



Wise decisions are not only based on the information we receive but also on our core values.



What is Wisdom?

*Making practical application
of what is learned.*

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You've probably heard that knowledge is knowing facts, and wisdom is knowing how and when to apply that knowledge in life. In his book How We Decide, Jonah Lehrer describes a study in which two groups were asked to pick out the best car. One group was asked to make their decision intuitively, and the other group was asked to make an analytical decision. First, participants were asked to make their decision by comparing four pieces of information about each car, and those who approached the question analytically did relatively better. But when they were asked to decide based on twelve pieces of information about each car, the intuitive group did better. Lehrer concluded, "Use your conscious mind to acquire all the information you need for making a decision. But then wait as your conscious mind organizes and digests this information, then whatever your intuition then tells you is almost certainly going to be the best choice." The best decisions are based on our inner core values – the values that define us as human beings.

Opposite: ignorance, foolishness, stupidity, ineptness, thoughtlessness, inability, instability

Related Concepts: acumen, intelligence, good judgment, astuteness, understanding, experience, discernment, clear thinking, horse sense

Summary: Making values-based and intelligent choices.



*“A good head and a good heart are
always a formidable combination.”*

—Nelson Mandela

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Nelson Mandela (July 18, 1918 – December 5, 2013). Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela was a South African anti-apartheid revolutionary, politician, and philanthropist who served as President of South Africa from 1994 to 1999 (Wikipedia).

Other Wisdom Quotes:

“A man must be big enough to admit his mistakes, smart enough to profit from them, and strong enough to correct them.” – John C. Maxwell

“It’s not what you look at that matters, it’s what you see.” – Henry David Thoreau

“The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing.” – Socrates

“Beware of false knowledge; it is more dangerous than ignorance.” – George Bernard Shaw

“By three methods we may learn wisdom: First, by reflection, which is noblest; second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third by experience, which is the bitterest.” – Confucius

“The pessimist complains about the wind; the optimist expects it to change; the realist adjusts the sails.” – William Arthur Ward

“We are what our thoughts have made us; so take care about what you think. Words are secondary. Thoughts live; they travel far.” – Swami Vivekananda

“Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers. It may not be difficult to store up in the mind a vast quantity of facts within a comparatively short time, but the ability to form judgments requires the severe discipline of hard work and the tempering heat of experience and maturity.” – Calvin Coolidge

“Whatever you do in life, surround yourself with smart people who’ll argue with you.” – John Wooden

“Wisdom begins in wonder.” – Socrates

“From the errors of others, a wise man corrects his own.” – Publilius Syrus

“It requires wisdom to understand wisdom: the music is nothing if the audience is deaf.” – Walter Lippmann

“We are made wise not by the recollection of our past, but by the responsibility for our future.” – George Bernard Shaw

“Wisdom, compassion, and courage are the three universally recognized moral qualities of men.” – Confucius

“Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity.” – George S. Patton

“It is better to remain silent at the risk of being thought a fool, than to talk and remove all doubt of it.” – Maurice Switzer

“The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool.” – William Shakespeare

“Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom.” – Aristotle

“It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it.” – Aristotle

“Think before you speak. Read before you think.” – Fran Lebowitz

“Turn your wounds into wisdom.” – Oprah Winfrey

“The simple things are also the most extraordinary things, and only the wise can see them.” – Paulo Coelho

“Any fool can know. The point is to understand.” – Albert Einstein

“I’m not young enough to know everything.” – J.M. Barrie

“Knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom. Mastering others is strength; mastering yourself is true power. If you realize that you have enough, you are truly rich.” – Lao Tzu

“Knowledge speaks, but wisdom listens” – Jimi Hendrix

“It is not that I’m so smart. But I stay with the questions much longer.” – Albert Einstein

“The measure of intelligence is the ability to change.” – Albert Einstein

“Sell your cleverness and buy bewilderment.” – Rumi

“Even strength must bow to wisdom sometimes.” – Rick Riordan

“The desire to reach for the stars is ambitious. The desire to reach hearts is wise.” – Maya Angelou

“He who knows all the answers has not been asked all the questions.” – Confucius

A photograph of a man with a beard and short hair, smiling warmly. He is wearing a blue and red plaid shirt. The background is a workshop or garage with various tools and equipment visible, though slightly out of focus.

1. Seek Understanding

Analyze the situation and learn
from past experiences.

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Analyze the facts of a situations. Learn from what has occurred in the past. Life is full of cause and effect relationships, and the more we understand this process, the better we can work and live.

A photograph of a man with a beard and mustache, smiling warmly. He is wearing a blue and red plaid shirt. The background is a workshop or garage with various tools and equipment visible, though slightly out of focus.

2. Ask for Advice

Ask someone you trust to share what they have learned.

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A person who thinks they know everything rarely does, but a wise person realizes the value of good advice. Learn from the experience of others and you can avoid potentially embarrassing mistakes. Once you have gathered advice, you can use the nuggets of wisdom found within to make better decisions.

A photograph of a man with a beard and short dark hair, smiling warmly. He is wearing a blue and red plaid shirt under a dark blue vest. The background is a workshop or garage with various tools and equipment visible, though slightly out of focus.

3. Apply What You Learn

Learn from mistakes so
you don't repeat them.

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The real test of wisdom is applying what you learn. Do you learn from your mistakes or do you repeat them over and over again? The choices you make today can affect your job, your family, and your future. Do yourself a favor by carefully applying all you learn to make the wisest choices possible.

Discussion Starters

1. What are some things you can learn by observing others?
2. How can you share your experiences and give good advice to others in a way that they will accept?
3. When did you make a mistake and learn from it? How did making the mistake actually help you later on?

Additional Wisdom Discussion Starters:

What are some cause and effect relationships you see every day in life?

How can you learn from observing these relationships?

They say "experience is a difficult teacher." How can experience be a difficult way to learn? How can you learn from the experiences of others so that you don't have to go through something yourself?

What is something that occurred in the past that taught you a good lesson?

What is the difference between wisdom and knowledge?

Who is someone you can ask for advice?

When has someone asked you for advice? How did you help them?

What can you avoid by asking someone you can trust for advice?

When someone you know refuses to learn from their mistakes, what usually happens to them?

How can choices you make today affect you and those around you in the future?

What are some things you have learned over time that have helped you make better choices and decisions?

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