The primary task in the *Discovery* phase is to identify and appreciate the best of “what is.” **The distinguishing factor of AI in this phase is that every carefully crafted question of the topic choice is positive.**

This task is accomplished by focusing on peak times of organizational excellence, when people have experienced the organization as most alive and effective. Seeking to understand the unique factors (e.g., leadership, relationships, technologies, core processes, structures, values, learning processes, external relationships, planning methods, and so on) that made the high points possible, people deliberately “let go” of analyses of deficits and systematically seek to isolate and learn from even the smallest wins.

In the *Discovery* phase, people share stories of exceptional accomplishments, discuss the core life-giving factors of their organizations, and deliberate upon the aspects of their organization's history that they most value and want to bring to the future. In the *Discovery* phase, members come to know their organization's history as *positive possibility* rather than a static, problematized, eulogized, romanticized, or forgotten set of events. Empowering and hopeful conceptions of organization frequently, if not always, emerge from stories that are grounded in organizing at its best. Appreciation is alive and stakeholders throughout an organization or community are connected in a dialogue of discovery. Hope grows and organizational capacity is enriched. This is where the storytelling beings.

The list of positive or affirmative topics for *Discovery* is endless: high quality, integrity, empowerment, innovation, customer responsiveness, technological innovation, team spirit, best in class, and so on. In each case, the task is to discover the positive exceptions; success, and most vital or alive moments. Discovery involves valuing those things that are worth valuing.

As part of the *Discovery* process, individuals engage in dialogue and meaning-making. This is simply the open sharing of discoveries and possibilities. Through dialogue, a consensus begins to emerge whereby individuals in the organization say, “Yes, this is an ideal or vision we value and should aspire to.” Through conversation and dialogue, individual appreciation becomes collective appreciation. Individual will evolves into group will, and individual vision becomes and cooperative or shared vision for the organization.

AI helps create a deliberately supportive context for dialogue. It is through the sharing of ideals that social bonding occurs. What makes AI different from other organization development methodologies at this phase is that every question is positive.