

The Language of Our Cultural Narratives: Appreciative Concepts Applied¹

The language that pervades an organization cannot help but shape its culture. As we live our lives, we also continually “tell stories” about our lives, even though we don’t always share our narratives with others. Because our individual stories play such a big part in our lives, it’s quite possible that we create our life experiences just as much by what we say as by what we do.²

But just how careful are we in how we talk about our work? We invite you to reflect on the language that is pervasive in your work environment.

- What words, phrases, and anecdotes do you hear people use often? Do they create a positive or negative picture about the organization for listeners?
- What language do *you* use that, once you think about it, might not be actively advancing a healthier culture?
- What phrases do you say or hear in your organization that appeal to you as beautiful expressions of the meaning and purpose of a life devoted to the healing and wellbeing of patients and their families?
- If you could shape the cultural narrative in your department or organization (hint: everyone can), what “stories” would you like people to start telling today?

¹ Koloroutis, M., & Abelson, D. (2017). *Advancing relationship-based cultures* (pp. 15-16). Minneapolis, MN: Creative Health Care Management.

² Smith, R. (2016). *Should: How habits of language shape our lives*. Minneapolis, MN: Creative Health Care Management.