

Intro

When the topic of wisdom comes up, so do the usual images. Walls and walls filled with dusty old books. Elders with the wisdom of many years carved into the wrinkles on their faces. Diplomas framed and filling one's office wall. The message: wisdom is about accumulation. But the math of wisdom is often the opposite of what we think, more subtraction than addition. Often, accumulation of knowledge doesn't get us closer to wisdom; it's just in the way. There's a sorting, simplifying and stripping away that needs to occur. It's about unknowing as much as knowing.

As the Sufi poet Hafiz wrote:

*The Beloved sometimes wants
To do us a great favor:
Hold us upside down
And shake all the nonsense out.*

And with all the nonsense shaken out and stripped away, maybe what we notice most is not so much the pearls of wisdom themselves, but the sources of wisdom we've forgotten. So many untapped sources. So much wisdom waiting to be known. Maybe the wisest question of all this month is: "Where have I not looked before?"

Spiritual Exercise The Best Advice You've Received

Wisdom is not just something we collect to uplift ourselves, rather we pass it on so we can all make it through together. We share our advice so others won't make the same mistakes we did. Wisdom and kindness are more closely linked than we acknowledge. To honor wisdom as a gift, we're invited this month to remember the wisdom we've received.

To help jog your memory:

- 1) Make time to meditate and reflect on the resources below.
- 2) Let them take you back in time to the best advice you received from others.
- 3) Then, out of all those memories and pieces of advice, pick the one you think is most relevant to you currently. Pick the one your life right now needs you to remember and come to your group ready to share.
- 4) Make this exercise richer by asking someone close to you about the best advice they received. It's not only a great way to help them remember the gifts of wisdom they've received, but it's also a great way for you to get some more great advice passed on to you!

Resources:

- 1) Best Advice You've Received | 0-100:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZfsyrNKhNTE> (2:46 minutes)
- 2) The Most Important Lesson You've Learned | 0-100:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2GsSy8LNXg> (3:02 minutes)
- 3) How to Age Gracefully | CBC Radio:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sycgL3Qg_Ak (4:40 minutes)
- 4) 12 Truths I Learned from Life | Anne Lamott:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X41iulkRqZU> (15:54 minutes)

Chalice Lighting

Knowledge is a process of piling up facts; wisdom lies in their simplification. - Martin H. Fischer

Check-in *Share your highs and lows since we last met focusing on what drains you and what lifts you up. We give each other the gift of listening without asking questions or offering advice to allow people the safety to share what's in their hearts.*

Quotes for Inspiration/Readings

Besides the noble art of getting things done, there is the noble art of leaving things undone. The wisdom of life consists in the elimination of non-essentials. -Lin Yutang

There are many ways to seek wisdom. There is travel, there are masters, there is service. There is staring into the eyes of children and elders and lovers and strangers. There is sitting silently in one spot and there is being swept along in life's turbulent current. Life itself will grant you wisdom in ways you may neither understand nor choose. -Kent Nerburn

The day the child realizes that all adults are imperfect, he becomes an adolescent; the day he forgives them, he becomes an adult; the day he forgives himself, he becomes wise. - Alden Nowlan

There is a wise being living inside of you. It is your intuitive self. Focus your awareness into a deep place in your body, a place where your "gut feelings" reside. You can communicate with it by silently talking to it, making requests, or asking questions. Then relax, don't think too hard with your mind, and be open to receiving answers. They are usually very simple and relate to the present moment, not the past or the future, and they feel right. -Shakti Gawain

Turn your wounds into wisdom. -Oprah Winfrey

Wisdom is the reward you get for a lifetime of listening when you'd have preferred to talk. - Doug Larson

Questions *Pick the one question that speaks to you most and let it lead you where you need to go. The goal is to figure out what being a part of a people of Wisdom means for you and your daily living.*

1. Who is the wisest person you know? Which of their lessons might be worth remembering today?
2. How much do you trust the wisdom of your intuition?
3. It's been said, "Nothing ever goes away until it has taught us what we need to know." Which of your problems, messes, mistakes or pieces of pain just never seems to go away?
4. What one piece of advice do you wish you hadn't ignored?
5. What has been the most unlikely source of wisdom in your life?

Sitting in Silence *Take a few moments to sit quietly and reflect upon your thoughts.*

Sharing/Deep Listening *Respond with your thoughts and experiences with the topic. We create a safe space by listening deeply and not responding. When sharing, connect with what is true for you. When listening, give the speaker your full attention rather than thinking about what you will share.*

Reflection and Gratitude *This is a time to respond briefly to something another person said or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared. Consider lifting up one comment or experience for which you are particularly grateful.*

Extinguishing the Chalice

Listen: a wisdom within you calls to a wisdom beyond you and in that dialogue lies peace. - Rev. Leslie Takahashi