

Using Appreciative Inquiry to Discern Values, Mission, and Ends

Facilitated by Laura Park, Unity Consulting

How can governance liberate the energy and creativity of our congregations to awaken compassion, transform lives, and bless the world?



Our mission:
To liberate the leadership of
progressive religious congregations and institutions to
awaken compassion, transform lives, and bless the world.

Agenda



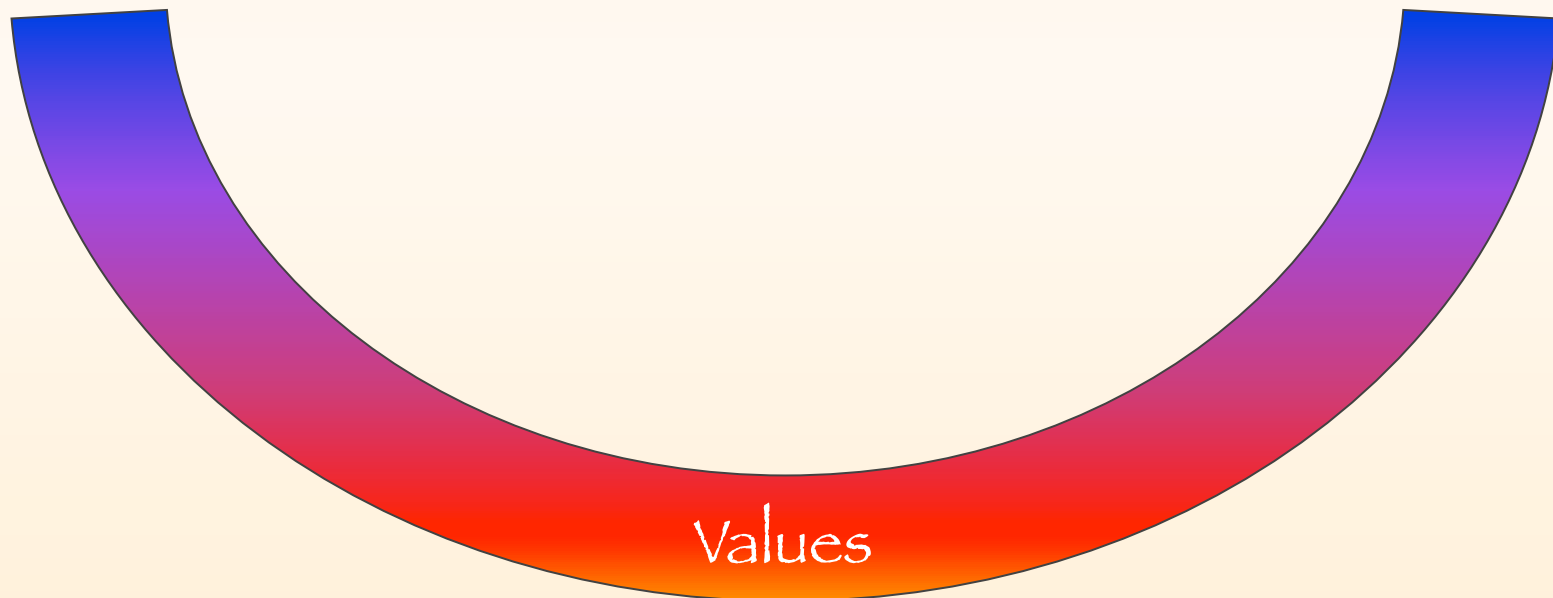
- The Nested Bowls
- Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Exercise
- Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Overview and How to Use Data
- Questions and Answers
- Close

The Nested Bowls



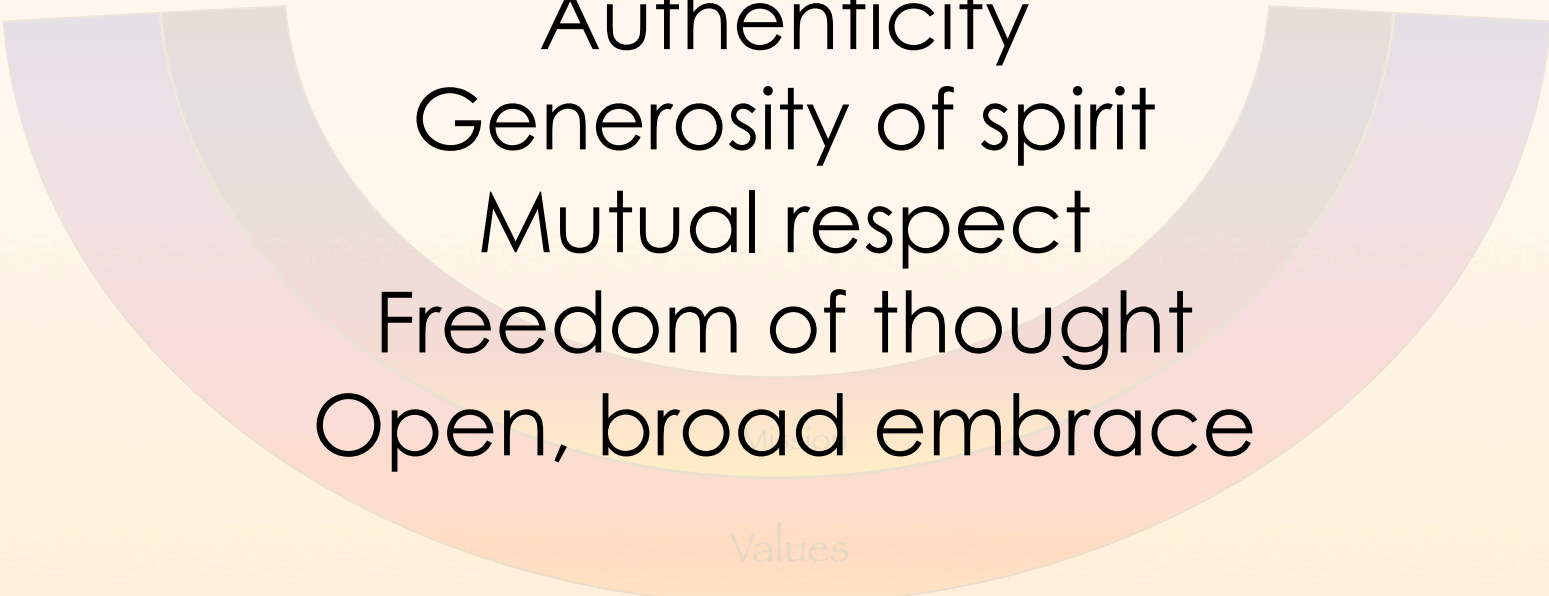
The Nested Bowls

Shared Core Values – What transcendent, timeless qualities of our religious community will we carry forward into the future?



Values:

Unity Church—Unitarian



Authenticity
Generosity of spirit
Mutual respect
Freedom of thought
Open, broad embrace

Values

Values:

First Unitarian Church Salt Lake City



Inclusion
Compassion
Engagement
Human Responsibility
Celebration

Values

Values:

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin



Transcendence
Community
Compassion
Courage
Transformation

Values

Values:
Unitarian Universalist Association

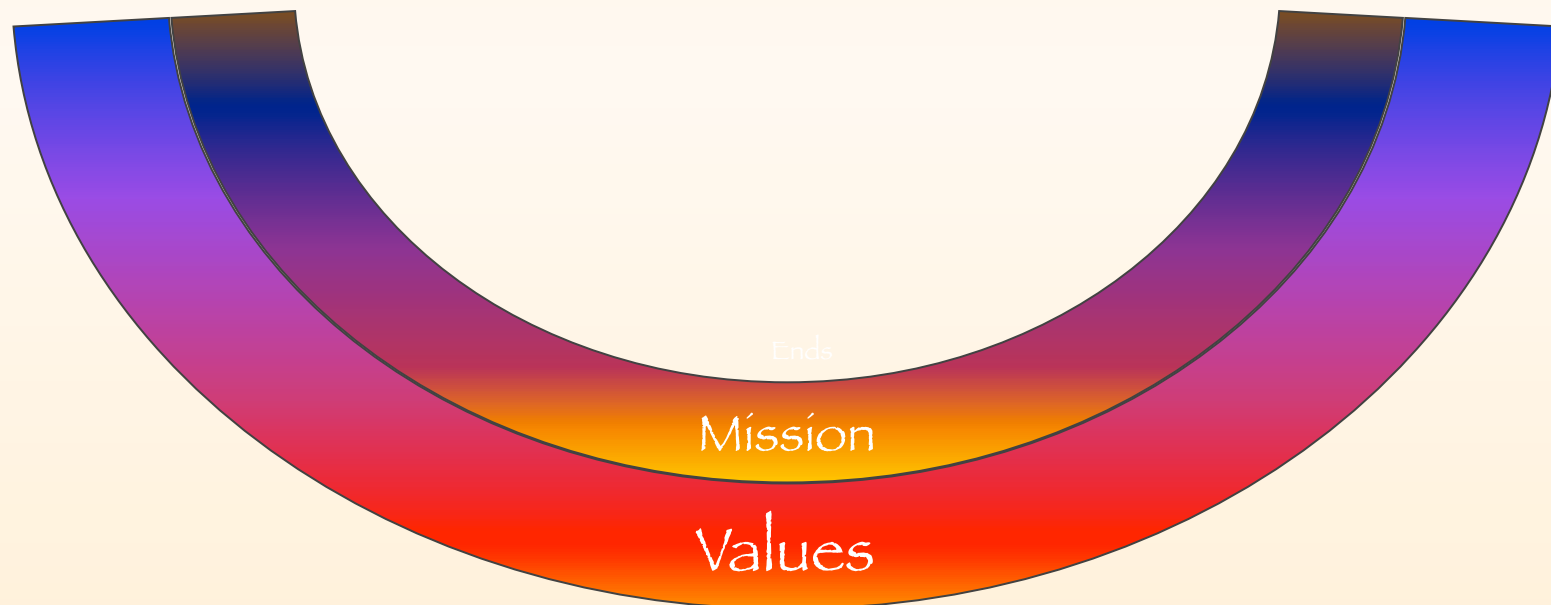
Wonder
Connection
Transformation

Mission

Values

The Nested Bowls

Mission – What is our transcendent purpose—
what overarching difference are we here in
the world to make and for whom?



Mission:
All Souls Church, Unitarian
Washington, DC

To create a diverse, spirit-growing,
justice-seeking community
that transforms ourselves
and our world into one great family
of all souls.

Values

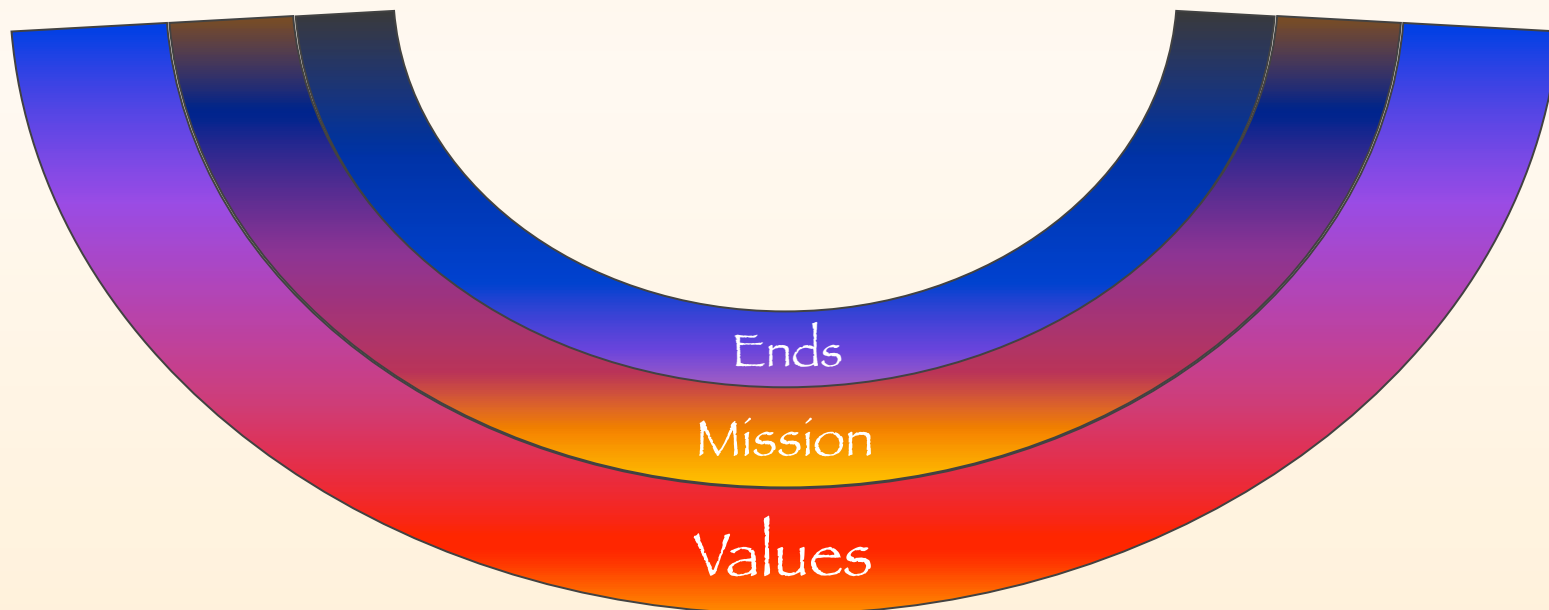
Mission:

Unitarian Universalist Association (Global End)

Grounded in our covenantal tradition,
the member congregations
of the Unitarian Universalist Association
will inspire people to lead lives
of humility and purpose,
connection and service,
thereby transforming themselves and the world.

The Nested Bowls

Ends – What specific, measurable differences will we make and for whom by some identified time in the future?



Ends: Organizing Structure

Ends – What specific, measurable differences will we make and for whom?

Within the people of the congregation

Among the people of the congregation

Beyond the congregation, out in the world

Mission

Values

Ends:

Unity Church—Unitarian

- The people of Unity Church – Unitarian have a deeply meaningful, transforming, liberal religious experience (within)
- Unity Church – Unitarian is a radically hospitable, spiritually vital and supportive community (among)
- Unity Church – Unitarian is a visible leader and partner, making a positive impact in our neighborhood and in the world (beyond)

Ends:

Unitarian Universalist Association

- Congregations unlock the power that transforms lives. (within)
- Congregations live in covenant with other congregations in our Association. (among)
- Congregations move toward sustainability, wholeness and reconciliation. (beyond)

Mission

Values

The Nested Bowls

Moral Ownership – connection with our sources of authority & accountability adds the flame



Moral Ownership: Unity Church—Unitarian

The moral owners of Unity Church-Unitarian are those who yearn for the Beloved Community *and* see Unity Church as an instrument for its realization. The Beloved Community is engaged in the work of the spirit. It is community at the highest level of reality and possibility, where love and justice prevail.

Ends

Mission

Values

The Nested Bowls



AI Exercise



Every relationship we have with an organization has its ups and downs, its strengths and its weaknesses. For the moment, I'd like you to focus on your best experiences with your congregation and tell me a story about a peak moment with or at your congregation, a time when you felt particularly alive, involved, connected and engaged, a time when you felt affirmed in your decision to participate in your church community. It could be an experience you had in worship, in a meeting, in a volunteer activity, with your kids. . .

- What was happening?
- What were you feeling?
- Who was involved and how?
- What factors in you, in others, and in your congregation made this peak moment possible?

AI Exercise Process



1. Choose a partner.
2. Interview partner. Listen deeply. 4 minutes each; 8 minutes total.
3. List values embedded in stories. Choose 3 you *both* want to bring forward. 5 minutes.
4. Form a group of 4 with another pair.
5. Share interview highlights. Share values lists. 5 minutes total.
6. Choose 3 values all four of you want to bring forward. 5 minutes.

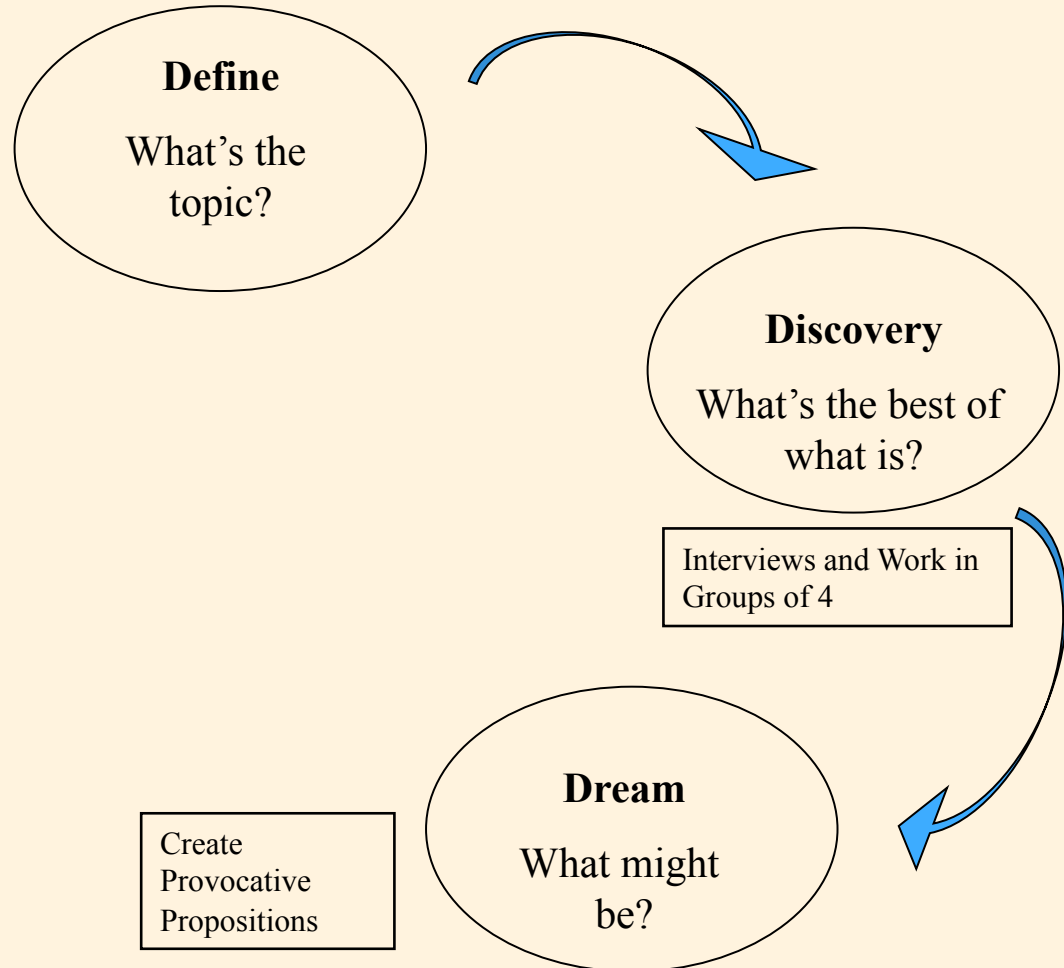
AI Assumptions



From *The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry* by Sue Annis Hammond:

- In every society, organization or group, something works.
- What we focus on becomes our reality.
- The language we use creates our reality.
- Reality is created in the moment, and there are multiple realities.
- It is important to value differences.
- The act of asking questions of an organization or group influences the group in some way.
- People have more confidence and comfort to journey to the future (the unknown) when they carry forward parts of the past (the known).
- If we carry parts of the past forward, they should be what is best about the past.

The 5D Cycle



Provocative Propositions



Provocative propositions are inspiring statements about the future, written as if they are already true. They should be:

- Desired (*if you got it, would you still want it?*)
- Bold, provocative (*is it a stretch that will attract others?*)
- Affirmative (*is it stated as if it's happening now?*)
- Grounded (*do you have examples of current strengths that will make this possible?*)

The 5D Cycle

