CHAPTER 1

The Case for a New Approach to Change

> "Change is not what it used to be. The status quo will no longer be the best way forward . . . we are entering an Age of Unreason, when the future, in so many areas, is there to be shaped, by us and for us; a time when the only prediction that will hold true is that no predictions will hold true; a time, therefore, for bold imaginings in private life as well as public, for thinking the unlikely and doing the unreasonable."
>
> Charles Handy, *The Age of Unreason*

AS WE ENTER THE SECOND DECADE OF THE 21ST CENTURY, we see and experience a world in constant and relentless change. In the decade since the first edition of this book was published, the shifts and emerging versions of reality have approached change at the speed of imagination. We live in a time unimaginable even by our parents' generation—a time of rapid and continuous shifts in how human beings experience, describe, and interact with the world around us. This macro shift calls for new levels of knowledge

and a higher capacity to understand and live in an environment that is no longer experienced as stable, predictable, or even comprehensible.

In this chapter, we will describe some of these changes that are observable in both the natural and social sciences and look at the impact of those changes on organizations and on the theories and practices in the field of organization development and change. Finally, we will look at Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as a theory that can be a perspective and approach for any model or method in the practice for organization change and transformation, that is, any process traditionally used in the field of organization development. We will provide information and examples of ways in which the intentionally positive and strength-based theory of Appreciative Inquiry can be applied to traditional OD models and methods in ways that enable human systems to develop the capacity and flexibility to live in a world that is created by the interactions of those who inhabit it.

We used Charles Handy's quote (above) in the first edition of this book published in 2000. As we write this second edition a decade later, we find ourselves in the midst of the kind of world that Handy predicted! The change was, indeed, "unimaginable!"

One of the most articulate of the writers struggling to describe the magnitude and speed of change in the last decade is Thomas Friedman in *The World Is Flat.* We add his comments here to share with you what seems to us to be a remarkable explanation for the phenomenal changes we are experiencing. Friedman writes of "a tale of technology and geo-economics that is fundamentally reshaping our lives—much, much more quickly than many people realize." He tells the story of a visit to India and a conversation that woke him up to the realization that globalization is already here. He writes: "I wish I could say I saw it all coming.… The longer I was there, the more upset I became—upset at the realization that globalization had entered a whole new phase, and I had missed it."

His Indian colleague explained to him: "What happened over the last years is that there was a massive investment in technology when hundreds of millions of dollars were invested in putting broadband connectivity around the world, undersea cables, all those things. At the same time, computers became cheaper and dispersed all over the world, and there was an explosion of e-mail software, search engines like Google, and proprietary software that can chop up any piece of work and send one part to Boston, one part to Bangalore, and one part to Beijing, making it easy for anyone to do remote development. When all of these things suddenly came together around 2000, they created a platform where intellectual work, intellectual capital, could be delivered from anywhere. It could be disaggregated, delivered, distributed, produced, and put back together again—and this gave a whole new degree of freedom to the way we do work, especially work of an intellectual nature."

Friedman describes the evolution over time: "This has been building for a long time. Globalization 1.0 (1492 to 1800) shrank the world from a size large to a size medium, and the dynamic force in that era was countries globalizing for resources and imperial conquest. Globalization 2.0 (1800 to 2000) shrank the world from a size medium to a size small, and it was spearheaded by companies globalizing for markets and labor. Globalization 3.0 (which started around 2000) is shrinking the world from a size small to a size tiny and flattening the playing field at the same time. And while the dynamic force in Globalization 1.0 was *countries* globalizing and the dynamic force in Globalization 2.0 was *companies* globalizing, the dynamic force in Globalization 3.0—the thing that gives it its unique character—is *individuals and small groups globalizing*. Individuals must, and can, now ask: Where do I fit into the global competition and opportunities of the day, and how can I, on my own, collaborate with others globally? But Globalization 3.0 not only differs from the previous eras in how it is shrinking and flattening the world and in how it is empowering individuals. It is also different in that Globalization 1.0 and 2.0 were driven primarily by European and American companies and countries. But going

forward, this will be less and less true. Globalization 3.0 is not only going to be driven more by individuals but also by a much more diverse—non-Western, non-white—group of individuals. *In Globalization 3.0, you are going to see every color of the human rainbow take part."*

Friedman continues: "Today, a fourteen-year-old in Romania or Bangalore or the Soviet Union or Vietnam has all the information, all the tools, all the software easily available to apply knowledge however they want.… As bioscience becomes more computational and less about wet labs and as all the genomic data becomes easily available on the Internet, at some point you will be able to design vaccines on your laptop.… The upside is that by connecting all these knowledge pools we are on the cusp of an incredible new era of innovation, an era that will be driven from left field and right field, from West and East and from North and South. Today, anyone with smarts, access to Google, and a cheap wireless laptop can join the innovation fray."

(It is not hyperbole to note that collaborative, innovative, and strength-based processes emerge when people dialogue in an appreciative mode. The process itself enables them to co-create a future that is "owned" by all involved in the dialogue; and this mutual "ownership" results in collaborative processes for co-creation. Once individual members of a group or organization internalize the power of focusing on the positive aspects of a situation, the more facile the group or organization gets at managing the reality of constant and relentless change.)

Unlike the world of 2000, Appreciative Inquiry as well as other innovative and strength based approaches to the field of organization development (OD) and change are recognized and sought after by those who live and work in "human systems." We are seeing methods and practices that deal with whole systems. Traditional practices are being revised and adapted in order to take into account the speed of change, the complexity of the environment, and the unpredictability of human behavior. The

concept of "social construction," so problematic for many years, is more and more understood to be causal. We do, indeed, create what we imagine together!

In a major paper titled "Organization Discourse and New Organization Development Practices," written by David Grant and Robert J. Marshak and published in 2008 in the *British Journal of Management* (eight years after the publication of the first edition of this book and nearly twenty years after the emergence of AI in the work of David Cooperrider and colleagues at Case Western Reserve University) the authors write:

> "A new ensemble of organization development (OD) practices have emerged that are based more on constructionist, post modern and new sciences premises than on the assumptions of the early founders (of OD). These include practices associated with Appreciative Inquiry, large group interventions, changing mindsets and consciousness, addressing diversity and multicultural realities, and advancing new and different models of change.…In particular, studies of organizational discourse based upon social constructionist and critical perspectives offer compelling ideas and practices associated with the establishment of change concepts, the role of power and context in relation to organizational change, and specific discursive interventions designed to foster organizational change.… Recently, organizational change research has undergone a 'metamorphosis,' one that encompasses a pluralism of approaches and a strengthening of the links between organizational studies and the social sciences (Pettigrew, Woodman, & Cameron, 2001, p. 697). We contend that one possible outcome of this metamorphosis is that there may now be an emerging set of new organization development (OD) practices—what we refer to collectively here as 'New OD.' Taken together, these practices emphasize a number of philosophical assumptions and associated methodologies that differ in varying degrees from key assumptions of those who founded the OD movement in the 1950s and 1960s."

Table 1.1. Classical vs. New OD

Classical OD (1950s Onward)	New OD (1980s Onward)
Based in classical science and modern thought and philosophy	Influenced by the new sciences and post-modern thought and philosophy
Truth is transcendent and discoverable; there is a single, objective reality	Truth is immanent and emerges from the situation; there are multiple, socially constructed realities
Reality can be discovered using rational and analytic processes	Reality is socially negotiated and may involve power and political processes
Collecting and applying valid data using objective problem solving methods leads to change	Creating new mindsets or social agreements, sometimes through explicit or implicit negotiation, leads to change
Change is episodic and can be created, planned, and managed	Change is continuous and can be self-organizing
Emphasis on changing behavior and what one does	Emphasis on changing mindsets and how one thinks

R. J. Marshak and D. Grant (2008). Organizational Discourse and New Organization Development Practices. *British Journal of Management, 19*, S7–S19.

These shifts are described by Marshak and Grant in Table 1.1 above:

In another paper, Gervase Bushe and Bob Marshak compare diagnostic and dialogic forms of OD, as shown in Table 1.2.

After reading the Marshak and Grant's work, the late Udai Pareek (an "elder" in introducing organization development in India and founder of the Indian Society for Applied Behavioral Science, added the following interesting information about the impact of this shift on young people growing up in this rapidly changing world. (This generation is often called the "Millennials." In Table 1.3 below, Pareek describes the older generation as "geezers" and the "Millennials as "geeks" and describes the shift from one generation to another in these turbulent times.)

Table 1.2. Contrasting Diagnostic and Dialogic OD

Topics	Diagnostic OD	Dialogic OD
Influenced by	Classical science, positivism, and modernist philosophy.	Interpretive approaches, social constructionism, critical and post-modern philosophy.
Dominant organizational construct	Organizations are like living systems.	Organizations are meaning-making systems.
Ontology and epistemology	Reality is an objective fact. There is a single reality. Truth is transcendent and discoverable. Reality can be discovered using rational and analytic processes	Reality is socially constructed. There are multiple realities. Truth is immanent and emerges from the situation. Reality is negotiated and may involve power and political processes.
Constructs of change	Usually teleological. Collecting and applying valid data using objective problem-solving methods leads to change. Change can be creative, planned, and managed. Change is episodic, linear, and goal oriented	Often dialogical or dialectical. Creating containers and processes leads to change. Change can be encouraged but is mainly self-organizing. Change may be continuous and/or cyclical.
Focus of change	Emphasis on changing behavior and what people do.	Emphasis on changing mindsets and what people think.

Pareek also writes that technological advancement seems to have had the following impact on the new generation:

1. Impact of technological advancement:
   - The new generation has never experienced life without computers
   - There is reverse accumulation of knowledge—the younger you are, the more you know
   - All information is a click away; so is the competition
   - The world is a click away

2. Further, he notes that Millennials have been characterized at work as follows:
   - Work well with friends and on teams
   - Collaborative, resourceful, innovative thinkers
   - Love a challenge
   - Seek to make a difference
   - Want to produce something worthwhile
   - Desire to be heroes
   - Impatient
   - Comfortable with speed and change
   - Thrive on flexibility and space to explore
   - Partner well with mentors
   - Value guidance
   - Expect respect

Table 1.3. The Shift from Geezers to Geeks

Shifts in	Geezers	Geeks
World View	Analogue world	Digital world
Perception of World	Newtonian, mechanical	Living organisms and biological systems
Thinking	Linear narratives and thinking	Nonlinear thinking
Preference of Structure	Organizational hierarchy and chain of command	Flat organizations
Mode of Understanding	A map that can help only in known worlds	A compass that is helpful in unsure territory and can give only a general sense of direction
Main Concern	Making a living	Aspiring to change the world
Value	Work	Balance in work, family, and personal lives
	Has heroes	Far less likely to have heroes

Pareek writes: "It seems that the eras influence the ways in which OD is both conceptualized and practiced." He suggests that the two contrasting forms might better be called "research versus search," with research being investigation of a known field, whereas for search more exploration is required. He sums it up with a quote from Bennis and Thomas: "Maps, by definition, can help only in known worlds—worlds that have been charted before. Compasses are helpful when you are not sure where you are and can get only a general sense of direction."

Appreciative Inquiry is all about being a "compass." It provides a process for exploration, rapid prototyping, and constant exploration through continuous dialogue that focuses on what one is learning and how that is a precursor for the next exploration.

The Emerging Paradigm

We previously wrote that we are living in a time of unprecedented and unpredictable change. And we noted that the impact of such a rapid pace of change on all of our human systems—families, schools, organizations, communities, governments—had become the focus of great interest and concern. Now, a decade later, we are beginning to comprehend that our task is not necessarily to *adjust* to rapid change. Rather, we face the reality of the necessity to shift the very ground of our previous beliefs that human behavior, like inanimate objects such as computers, could be programmed and made predictable. We recognize that we live in a world that is continuously unpredictable and emerging. Our task now is to recognize that "change" is the water we swim in and, more importantly, it is what makes life possible. Our task is to learn how to embrace this "reality" and to free ourselves from the idea that change is an object that can be managed. This reality requires a major shift in how we define and relate to "change;" which leads us to recognize the need for new ways of working within human systems as they cope with the reality of the idea that change is continuous, relentless, and accelerating!

"We've reached a Breakpoint!" George Land and Beth Jarman wrote in 1992 in their book, *Breakpoint and Beyond*. "Breakpoint change abruptly and powerfully breaks the critical links that connect anyone or anything with the past. What we are experiencing today is absolutely unprecedented in all of humanity's recorded history. We have run into change so different from anything preceding it that it totally demolishes normal standards. It has swept us into a massive transformation that will completely reorder all we know about living in this world."

We are also learning that, even though some ideas are surely transferable from one group to another, by far the strongest and most effective way to imagine our own future is to engage in continuous dialogue and exploration from an open and curious mindset. We are living in a time when our attachment to a process that was created in another time and place by people no longer present is obsolete and, often, destructive. Time and energy spent in convincing people that someone else's "construction" is the best or most desired is giving way to the work of the future, which is to create environments that encourage individuals to engage with others to continuously create the "reality" needed for each circumstance as it emerges.

Will human beings continue to debate and even fight over what is right and wrong in any given situation? Or will the 21st Century be the beginning of our realization that with every breath we take and every conversation we have, we are creating a new reality! As Margaret Wheatley wrote prophetically in her book, *Leadership and the New Science* (1994): "There is no objective reality out there; there is only what we create through our engagements with others and with events. Nothing really transfers; everything is always new and different and unique to each of us."

In 1970, Alvin Toffler wrote a mind-bending book called *Future Shock* in which he talked not just of change, but of the changing rate of change. Those born early in the 20th Century (our parents' generation) have experienced change in both speed and kind unimaginable in all of human history. Toffler and others scanning

and predicting the future were like modern prophets, seeing the waves of an emerging paradigm that would call all of what we "know" and "believe" into question.

Classical (Newtonian) mechanics is the science of how bodies move in our universe. The assumption is that the universe is a vast machine with interacting parts much like a clock. Each part has only a few properties and movements, determined by its mass and the forces acting on it. This view was articulated by the philosophers Descartes and Locke, during the time when philosophy and science were the same discipline, and scientifically by Galileo. The key concepts are space, time, mass, forces, and particles. Anything else, such as consciousness, has remained outside the realm of physics altogether.

Newton's work and that of his predecessors led to the scientific paradigm that has dominated our view of what is real for several centuries. Frederick Taylor's early theories of "scientific management" came out of that paradigm, applying the image of a machine to a human system. When studies of the importance of human behavior in organizations began to be developed by social scientists in the 1940s (most notably by Kurt Lewin and his colleagues, Ken Benne, Leland Bradford, and Ron Lippitt, who in 1947 founded the National Training Laboratory, now known as the NTL Institute for Applied Behavioral Science), it was often assumed that one could measure human behavior using the methods of the natural sciences. It was assumed that human behavior was governed by the same principles as the material world: cause and effect, natural hierarchy, force exerted to cause movement, and individuals as separate and isolated "parts."

Wheatley (1994) describes the impact of this thinking on our behavior and on our organizations.

> "Each of us lives and works in organizations designed from Newtonian images of the universe. We manage by separating things into parts; we believe that influence occurs as a direct result of force exerted from one person to another; we engage in complex planning for a world that we keep expecting to be

predictable; and we search continually for better methods of objectively perceiving the world. These assumptions come to us from 17th-Century physics, from Newtonian mechanics. They are the base from which we design and manage organizations and from which we do research in all of the social sciences. Intentionally or not, we work from a worldview that has been derived from the natural sciences.

"Scientists in many different disciplines are questioning whether we can adequately explain how the world works by using the machine imagery created in the 17th Century.... In the machine model, one must understand parts. Things can be taken apart, dissected literally or representationally (as we have done with business functions and academic disciplines), and then put back together without any significant loss. The assumption is that by comprehending the workings of each piece, the whole can be understood. The Newtonian model of the world is characterized by materialism and reductionism—focus on things rather than relationships and a search, in physics, for the basic building blocks of matter." (p. 8)

The New Sciences

In 1927, a group of scientists met in Denmark to discuss revolutionary new discoveries in physics. As technology and new methods of experimentation made possible new discoveries in the realm of sub-atomic particles, all of the orthodoxy of classical physics was being called into question. Albert Einstein and Danish physicist Niels Bohr had been embroiled in a difference of opinion often referred to as the Copenhagen Debates. Bohr had discovered that two particles separated by a vast distance were able to behave coherently as if they were communicating instantaneously. Einstein argued that it wasn't possible because the information between the two would have to travel faster than the speed of light. Bohr argued that such speed would be required only if one assumed that the two particles were separate and independent units. And the

paradigm began to shift! What if all things are connected? From the conference in Copenhagen came public statements about these new discoveries that were so confounding the physicists. Since that time, terms such as quantum physics, chaos theory, self-organizing systems, and complexity theory have become common in our vocabulary.

While classical physics focuses on parts, the common denominator of the new sciences is the search for a theory of wholeness. The language of these new sciences has a major impact on how we think about human systems. Certainly the language of quantum physics challenges our most sacred assumptions about the concepts of organization development.

Here are a few of the dilemmas:

While classical physics speaks of waves and particles as separate, quantum theory suggests that there is a wave/particle duality (a wavicle) and that these basic building blocks of the universe have the potential to behave as a wave or as a particle, depending on their surroundings. This means that we can never know the momentum (wave) and the position (particle) of these quantum entities at the same time. This turns Newtonian determinism on its head, as the predictability that B will always follow A, as Newton proved, gives way to Heisenberg's uncertainty principle: B *may* follow A and there is a probability that it will do so, but there is no certainty (Marshall & Zohar, 1998).

Classical physics describes complex things as reducible to a few simple absolute and unchanging components. This is "What is." Quantum physics describes the phenomena of the new properties that come from the combination or relationships of simple things. Possibility is the key. Every quantum in the universe has the potential to be here *and* there, now *and* then. In classical physics things happen as part of a chain of events, of cause and effect. In quantum reality, all things move in harmony as some part of a larger, invisible whole. We might describe this as a quantum shift! From understanding the world as parts, each alone in space and

time linked only through force, quantum physics presents us with a universe in which every part is linked to every other part.

This view of the way the world works challenges any assumption about being able to isolate one thing from another, and it goes further to suggest that the observer cannot be separated from that which is observed. It challenges us to re-examine our assumptions about how organizations function as well.

Chaos theory presents another challenge to Newton's clockwork universe with its predictable tides and planetary motion. In chaos theory, very simple patterns become complex and unpredictable, as demonstrated by fractals, weather patterns, and the stock market. No level of accuracy is exact enough for long-term predictions. Such an idea rocks the very foundation of such organizational sacred cows as long-range planning, which in its most linear application requires a belief in a reasonable amount of predictability in the future.

Self-organizing systems behave in the reverse way. A complex and unpredictable situation develops into a larger, more ordered pattern like a whirlpool or a living organism. Although most organizations have, no doubt, experienced the sudden clarity that can come out of seeming chaotic situations, few have learned to embrace chaos, often short-circuiting times and situations that hold the potential for high levels of innovation and creativity.

Complexity theory, the focus of study at the Sante Fe Institute, is most often described as "order at the edge of chaos." It is also the study of complex systems that cannot be reduced to simple parts. Along with quantum and chaos theory, complexity theory focuses on the emergent whole that cannot be reduced to the sum of its parts. It involves unpredictability, nonlinear and discontinuous change—the phenomena that lead to surprising new forms (Marshall & Zohar, 1997).

Wheatley (1994) writes:

> "In New Science, the underlying currents are a movement toward holism, toward understanding the system as a system and giving primary value to the relationships that exist among seemingly

> discrete parts.... When we view systems from this perspective we enter an entirely new landscape of connections, of phenomena that cannot be reduced to simple cause and effect, and of the constant flux of dynamic processes." (p. 8)

Applying these theories to human systems, Peter Senge (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2005) writes: "The solvent we propose is a new way of thinking, feeling and being; a culture of systems. Fragmentary thinking becomes systemic when we recover "the memory of the whole,' the awareness that wholes precede parts." Table 1.1 illustrates the kinds of shifts that are occurring in response to our broader vision of science. In this post-modern era, the marvel is that all of these things are present and in good order.

These "new sciences" give us radically different ways of making sense of our world. The most exciting ramification for the field of organization change/transformation is the realization that organizations as living systems do not have to look continually for which part is causing a problem or which project is not living up to some set of criteria. The "new" science embraces the magnificent complexity of our world while assuring us that built into the very fabric of the universe are processes and potentials enough to help us and all of our organizations move toward our highest and most desired visions.

For past generations the Newtonian paradigm fit nicely into the comfort zone for most people. It is still hard for most of us to wrap our brains around such questions as: "Is order essential to the structure of the universe or is it simply a product of human perception?" The challenge is to step out of our dichotomous, simple, and orderly version of the universe and embrace those "wavicles" until we engage with them. Whether we experience wave or particle will depend on what we seek. Stephen Hawking, the noted Cambridge physicist, puts it this way: "Quantum physics is the nether world of physical law. It is a realm beyond comprehension, where logic is replaced by chance; where matter is ruled by mere probability; and scientists must resort to summing up the rolls of the dice." This, perhaps, is a vivid description of our

work in human systems once we give up the idea that anything about human behavior and relationships is predictable!

And so we come again to "social constructionism" and Appreciative Inquiry. In Chapter 2 we will look at the theoretical basis for AI from a social science point of view, asking: "How is it that we know what we know?" Suffice it to say that in its simplest form, social constructionism suggests that we create the world by the language we use to describe it and we experience the world in line with the images we hold about it. The Appreciative Inquiry process provides human systems with a way of inquiring into the past and present, seeking out those things that are life-giving and affirming as a basis for creating images of a generative and creative future.

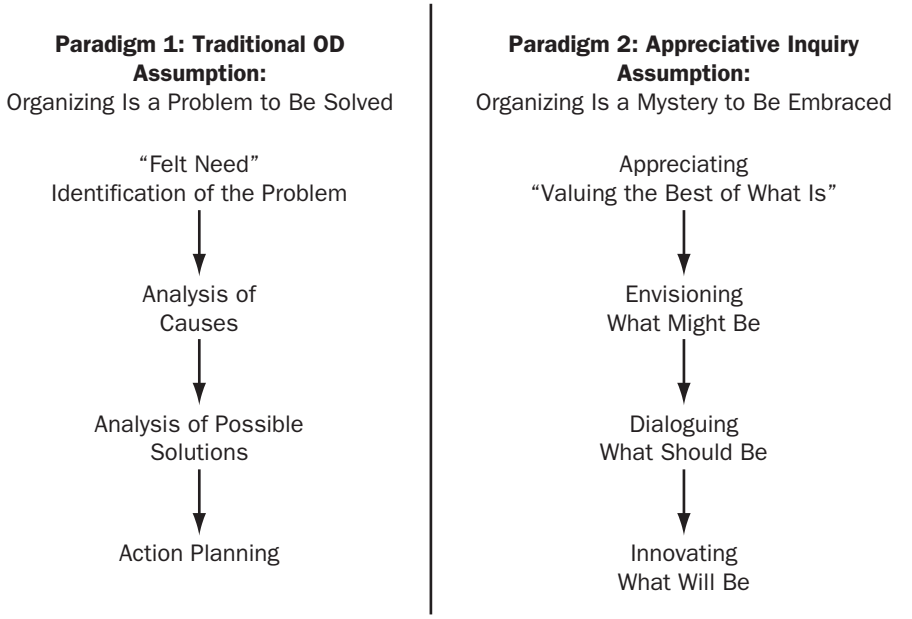
Thinking About Problems Using the New Paradigm

So what about all those problems caused by this changing rate of change? Does AI just ignore those? Are we engaging in denial? Doesn't organization development as a method promote the identification and resolution of problems? Indeed, the practice of OD has traditionally highlighted deficits in the belief that the organization can be returned to a healthy state. Appreciative Inquiry suggests that, by *focusing* on the deficit, we simply *create more* images of deficit and potentially overwhelm the system with images of what is "wrong." All too often, the process of assessing deficits includes a search for *who* is to blame. This leads to people being resistant to the change effort and to a large amount of literature in the field describing ways to deal with that resistance.

In Appreciative Inquiry, we take a different perspective. When we define a situation as a "problem," it means that we have an image of how that situation ought to be—how we'd like it to be. Appreciative Inquiry suggests that, by focusing on an image of health and wholeness, the organization's energy moves to make the image real. Indeed, the seeds of the solution are in the images, and therefore it is not unusual to see a system shift directions "at the speed of imagination!"

In the early days of working with Appreciative Inquiry, we compared problem solving and Appreciative Inquiry as if the two were parallel processes, with one being superior to the other. If AI is seen as just one more organization development methodology, it might usefully be compared to traditional problem solving. If, however, we shift into new paradigm thinking, AI becomes not a methodology, but *a way of seeing and being* in the world. In other words, when we are using the AI frame, we do not see problems and solutions as separate, but rather as a coherent whole made up of our wishes for the future and our path toward that future. (See Figure 1.1.)

Figure 1.1. Two Different Processes for Organizing Change



The commitment to our current deficit-based paradigm, particularly in our Euro-Centric "Western" culture, is our "default setting," as it were. That paradigm places high value on the machine metaphor (that we can take things apart, fix what is broken, and return to some ideal state). It takes a great deal of "re-training" of our thought

processes to shift our metaphor, our view of the world, to a more organic and holistic image. Margaret Wheatley (1994) writes:

> "For months, I have been studying process structures—things that maintain form over time yet have no rigidity of structure. This stream that swirls around my feet is the most beautiful one I've encountered.... What is it that streams can teach me about organizations? I am attracted to the diversity I see, to these swirling combinations of mud, silt, grass, water, rocks. This stream has an impressive ability to adapt, to shift the configurations, to let the power balance move, to create new structures. But driving this adaptability, making it all happen, I think, is the water's need to flow. Water answers to gravity, to downhill, to the call of the ocean. The forms change, but the mission remains clear. Structures emerge, but only as temporary solutions that facilitate rather than interfere. There is none of the rigid reliance on single forms, on true answers, on past practices that I have learned in business. Streams have more than one response to rocks; otherwise, there'd be no Grand Canyon. Or else Grand Canyons everywhere. The Colorado [River] realized that there were ways to get ahead other then by staying broad and expansive." (pp. 15–16)

If we follow the organic metaphor, we begin to value and embrace the unlimited diversity of nature. In such a frame of mind, it becomes easy to believe that finding one truth—or one right way to do anything—is not the goal. Rather, the goal is to engage the organization in dialogue that creates multiple positive possibilities and moves the organization in the direction of the most desired future. It becomes important to create the most generative and effective way to move forward.

Appreciative Inquiry is rooted in the values of the emerging paradigm. In this mode, organizations create and move toward their vision of the desired future in harmony with a world view that sees the interconnection of all parts of a system; that accepts the complexity and subjectivity of the world; that knows planning to be

a continuous and iterative process; that embraces the concept of many truths and multiple ways to reach a goal; that understands the relational nature of the world; that believes information to be a primal creative force; and that knows language to be the creator of "reality." In other words, the Newtonian paradigm process of dividing things into parts, believing that there is one best way of doing any action and assuming that language describes some ultimate truth for which we all search, creates a way of solving problems that looks backward to what went "wrong" and tries to "fix" it. Appreciative Inquiry, on the other hand, looks for what is going "right" and moves toward it, understanding that in the forward movement toward the ideal the greatest value comes from embracing what works. As Charles Handy (1989) noted in his book *The Age of Unreason*: "Change is not what it used to be. The status quo will no longer be the best way forward…we are entering an Age of Unreason, when the future, in so many areas, is there to be shaped, by us and for us; a time when the only prediction that will hold true is that no predictions will hold true; a time, therefore, for bold imaginings in private life as well as public, for thinking the unlikely and doing the unreasonable."

This being said, Chapter 2 provides a definition of Appreciative Inquiry in the context of an approach to organization change that enables OD practitioners to shift not the tools of their practice (team building, strategic planning, organization redesign), but rather to shift the perspective from which they approach these processes.