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A Reverence *for* Wisdom



Professionals develop wisdom over time.

Sometimes being conscious that wisdom exists is the first step toward a person's pursuit of it. Then accessing wisdom, learning from a wise person, is another important step to take on that path.

Wisdom is an ability to think and act in a way that utilizes knowledge,

experience, understanding, insight, and common sense.

In my youth, I read that wisdom is achieved through a lifelong learning progression from clarity through power to wisdom. At the earliest phase, many people do not see things clearly and, of the few who do, fewer still are able to handle the precision and simplicity of clarity.

Accessing those who are wise, then learning what they have to share, is an important custom to nurture.

Clarity is almost always a prerequisite for power and being able to see things plainly can often lead to power. Again at this phase, when people attain power, many cannot handle it. Seduced by the forces of power, they misuse it and thus fall short of achieving wisdom. Those who do attain power and use it wisely move forward and can, over time, arrive at the wisdom phase.

As a word, "wisdom" is sometimes preceded by the words "age old," reflecting that wisdom is often timeless and holds true through generations. Wisdom usually comes

later in life. Many who achieve it often do so against great odds.

Sometimes, even when people don't consciously pursue it, wisdom just arrives. In whatever way it is attained, true wisdom is a gift, both for the person attaining it and for those of us fortunate enough to have wisdom in our midst.

Accessing those who are wise, then learning what they have to share, is an important custom to nurture. If we are lucky, we recognize other people's wisdom, pay attention to what has heart and meaning in what they share, learn what we need from their teachings, and press on in our own life pursuit.

In British Columbia we are fortunate, for instance, to have access to wisdom in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. There are wise teachings in both these streams of knowing.

By broadening our understanding of the teachings of Aboriginal people, we can develop a greater reverence for the complementary wisdom, intelligence, and acumen among us. The analogy of their practice of honouring the wisdom of the elders might provide insight in our rapidly changing world that can seem bereft of context and continuity.



There is growing interest in intercultural learning.

