



DYNAMIC 7 D PROCESS

By Sally Mahé
Director of Organizational Development

Mac Odell is a vibrant leader in the Appreciative Inquiry Process. While AI traditionally incorporates a process that has 4 D's – Discover, Dream, Design, and Destiny—Mac has created a 7 D process! Here is a story of how a group had the fun of learning these 7 Ds.

Even though it was 7am in the morning, in no time at all a group of about 15 of us, clutching coffee and tea cups, were excited and engaged with Mac's 7 D Process. He called it the Sunrise Seminar. Mac explained that he created the 7 D process as an evolution of the 4 D AI process developed by David Cooperrider at the Weatherhead School of Management at Case Western Reserve University. Mac said he used the 7 D process to offer opportunities to literally hundreds of thousands of women in Nepal to initiate projects, businesses, and actions that improve their lives and the well being of their communities.



Photo taken from <http://www.macodell.com/>

The 7 D's are:

1. **Discovery** – a question that calls people to share an experience that is deeply meaningful to them.
2. **Dream** – a question that calls people to imagine or vision a preferred future, a future where they see the world becoming better.
3. **Design** – a question that asks people to design an action that would help bring about their dream for a better future.
4. **Delivery** – a question that asks people to think of the next steps needed to implement this action.
5. **Do it Now** – a question that elicits people to do something right in the moment that forwards their action plan.
6. **Discuss/Dialogue** – a question that asks people to evaluate this process with which they are engaged.
7. **Dance and Drum** – time to celebrate!

Mac explained that in Nepal thousands of individual women are invited to form groups with the intention of helping one another initiate community projects and enterprises. Each group selects two women (one of whom is a “literacy volunteer”) to attend a mobile workshop once a month. People employed with the NGO communities in Nepal have taken on the job of keeping the monthly mobile workshops running smoothly.



Photo taken from <http://www.macodell.com/>

The monthly workshops support the work in general and help advance the learning but the groups are set up so that the women have responsibility for managing themselves. Mac and his team have created extensive training materials (such as how to create a village bank, etc.) that are given to each group. Women pay for these materials and pay an entrance fee.

Each group must select a literacy volunteer. Recruiting of women is done by various NGOs. The 7 D process is used to launch these groups. Mac asks the women themselves to take a leadership role and to lead one piece of the 7 D activities. Mac said that a 7D session usually takes two or three hours.

Our group wanted to experience the 7 D process as a way to advance our thinking towards initiating a national conversation through cascading appreciative interviews and projects that empower people to bring about positive changes in health in the USA and the world. With Mac’s contagious enthusiasm, seven of us volunteered to lead a piece of the 7 D process. Our job was to think of a question to ask our group. Each D began with a question to the group.

Questions & Description of Events

1. **Discovery** – Think of a time when you were a part of a life-giving experience, one that deeply affected you and helped promote health, joy, vitality of yourself or someone else? (first we formed pairs and interviewed one another, then we joined pairs in groups of four and shared our stories.)
2. **Dream** – Imagine it is 2005 and people everywhere have reclaimed authority for their health and well-being. What does your community look like? What is happening? (all of us gathered around a large coffee table. Newsprint was placed on the table and with colored markers we drew pictures using symbols etc, of our visions of a healthy world. We placed the newsprint on the wall and each person explained his or her image.)

3. **Design** – Create a way for every school age child to help implement this dream –how would they do it? (we stayed in our groups of four and shared ideas for what we thought school children could do. We wrote our ideas on newsprint and posted it on the wall and explained our ideas to the group.)
4. **Delivery** – What are adults like us going to do in the next four weeks to advance our ideas? (*we shared with the large group what we could commit to do in the next few weeks.*)
5. **Do it Now!** - What can we do right now that can help? (we talked to one another about resources; people to contact were generated, contact information was shared)
6. **Discussion and Dialogue** – How would we describe this process? Hat would we say about it? (one member of the team offered observations - one improvement suggested was not to meet at 7am again!)
7. **Dance and Drum** – how will we celebrate our successes? a guitar was handy – instead of celebrating at the end we enjoyed musical interludes as we moved from one D process to the next. (*Joy was generated, actual actions were clarified, friendships formed, resources were shared, commitments were made, energy exploded. All of this happened within an hour.*)