Once an organization “discovers” its positive core, the next step is to imagine and envision its future. The *Dream* phase of the AI 4-D Cycle accomplishes this step. One aspect that differentiates AI from other visioning or planning methodologies is that images of the future emerge out of grounded examples from its positive past. These images are compelling possibilities precisely because they are based on extraordinary moments from an organization’s history. For many organization stakeholders, this is the first time to think “great” thoughts and create “great” possibilities for their organization. The process is both personally and organizationally invigorating.

The Dream phase is an invitation for an organization to amplify its positive core by imagining the possibilities for the future that have been generated through the Discovery phase. During the Dream phase, the participants are encouraged to talk about (and dream about) not what is, but what might be a better organization and a better world. The Dream phase is both practical, in that it is grounded in the organization’s history, and generative, in that it seeks to expand the organization’s true potential. It is the time to challenge the status quo of the organization. It is intended to create synergy and excitement. Once the group gets into the spirit and acknowledges the possibility of greatness, the positive core can be channeled, focused, and used to design how it will be and create the destiny of the envisioned dream.

The primary goal of the Dream phase is twofold. First, it is to facilitate a dialogue among stakeholders in which they begin to share positive stories in a way that creates energy and enthusiasm. This is accomplished by asking those who participated in the Discovery phase to share their stories with the entire group. These stories are the vehicles for bringing out the *positive core* of the organization. Therefore, those who are telling the stories must be encouraged to share the essence of the stories, not a bullet point description of events, giving the storyteller the latitude to share the story in full and rich detail generates more data for theme building. It is, therefore, the job of the facilitator to gently probe for details in order to continue identifying themes. One tool used to encourage these conversations is called dream dialogues. The *dream dialogue* is often integrated into the appreciative interviews with questions about wishes, hopes, and dreams for a better organization and world. Some interview guides probe for best practices and peak experiences from outside the organization in question. Thus, interviewers might learn through discovery of positive possibilities that have existed elsewhere and that might be transported into their system.

The second goal of the Dream phase is to allow the participants to start to see common themes. At this point, it is important to encourage the group to observe and value the stories rather than critique, judge, or analyze them. Unlike other organizational change methodologies, AI does not focus on solving a problem. Dreaming is a journey of mutual discovery, not an analytical journey. Therefore, it does not emphasize identifying one best idea. Instead, participants look for broad themes or “life-giving” forces that contribute to the organization’s success. These positive themes are the building blocks for the rest of the AI process.

Accomplishing these two goals helps the participants to imagine the organization as they would like it to be. By building energy, excitement, and synergy and by extracting the common themes or “life-giving” forces, the participants can begin to envision an organization of the future, an organization that embodies the images, hopes, dreams, and visions of its people.