby, 2002; Whitney et al., 1999)—critics of AI argue that the process censors alternative viewpoints, fails to employ critical inquiry, and fails to generate new, transformational ideas (Bechtold, 2011; Bushe, 2007; Fitzgerald et al., 2010; Boje, 2010).

In addition to using AI to plan and navigate organizational change, AI could be powerful when used as part of a feedback-oriented leadership development program. A popular tool used in feedback-oriented leadership development programs is the 360-degree survey, which aims to enhance leaders' self-awareness by gathering feedback about the leader's strengths, development areas, and behaviors from the leader's supervisors, peers, and subordinates (Hart et al., 2008; Herold & Fields, 2004; Kelm, 2005; Sloan, 2008; Wilson, 1997)

An appreciative 360-degree survey would blend the philosophies of AI with the approach of 360-degree surveys by gathering feedback about the leader's outstanding past performance. This approach is predicted to be beneficial due to the generative nature of positive feedback (Atwater & Waldman, 1998; Peiró et al., 1999). Appreciative 360s also might enable users to overcome the shortcomings of both traditional 360s and AI interventions.

Although several studies examined the intersection of AI and leadership development, no studies were found that examined how AI could be used in 360-degree surveys. Although no specific case studies were found, Neil Samuels' resources on appreciative 360 upward feedback were reviewed. Thus, the present study will add to the body of knowledge by offering a balanced way to obtain feedback while supporting leaders' self-confidence and, thus, helping to propel the leader forward to more effective action. The next chapter describes the methods that were used in the present study.

Chapter 3

Methods

The purpose of this study was to identify how the use of AI in a 360-degree leader survey enhances the feedback process for leaders. This chapter describes the methods used in this study. The following sections outline the research design as well as the procedures related to participants, the AI intervention, measurement, and data analysis.

Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative design to examine the use of AI in a 360-leader survey at one organization with two pastors and 10 subordinates. Study data often are collected using various methods, including a survey, group interviewing, and observation. Similarly, this study utilized a mixed method approach. Qualitative "methods of data collection are growing, and they increasingly involve active participation and sensitivity to the participants of the study" (Rossman & Rallis, as cited in Creswell, 2003, p. 181).

Qualitative research "is emergent rather than tightly prefigured," meaning that although certain elements of the research may be designed in advance (e.g., in this study, a survey and group interview), new questions and observations may be created and used during the course of data collection. Rossman and Rallis explained that the "data collection process might change as doors open and close for data collection…" (as cited in Creswell, 2003, p. 18). Additionally, qualitative research is subjective, wherein it is accepted that the researcher conducts the study and interprets the data through his or her own personal lens (Creswell, 2003; Punch 2005).

AI was used as the intervention design in this study. AI is considered a form of contemporary action research and is based on the positive model of change outlined in Cummings and Worley (2008). Although several models exist, the model of AI used in

this study stipulates five phases: initiate the inquiry, inquiry into best practices, discover the themes, envision a preferred future, and design and deliver ways to create the future.

AI was appropriate for this study because it seeks to generate information on when the two pastors are at their best so they can use this feedback to make improvements. During the research, the researcher trained subordinates on the approach, taught and modeled AI in action, facilitated the survey process, presented feedback to leaders, and led participants through the possibility statement process.

Participants

The purpose of the sampling approach in this study was to balance the need for feasibility and relevance. This means that it is important that the sampling approach be feasible in terms of time requirements, access to the setting, and access to the people (Punch, 2005). Specifically, the leaders had asked the effort to limit the amount of people and time per activity where possible. The researcher had to balance this request with the need to get relevant and valuable information. The researcher urged the leaders to invite as many staff members as possible who had interacted with the pastors on work projects. The goal was to draw 10 subordinates (5 subordinates taking the survey per leader).

Purposeful sampling is often used in qualitative research (Punch, 2005, p. 187). Silverman (2010) explained that purposive sampling occurs when respondents are selected on the basis of the groups that the research addresses. Using this strategy, the researcher can "purposefully select participants and sites, (or documents and visual material) that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question" (as cited in Creswell, 2003, p. 185).

Miles and Huberman (1994) mention several checks researchers can employ to ensure a good sampling plan. These include selecting individuals who are (a) relevant for

one's questions, (b) able to produce the information that researchers are interested in hearing, and (c) able to produce generalizable and true-to-life themes. The selection criteria defined for this study reflect these considerations and included,

1. The subordinate must be employed at the same organization as the two pastors in which the study was being conducted.

2. The subordinate must have interacted with the chosen leader on one or more work projects, giving the subordinate a working knowledge of the leader and their behaviors.

Selection procedures. The pastors began the selection process by announcing the study at a staff meeting in February 2012. The researcher provided the pastors with a one-page explanation document to overview the purpose and process which the pastors sent emails to their respective subordinates.

Confidentiality and consent procedures. This study complied with all requirements outlined by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Pepperdine University to ensure all requirements were met regarding the University's procedures.

Participant demographics. The two co-pastors (one male, one female) of the 21-person organization that were chosen for the study differ in roles and responsibilities. The male co-pastor interacts with people for administering vision, classes, and teaching of the church. The female co-pastor acts as the administrative lead and interacts with people to administer church programs. The two leaders refer to themselves as the co-pastors; however, their official titles are senior pastor and executive associate pastor for the male and female leader respectively. In addition to the female leader, three additional leaders report to the senior pastor.

A minimum sample size of five employees per pastor was desired to ensure sufficient data and ability to draw conclusions on behavioral themes. The sample size for

this study was determined by a couple of factors. The employee must meet the selection

criteria and also be able to make the personal time commitment. In total, 10 out of 19

staff members were able to participate in the survey, or 53%. The other nine staff

members were unable to fulfill these requirements.

A five-person sample took the survey on the female pastor and a five-person

sample took the survey on the male pastor. A demographic profile of each sample is

provided in Table 1. Demographics for the total organization were unavailable.

Table 1

Survey Sample Demographics

	Sample 1 (female leader) $N = 5$	Sample 2 (male leader) $N = 5$	Total $N = 10$
Gender			
Male	0	1	1
Female	5	4	9
Age			
20-29	0	0	0
30-39	0	1	1
40-49	1	1	2
50-59	4	2	6
60 and over	0	1	1
Tenure			
0-5 years	3	3	6
6-12 years	2	1	3
13-19	0	1	1
20 years or more	0	0	0
Educational Attainment			
High school	0	0	0
Some college	0	0	0
Bachelor's	2	1	3
Master's	2	4	6
Doctorate	0	0	0

In sample 1, all subordinates were female. In sample 2, four were female and one

was male. In total, 90% were female. In terms of age, four participants fell into the 50-59

year bracket in sample 1. The other person fell into the 40-49 bracket. For sample 2, one subordinate each fell into each of the 30-39, 40-49 and 60 and over brackets, and two fell into the 50-59 bracket.

Sixty percent of each sample had 0 to 5 years tenure with the organization. The remaining 40% in sample 1 had 6 to 12 years with the organization. The remaining 40% in sample 2 had 6 to 12 years in the organization (1 person) or 13 to 19 years (1 person).

Regarding education attainment, 40% of sample one holds a bachelors degree and 40% had a masters degree (one person out of five abstained). For sample 2, 80% (four people), hold a master degree and one person holds a bachelors. In total, 60% hold a master's degree and 30% hold a bachelor's and 10% (or one person abstained).

AI Intervention

The AI intervention was carried out over two days (see Table 2). There were several phases to this AI intervention including the training, leader survey, possibility statement creation exercise, and possibility statement debrief. The phases are described in more detail below. All meetings, with the exception of the training and demonstration, were recorded. On the first day of the intervention, all 10 survey participants and the 2 pastors participated. Nine of the 10 survey participants attended Day 2.

Day 1. Day 1 consisted of five activities: AI training, an online survey, feedback, possibility statement creation, and a second round of feedback. These steps are described below.

Training. The intervention began with a module that involved all participants, both pastors and subordinates, in training on AI and a demonstration of the survey tool. The objectives of the training were to teach the subordinates the basics of AI so that they

may understand the philosophy in order to apply their learning and knowledge in the AI-inspired survey.

Table 2

Intervention Design

Module	Activities	Timing
Day 1		
Training	-Train staff and leaders on Appreciative Inquiry -Give instructions for survey	60 minutes
Survey	-Take survey on their leader/pastor	45 minutes
Feedback	-Present feedback from survey to pastors -Obtain leader reactions to survey feedback	50 minutes
Possibility statement creation	-Explain concept and exercise -Present thought-starter questions -Capture resonant feedback through key words and pictures -Create and review possibility statements	20 minutes
Feedback	-Obtain feedback on the entire Day 1 process	20 minutes
Day 2		
Possibility statements with team and feedback	-Introduction -Obtain feedback on the intervention -Recap feedback from day 1 -Present possibility statements -Obtain input to statements -Closing of intervention, thank you	40 minutes

The tasks included the teaching of the AI concept for 20 minutes. Next, 15 minutes were taken to conduct an experiential exercise in groups of two for a deeper understanding of AI in action. Subordinates were instructed, "Think about a time where you felt at your best. When did you feel alive? When were you most successful?" The group was broken into pairs to discuss five questions:

    1. What was present?

    2. What made it the best time of your life?

3. Why were you at your best?

4. What strengths enabled you to be your best?

5. What did you value about the situation?

The researcher explained verbally, "Take 2 minutes to think of a really good example. Your example doesn't have to be within the last week, month, or year." After the 2-minute pause, the researcher instructed the room, "Please break into pairs for 8 minutes. Each person has 4 minutes to discuss their answers to these questions."

Survey. Subordinates were then exposed to a demonstration of the survey tool. This presentation lasted approximately 15 minutes. In the demonstration it was explained the ideal time to complete the survey was 45 minutes at a maximum. Subordinates were reminded of the need to keep in mind the principles of AI. Surveys were completed on-line.

The researcher checked the online tool to ensure that all subordinates had completed the survey. The researcher finished the data collection process by adding one additional question after the fact to separate the survey responses for the two pastors and then organized the data appropriately.

Feedback. Meeting with the two pastors the researcher presented the survey feedback, synthesized the themes and provided coaching to the pastors. The leaders also shared impromptu feedback about the AI process during this dialogue. After reading through all the data, they took a 5-minute break.

Possibility statement creation. A group interviewing approach was taken in the final phase of the intervention. Punch (2005) defines group interviewing as involving more than one respondent with varying degrees of structure to the questioning and process. The benefits of this approach include the opportunity to expose new facts, views,

and opinions in a stimulating and flexible manner (Creswell, 2003; Punch, 2005). The challenges to this approach include the consideration about group dynamics and how the dynamics will influence group behavior. In addition, given the large amount of input, it is more difficult for the interviewer to achieve balance from the respondents. This type of interviewing usually takes place in a natural setting like a home or office (Rossman & Rallis, as cited in Creswell, 2003). Creswell (2003) recommended that when conducting qualitative data collection, a best practice is to audiotape and transcribe the interviews.

For the possibility statement creation, the researcher again met with the two pastors. The trio discussed the possibility statement exercise and the researcher gave instructions to begin journaling. The two pastors were instructed to note the key themes, images, and words that struck them from the feedback session. While they were journaling their individual responses, the researcher presented additional questions to serve as thought-starters (see Appendix A). These questions generated data for them to use in creating their provocative statements.

Next, the researcher gave instructions to reflect on the data generated during their journaling exercise in its entirety, identify the key ideas, and distill their ideas down to one compelling statement. This statement would serve to explain who they are and who they want to be as a leader. They were scheduled to share this statement with the team the next day. After finalizing their statements, each pastor read their statement aloud to each other.

Feedback. Before the trio ended for the night, the pastors provided nearly 20 minutes of reflections—both regarding personal feedback about oneself as a leader and about the AI process as well. The researcher audio recorded the pastor comments, which

focused on the large quantity of data to process and needing additional time to process the feedback. The researcher then created talking points for Day 2.

Day 2: Sharing possibility statements with team and feedback. In the final step of the intervention, which occurred on Day 2, the pastors shared their possibility statements with their team and collected members' feedback. During this time, the researcher also conducted an informal group interview to gather the pastors' and subordinates' perceptions of the AI intervention.

The female pastor opened the session with prayer and thanked everyone for coming. The researcher explained the leader session from the night before, which including reading through the feedback, journaling, and creating a possibility statement, and then outlined the process for the day. Each pastor would recap what they heard in the feedback and present their possibility statements. Before transitioning into the planned exercise, the staff provided the researcher with feedback on the process and the survey.

Next, the female pastor shared her reflections on the process, her strengths, and what she heard in the feedback. Following the female pastor, the male pastor followed suit and presented in a similar fashion.

The researcher recapped along the way and then transitioned to the explanation of the possibility statement. The female pastor presented her possibility statement to the team first. The subordinates then offered feedback to her on her statement. The male pastor presented his statement to the team and then received feedback and ideas to further develop the statement.

While each pastor received feedback on their statements, the researcher facilitated the discussion asking "does anyone else have feedback?" and "what could be added?" The researcher captured feedback about the statements on the flipchart. At the end, the

researcher reviewed what was heard for each statement and then thanked the group for their participation. The male pastor closed the intervention in prayer.

Measurement

Several measurement tools were used in this study. One tool, which was administered for the purpose of gaining feedback about the leader, was the 360-degree appreciative survey. The second tool—the primary data collection instrument for this study—consisted of interviews of the pastors and subordinates and served the purpose of gaining feedback about the AI process as a means of leader evaluation. These two tools are discussed in the sections below.

Survey. The aim of this study was to conduct an appreciative 360 that focused directly on successful performance. The researcher created the survey (see Appendix B) for the purpose of discovering the individual leader's best examples of successful, past performance. The data from the survey was used to provide the leader with feedback that could be used in generating a possibility statement. The survey consisted of 18 questions organized into 5 categories:

1. General demographic questions. This category consisted of six questions. For example, Question 3 asked participants, How long have you been employed in this company?

2. Scaled dimensions. This category consisted of 10 dimensions for which the respondent had to rate the leader on a 5-point scale from "very ineffective" to "very effective." For example, Dimension 1 on Question 6 asked participants to rate the leader on their creativity and innovation. The respondent had the option to add up to three dimensions of their own plus answer an open ended question about what the leader should be doing more of.

3. Fill-in-the-blank responses. This category consisted of 16 sentences where the respondent needed to fill-in the blank. For example, Question 3 asked participants to finish this sentence, "My leader made me feel encouraged/special when . . . "

4. Open-ended questions. This category consisted of four questions asking the participants for specific stories. For example, Question 15 asked the participants, "When have you experienced great leadership with your leader? Share a specific story. What did you value about what your leader did in that situation?"

5. Imagining the ideal future. This category consisted of one question with three parts. For example, Question 17, Part 1 asked participants "In an ideal world, what would your leader work on developing?"

This survey was administered online using Qualtrics.

Interviews. This study gathered data about the AI survey and intervention process using two semi-structured group interviews. The first group interview was conducted with the pastors to gain their perspectives about the AI process. The second group interview was conducted with two subordinates (one from each sample) who had completed the survey.

The researcher did consider his presence a drawback, given his family relationship with the interviewees. The interviewer attempted to counteract that drawback by asking the interviewees for honest feedback and to not hold back to spare the researcher's feelings. The researcher chose the phone method due to cost and time constraints. The time commitment did also not warrant travel for a face-to-face interview. The following sections describe the specific design and administration details about the interview.

Design. The researcher chose a semi-structured interview design to allow for flexibility to explore themes and feedback with the participants. The researcher designed the interview questions with additional input from both his thesis advisor and one colleague.

The interview script was created in both an inductive and deductive manner. It was inductive because the effectiveness of AI theory and approach was considered when

crafting the questions. It was deductive because the questions arose based on themes that occurred during the intervention. This allowed for further validation and clarification around the accuracy of the interview results and data.

Specifically, the interview contained eight open-ended questions for the leaders (see Appendix C) and six open-ended questions for the employees (see Appendix D) with additional sub-prompts for some questions. The interviewer added additional open-ended questions as the interview progressed to assess, clarify, and validate themes from the intervention. The questions were created to gauge the effectiveness of the overall process.

Administration. The group interviewing format is when the researcher meets with several people simultaneously (Punch, 2005). The benefit of this approach is the ability to meet with more than one person at a time. The challenge of this approach is the group dynamic which may influence behavior. The interviewer asked one of the leaders beforehand if the feedback would be different if the leaders were in the same session. The leader told the interviewer the feedback would be relatively similar. The researcher chose the group method to allow for greater efficiency.

The two pastors were asked to participate in the follow-up interviews to get both perspectives on the effectiveness of the process. The researcher asked for volunteers among the subordinates to participate in the interviews. Using the AI philosophy, the researcher let those with the highest levels of engagement participate.

The two follow-up interviews were both administered over the phone and were audio-recorded. Interviews ranged from 35 to 55 minutes.

Data Analysis

Data was collected throughout each phase of the study. During the AI intervention, the researcher recorded the data by hand on flipcharts and also audio-

recorded the discussion. Transcripts of the audio recordings were then created. The researcher confirmed the accuracy of the transcripts by listening to the audio while reviewing the transcript.

The transcripts of the AI sessions were analyzed to determine emergent themes regarding the use and effectiveness of the AI process for leader evaluation. Thematic analysis, as described below, was the specific process used to draw themes.

Descriptive statistics and themes (for open-ended questions) were determined using the survey data. It is important to note; however, that these results serve only as context for this study and do not help answer the research question regarding the use and effectiveness of the AI process for leader evaluation. Therefore, the results of the survey are reported in Appendix E.

Themes were generated using thematic analysis (see description below) for the interviews of the pastors and subordinates about the AI process. It is important to note that this round of data analysis was performed on detailed notes taken from the audio-recordings of the interviews rather than from a verbatim transcript. Although the best practice is to transcribe the audio recordings into a text form, the interviewer may instead take notes on the most salient, key points and perspectives (Rowley, 2012).. The researcher confirmed the accuracy of the notes by listening to the audio-recordings while reading the notes.

The thematic data analysis process can be similar to a spiral, where multiple iterations of review and meaning-making are needed. Creswell (2003) recommends three main phases during data analysis: organizing the data; reading over the source material to get a general sense of the data, paying attention to tone and ideas; conduct detailed analysis with a coding process, which means organizing the information into chunks after

analyzing the sentences and ideas. Creswell purports that the way to categorize the

information is to read the data for the first few informants and generating a list of topics.

Once the list of topics is generated, the next step is to start matching coding the

comments into the categories.

This chapter outlined the methods used to gather and analyze data for this study.

The next chapter presents the results.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to identify how the use of AI in a 360-degree leader survey enhances the feedback process for leaders. Four research questions were examined:

1. Does the AI process impact the implementation and use of survey results?

2. What is the nature of participants' willingness to engage in the process?

3. In what ways is action planning in response to the feedback supported by the process?

4. To what extent does process generate meaningful feedback for the leaders?

This chapter reports the results of the study for each research question. The data generated through the course of the AI intervention, including results of the exercises and the leader survey results act as context for this study and do not specifically address the research question. Therefore, these data are reported in Appendix E. The following sections present feedback about the process that emerged during the 2-day intervention, the results of the leader group interview, and the results of the subordinate group interview. The following sections report themes for each of the major research questions. Summarized themes are presented at the end of the chapter.

1. Does the AI Process Impact the Implementation and Use of Survey Results?

Subordinate and leader feedback were solicited regarding the impact of the AI process on implementation and use of survey results. Key themes determined from feedback, leader interviews, and subordinate interviews are provided in Table 3.

Table 3

Impact of Appreciative Process on Implementation and Use of Survey Results

Feedback from Leader Feedback Session	Leader Interview Results	Subordinate Interview Results
1. Leader tendency to focus on lower survey scores 2. Generally gained a depth of insight through open-ended or provocative AI questions, although in some cases this did not occur. 3. Intervention and coaching can occur as part of survey feedback process 4. Facilitator and leaders begin synthesizing themes as part of feedback process	Survey results were expected	1. The survey process was familiar 2. Survey was effective; it encouraged feedback and was thought-provoking 3. Survey questions were not relevant to subordinate's interaction with the leader 4. Easier to give leaders feedback—especially negative feedback—by survey rather than face-to-face.

Feedback from leader feedback session. The key themes emerging from this

feedback are as follows:

a. Leader tendency to focus on lower survey scores. While reviewing the survey

feedback during the leader feedback session, the pastors tended to focus on lower survey

scores. The researcher showed the pastors the ratings their subordinates gave them on

various leadership dimensions. Although the process was meant to be appreciative and

focus on strengths, one pastor commented, "you always notice your lowest, and my

lowest was 3.6 for energizing the team." It is notable that although the pastor pointed this

out as "lowest," the score was between a 3 (neutral) and 4 (effective), which does not

reflect an ineffective or poor score. This reveals a possible tendency to focus on one's

deficits, despite the appreciative focus of the intervention.

b. Generally gained a depth of insight. The open-ended or provocative AI

questions tended to produce a depth of insight, although in some cases this did not occur.

For instance, asking subordinates to share stories of times they felt like they were on the

same page as your leader resulted in the leaders saying, "that's great. That's what you want to hear, that they feel that you're involved and engaged but also not getting in their way." In other cases, the pastors realized things they did not know before: "what you don't really think is…significant, is really significant to them. It's the little things that matter." In contrast, other questions solicited short comments, such as "What would be your ideal role in creating this positive future?" One answer to this question was, "Just do anything I could do as a team player," for which it was difficult to draw any conclusions.

c. Intervention and coaching can occur in feedback process. The survey feedback process offered an opportunity for intervention and coaching by the facilitator. Because the pastors tended to focus on lower scores, the researcher examined the comments related to these areas to pull out positive comments in these areas. The researcher then highlighted these instances of success to the leaders and reinforced to the pastors that they have been successful in these areas. Finally, the researcher recommended that they continue the positive behavior with the statement, "You might want to take a chance to do more of that." This manner of intervention helped the researcher restore an appreciative focus, despite the pastors' tendency to focus on their lower scores.

d. Facilitator and leaders begin synthesizing themes. Although the raw survey data was shared as part of the feedback session, both the facilitator and the pastors began synthesizing the key themes as part of this process. The pastors occasionally summarized what they were hearing from each comment. The researcher made comments on recurring themes he had seen, including a comment "preaching was mentioned a lot," and others like it. This seemed to be a strength of the process because the pastors and researcher

were readily able to identify themes as they read through the feedback without having to do a detailed analysis.

Subordinate interview results. Additional themes that emerged during the subordinate interviews were:

a. Easier to give leaders feedback. The subordinates reported that it was easier to give leaders feedback—especially negative feedback—by survey rather than face-to-face. One subordinate claimed it could be awkward and questioned if it was their place:

> I don't think you could give the feedback directly to the leaders' faces. I just don't know, I think it would be awkward to give that feedback to your boss. It's not my equal coworker. Who am I to tell [my managers] something? For these reasons, it was easier to give this feedback using the survey.

Although another subordinate stated not having an issue sharing the positive feedback with the pastors, she did express concern providing the negative feedback to the leader's face:

> I wouldn't have any trouble giving the positive feedback directly with them, but it would be awkward or more difficult to directly give the negative feedback. And, for micromanagers (like at my previous church), if I share the feedback, he probably wouldn't do anything.

The two subordinates who were interviewed remarked that they would have had difficulty in providing feedback because they did not think it was their place or because it may go unnoticed in the face-to-face setting. Thus, the survey aspect seemed to be a strength of this process.

b. Survey encouraged thought-provoking feedback. Similarly, the subordinates shared that the survey was effective in that it encouraged feedback and was thought-provoking. When asked about the effectiveness of the survey, one subordinate remarked, "I thought it was pretty effective. The questions you had encouraged the feedback and the positive approach." Another subordinate said, "45 minutes [to take the survey] is

probably more realistic. Because a lot of those are really thought-provoking. You know, trying to think through and come up with good ideas." This comment reflected how the subordinate wanted to give thought to her ideas to ensure they were good and helpful to the pastors. Another subordinate said, ": I thought I'd be saying yes, no, yes, no, 1, 2, 3. I found I had to think about things." These perspectives show how the subordinates thought the questions encouraged feedback and ideas rather than discouraging or limiting their responses.

2. What is the Nature of Participants' Willingness to Engage in the Process?

Subordinate and leader feedback were also solicited regarding the impact of the AI process on willingness to participate in leader evaluations. Key themes determined from leader feedback session, leader interviews, and subordinate interviews are provided in Table 4. The key themes emerging from this feedback are as follows:

Leader feedback session, leader interview results, and subordinate interview results

a. Participants found experience to be positive; engaged in laughter. The facilitator, pastors, and subordinates all found the AI process to be a positive experience and participants engaged in laughter and good-natured teasing. Over 10 instances of laughter were noted. The two pastors poked fun at one another, one even calling the other "Gandhi" for being cited as "calm." Subordinates also reported that the appreciative training was interesting, effective, and exciting. They also mentioned that the AI concept was new to them. One subordinate explained: "Usually, when you do an evaluation, you focus on what they need to do better, in a negative way. It was a real mind shift for me. I found it very exciting, very interesting. So I was fascinated with all the background."

Table 4

Impact of Appreciative Process on Participant Willingness

Leader Feedback Session	Leader Interview Results	Subordinate Interview Results
1. Facilitator, leaders, and subordinates found it to be a positive experience 2. Participants engaged in laughter and good-natured teasing 3. Leaders felt "under the microscope." Their emotions and self-concept affected by the feedback. 4. Subordinates were concerned about confidentiality. Some subordinates not willing to participate in follow-up interview.	Appreciative process made it easier to hear and be receptive to constructive feedback.	Appreciative training was interesting, effective, and exciting.

b. AI made constructive feedback easier to hear. Leaders reported that the appreciative process made it easier to hear and be receptive to constructive feedback. One pastor commented about how starting with the positive actually helped him open himself up to the challenging himself. He said, "I'm hearing the good things about myself, but what about the rest?...It made me do that. That's what I call an unintentional result."

c. Leaders felt "under the microscope" and emotionally affected. The pastors and subordinates also expressed some discomfort with the process. Leaders felt "under the microscope" and they shared that their emotions and self-concept were affected by the feedback. One pastor commented, "You do feel like you are a little bit under the microscope." In response to the idea of having a longer intervention, the pastor said, "so spreading the process out just elongates that period that you feel like either others are focused on you or you're having to think about yourself." This is a drawback of the process the pastors showed apprehension to lengthening the process due to their discomfort with having the process focused on them. The pastors felt a range of emotions from feeling affirmed by the feedback to feeling inept from the feedback. Both pastors

felt affirmed, with one commenting, "strengths that I had identified were things that others were recognizing and commenting on. And so that was nice affirmation that those things were being seen, or that I was using." The other pastor felt inept and said, "I wanted to find out I had more strengths," and "I feel like people require things of me that I don't feel that I'm gifted or qualified to do." For their part, subordinates were concerned about confidentiality and some were not willing to participate in a follow-up interview. One subordinate said it was easier to give the positive stories, whereas the negative stories were more difficult. She articulated, "you can't really give a personal story and it stay confidential," because the leader would inevitably remember the story, who the story involved, and know who provided the feedback in the survey. This is a risk of the process and should be part of the informed consent procedures for survey takers.

3. In What Ways is Action Planning in Response to the Feedback Supported by the Process?

Subordinate and pastor feedback also were solicited regarding the impact of the AI process on action planning evaluations. Key themes determined from impromptu feedback, leader interviews, and subordinate interviews are provided in Table 5.

Table 5

Impact of Appreciative Process on Action Planning

Impromptu Feedback (from Leader Feedback Session)	Leader Interview Results	Subordinate Interview Results
1. Leaders spontaneously brainstormed ways to use the feedback 2. Leaders need time to review data before engaging in action planning. 3. Specific process for action planning is missing in the AI approach used	1. Process invited leaders to shift toward appreciatively evaluating their staff and programs 2. The intervention lacked opportunities for deliberate action planning 3. Process invites leaders to engage in broader self-evaluation	Action planning needs to be the next step in the process

The key themes emerging from this feedback are as follows:

a. Intervention lacked opportunities for action planning. Pastors and subordinates pointed out several times that few opportunities were provided in the process for deliberate action planning. One pastor commented, "We didn't do a lot of action planning," whereas a subordinate recommended, I think the goal setting and action planning is an important next step in the process." This feedback reveals one way that the process fell short of the intent of the AI process, which seeks to create action around areas of success. The subordinate's comments on action planning reflect that more effort could have been placed in this area to ensure a successful intervention conclusion.

b. Leaders need time to review data before action planning. For any action planning to be effective, the pastors also shared that they needed time to review the data before engaging in action planning. The pastor explained that the amount of data to process was overwhelming: "I can't take this much [information this] quickly". The leader recommended, "It would be nice to hear that [feedback], go back to your room, process it for a couple of hours, then come back to the group and talk about it. This reflects a need for modification in the process in that the 2-day intervention may need to be extended over additional days.

c. Process invites broader self-evaluation. The pastors reported that the process invited them to engage in broader self-evaluation and also consider building an appreciative focus into their performance evaluation programs throughout the organization. The pastors explained that the process made them reflect on themselves and ask about other areas in their leadership. They reported that this helps them grow. The pastors surmised that having this honest dialogue would help their subordinates grow too. One pastor stated, "I want to be more of a leader [who] is able to challenge somebody

when they need to hear something [they] don't want to hear. For example, the pastor said it was not fun for him to hear the feedback but it was helpful. He wanted to give his people the same opportunity. The pastor posited that the organization "will re-structure the way we evaluate our staff" to incorporate an AI approach to evaluation. This was in part due to the fact that the AI process connected with the church's philosophy to focus on people's strengths and ask their subordinates, "in what areas are we doing well?"

4. To What Extent Does the AI Process Generate Meaningful Feedback for the Leaders?

Feedback was gained regarding the impact of the AI process on producing meaningful feedback. Key themes determined from impromptu feedback, leader interviews, and subordinate interviews are provided in Table 6.

Table 6

Impact of Appreciative Process on Producing Meaningful Feedback

Impromptu Feedback	Leader Interview Results	Subordinate Interview Results
From Leader Feedback Session 1. More time is needed for the overall process 2. Gives leaders opportunity to reflect on how they think and process information From Day 2 Feedback Session 3. Produces opportunities for subordinates to affirm and support leaders 4. Participants found questions to be thought provoking	1. More time is needed for the overall process 2. Overall process had impact 3. More time is needed specifically for action planning 4. Hearing the feedback produced feelings vulnerability and affirmation 5. Group feedback and relationship between researcher and leader produced feelings of discomfort	1. More time is needed for the overall process 2. Intervention's success was partially due to health of organization and leaders' willingness 3. Process was frustrating for those who have limited types of interaction with leaders

The key themes emerging from this feedback are as follows:

a. More time is needed for the overall process. All the interview participants, both pastors and subordinates, voiced that more time is needed for the overall process, particularly action planning. The pastors claimed that the organization had a lot going on

and the intervention was viewed as one more activity to fit into the organization's schedule. The pastors acknowledged to the researcher that they had not given the commitment or permission for the study to have the time needed for the process. One pastor commented, "As a leader, I wasn't giving you permission. I was being very restrictive on how much time I was going to give you." He acknowledged the process would have been better if there was more time dedicated to the intervention. The pastors posited that a two-day workshop or seminar would have provided "retreat setting where it [AI intervention] was the main thing." This feedback underscores the need for executive-level support for this appreciative 360 process.

When asked to rate the intervention on a scale from 1 to 5, 5 being the best, the two pastors both scored the intervention a 4. One pastors posited, "we didn't have the time to really flesh out the results or flesh out the next steps." He continued, "a determination or a creation of some action items or action steps of what we could do next would have made it a 5." The other pastor similarly wanted to understand how to implement the possibility statement with each of her direct reports. She recommended adding a step to the process that asked the leader, "What does this statement look like in my relationship with [my Director of Children's Ministries]?" The pastors both agreed that a list of action steps for the future would have improved the intervention.

b. Participants found questions to be thought provoking. Pastors and subordinates expressed that the overall process was thought provoking and had impact. One subordinate shared, "I had never heard of it before and I had no idea what it was about. It was a lot to take in and understand and process." The pastors found the overall process to cause self-reflection on both their areas of strengths and areas for improvement. Regarding the impact, both pastors reported hearing feedback from the

participants about the quality of the presentation and introduction of AI. One pastor

summarized the intervention's overall impact by saying,

> The greatest takeaway for us as a church or as an organization, is that this [AI] works better. This is not Pollyannaish. This isn't just positive thinking. This actually produces results. When you affirm people in what they do well, they do it better. When a person feels better or good about the team they serve with or the organization that they are apart of, they are actually going to contribute better. It seems so logical and so simplistic. But it has a powerful result.

The subordinates additionally commented that this process produced opportunities for

them to affirm and support their leaders.

c. Success partially due to health and willingness of organization. Pastors and

subordinates appeared to believe that success of the approach strongly relies on the

specific individuals involved and how their involvement is orchestrated. One subordinate

posited that the intervention's success was partially due to the health of the organization

and the leaders' willingness to participate. Another subordinate reflected on her past

experience,

> I have worked in churches that were quite different. In the church I worked at before here, the pastor was a micromanager. So, the questions you asked worked well here, but if I had a different type of leader, I would have to give different feedback.

> The other subordinate posited that the morale of the group resulted in less trust

issues related to the AI process. She summarized,

> Basically, we have a group with high morale, are very confident, and enjoy working together. But if you had a dynamic where the work morale isn't so high, I think you'd have a lot of trust issues. "Why am I going to show my hand?" Basically, they would tell you what you want to hear to get out of the room. Because it's not going to matter in a year. Nothing will change [in that kind of environment].

d. Process was frustrating for those with limited interaction with leaders.

Additionally, the right people need to be providing feedback. One subordinate expressed

that she had little exposure to certain aspects of the leader; therefore, it was difficult and frustrating to be asked to provide that kind of feedback. The subordinate posited the questions were not appropriate given her interaction with the leaders. She stated, "I had a lot of trouble answering the questions because my role is different. As the secretary, I don't participate in the creative planning process." This subordinate stated she could not provide work-related examples that she deemed relevant to the question.

> ***e. Feedback produced feelings of vulnerability and affirmation. Relationship between researcher and leader caused of discomfort***. Finally, one pastor noted that being related to the researcher led to awkwardness and discomfort during the feedback sessions. He acknowledged that hearing critique from his subordinates with his son present made him feel vulnerable. He stated he had a difficult time receiving feedback as it is. He remarked, "You feel like 'I don't want him hearing this.'" Although the pastor did not want to project a false image, he reported discomfort with the researcher's involvement. The pastors further suggested that it might be preferable to share the feedback one-on-one rather than in a group setting. The two pastors had listened to one another's feedback together, allowing for each leader to compare the other leader's scores to their own. The pastors acknowledged that one leader's feedback was more positive. One pastor stated, "compared to mine. It wasn't as good as mine." The pastors attributed their assessment on who was able to take the survey for each pastor. Some were not able to take the survey on the pastor who received lower, less positive scores because of personal time constraints. When asked if the intervention should been conducted separately, one pastor said "perhaps it could have been done separately," while the other said, "I didn't have any problem having it together."

Summary

Table 7 reports the key themes that emerged for each research question of this study. Examination of the impact of the appreciative process on the implementation and use of survey results yielded six themes regarding the risks, benefits, and needed interventions related to the process. Risks include the tendency for leaders to focus on the negative; subordinates having difficulty providing rich, relevant data; and having to make sense of large volumes of raw data. Benefits include the possibility for gathering insightful stories and giving subordinates an opportunity to give feedback that may otherwise be difficult to provide. These risks and benefits reveal the need for certain facilitator interventions, such as helping to maintain a positive focus and supporting the leaders in synthesizing the data.

Three themes emerged regarding pastors' and subordinates' willingness and their positive and negative emotions surrounding the feedback process. Positive emotions included pastors' feelings affirmation and recognition for their strengths. All participants including the pastors and subordinates remarked about how the positive process was a paradigm shift that opened their mind up to a new perspective on evaluation. Negative emotions involved feelings of discomfort with being the focal point in the group setting for leaders and confidentiality risk for subordinates. These positive and negative emotions reveal the need for well-developed training on AI, explanation of the personal risks involved, and a pre-intervention discussion on how best to mitigate against negative emotions.

Themes also were generated regarding effective action planning and the 360 process. Pastors reported not having sufficient time to absorb the feedback (and feeling overwhelmed as a result), not being able to identify deliberate action steps, and desiring

Table 7

Summary of Impacts

Research Question	Risks	Benefits	Needed Interventions
1. Implementation and Use of Survey Results	• Focusing on the negative • Need for rich, relevant data • Large volumes of raw data	• Gathering insightful stories • Easier forum for giving feedback	• Help maintain a positive focus • Help synthesize the data.
2. Participant Willingness	• Discomfort being the focal point • Confidentiality risk	• Enhanced willingness • Feeling affirmed and recognized • Enjoyed paradigm shift	• Give pre-intervention orientation • Explain risks and benefits and intended uses of feedback
3. More Effective Action Planning	• Insufficient time • Overwhelmed by volume of information	• Feeling inspired	• Allow enough time • Allow for action planning
4. Producing Meaningful Feedback to Leaders	• Lack of trust	• Thought-provoking	• Allow enough time • Ensure right people are involved

the opportunity to apply the process to the organization and its leaders. Pastors and

subordinates wished that the intervention had been longer and that specific action plans

could have been developed—particularly for each of their subordinate relationships.

Overall, the pastors felt inspired by the AI process and now seek to extend the AI

evaluation in their subordinate evaluation process. These drawbacks and opportunities

reveal the need for continuing the positive momentum of the AI intervention into a

deliberate action planning stage that allows for a tailored approach for individual

members.

Examination of the impact of producing meaningful feedback for leaders yielded

themes regarding the benefits and key indicators for success. The benefits of the process

included its thought-provoking nature and its effect of increasing their receptivity to

feedback. Key indicators for success included having additional time for the overall

process to avoid distractions and time barriers and also the need to examine the specific

people involved in the process and their approach to receiving feedback. These benefits

and indicators for success reveal the need for dedicated time for the intervention.

Additionally, it would be helpful to utilize a workshop format and include adequate pre-

planning to ensure a successful outcome. The next chapter presents a discussion of these

results, including conclusions, recommendations, limitations, and suggestions for

additional research.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to identify how the use of AI in a 360-degree leader survey enhances the feedback process for leaders. Four research questions were defined:

1. Does the AI process impact the implementation and use of survey results?

2. What is the nature of participants' willingness to engage in the process?

3. In what ways is action planning in response to the feedback supported by the process?

4. To what extent does process generate meaningful feedback for the leaders?

This chapter provides a discussion of the study results. The following sections present the conclusions, recommendations, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

Conclusions

Conclusions were drawn for each research questions. These conclusions and their implications are described in the following sections.

Implementation and use of feedback with AI. Examination of the impact of the appreciative process on the implementation and use of survey results yielded six themes regarding the risks, benefits, and needed interventions related to the process. Risks include the possibility for leaders to focus on the negative; subordinates having difficulty providing rich, relevant data; and having to make sense of large volumes of raw data. Benefits include the possibility for gathering insightful stories and giving subordinates an opportunity to give feedback that may otherwise be difficult to provide. These risks and benefits reveal the need for certain facilitator interventions, such as helping to maintain a positive focus and supporting the leaders in synthesizing the data.

These aspects of the process reflect AI's focus on generating illustrative stories and large volumes of data about the organization (or focus of inquiry) at its best (Cooperrider et al., 2008; Johnson & Leavitt, 2001). It is interesting to note that leaders tended to focus on the negative, despite the appreciative focus, as critics have complained that AI inappropriately ignores negativity (Bechtold, 2011; Bushe, 2007; Fitzgerald et al., 2010).

It is important to acknowledge the possible alternate explanations for the results. The focus on the negative could have been the result of a personality trait of the pastors or subordinates, they could have been having a bad day, or participants might have simply offered a lot of negative information. The lack of rich, relevant data in some cases may have been the result of some participants not realizing their stories are insightful, being unwilling to share a positive story about the leader, or feeling concerned about confidentiality. The failure to provide information also could be because they have too much or too little history with the leader to choose from, thus they may not know how to proceed with the survey. It was therefore concluded that the researcher should pay attention to the data being obtained and coach the subordinates to provide more relevant data. In advance of collecting feedback, the researcher may need to take measures such as administering personality tests and ensuring sufficient history between the leaders and subordinates. These measures may provide supplementary context needed to understand the feedback and results.

AI impact on participant willingness. The appreciative process seemed to generally have a beneficial impact on pastors' and subordinates' willingness to engage with the process, although some concerns did arise. Pastors reported feeling affirmed and recognized for their strengths. The pastors and subordinates remarked about how the

positive process was a paradigm shift that opened their mind up to a new perspective on evaluation. Negative emotions involved feelings of discomfort with being the focal point in the group setting for leaders and confidentiality risk for subordinates. These results suggest the need for well-developed training on AI, explanation of the personal risks involved, and a pre-intervention discussion on how best to mitigate against negative emotions.

Subordinates enjoyed learning the new appreciative paradigm but also voiced concerns about confidentiality. They believed that the leaders would easily recognize their stories—and the pastors typically did. These results suggest that subordinates not only need knowledge of how the information they provide will be used but also be reminded of the confidentiality risks associated with participation in appreciative feedback. Given these risks, some subordinates may opt not to participate. Furthermore, the subordinates desired to see the feedback acted upon in terms of concrete action steps.

These results partly align with the AI literature. Cooperrider et al. (2008) asserted that the AI approach leads to a stronger sense of commitment and engagement. Based on the results of the present study, it can be concluded that there is a chance for both enhanced engagement as well as reduced engagement, due to the intimacy and sharing endemic to the process. This is an important caveat to the AI approach and would benefit from further research.

AI impact on action planning. Pastors and subordinates emphasized that they did not have sufficient time to absorb the feedback or to identify deliberate action steps. Nevertheless, they did want to use the process in the future with the organization and its leaders. The pastors shared that due to the volume of information, they felt overwhelmed, wished the intervention had been longer, and wished they had emerged from it with

specific action plans for each of their subordinate relationships. This was a notable finding, as the pastors initially required that the intervention take as little time as possible from their subordinates' work days. The key learning here is to ensure that adequate time is allocated before an intervention like this is started.

Opportunities existed in the intervention for the pastors to ask about areas other than their strengths. In addition, the leadership felt inspired by the AI process and seeks to extend the AI evaluation in their subordinate evaluation process. It is therefore concluded it is necessary for continuing the positive momentum of the AI intervention into a deliberate action planning stage that allows for a tailored approach for individual members.

The final two stages of the 4-D AI model focus on designing and delivering on action plans as articulated in the possibility statement (Cooperrider et al., 2008; Srithika & Bhattacharyya, 2009; Watkins & Kelly, 2007). Johnson and Leavitt (2001) explained that this stage focuses on action planning, cultivating commitment to the change, and evaluating the process to determine its effectiveness. It is apparent from the participant feedback that these two stages were not adequately built into the process. It is also concluded that the process needs to be longer to enable sufficient attention to these final two phases.

AI impact on meaningfulness of feedback. Examination of the impact of producing meaningful feedback for leaders yielded three themes regarding the benefits and key indicators for success. The benefits of the process included its thought-provoking nature that increased receptivity to feedback. Key indicators for success included having additional time for the overall process to avoid distractions and time barriers and also the need to examine the specific people involved in the process and their approach to

receiving feedback. It is concluded that sufficient dedicated time for the intervention to include workshop format, and pre-planning to ensure success of a tailored intervention.

Recommendations

Several recommendations emerge from this study regarding the 360 survey approach described in this study. Specific recommendations for leaders, subordinates, organizations, and OD practitioners are described below.

Leaders. Recognizing that sufficient time to successfully execute this process is critical, leaders should provide the allocated time and space for the participants to participate in the process. This would include additional time in the training, survey, and team sessions. When taking time to review the feedback, the leaders should convey how much time they need to process the information and how they plan to review it. Lastly, once the feedback has been reviewed, time should be allocated to the OD practitioner to provide the leader with coaching.

Leaders need to be aware that submitting themselves to this process requires willingness to potentially leave behind their old paradigm and be open to change. The process is challenging and not easy. Leaders should realize that there is the potential to hear specific stories of success and be prepared to continue doing the things that subordinates appreciate. Leaders also should prepare themselves to hear stories that others do not comfortable telling them in person. Furthermore, leaders should encourage subordinates to share all stories—whether subordinates think those are good or bad. Offering an invitation to work through the challenging feedback is another recommendation to ensure participants can fully engage themselves in the process. Otherwise, leaders risk not having full participation for fear of certain stories will be more awkward to share than constructive.

Finally, leaders must make a personal commitment to the AI intervention. Leaders should champion the process, as the more they stand behind the process, the more effective the process will be. Leaders should be careful to show active support throughout the intervention and work with the OD practitioner on the direction the OD intervention is taking to ensure optimal results. Leaders can help the OD practitioner in establishing the direction of the intervention by sharing their goals for the intervention and what kind of feedback would they find meaningful. Furthermore, once the feedback is received, leaders should support the facilitator by offering feedback on how to keep the process alive in the participants' mind, letting the facilitator advise how best to take the feedback one step further in their organization. The leaders know their organization the best and can be invaluable in co-creating a tailored solution that will work for their organization.

Subordinates. Subordinates play an important role in any 360 intervention. Their engagement produces the feedback needed to carry the intervention forward. They should be informed that all their stories, no matter how small they may seem, can comprise significant and impactful feedback for leaders. Participants need to be reminded to stay focused on providing specific and positive information.

This appreciative process also requires specific information which can be time-consuming for subordinates to provide. They should be informed that they can take breaks in order to provide the most helpful feedback as the quality of the feedback matters. Their insightful comments can lead to meaningful conclusions for the leader; therefore, subordinates should take the time they need.

Subordinates also need to be aware that they are taking a risk in providing the feedback. Specific stories will be shared and it is possible that the leaders may recognize which stories were mentioned by whom. Subordinates need to be encouraged to share

information that might feel uncomfortable because it could improve a working

relationship. Subordinates should be allowed the ability to opt in or opt out of the process

accordingly.

Organizations. It appears that the appreciative 360 process may affect the

organization positively in that it helps the organization experience a new paradigm for

evaluation. The organization may quickly experience higher levels of engagement in the

process and leaders may feel affirmed. On the other hand, some subordinates and leaders

may feel discomfort as a result of the amount of sharing, risks to confidentiality, and

nature of the data that emerge. It is important to recognize this issue and plan accordingly

when determining who will and will not participate.

For these reasons (as well as those discussed throughout this chapter),

organizations should not expect to be able to simply propose an AI leader evaluation off

the shelf and have the process work by itself. All participants can show engagement in

the AI intervention effort by evaluating the survey questions themselves. After

completing an assessment, the organization may determine that certain questions are not

needed. This process has the potential to become unwieldy due to the large amount of

data. Efforts should be made to manage the intervention so that it is valuable, but more

importantly sustainable for future use. Once in process, a facilitator will be needed to

help subordinates shift to the positive. Additionally, the organization's leaders need to

visibly support the process if subordinates are expected to engage with it.

OD practitioners. OD practitioners have a responsibility to manage the feedback

process to ensure there is an appropriate amount of information, leaders are coached to

focus on the positive information, and subordinates feel prepared to offer feedback in a

helpful manner to the intervention. OD practitioners should be cognizant of the

information they are collecting, as gathering too much information can be a limitation. This limitation can result in an unmanageable amount of information to analyze and understand in the timeframe allotted.

The OD practitioner should contract with leadership to ensure the leadership has chosen the appropriate questions and that there is a process to analyze the information in advance of the feedback meeting. This may mean that the OD practitioner conducts a thematic analysis prior to the session or determines which feedback to share and which to withhold for later.

OD practitioners should not only be focused on the quantity of information provided, but also on the quality of the information provided. Some subordinates may readily provide specific stories that give instances of situation, behaviors, and results, while others may not. OD practitioners should consider providing sample responses to subordinates and coaching those who may need help crafting their answers.

Some may be unable to delve into positive feedback because of a negative past experience. It is also essential that the facilitator help subordinates remain within the positive frame or allow them to identify a way to move past the negative history. The OD practitioner could research T-groups or other formats to uncover strategies for helping leaders and subordinates address issues so that conflicts and unrest may be resolved or at least kept from undermining the 360 process.

OD practitioners should prepare leaders for the flexibility will be needed in the AI intervention, as a different approach may be needed with some subordinates. They should be prepared that not all participants will readily move to the appreciative frame and will need to air their complaints. Before moving to the positive stories, some participants may require working these issues. Everyone may not be able to "get with the program" from

an AI perspective. Subordinates should be encouraged to choose whether to participate. OD practitioners should offer this opportunity to opt or opt in.

The challenge for OD practitioners is to maintain the positive momentum. If done well, it is likely that it will create positive energy. For example, GTE kept its AI intervention going through an employee engagement program and they published stories of success for the organization to see (Whitney et al., 1999). In particular, the practitioners need to help coach the leaders through the process to support the leaders' personal growth process. Facilitators need to be ready to prepare leaders for the opportunity to grow in this process by showing both the benefits and challenges of personal growth.

The current study found participants dwelling on low scores and improvements that needed to be made to the survey. Research should be conducted to help the leaders and facilitator move the team from the negative to the positive. The team needs to find a method to suspend the negative responses and identify ways to gain new, positive insights.

Further, issues of confidentially, trust and risk must be analyzed and accounted for in the design of the process. It is the rare occasion when subordinates can speak freely in a group setting about perceived leader weakness—even if done so in an appreciate way, and even rarer for them to be able to do so with the leaders present.

Limitations

Two primary limitations affected this study. First, the pastors evaluated in the study were related to the researcher. The subordinates were aware of this relationship. Therefore, participants may have consciously or subconsciously been motivated to "help" the researcher by telling him what they believed he wanted to hear (e.g., that the process

was enjoyable and effective). Additionally, the subordinates and researcher may have been consciously or subconsciously motivated to help the leaders save face. One of the pastors admitted to discomfort about receiving negative feedback for this reason. These factors affect the accuracy and quality of the data. Future studies could avoid this limitation by selecting study sites where no prior relationships between the researcher and the study participants exist.

Second, this study did not assess or control for confounding variables that could be responsible for the results. For example, the findings the pastors tended to focus on negative feedback could be a personality trait. The subordinates' difficulty in providing rich, relevant data may have been the result of a personality trait, trust issues, lack of experience with the leader, or unresolved issues with the leader. The positive impressions and experiences noted by the participants might have been more indicative of the health of the organization or personal proclivities rather than the nature of the process. These are but a few examples of extraneous variables may be responsible for the study results. The presence of such untracked, influential variables such as compressed time, lack of AI understanding, etc. skew the results. Future studies on the impacts of an appreciate 360 survey process should take care to assess these confounding variables.

Suggestions for Research

This study produced valuable exploratory insights about the potential impacts of an appreciative 360 survey process. However, more can be gained by performing the study again while correcting for the present study's limitations. For example, bias could be reduced by selecting a study site where no prior relationships exist between the researcher and the study participants.

Second, more time and attention could be dedicated to not only identifying the participants' experiences and reactions to the process, but also exploring the reasons for these experiences and reactions. For example, the researcher also could gather data on the participants' personality types and the quality of the leader-subordinate relationships. Personality type and leader-subordinate relationship quality could then be compared to participants' reactions to better determine the impact of the process versus the impact of other variables.

References

AI history and timeline. (n.d.). Appreciative inquiry commons. Retrieved from
http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/intro/timeline.cfm

Alimo-Metcalfe, B. (1998). 360-degree feedback and leadership development.
International Journal of Selection and Assessment, 6(1), 35.

Allen, S. J., & Hartman, N. S. (2008, Winter). Leadership development: An exploration
of sources of learning. *S.A.M. Advanced Management Journal, 73*(1), 10-19, 62.

Atwater, L. E., & Waldman, D. A. (1998). Introduction: 360-degree feedback and
leadership development. *Leadership Quarterly, 9*(4), 423-442.

Barrett, F. J., & Cooperrider, D. L. (2001). Generative metaphor intervention: A new
approach for working with systems divided by conflict and caught in defensive
perception. In D. L. Cooperrider, P. F. Sorensen, T. F. Yaeger, & D. Whitney
(Eds.), *Appreciative inquiry: An emerging direction for organization development*
(pp. 147-174). Champaign, IL: Stipes.

Bechtold, M. (2011). Improving worker morale through the use of appreciative inquiry.
Industrial & Commercial Training, 43(1), 25-30.

Boje, D. M. (2010). Side shadowing appreciative inquiry: One storyteller's commentary.
Journal of Management Inquiry, 19(3), 238-241.

Bradley, T. P., Allen, J. M., Hamilton, S., & Filgo, S. K. (2006). Leadership perception:
Analysis of 360-degree feedback. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, *19*(1), 7-
23.

Bushe, G. (2007). Appreciative inquiry is not (just) about the positive. *OD Practioner,
39*(4), 30-35.

Bushe, G. R. (2010). Generativity and the transformational potential of appreciative
inquiry. In D. Zandee, D. L. Cooperrider, & M. Avital (Eds.), *Organizational
generativity: Advances in appreciative inquiry* (Vol. 3). Bingley, UK: Emerald.
Retrieved from http://www.gervasebushe.ca/AI_generativity.pdf

Bushe, G. R. (2011). Appreciative inquiry: Theory and critique. In D. Boje, B. Burnes, &
J. Hassard (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to organizational change* (pp. 87-
103). Oxford, UK: Routledge.

Bushe, G. R., & Kassam, A. F. (2005). When is appreciative inquiry transformational?
Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 41(2), 161-181.

Carless, S. A., Mann, L., & Wearing, A. J. (1998). Leadership, managerial performance
and 360-degree feedback. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, *47*(4),
481-496. doi:10.1111/j.1464-

Chien, P., Cawthorn, C., & Browne, B. (2001, Sep 20). *Citizen leaders: inspiring community innovation*. Chicago, IL: Imagine Chicago. Retrieved from http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/intro/bestcasesDetail.cfm?coid=564

Conger, J. (1992). *Learning to lead: The art of transforming managers into leaders*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Cooperrider, D. L. (1986). Appreciative inquiry: Toward a methodology for understanding and enhancing organizational innovation (theory, social, participation). *Dissertations Abstracts International, 47*(05), 1805A. (AAT 8611485)

Cooperrider, D. L., Whitney, D., Stavros, J. M. (2008). *Appreciative inquiry handbook* (2nd ed.). Brunswick, OH: Crown Custom.

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cummings, T. G., & Worley, C. G. (2008). *Organization development and change* (8th ed.). Mason, OH: South-western.

Drew, G. (2009). A "360" degree view for individual leadership development. *Journal of Management Development, 28*(7), 581-592. doi:10.1108/02621710910972698

Fitzgerald, S. P., Oliver, C., & Hoxsey, J. C. (2010). Appreciative inquiry as a shadow process. *Journal of Management Inquiry, 19*(3), 220-233.

Fitzgerald, S., Murrell, K., & Miller, M. (2003). Appreciative inquiry: Accentuating the positive. *Business Strategy Review, 14*(1), 5-7.

Garrett-Howard, C. E. (2012). *Factors influencing advancement of women senior leaders in aerospace companies*. (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses database. (Publication No. AAT 3495166)

Great Bridge Presbyterian Church (GBPC). (n.d.). *Living your strengths*. Retrieved from http://www.gbpres.org/pagemenu.asp?id=159

Hamill, P. (2011) Embodied leadership: towards a new way of developing leaders. *Strategic HR Review, 10*(5), 5-10.

Hart, R., Conklin, T., & Allen, S. (2008). Individual leader development: An appreciative inquiry approach. *Advances in Developing Human Resources, 10*(5), 638-639.

Herold, D., & Fields, D. (2004). Making sense of subordinate feedback for leadership development. *Group & Organization Management, 29*(6), 686-703.

Johnson, G., & Leavitt, W. (2001, Spring). Building on success: Transforming organizations through an appreciative inquiry. *Public Personnel Management, 30*(1), 129.

Kelm, J. B. (2005). *Appreciative living: The principles of appreciative inquiry in personal life.* Wake Forest, NC: Venet.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Morris, D., & Schiller, M. (2003). *AI in diversity work: Avon Mexico.* Retrieved from http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/intro/bestcasesDetail.cfm?coid=3218

Newman, H., & Fitzgerald, S. (2001, Fall). Appreciative inquiry with an executive team: Moving along the action research continuum. *Organization Development Journal, 19,* 37-44.

Peiró, J. M., González-Romá, V., & Cañero, J. (1999). Survey feedback as a tool for changing managerial culture: Focusing on users' interpretations—A case study. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 8*, 537-550.

Peters, L., Baum, J., & Stephens, G. (2011). Creating ROI in leadership development. *Organizational Dynamics*, *40*(2), 104.

Positive Change Corps (2002). *West Springfield Public Schools: Strengths informing our decisions.* West Springfield, MA.

Preskill, H., & Catsambas, T. T. (2006). *Reframing evaluation through appreciative inquiry.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Punch, K. (2005). *Introduction to social research—Quantitative & qualitative approaches.* London, UK: Sage.

Rowley, J. (2012). Conducting research interviews. *Management Research Review*, *35*(3), 262.

Samuels, N., & Willoughby, G. (2002, Nov). *Heathside School: A play in two acts.* Retrieved from http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/intro/bestcasesDetail. cfm?coid=2338

Samuels, N. (2002*). A guide to appreciative upward/360 feedback conversations.* Retrieved from http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/practice/toolsQuestionsDetail. cfm?coid=939

Schmidt, L. (2004). *The leadership scorecard*. New York, NY: Butterworth Heinemann.

Silbert, B., & Laliberte, B. (2010). Leaders worthy of appreciation. *T+D, 64*(11), 80.

Sloan, K. (2008). It's you, not them: Strategies for becoming a smarter leader. *Global Business & Organizational Excellence, 27*(2), 73.

Smither, J. W., London, M., Reilly, R. R., Flautt, R. (2004). Discussing multisource feedback with raters and performance improvement. *Journal of Management Development, 23*(5), 456.

Sofo, F., Yeo, R. K., & Villafañe, J. (2010). Optimizing the learning in action learning: Reflective questions, levels of learning, and coaching. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, *12*(2), 205.

Srithika, T. M., & Bhattacharyya, S. (2009). Facilitating organizational unlearning using appreciative inquiry as an intervention. *Vikalpa: The Journal for Decision Makers, 34*(4), 67-77.

Stavros, J., Cooperrider, D., & Kelley, D. L. (2007). .SOAR: A new approach to strategic planning. In P. Holman, T. Devane, & S. Cady (Eds.), *The change handbook: The definitive resource on today's best methods for engaging whole systems* (2nd ed., pp. 375-380). San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.

Watkins, J. M., & Kelly, M. (2007). *AI workshop binder.* Unpublished manuscript.

Watkins, J. M., & Mohr, B. J. (2001). *Appreciative inquiry: Change at the speed of imagination.* San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer.

Whitney, D., Cooperrider, D.., Garrison, M., Moore, J., & Dinga, L. (1999). *Appreciative inquiry and culture change at GTE.* Retrieved from http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/intro/bestcasesDetail.cfm?coid=2880

Wilson, J. L. (1997, June). 360 appraisals. *Training & Development, 51*(6), 44-45.

Winseman, A. L., Clifton, D. O., & Liesveld, C. (2008). *Living your strengths: Discover your God-given talents and inspire your community.* New York, NY: Gallup.

Zolno, S. (2002). Appreciative inquiry: New thinking at work. *The 2002 annual human resource development: Training* (vol 1, pp. 131-136). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Appendix A: Questions Posed During Provocative Statement Creation

Questions Posed During Provocative Statement Creation

1. What does great leadership look like in me? (Hart, Conklin, Allen, 2008, p. 639)
2. What have you done in the last six months that you are most proud of? (Locander, Luechauer, 2007, p. 48)
3. What steps can you take today toward efficiency, effectiveness, and fulfillment? (Sloan, 2008, p. 73)
4. What would a bright and positive future look like for you as a leader? (Sloan, 2008, p. 73)

Appendix B: Survey Questions

Subordinate Survey

The following questionnaire is divided into two parts. The first part requests some basic information about you. The second part asks Appreciative Inquiry (AI) questions about your leader.

Your participation is voluntary, and your responses will remain confidential.
Any question may be left unanswered if you wish. This survey takes approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Part One : BASIC INFORMATION
Directions: Please choose the appropriate answer:

What is your gender?
- Female
- Male

What is your current age?
- Less than 20 years of age
- 20 - 29 years
- 30 - 39 years
- 40 - 49 years
- 50 - 59 years
- 60 years or more

How long have you been employed in this company?
- 0 - 5 years
- 6 - 12 years
- 13 - 19 years
- 20 years or more

What is your highest level of completed education?
- Some high school
- High school diploma
- Some college
- Bachelors degree
- Masters degree
- Doctoral degree

What is your current position?
- An individual contributor/worker
- A manager

Who are you taking this survey on?
- Leader 1
- Leader 2

Part 2:

Directions: Read each item carefully. As you approach this survey, remember the ideas of Appreciative Inquiry (AI). Keep an appreciative mind and try to envision your leader at his or her best. Use this survey as an opportunity to celebrate these times. Resist the sometimes natural and human urge to critique merely for critique's sake. Treat this survey as a different exercise, an exercise in highlighting someone's successes. The goal is to obtain concrete examples for your leader to provide them with ideas of when they are at their best. The hope is that they will use this feedback in the future to create more of these desirable moments and less of the undesirable moments.

Scaled questions: Rate your leader on the following dimensions.

	Very Ineffective	Ineffective	Neutral	Effective	Very Effective
Creativity and Innovation					
Diversity and inclusion					
Energizing the team					
Relationships					
Communication					
Task management/production					
Development of others					
Adaptability					
Personal development and modeling personal integrity					
Listening					

For scores of very effective, please explain why the leader is strong in this dimension. Feel free to give specific situations where the leader demonstrated.

Creativity and Innovation	
Diversity and Inclusion	
Energizing the team	
Relationships	
Communication	
Task management/production	

Development of others	
Adaptability	
Personal development and modeling personal integrity	
Listening	

Or, Add your own dimension and assign a rating:

Choice 1:	
Choice 2:	
Choice 3:	

Or, Add your own dimension and assign a rating:

			Very Ineffective	Ineffective	Neutral	Effective	Very Effective
Choice 1							
Choice 2							
Choice 3							

Imagining the ideal future:
Which dimensions would you like to see your leader do more of?

Fill-in-the-blank responses:
Choose at least 5 of the questions below to respond to. The more feedback you can provide is greatly appreciated.

1. My leader is exceptional atd	
2. I consistently hear the following positive quality (ies) described from others about my leader	
3. My leader made me feel encouraged/special when	
4. My leader pleasantly surprised me when	
5. My leader inspires me when	
6. My leader was especially creative / or did something out of the box when	
7. I appreciate when my leader	
8. I learned from my leader that	
9. I know my leader has the potential to	

10. My leader does not give him or herself enough credit for	
11.I wish my leader did more of	
12. One great thing I've never told my leader but he or she really needs to know is	
13.I was impressed when my leader	
14.My leader does _____ better than almost anyone that I know.	
15. My leader energizes the team when	
16.I was most happy to work for my leader when	

Open-ended questions: The following questions require specific answers. For each question, pick just one specific situation and explain the situation, actions the leaders took, and the results of the actions.

From your perspective, what are 2 ideal qualities of a leader in general? Feel free to tell stories, share a favorite quote on leadership, etc.

When is your leader at their best?

When have you experienced great leadership with your leader? Share a specific story. What did you value about what your leader did in that situation?

Describe an effective conversation with your leader where you felt like you were on the same page as your leader. What made it successful? What did you appreciate about what was said?

Imagining the ideal future:

• In an ideal world, what would your leader work on developing?	
• What three wishes would you have to make your leader their best, most exciting and effective leader in your life? What are the solutions to be embraced?	
• What would be your ideal role in creating this positive future?	

Appendix C: Follow-up Interview with Leaders

Follow-up Interview with Leader

1. How effective or helpful was the feedback? Can you give an example of where you saw this process to be effective? If you were to rate the effectiveness on a scale 1 to 5, 1 being very ineffective, 5 being very effective, what would you rate it?
2. What were you expecting when you received the results from this 360 survey? Had you taken gotten results from a 360 before? If so, how did it compare?
3. How did it feel to read the feedback?
4. Did you have an aha moment? What was it?
5. What information can you apply right away?
6. What low-hanging fruit do you see? What can you implement right away?
7. What do you plan to do with the feedback? What next steps will you take?
8. What feedback do you have about how to make this process better?

Appendix D: Follow-up Interview with Employees

Follow-up Interview with Employees

1. What were you expecting when you took this 360 survey? Had you taken one before? If so, how did it compare?
2. How effective was it? Can you give an example of where you saw this process to be effective? If you were to rate the effectiveness on a scale 1 to 5, 1 being very ineffective, 5 being very effective, what would you rate it?
3. What feedback do you have about how to make this process better?
4. What surprised you about the process?
5. Did you have an a-ha moment? What was it?
6. Do you believe you could tell this feedback to your leader's face?

Appendix E: Leader Survey Results

LEADER 360-DEGREE SURVEY RESULTS

	Leader 1 Mean (SD)	Leader 2 Mean (SD)
Creativity and Innovation	4.20 (0.45) $N = 5$	4.00 (0.00) $N = 5$
Diversity and inclusion	4.00 (0.71) $N = 5$	4.00 (0.00) $N = 4$
Energizing the team	3.60 (0.55) $N = 5$	4.25 (0.50) $N = 4$
Relationships	4.40 (0.55) $N = 5$	4.00 (0.71) $N = 5$
Communication	4.60 (0.55) $N = 5$	3.80 (0.45) $N = 5$
Task management/production	4.40 (0.55) $N = 5$	4.00 (0.00) $N = 4$
Development of others	4.20 (0.84) $N = 5$	4.33 (0.58) $N = 3$
Adaptability	4.20 (0.45) $N = 5$	4.00 (0.00) $N = 3$
Personal development and modeling personal integrity	4.80 (0.45) $N = 5$	4.50 (0.58) $N = 4$
Listening	4.60 (0.55) $N = 5$	4.00 (0.00) $N = 5$

Leader Strengths Open-Ended Comments

	Leader 1	Leader 2
Creativity and innovation	• Leader 1 is always open to changing how things are done. Leader 1 notices how other churches are doing something and brings the ideas back to GBPC. Worship Grow Serve is the most recent example. What is nice about that is, she is open to new approaches when I want to try something new too. She gives me the freedom to bring creativity to my job.	
Diversity and inclusion	• Always open to thoughts and ideas from multiple sources	
Energizing the team		• He praises often which makes us feel like we want to do more
Relationships	• sincere/genuine	• he has an individual relationship with each staff person and makes each feel important and good at what they do
Communication	• Leader 1 clearly states what is expected of us and why. • Leader 1 is always available and responds quickly. • Articulate/great "thesaurus" in her head!	
Task management/ production	• Very high administrative skills, tremendous output • She is very organized and encourages organization in others. Specifically, Leader 1 asked me to facilitate a meeting of leaders recently, she planned the agenda, sent out	

	Leader 1	Leader 2
	emails, which are the typical things for her to do, so it was quite easy to fill in for her.	
Development of others	• Almost always helpful when asked for advice, willing to look for training opportunities and encourages attendance • She sees potential in others and encourages people to take steps toward developing new skills.	• He is supportive for those who want to do whatever they need to do to be a better person/worker
Adaptability	• Sees forest, not just trees, and adapts to every changing needs/environment	
Personal development and modeling personal integrity	• Leader 1 is a great example for me of a person who works on growing, learning, trying new things for professional growth. In all the years I've known Leader 1, I have always admired her integrity, professionalism and example as Christ's disciple. • This ties in to "creativity & innovation".... Leader 1 is encourages purposeful change. • I'm never surprised by her actions, because she does not deviate from her moral compass. I see her always learning and applying -- modeling the importance of personal and professional development.	• Leader 2 is always so open about things he is working on for himself, he is honest with his congregation about his personal "weaknesses or struggles" which makes him very "real" to his congregation. He always models exceptional personal integrity. • He regularly seeks out continuing ed opportunities and I admire the fact that he obtained an advanced degree.
Listening	• One of the best listeners I know, which accounts, too, for the "Relationships" above -- sincere and genuine. Gives of her time freely, and never seems "rushed". Hears concerns and restates to assure understanding, then offers advice. • Leader 1 listens well. We meet weekly and I greatly appreciate this! I can share any concerns or joys I have and know that she listens and takes action when that is needed. • Excellent. She hears me.	

9. Imagining the ideal future, which dimensions would you like to see your leader do more of?

Leader 1	Leader 2
I am very happy with the dimensions already listed, and truly can't think of improvement in these areas. / / Unless you are able to provide more "time" -- something we all need more of -- I think this leader is already VERY effective! / / (If you are able to modify this survey/evaluation, I would suggest enabling the participant to "go back" or "forward", and "return" to this spot!)	• Continue being very transparent to his congregation and staff....it makes him very approachable and his church family see him as he really is and they can relate well to him. People appreciate his willingness to be so transparent and open about his life, short-comings, struggles, triumphs etc. • Communication: More opportunities for staff to see his vision for the future. This might be done in staff meetings that I do not attend, but I think he does a great job when all the staff do get together of praying for each one of us and making us feel important. Perhaps he could express his vision at a staff party/luncheon?

Question	Leader 1	Leader 2
1. My leader is exceptional at	• encouraging and enabling others, trusting in the outcome when a task has been delegated • HANDLING DIFFERENT SITUATIONS • staying calm, level headed, not reactionary. • creating harmony by seeing the big picture and getting folks on the same page. • organization, compassion	• Visioning • Preaching, engaging people with his sermons • People skills • Providing me a supportive environment in which to work.
2. I consistently hear the following positive quality (ies) described from others about my leader	• high ethical standards • Leader 1 is so: nice, gentle, kind, smart. • sincere/sweet/truthful/nice/easy to talk to. • she is great at organizing things; she values people	• Caring • Preaching • His messages on Sunday mornings are so powerful! • Preaching skills are excellent
3. My leader made me feel encouraged/ special when	• likes an idea of mine. • she listened to, and related to, my concerns about praying out loud with others. There have been many other times that my leader has made me feel encouraged/special, too! • she saw potential in me to lead, make decisions, take charge	• Compliments on my work • Verbal and written encouragement • He stops from his busy day to ask how I am or my family is doing....that he always makes time for his "congregants" no matter how busy he is. • He prayed for me at a luncheon • Seems genuinely appreciative of the efforts of everyone in the music ministry. He often does this, and everyone appreciates it.
4. My leader pleasantly surprised me when		• He changed the lettering on the outside sign for an upcoming event---very thoughtful and helpful • I made an error in payroll and he told me not to worry; everyone makes mistakes.
5. My leader inspires me when	• she preaches. It's very apparent that she has taken great care to prepare a sermon that will be meaningful and impact people. I feel she earnestly strives to be as effective as she possibly can. She models the love of Jesus every time I see her, and she makes me want to do the same. • she prays with me and for me	• He gives insight into what is coming up • He shows his great passion for the Lord in his preaching, serving, and teaching. It makes me want to reach more people for Christ. • He speaks at our stewardship/ finance meetings
6. My leader was especially creative / or did something out of the box when	• we discussed and came up with my split position here	• He uses tangible sermon props, like passing out nails on Good Friday Holy Week service • He handled a situation where a direct report was asking for money and others were not in favor of granting it to her.
7. I appreciate when my leader	• SHE LISTENS WHEN I NEED TO VENT • let's me do my job without micro-managing everything I do. • takes time to ask about my personal life --	• Prays with me • Asks me specifically to help with something that may not necessarily be in my job

Question	Leader 1	Leader 2
	which she always does. I don't necessarily want to talk about my personal life, but it's nice to feel like someone genuinely cares about me as a person, and not just a staff member. Note: This does not mean she needs to ask more :) so, please, don't read into that! • shares plans for ministry; supports my ideas and encourages me to proceed	description...that he will ask others to step up and lead and help with things • Takes the time to listen when I need to talk. • For all of the times he has supported me, especially when my family has struggled.
8. I learned from my leader that	• sometimes the best approach is to sit back and process information, knee jerk reactions are not the best reactions • being pleasant with people pays dividends.	• When prayer surrounds an event, God makes things happen • You accept everyone for who they are.
9. I know my leader has the potential to	• independently lead her own church • be a great organizer.	• Think bigger than the moment • Deepen the faith and devotion to Christ in each individual in this congregation, He desires to see people get to the next level in their faith and I believe he has the skill and power to help each person do that. • Be a great visionary
10. My leader does not give him or herself enough credit for	• building up new leaders • her gentleness is a strength. • many things that she is good at. She is humble (almost to a fault!).	• Helping people through tough times • All the growth that has happened in this church....He has had a big impact on the growth (not in numbers of people but in all the things the church is doing) of this church • His power at the church.
11. I wish my leader did more of		• Technological advances • Occasionally praying with our various choirs. We serve together in worship, and the sense of unity and purpose when we pray together is so powerful.
12. One great thing I've never told my leader but he or she really needs to know is	• IM REALLY GLAD THAT GOD PUT HER IN MY LIFE SHE IS SUCH A CALM SPIRIT AND THAT CAN RUB OFF ON ME • I am glad for the freedom to do my job my way. • I admire her. I respect her. I believe she is a great role model.	• I respect his opinion • all the hours of time he spends attending all the events of the church body, visiting people, scheduling individual appointments with his congregants, attending weddings, funerals, etc...all the time he is willing to give to every aspect of the church does not go unnoticed. I appreciate so much having a pastor that is so dedicated to every component and every person in his church family!! • I respect him just for who he is.
13. I was	• communicated empathy on something in my	• Answers questions from his

Question	Leader 1	Leader 2
impressed when my leader	personal life.	Bible knowledge, scripture • Answered e-mails quickly.
14. My leader does _____ better than almost anyone that I know.	• My leader communicates better than almost anyone that I know. She always chooses her words carefully, and weighs all possible reactions BEFORE communicating.	• Sermon preparation • Remembers to include everyone
15. My leader energizes the team when	• she shares plans, ideas, suggestions	• He visions • He allows both staff and his congregants to get involved in any capacity in the church life. Leader 2 is always open to letting people add new ministries to our church, is open to new ideas that people have and lets them run with them. The church culture that he has promoted allows everyone to feel like they can participate and especially that the leadership in the church is not just open to a "certain group of influential individuals", that it is a very open and engaging leadership atmosphere that works to bring in new people to leadership positions. • We have staff appreciation get-togethers.
16. I was most happy to work for my leader when	• ALWAYS • we are creating something new	• I saw him worship with the congregation • I was going through a tough time with husband's health and he prayed for me. • We complete a particularly moving worship service.

11. From your perspective, what are 2 ideal qualities of a leader in general? Feel free to tell stories, share a favorite quote on leadership, etc.

Leader 1	Leader 2
• Set standards high, offer training, support, advice & be available when needed, then get out of the way and let those chosen to complete ministry tasks do so as they feel called. / Don't micro-manage • Being exactly what the title said, a leader, being able to handle any situation or circumstance. Being able to handle adversity and at the end of the day it was just business and not personal. It's what's best for everyone. • A leader provides me the freedom to accomplish the team's vision using my creativity, ideas, and style. A leader does	• In my opinion, a good leader is someone who sees the whole picture and beyond, then does something with it. Two words that come to mind are visioning and equipping. There is a lot that goes into both f those words/concepts. To vision you have to know where you are and who you have. You also have to see where you are going and who/what you need. • Transparency and Openness / • A leader must have integrity and be trustworthy. / A leader must be highly competent in their field. • Ideal qualities of a leader: Earning Respect & Being Fair to All. I think by being fair to all, he earns respect.

Leader 1	Leader 2
not make me to do "her way." / • Ideal qualities of a leader include good communication skills and the ability to perceive others' understanding of those communication opportunities. • Encouraging development and approach-ability; / "Leaders move people from here to there" Bill Hybels / It's so refreshing to be working with people who are authentic, healthy, approachable and passionate about sharing the love of Christ with excellence and diligently.	

12. When is your leader at their best?

Leader 1	Leader 2
• Brainstorming, giving advice, idea sharing • Leader 1 is at her best when she gets to research a topic and provide background/teaching material to support a new vision/program/approach. • I feel my leader does an outstanding job of listening, understanding the circumstance, and giving advice. I feel my leader shows empathy and is able to use the BEST words to clarify the situation and needed action. There have been several instances when my leader has been able to "reframe" my concern, without making me feel bad, and elicit appropriate remedies for the situation. Regardless of the type of conversation, I always feel like I walk away from my leader as a partner in the resolution. • Leader 1 is at her best when she is leading a meeting, organizing events or planning regular activities. I also see her at her best when she is teaching, when she is sharing a message with children. When dreaming and planning for upcoming ministries, she is quite thorough in the details.	• Leader 2 is at his best in several different situations---preaching (especially to a full space) and teaching. He enjoys sharing with people the knowledge that he is continually acquiring, and that shows in his sermons and classes. • When he is preaching and teaching. • He is absolutely at his best in the way he allows people to function without micromanaging. Besides our common bond in Christ, I believe this is one of the reasons our staff has such longevity. "Allow professionals to be professional and do their jobs with expertise." • Apparently when he preaches, but I have never heard him preach. He is well known though for his preaching skills and it's on my "to-do list" for this year to come to a service at GBPC.

13. When have you experienced great leadership with your leader? Share a specific story. What did you value about what your leader did in that situation?

Leader 1	Leader 2
• She helps set and maintain boundaries, often keeping me from overextending. As a part time employ, it is very easy to continue working way over agreed upon hours, and several times Leader 1 has been the one to revisit those boundaries and insist they are honored. This can be true, not only in situations involving requests from others, but because I push my own self, or offer to do things outside my job description because of an idea I have. She can be my best advocate to part time hours, even with myself.	• I experience great leadership from Leader 2 when he served a meal for a Spring Fling event. I had just started working at the church and it impressed me that a pastor could/would also serve. That image has stayed with me for years. • When he came in to share Communion with the Children's ministry committee and tell in his own words what it means to him to partake in communion and what it means in Jesus eyes to his body of believers. Basically, Leader 2 was participating with our team in a sacred ritual, and

Leader 1	Leader 2
• Because I don't actually report DIRECTLY to this leader (I have another leader in between), I'm unable to share a specific story. • When I first started working here, there was a situation following an event, my assistant was quite upset about how things were run, I was feeling my way around, learning the culture, trying to figure out how to work with my assistant, etc. Leader 1 talked to me following the event and helped me understand how to be a better leader myself. It was a great example of leadership, handled in a very professional and positive manner.	teaching us things while doing it...and just taking the time to again, be with his people of the church. He gives time to all the different groups in his church and always seems committed to what he is doing when he is doing it. • He made some dramatic changes in his personal life. This was a courageous and risky thing to do. It was extremely hard for him and his family; however, since making these extraordinary changes, his entire countenance has changed. His outlook on multiple levels has blossomed. One of the direct results is that his sermons have taken on a deeper and more deliberate focus. I think also he has become more inclusive on a variety of issues. • Leader 2 experienced great leadership when he had to handle a delicate situation with a staff member and a member of the Session. He understands the importance of both, and sometimes has to deal with unpleasant things in the church, but he has shown me that he can handle that with ease.

14. Describe an effective conversation with your leader where you felt like you were on the same page as your leader; What made it successful? What did you appreciate about what was said?

Leader 1	Leader 2
• We have had numerous conversations re: Presbyterian Women Ministry and my role with them as the staff person who attends the Adult Ministry Team meetings. It has become easier to refer to my job description when declining their requests. Leader 1 not only supports my sticking to that description, but recently told me she was glad I shared that job description with a group in an effort to punch back a bit. I feel like we are on the same page when discussing what my role should or should not include and I feel it is successful because we are both likely to give similar responses even when we are approached separately or by multiple people. I appreciate a clear expectation of my role in this situation and Leader 1's support when I don't go beyond that expectation when asked to do so. • When i go in to sit and talk with her about anything, she always gives me her honest opinion. i just love how calm she always is in situations. its always good to hear another side • We have a good give and take creative process...we are both open to suggestions of the other for layout/design/purpose. New projects are a collaborative process which are very satisfying and fun! • As I stated above, I've had several conversations with my leader, and to me, one of her greatest strengths is to make me (and others, I assume)	• Most weeks I feel like we are on the same page when we discuss worship preparations. The first thins that comes to mind is that we are both focused on the week's scripture and what can be learned from it. I especially appreciate when I have a glimpse of talking points from the sermon preparation. Those talking points help me in choosing music and media. So in sharing them we are then on the same page (or close to) for Sunday morning's worship. • Talking about the importance of prayer as a church family and how important it is that we as a church body are praying for one another and with one another. I appreciated our conversation because it is something that I think we both feel is very important for this church body to develop; a more intentional time of prayer together, teaching others the power of prayer, and sharing with others the importance of being in prayer for one another. It was nice to feel so unified on a topic and to know that Leader 2 places such a priority on something that I also feel is so important. • We often have conversations where we are on the same page, and it is difficult to extract one. While we see some political issues through different lenses, that rarely inhibits our ability to communicate effectively on matters of mutual importance. As we have worked together over

Leader 1	Leader 2
feel like we are ALWAYS on the same page. I think she has an ability to see the "big picture" and persuade others (if necessary) to get on the same page with her. Her persuasiveness, however, is done in such a way that it's always sincere and genuine, and therefore, never pushy. • Well, we have many effective conversations where I feel like we are on the same page. One example is with a conversation about some of my goals and dreams for children's ministry and some changes I would love to make in the next few years. I appreciate the fact that Leader 1 is so open and supportive, I feel like she understands where I'm coming from and is encouraging me to proceed.	the years, we have developed a deep mutual respect for one another. I believe we have also worked diligently at being able to discuss issues where we may differ effectively. Having that mutual respect is the key. • I made an error in payroll one time that caused a staff person to be overpaid for the year. The situation was brought to the attention of Stewardship & Finance, and P&A as soon as it was discovered. They then took the concern to Leader 2 and he handled it with care and discreetness and even consulted with me to let me know that we are all human and we all make mistakes and that nothing like this could hurt my reputation as a good employee. He continues to make me feel that I am the best at what I do and that the church is lucky to have me.

15. Imagining the ideal future: In an ideal world, what would your leader work on developing? What three wishes would you have to make your leader their best, most exciting and effective leader in your life? What are the solutions to be embraced? What would be your ideal role in creating this positive future?

Leader 1	Leader 2
• Take much deserved time off, have a blast in a new, happy marriage, take annual vacations! • Checking in to make sure I have the support to do my job. • 1. Have a happy personal life. 2. Trust me to do my best 3. Recognize that I play an important role on staff. • Being included • Staying around here for a very long time! :) • I am new here and one of the things I so appreciate about Leader 1 and Leader 2 is the culture of excellence that they've created here. I was longing for this kind of environment and this level of leadership, so I am extremely appreciative of their leadership! As I said, my wish is for Leader 1 to stay here and continue as our pastor/leader for a very long time! • I will support her in any way I can! • Just anything i could do as a team player • If she could solve the "lack of time" issue for everyone, that would be great! Otherwise, I'm not certain what else could be done to make this an "ideal world". :)	• technology • 1. to get Leader 2's knowledge and vision more visible on the internet---YouTube, Facebook, church website, etc. A person in charge of media would do it! 2. More time for relationships---time 3. more Princeton-like opportunities---internet exposure could help • support and technology help • Making the church service the most meaningful for everyone participating. Seeking to make every aspect of the service in a way that would be most pleasing to God and most relevant to our congregants. • I don't have any concrete suggestions so I would only say for him to continue to get feedback from all people in the church family, from leadership to just Sunday attendees....get feedback from the "regular folks" to know how they experience our church service and the leadership in our church family. Get feedback from all parts of the church body. • Consistent supporter and open to giving feedback. • One's style in preaching is individual and I appreciate that fact. However, for me, his ideas would have more of a powerful effect if he could carry his main point to the very end of the sermon. Sometimes, a really great point is lost by the inclusion of a joke, anecdote or side story that may or may not be completely relevant. Believe me, I love humor, and we need humor, appropriately placed in sermons, but sometimes, being profound is enough.

Leader 1	Leader 2
	• 1. see above 2. Inclusion of all key team members in a timely manner when decisions and planning need to be made that affect all of us. .
	• I embrace planning and am gifted with organizational abilities. I am willing to initiate planning for any future services that involve multiple staff.
	• Preparing video tapes of his sermons for shut-ins and others who can't make it to his services.
	• I wish that he will continue to have an open door policy where all of us can come to him when we have a need, that he is a presence at important functions of his parishioners, and that he uses verses from the Bible when helping people overcome bad situations.
	• To help find the funding needed for any special events he wants to do to promote a welcoming church and for honoring/appreciating staff members.

19. Or Add your own dimension and assign a rating:

Leader 1	Leader 2
• Demeanor is personable and relaxing/calming. Very assuring to folks around her, that all will be okay. Vital in her role. • Excellence modeling • Positivity	• Efforts to get to know personally his congregation