Discover, Dream, Design, Destiny

Discover, Dream, Design, Destiny is a participatory method based on the principles of Appreciative Inquiry. Rather than focusing on problems, participants build on existing strengths, successful experiences, and positive examples. Together, they develop a shared vision for the future and identify practical actions based on what already works well. The method is particularly suitable for change processes that aim to strengthen collaboration, motivation, and collective development.

Participation Depth	Participate
Project Phase	Onboarding
Goals	Developing Ideas
Format	Analogue
Duration	1 Day
Target Group	Directly Affected, Interested Public, Organised Actors
Group Size	Small Group up to 15, Large Group from 30, Medium Group up to 30
Characteristics	Creative, Activating

GOAL OF THE METHOD

The goal of the Discover, Dream, Design, Destiny process is to identify existing strengths, positive experiences,

and successful examples, and to use them as the foundation for developing future visions and concrete actions.

The method promotes motivation, collaboration, and shared learning.

PROCEDURE

Preparation

1. Define the objectives and framework
At the beginning, clarify:

- Why is the process being organised?
- Which topics will be explored?
- What kind of change is being sought?
- How much freedom is there for new ideas and outcomes?
- Who should participate?

Important:

- Create enough openness for new ideas.
- Avoid over-structuring the process.

- Prepare positive and inspiring guiding questions.

2. Select participants
The method benefits from bringing together people with different perspectives and experiences.

Depending on the topic, participants may include:

- residents
- employees
- young people
- members of community organisations
- public administration staff
- local initiatives
- project teams
- subject-matter experts

Important:

- Reduce hierarchical barriers wherever possible.
- Ensure equal opportunities for participation.
- Encourage participants to share diverse experiences.

3. Prepare guiding questions
Questions should be deliberately appreciative and focus on positive experiences.

Examples include:

- What is already working particularly well?
- What are we most proud of?
- Which experiences have been especially successful?
- What do we hope for in the future?
- What would an ideal outcome look like?

Avoid:

- problem-focused questions
- assigning blame
- negative evaluations
- overly restrictive questions

4. Prepare the venue and materials
Typical materials include:

- facilitation materials
- pinboards
- cards
- large work surfaces
- spaces for group work

Important:

Create an open, welcoming, and positive working environment.

Execution

1. Discover – Identify strengths
Participants begin by sharing positive experiences and successful examples.

The discussion focuses on questions such as:

- What is working well?
- Which experiences have been particularly successful?
- What strengths already exist?

Participants share personal stories and identify common success factors.

2. Dream – Imagine the future
Participants then develop future visions and aspirations.

Helpful questions include:

- What would an ideal future look like?
- What do we hope to achieve in the long term?
- Which strengths and opportunities should we build on?

This phase is intentionally creative and open-ended.

3. Design – Develop solutions
Participants transform their visions into practical ideas and possible actions.

They consider:

- Which steps are necessary?
- What can realistically be implemented?
- Who could take responsibility?

Initial implementation strategies emerge from the shared vision.

4. Destiny – Prepare for implementation
Finally, participants agree on concrete commitments and next steps.

For example:

- assign responsibilities
- establish working groups
- launch projects

The aim is to create a shared sense of ownership for implementing the agreed actions.

Evaluation

1. Document the results
Record:

- identified strengths
- future visions
- proposed ideas
- actions
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agreements

The documentation should be accessible to all participants.

2. Identify common priorities
After the process, review:

- which topics were considered most important
- which visions were widely shared
- which ideas appear realistic
- where there is interest in continued collaboration

3. Support implementation
Ongoing follow-up is essential.

Possible activities include:

- working groups
- project teams
- regular meetings
- additional participation activities

This helps maintain the motivation and momentum generated during the process.

Source: https://partizipation.at/partizipation-anwenden/methoden/

WHEN USEFUL?

- developing shared and positive visions for the future
- supporting organisational or community change processes
- strengthening collaboration and motivation
- identifying existing strengths and successful experiences
- generating new ideas and shared goals
- neighbourhood, organisational, or project development
- encouraging participants to take ownership and responsibility

WHEN NOT USEFUL?

- rapid decisions are required
- there is little or no scope for action
- urgent problems require immediate attention
- outcomes have already been predetermined

TIPS

- Phrase questions in a positive and motivating way.
- Allow plenty of space for participants to share personal experiences.
- Foster an open and appreciative atmosphere.
- Schedule sufficient time for dialogue and reflection.
- Ensure equal participation for everyone.
- Use creative methods and visualisation techniques.
- Connect future visions with concrete actions as early as possible.

NOT SUITABLE FOR

- situations requiring immediate conflict resolution
- groups with severe interpersonal conflicts
- processes without genuine opportunities for change
- situations focused exclusively on analysing problems

View online: https://methoden.urbankit.de/en/methods/discover-dream-design-destiny