A Case Study to Demonstrate the Use of Appreciative Inquiry in Financial Coaching Program

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Abstract

This article presents a case study of Appreciative Inquiry applied to client work within the context of a solution-focused, financial coaching model. Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a process – a generative process—wherein a client envisions, describes, and constructs a new meaning or reality through structured questions and answers, and then designs a way to get there (to their destiny). The origins, tenants, and applications of AI approach are described, followed by a real case study involving the utilization of this approach to facilitate a client's overcoming of a specific, maladaptive money script. The article provides implications for financial practitioners and a foundation for future experimental research on the effectiveness of the AI approach in financial coaching.

Keywords: financial coaching, appreciative inquiry, money scripts, financial literacy, counseling

Introduction

Building on the post-modern tenants of social constructionism, Appreciative Inquiry (AI) posits that people can rewrite their personal realities to accommodate for life events, transitions, or challenges (Tschannen-Moran, 2010). Drawing on the recent literature from coaching psychology, this article presents a brief review of AI, highlighting its theoretical underpinnings, foundational principles, and applications to a case study involving an interior finance intervention with a client holding a money script. *Interior finance* is "the way clients relate to money emotionally" (Klontz, Kahler, & Klontz, 2008, p. 5), and a *money script* is a specific, strongly held belief about money that may be adaptive or maladaptive in terms of financial or psychological wellbeing. The article includes a discussion and implications for future research and practice in the emerging field of financial coaching as well as their potential use in other financial professions.

Based on the categorization of Carla Willig (2008), the paper presents a *single, instrumental, and pragmatic case study* that describes a real (not hypothetical) example of the use of Appreciative Inquiry under the umbrella of a Solution Focused approach. The objective of the paper is demonstration, which is the first step in the development and incorporation of AI in financial services, within the context of financial coaching. Once this approached is understood on how it is applied, the second step would involve testing to determine the efficacy of the approach. Case studies are amply used in the medical and other fields to demonstrate the use of new approaches. Furthermore, this paper contributes to the emerging literature in financial coaching by providing continuity of previous papers published on this topic in this journal, (Delgadillo, 2015; Delgadillo & Britt, 2015; Delgadillo, 2014a; Delgadillo, 2014b).

How is AI different from solution focused? From a conceptual standpoint, AI seems to have significant overlap with a Solution Focused (SF) approach including: (a) a short number of sessions (usually less than four); (b) being future-focused and goal-directed, and (c) having a focus on solutions, rather than on the problems that brought clients to seek intervention. Nevertheless, AI is different from SF in the sense that (a) the client does not necessarily look for previous solutions but envisions a new one; (b) the client is not invited to do more of what is working; (c) the client does not look for exceptions; and (c) AI does not ask for coping questions based on previous experiences.

Description and Application of AI

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a strengths-based approach to goal visualization and realization operationalized through structured, positively framed inquiry. AI "deliberately seeks to discover people's exceptionality – their unique gifts, strengths, and qualities. It actively searches and recognizes people for their specialties—their essential contributions and achievements" (Hammond & Royal, 2001, p. 12). AI posits that each life situation, individually and collectively, is a story with additional chapters to write. By envisioning future chapters through a strengths-based lens and centered on the individual's or organization's positive core— their values, visions, achievements, and best practices—intrinsic motivation is fostered and accentuated. Watkins and Bernard (2001) build on this, stating that because AI is "grounded in the theory of social constructionism, [it] recognizes that human systems are constructions of the imagination and are, therefore, capable of change" (p. xxxii).

AI was initially conceptualized as a method of producing generative outcomes in an organizational setting (Bushe & Paranjapeg, 2014). AI consists of developmental activities – as opposed to learning activities. In the context of coaching, Tatiana Bachkirova explains that

learning activities response to specific performance. Developmental activities is less focused on the specific performance related behavior. It is more open to the long-term and emerging needs and aspirations of the individuals (Bachkirova, 2008). AI coaching represents a "new way of approaching positive change in the individual and the system for the benefit of both" (Sloan, n.d., p.1). A defining characteristic of AI is asking questions that lead individuals or organizations to focus on strengths, visions, competencies, and shared beliefs. Positive questioning leads to generative responses and thought processes. Generative responses produce additional positive discussion, thoughts, and vision relating to the individual or organization. One of the primary functions of a financial coach is to structure the conversation to achieve generative responses (Sloan, n.d. p.1)

Appreciative Inquiry focuses on desired outcomes based on existing strengths and asks fundamental questions, such as, *What will work for you?* (Hammond, 1998). By focusing on strengths and asking questions that cause people to focus on good things that are happening, positive affect within clients is fostered. People in higher states of positive affect are better able to see, and are more open to, alternative perspectives (Ashby, Isen, & Turken, 1999). The broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 2001) extends previous findings by stating that positive emotions broaden immediate thoughts while also building personal resources to address difficulties in the future. Furthermore, positive emotions are predictors of resilience and life satisfaction (Cohn, Fredrickson, Brown, Mikels, & Conway, 2009). AI fosters positive emotions by focusing on solutions, desired outcomes, and strengths that in turn lead to generative ideas and sustained change.

Generativity surpasses the concept of a simple brainstorming to find a solution to a problem. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, generativity is "having the power or

function of generating, originating, producing, or reproducing." A generative idea is one that motivates ongoing thinking, discussion, and actions around an idea. Brainstorming is effective at creating many ideas to address problems, but simple ideas lack the intrinsic motivation to make them self-sustaining (Bushe & Paranjapeg, 2014).

Beyond questions, another way a financial coach can help the coachee accomplish this is by positively reframing their negative remarks—which ties back to the ability of the client to write a new chapter in their life. Positive reframing can help someone stop seeing how bad they are doing, how impossible the tasks at hand seem, and how inadequate they are, and start seeing how capable they are, how to tackle the tasks at hand, and what they can do to succeed. Generative discussions and ideas create intrinsic motivation to achieve the desired outcomes. AI centers on what is uniquely important to each client now. The client is the expert; the financial coach serves as a facilitator.

A core element of AI is seeking to identify positive elements within any system. Individuals and organizational leaders should highlight, discuss, and building upon these positive elements, or strengths, for further growth. Focusing on strengths fosters positive feelings and emotions. A hypothesized neurological outcome of positive affect, or positive feelings, is that it releases additional dopamine into the brain resulting in greater cognitive flexibility. Ashby, Isen, and Turken (1999) review lab-based experiments and field studies and note that positive affect leads to deeper reasoning, more thoughts, more unique thoughts, and greater innovation in problem solving. More recently and further supporting the AI approach, its focus on positive feelings and optimism have been compared to positive psychology with the strengths of each approach being complementary in terms of creating positive change (Cantore & Cooperrider, 2013).

AI assumes that every individual has a collection of core strengths - the positive core - which, when identified and unleashed, provides the direction and energy for transformation. AI is generative because it uses language both: (a) to formulate thought–provoking questions, and (b) to choose words that bring an energizing and positive element to conversations. This dialogue directly influences the dynamic of the exchange. The following is an example of what this conversation would look like in action. For example, instead of asking, what would you like to work on today? With AI, the question would change to, "To walk out of here feeling thrilled, what would we have done together to have you feeling that way?" (Tschannen-Moran, 2010).

Foundational Principles of AI

There are key principles in Appreciative Inquiry described in very rhetorical terms; they are: (a) the constructionist principle; (b) the simultaneity principle; (c) the poetic principle; (d) the anticipatory principle, and (e) the positive principle. Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2010) designate three additional principles, which are (f) wholeness; (g) enactment; and (h) free choice.

- The *constructionist principle* asserts the language is the tool through which individuals create their current and future realities. In essence, words create subjective realities, which affect individuals' perception of possibility of change.
- The *simultaneity principle* posits that inquiry and change are not separate. They can be and should be simultaneous.
- The *poetic principle* exerts that just as a poem is read, and interpreted from many different perspectives, the same principle applies to situations and circumstances. Similarly, in poems and lives, we can focus on strengths or weaknesses, but what we choose to focus on will mold our behavior.

- The *anticipatory principle* relates to image theory of the future. When images of the future become clearer and well defined, people are more likely to be guided by them in their present actions (Hershfield, 2011).

- The *positive principle* is similar to the poetic principle in that what clients choose to focus on, creates the new story that will be written. Thus, positive questions lead to positive change and positive outcomes. A positive image results in positive actions.

- *Wholeness*, *enactment*, and *free choice* are similar to other previous principles, but reinforce key points. *Wholeness* emphasizes that the entire system (whole life, whole family, and whole organization) is examined and that all perspectives are valid. *Enactment* posits that to make a real change, we must be the change we want to see Finally, *free-choice* is perhaps the most important underlying principle in that it respects each person's power to choose their own future, and how they will participate in the present (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010).

Application of AI in Financial Services

Five processes within Appreciative Inquiry (AI) have been distilled into a financial coaching framework that guides and augments the flow of work with a financial client. These processes are labeled "The 5-D Cycle" (define, discover, dream, design, and destiny). It begins with *define*, when a client and coach agree on what it is exactly that needs to be done/learned/achieved. An unclear definition will lead to confusion and decreased effectiveness down the road, so a mutual understanding is imperative. *Discover* entails imagining optimistic outcomes, as well as taking stock of the positive resources, abilities, etc. of the client to accomplish said financial goals (appreciating). Recalling best experiences, examining core

values, and other exercises to strengthen the resolve and self-efficacy of the client (Tschannen-Moran, 2010).

When the client has an idea of what is, they *dream* what could be. Most goal-setting takes place here, and it is vital to the success of the AI intervention that the first two steps are thorough to avoid unrealistic, unattainable, or pessimistic objectives, in other words, envision the results. After dreaming, the *design* phase has the client compare what they are currently doing to what their goals dictate, and to make small, short-term adjustments to synchronize them (co-constructing). Finally, *destiny* is achieved by building hope and sustaining momentum for ongoing positive change (sustaining) (Tschannen-Moran, 2010).

While the impact of AI over the past 25 years has been vast (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005), AI's depth and breadth of impact on financial services has been limited. Pullen (2001) introduces AI to financial advisors as a way to communicate with clients, particularly as a way to move seemingly dysfunctional and entrenched families forward and toward achieving their dreams by revitalizing strengths, vision, and shared beliefs. Additionally, Jacobson (2007) also presents AI to financial service professionals as an effective and efficient technique during the client discovery process as well as an approach to help clients recognize and focus on intrinsic strengths that will propel them toward their ideal visions for themselves and their families. Previous literature has advocated AI's use when working with higher income and higher net worth clients, with little said about applying AI more universally across the income scale to help individuals at all stages of their financial development.

This paper is an initial effort to demonstrate how AI could become another valuable instrument in the toolbox of financial professionals. The burden then is on the facilitator who must have AI training. In this case example, the financial coach needs to know how inquire in a

way that is more likely to create new appreciation of their current financial reality, a new vision, and a new co-construction of what should be.

AI is a process model that is broadly applicable to the work of financial coaches and other financial professionals. Before a financial coach can begin to incorporate AI techniques into their coaching work, appropriate education and training should be acquired to ensure the coach is practicing within the scope of their knowledge and skill set. As with all helping professions, when a service provider determines that particular services or techniques are outside of her scope of competence, then referrals to other professionals with the appropriate skills and knowledge is appropriate (Gale, Goetz, & Britt, 2012).

As you may observe from the case study, the financial coach does not engage in activities that are exclusive to other financial practices including financial counseling and planning. Coaching, counseling, and advising are three differentiated financial interventions. Following the typology presented by Pulvino & Pulvino, (2010) coaching could overlap with productive and preventive counseling, but it will not overlap with remedial counseling. Productive and preventive counseling and advising do not overlap either, but remedial counseling (e.g. mortgage default counseling) could overlap with advising. Coaching and advising do not overlap at all because advising requires an expert sharing with the client their knowledge and offering suggestions.

Methodological Considerations

Case Study as a Form of Inquiry. As defined by Carla Willig (2008), case studies "are not characterized by the methods used to collect and analyze data, but rather by its focus is on a particular unit of analysis: a case" (p. 74). Similarly, Robert E. Stake (1995) argues that case studies present data that is usually gathered through a variety of means including, but not limited

to interviews, observations, audio and video data, and document collection. The goal of collecting data through a variety of means is both to enhance the theory used in the case and to provide additional validity assertions made by either the researcher or the participants in the case itself. According to the University of Texas Health Science Center, most [research] journals publish case reports that deal with one or more of the following: (a) Unusual observations; (b) Adverse response to therapies, (c) Unusual combination of conditions leading to confusion (d) Illustration of a new approach; (e) Question regarding a current approach, and (f) Personal impact. Conceptually, this manuscript falls into category d. Carla Willig (2008, pg. 77-78) also outlines the most general typologies of case studies as single case vs. multiple; intrinsic vs instrumental and naturalists vs pragmatic.

Single case vs. multiple cases: A single (or singular) case, is a case of one particular entity or event at a specific time. A multiple case study, also known as a collective case, is a case that focuses on more than one particular entity or event sometimes over different time periods.

Intrinsic vs. instrumental: An intrinsic case focuses on the particulars of one specific phenomenon rather than seeking generalizations, with the interest arising from the particulars and potentially rare or unique aspects of the case. Instrumental cases usually describe a specific case of a more general phenomenon.

Naturalist vs. pragmatic: Naturalist case studies seek to describe a case from the ground-up, embedded in its particular context. Pragmatic cases are designed with a more focused question and approach, which is refined iteratively through engagement with the case.

Application of AI in a Case Study

Client Profile: The client (pseudonym: Betty), who is 32 years old and single, volunteered to participate in three free coaching sessions. The only incentive provided to Betty was the opportunity to receive financial coaching at no cost. The coaching sessions were conducted at a financial clinic located in a university setting. This intervention and associated data collection was approved by the academic institution's Institutional Review Board.

Betty received an initial intake-form, and a financial wheel, which is an adaptation of the Wheel of Life tool (Coaching Training Institute, n.d.). The financial wheel aids financial advisers in exploring different areas of a person's financial life. The instructions are simple: the person rates their satisfaction with each of the areas of their financial life listed on the wheel. Their level of satisfaction can range from zero to 10—10 being the highest. Then, they plot a dot corresponding to their rating along each spoke of the wheel. Once they connect the dots, they unveil a wheel that may — or may not — roll very well. This assessment provides a visual picture on how a person rates on their exterior finances, which are the numerical aspects of money (debts, savings, insurance, budgeting, retirement, etc.) as opposed to the intra-emotional and inter-relational ones (interior finances) (Delgadillo, 2014; Klontz,, Kahler, & Klontz, 2008).

After the initial assessment of exterior finances, it was evident that Betty was in good standing concerning all her exterior finances. Betty had a working budget, an emergency fund, money in her retirement account, and affordable levels of debt. When inquired about her motivation to seek financial coaching, she expressed that she wanted to validate that her finances – meaning her external finances— "were in order". There were no 'money pathologies' associated with this case; for example, no issues of compulsive overspending, problem gambling, or lack of financial control. If this had been the case, she would had been referred to a mental health professional or financial therapist. In addition, this coaching case was not a situation that

would benefit from an immediate, remedial financial counseling intervention, because it was not a case of eviction, bankruptcy, or foreclosure. In this face-to-face session, the coach actively listened to Betty's words and observed her gesturing, and in turn, mirrored her language and body language.

Analysis of Case Study

The intervention for this particular case consisted of an adaptation of the AI model to help a client overcome a specific maladaptive money script. The analysis of the case study is written in the first person because it is the narrative account of the coaching experience**.**

First stage

Define. At this stage, two critical questions arise: What is the focus? What do I want to accomplish? *Define* is a crucial stage in AI because it is the foundation for a coaching agreement. At the beginning of the session, the coachee claimed that she did not have any financial issues. Betty mentioned that she had a working budget, she was on track with her savings and retirement, and she had one car loan, and rent payments within affordable guidelines. Any regular counseling or planning session would have ended here because there were no apparent external financial issues.

Because financial coaching also includes an understanding of the emotional aspects of money, it was adequate to search for meanings associated with financial practices. In searching for meanings, I decided to explore more of what she meant by "she had a working budget." She explained each of the items on her budget with some details. That is when she told me that her birthday was coming up in about three months and that she "does not like to spend money on

herself, even in a justifiable situation like her birthday"; I recognized the issue immediately. My working hypothesis at that moment was that I was witnessing the presence of a money script related to interior finances. Given that, I decided to explore more on the issue so that clear objectives could be identified for this particular coaching session.

Discovery. A valuable element of AI is the element of creative rendering and visualization. AI in coaching allows clients to dream bigger. Clients seldom pause to dream. Dreaming is part of both the Discovery and the Dream phases. In this particular case and within the context of AI, the client needed to construct a dream in which she will enjoy spending some money on herself. This turned to be the coaching agreement for the coaching session.

Once the coaching agreement was established, I started the discovery stage of AI with the question: please describe for me how does it make you feel to spend money on yourself? Her answers confirmed my working hypothesis. She said, "I feel guilty. It is more important for me to give than to receive". The money script identified in this coachee was, "I don't deserve to spend money on myself." This maladaptive money script is held "by many people who believe that they should not enjoy what money can give them because others are not so fortunate" (Klontz et al., 2008, p. 78). Often this money script is associated with lower self-esteem; it can keep people emotionally and spiritually poor despite any external wealth they may have (Lawson, Klontz & Britt, 2015).

I had Betty stand up and visualize four quadrants on the floor (see Figure 1). Then, I had her step on each of these "imaginary quadrants" starting in Quadrant. Once she stepped on Quadrant 1, I asked, How do you feel about spending money on yourself for your birthday? Words like "guilty", "sad", and "uncomfortable" came up again. Because I was in the discovery

process, it was important that the client articulated what the best of the best of the situation would be. Then, I asked again, tell me a story when you bought something for yourself and enjoyed it? What was the situation? What did you do? How did this action affect you? After her responses, I asked, *if you want to have those same feelings for yourself on your birthday, what would you do?* That was the introductory question for the second quadrant.

<Insert Figure 1 here>

Second stage.

Dream. I asked Betty to step on imaginary Quadrant 2, and I then asked, *how would you want to feel on your birthday?* This quadrant is the equivalent to the Dream stage in AI. Her response was, "I don't want to feel guilty. I work hard for my money. I want to spend money on myself." (Note from the coach: At this point, I took the client's negative language and reframed it into a positive, moving towards language. The tool used at this point came from Neurolinguistics Programming (NLP). NLP is an approach to communication, personal development, and psychotherapy created by Richard Bandler and John Grinder in California, United States in the 1970s and it is largely used in coaching (McDermott, 2012). It is very valuable in understanding the use of language and the connection with goals. For example, many people want to move away from a situation (e.g., I want to buy a house because I do not want to pay rent). However, the goal of NLP is helping people *move towards* rather than *away from* an undesirable one. NLP rests on the assumption that the language we use creates our realities, which is in alignment and overlap with the constructionist principles of AI. The following statement, (I want to buy a house because it will give me … ("a sense of accomplishment", "freedom to remodel", etc.) is an example of moving towards language). In Betty's situation,

instead of reflecting back on the "I do not want to feel guilty on my birthday" – which is "move away form of language," I reframed this negative statement by saying, "I am hearing you say you want to feel at peace spending money on yourself to celebrate your birthday" (a move forward, poetic language). Then, I asked, what would you like to see happening in your birthday? (Envisioning the results).

Third stage.

Design. The Design stage in AI is the equivalent to the action stage. The design stage creates possibility prepositions to design a plan to get to the newly expressed dream. For this purpose, the question I posed was, "how much money would you like to spend on your birthday?" Betty responded that she would like to spend $100 on her birthday. I asked her, "how will you do that?" (We needed to give an infrastructure to that dream). After a long pause, she said that she will save $35 each month for three months before her next birthday. After three months, she will have $105 to buy herself a nice present and celebrate her birthday without "feeling guilty".

Last stage.

Destiny. This stage enables clients to deliver on their promises. At this point, the client wants to sustain momentum for ongoing positive change. For this purpose, I added the element of accountability—which is a fundamental component in any coaching intervention (Delgadillo, 2015). Although this was a formality issue, the coachee kindly suggested that she would send an email telling me what she bought for herself on her upcoming birthday. I shared with her that journaling her feelings after her birthday purchase will help her experiment new feelings and

provide more confidence to take later bigger, bolder and better actions to serve her dreams. Indeed, the email came three months later with the statement that "she has learned to give permission to herself to spend money on her."

Discussion and Implications

The purpose of this article was to demonstrate the application of Appreciate Inquiry in one's work with a financial client within a solution focused financial coaching setting. The case study represents an adaptation of the five phases of the appreciative inquiry model to help a client overcome a maladaptive money script. The paper shows the use of AI as an intervention tool to enhance the work of financial professionals. It is important to mention that this particular case study only collected data during the intervention process and one three-month, post-intervention interview. Therefore, as a single case study, no generalizable conclusions can be drawn about the efficacy of this approach in fostering financial health in the long term, or for other similar cases. The demonstration of the case study is the first step in the ongoing process of providing future empirical data.

From the exterior finances point of view, the coachee in the case study was a financially sound individual. In the exploration stage, it surfaced that she was in control of her external finances, but she had an unsatisfactory situation associated with her interior finances. Sometimes people find themselves stuck in painful patterns around money that deal more with their emotions, meanings, and uses they ascribe to money than with the external finances per se (savings, budgeting, investing). As Klontz et al. (2008) explain, one aspect of financial balance reflects "we deserve to spend money on ourselves and those close to us" (p. 78).

AI provides an alternative framework with guiding principles for coaches and other financial service professionals to use to correct maladaptive money practices. s. AI is a relative easy approach to remember and very practical. Similarly to solution focused, AI's language is positive, forward looking, and strengths based. Often clients will begin using language of failures, frustrations, obstacles, and past inhibiting experiences. Different from solution focused, AI does not tap on previous experience to create a new vision or dream. While it is important for the coach to acknowledge the client's comments, the coach must have the confidence to move the discussion back to the 5-D process. AI's foundational principles, particularly the constructionist, poetic, simultaneity, and positive principle are critical tools which support the client and help them move through the 5-D process.

AI may also be adapted for shorter-period interventions such as at Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites. Volunteer tax preparers are required to interview clients to learn about their family situation, income, expenses, life transitions, certain asset disposition and acquisition, as well as other items that may affect their tax return. In short, clients receive extensive questioning about their exterior finances. VITA clients are rarely, if ever, asked questions about their interior finances. Structured questioning is also the foundation of AI and Tax preparers can follow a structured inquiry process relative to narrowly defined outcome, such as what is the best use for client's tax refund. The case presented in this paper illustrates that the use of AI's structured questioning can be adapted to a variety of principles. In many VITA settings, clients meet with tax preparers for about an hour and have an opportunity to dialogue about many things. Some student based VITA sites have tax preparers work in pairs so that one preparer can focus on data entry and the other can focus on dialogue with the client (Annis, Palmer, & Goetz, 2010). Volunteers can follow the AI guiding principles to govern their conversation with clients

to create a generative process, which largely focusses on discovering the client's strengths in their unique circumstances and encourages them to dream about different possible outcomes and goal attainment.

Palmer, Kunovskya, and Pichot (2016) demonstrated that this type of intervention is possible at VITA sites. They used a brief eight-minute coaching video, based on the Solution Focused Brief Coaching method, and worksheets to implement their coaching intervention strategy. VITA clients who received this brief coaching intervention reported significantly higher intentions to save and reported significantly higher amounts of intended savings. VITA clients are responsive to positive, solution focused coaching interventions and AI provides another methodology that VITA sites could utilize, even if the coaching takes the form of a video and worksheet followed up by a conversation with the tax preparer about the client's thoughts.

AI is appropriate in many circumstances where financial coaches are supporting clients' aspirational desires. These situations would include working with client preparing to purchase a home, students seeking to graduate from college in a strong financial position, or current workers seeking to prepare for their own unique vision of retirement. In each of these situations, financial practitioners can use AI to provide a structured approach to discovering the unique strengths, values, best practices, and dreams of clients. Practitioners and clients can then work together and using these points of exception to design an intrinsically motivating and financially secure future.

Based on authors' interviews, observations and document collection, financial counselors and other financial professionals often need to focus on the following items when implementing AI into their work with clients:

Focus on the basic stage of discovery. Minimizing the discovery process undermines the application of foundational AI principles that provide ongoing support and intrinsic motivation throughout the process. Thus, ample effort should be given to the process of generative questioning to discover the client's core strengths, vision, and beliefs.

Focus on the client's positive core and the constructionist principle to allow a generative process to unfold. By spending sufficient time with clients in the discovery and dream processes, clients will be more likely to seek out financial education and more motivated to take on challenging changes to external finances. An overemphasis on external finances may lead to a degenerative discussion, where the focus is on the problems and barriers the client faces.

AI is a powerful process that allows for broad application and unique outcomes when working with clients. AI values the unique characteristics and challenges of each client and provides a process that empowers clients and provides them with intrinsic motivation to achieve their desired dreams. With practice, financial coaches can integrate AI into their toolbox of techniques to assist clients and help them gain an internal vision for their financial future.

In summary, the paper demonstrated the AI model applied to a consumer financial problem. Consistent with the scientific method, demonstration is the first step in the development of new approaches. Once a new approach is developed, the second step is to begin testing in order to collect evidence of the efficacy of the approach. This can be done by using a randomized control-wait trial and/or longitudinal studies to further support the development of additional evidence-based intervention and communication tools for financial practitioners.

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