

**February Theme**  
***Wisdom: The Practice of Intuition***  
*Knowing others is Wisdom, knowing yourself is Enlightenment.*  
~ Lao Tzu

## **Introduction**

Wisdom is the ability to think or act using knowledge, experience, understanding, common sense and insight. There appears to be consensus that wisdom is associated with attributes such as compassion, experiential self-knowledge, non-attachment and virtues such as ethics and benevolence. Wisdom has been defined in many different ways, a variety of measurement scales have been developed, and several subtypes of wisdom have been proposed. Out of these, *phronesis* and *sophia* are two key subtypes of wisdom. In the classical Greek tradition, there is a distinction between *sophia* "wisdom" and *phronesis* "prudence, practical intelligence".

Intuition is the ability to understand something immediately, without the need for conscious reasoning, a thing that one knows or considers likely from instinctive feeling rather than conscious reasoning. By applying the lessons we learn through experience, wisdom is akin to intuition, inasmuch as they both allow one to discern and judge with insight. When one navigates knowledge intuitively, we think of wisdom. Intuition is subconsciously accumulated experience informing oneself in real time, knowledge without a logical or rational explanation. Acting on intuition is how wisdom is manifested. Intuition is the instinct or perception which guides us through all our queries. It is our soul, our conscience, speaking directly or indirectly to us. Many consider it as a spiritual faculty, many as a foreseeing quality. There won't be a state of confusion if we learn to trust our instincts. Leading with our intuition ideally will not make us feel guilty or regretful because at the end we know what we did was what we wanted to do; it was our choice after all.

We learn from our experiences, good or bad, positive or negative, favorable or non-favorable. When we have a big question or an important decision to make, many of us look outside of ourselves for the answers. Yet we often neglect to consult the most important authority of all: our own intuition. Just like memory, critical thinking, and intellect, our intuition is a mental muscle we can strengthen and use to create success and become the best possible version of us. We can use our intuition and leverage it to make wiser, more soul-inspired decisions for our life. Learning to develop and trust our intuitive intelligence is more important now than it ever has been. We are exposed to a tsunami of information on a daily basis in the forms of opinions, expert advice and a myriad of gurus and guides telling us what we should be doing in order to live our best lives. Simone Wright (*First Intelligence: Using the Science and Spirit of Intuition*) writes: "The reality is that the only guidance system we need to assist us in living our best life is the wisdom held within our natural intuitive intelligence."

## **Questions for discussion and discernment on your own, or with each other:**

1. What helps you access your intuition?
2. How do you tap into your well of wisdom?
3. How does your body feel when you easily access your intuition?
4. How do you know it's your intuition?
5. What is the difference between wisdom and knowledge?
6. How do you think you are wiser now than you were when you were younger?
7. How do you know when your intuition is 'speaking' to you?
8. Recall a time that your intuition led you to a life-changing decision. What was it and how did it affect your life?

This month's theme was composed by Megan Momtaheni, Alan Cantor, and the Worship Associates.

9. Are there any life experiences that have contributed to your wisdom?
10. Are there things that block your intuition?
11. How does intuition impact your relationship with others?

## Quotes and Short Readings

Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom.

~*Aristotle*

In a good bookroom you feel in some mysterious way that you are absorbing the wisdom contained in all the books through your skin, without even opening them.

~*Mark Twain*

Turn your wounds into wisdom.

~*Oprah Winfrey*

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*

The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift.

~*Albert Einstein*

Follow your instincts. That’s where true wisdom manifests itself.

~*Oprah Winfrey*

Intuition is not a single way of knowing - it's our ability to hold space for uncertainty and our willingness to trust the many ways we've developed knowledge and insight, including instinct, experience, faith and reason.

~*Brené Brown*

When we are motivated by compassion and wisdom, the results of our actions benefit everyone, not just our individual selves or some immediate convenience. When we are able to recognize and forgive ignorant actions of the past, we gain strength to constructively solve the problems of the present.

~*Dalai Lama*

Wisdom, compassion, and courage are the three universally recognized moral qualities of men.

~*Confucius*

For more on this month’s theme go to: <http://uuac.org/worship/themes-for-spiritual-practice/>

The Worship Associates are: Jen Ryan Brown, Alexandra Businger, Alan Cantor, Erin Collier, Jess Jonas, Katherine McHugh, Megan Momtaheni, and Gary Strichartz.

Your time is limited; so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma - which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of other's opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary.

*~Steve Jobs*

Knowing others is intelligence;  
Knowing yourself is true wisdom.  
Mastering others is strength;  
Mastering yourself is true power.

*~Lao Tzu*

The moment you accept what troubles you've been given, the door will open.

*~Rumi*

What is required of us is that we love the difficult and learn to deal with it. In the difficult are the friendly forces, the hands that work on us. Right in the difficult we must have our joys, our happiness, our dreams: there against the depth of this background, they stand out, there for the first time we see how beautiful they are.

*~Rainer Maria Rilke from Letters*

Tragedy is a tool for the living to gain wisdom, not a guide by which to live.

*~Robert Kennedy*

Wisdom is not a possession you can point to as much as it is a way that a life has of imprinting the lives around it.

*~Krista Tippett*

"My Smile"

Beneath the lies

Beneath the drama

Beneath the abuse

Beneath the pain

Beneath the confusion

Beneath the whole history of you being an unmitigated bastard at work and at home,  
exists a truth

that I still live, and love

and spread joy, healing, and wisdom

on a scale you cannot imagine.

So when you see me smile,

I am not pretending you are a good person.

I am rejoicing that I am a good person.

*~Alan Price*

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The meaning of life is a conundrum we all have to figure out for ourselves. Someone else's meaning may make sense of their journey, but it is not necessarily right for you. Albert Camus suggested that life is meaningful precisely because it is absurd. I believe he meant that if someone figures out a meaning, and, however sincerely, tries to impose it on you, then it is likely wrong for you. In other words, there is no common packaged meaning, as many would profess. Your life becomes meaningful when you keep this question before you, as both guide, and a prompting to move out of yesterday's answer. Today's meaning will need be replaced by tomorrow's when you have better questions, more comparative experience, and an enhanced capacity for ambiguity and mystery. And all provisional meanings must meet the test of honest skepticism, and be confirmed by your inner, autonomous knowing, not the consensual voice of a clamorous group around you. Something inside of us knows what is right for us, and we have to humbly learn to track its voice and align its wisdom with our outer choices.

*~James Hollis, Ph.D., Jungian analyst, author, professor*

I believe in intuitions and inspirations...I sometimes FEEL that I am right. I do not KNOW that I am.

*~ Albert Einstein*

Don't try to comprehend with your mind. Your minds are very limited. Use your intuition.

*~ Madeleine L'Engle, A Wind in the Door*

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