

What is wisdom?

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Editor's Note - We have known Laura for over 10 years as a computer systems integration business owner, entrepreneur, and prolific writer.

We have wise old owls, wise women, wise men and Wise potato chips. We look to our elders to impart their wisdom to us and we constantly look for mentors and peers who can add a little enlightenment to our everyday lives. But what truly makes someone wise? Webster's dictionary defines wisdom as, "accumulated philosophic or scientific learning; ability to discern inner qualities and relationships; good sense; generally accepted belief."

If wisdom is knowledge coupled with discernment, good sense and insight then I am only wise because of what I have learned and experienced. Others are wise because of their experiences and knowledge. What makes wisdom accepted by all is discernment that allows us, as individuals, to evaluate new information we are given and determine its validity and value. A good example of this is not sticking your hand into fire because you will get burned. Very few would argue it is not wise advice to follow.

The School of Practical Philosophy has a homework assignment very early on in their coursework that requires you to ask yourself, "What would a wise (wo)man do?" before you do or say anything for a week. Then you have to report back on how that changed or influenced your action and the results. I took that course two years ago and I still frequently ask myself that question.

What I love about the question is it makes me stop and think before I act and opens me to other possibilities that I might not have seen if I only responded from my instincts, programming and existing knowledge. By asking, "What would a wise woman do?" I allow myself to consider other possibilities of action and thought. I give myself permission to not have all the answers.

By giving myself permission to not have all the answers and by being willing to learn from others, I create a world full of possibility and growth. There is always a new door or window to open that offers me infinite paths to walk in my business, personal and spiritual life. I don't have to accept only what I know of to provide an answer. I can talk to others and see if they have insights into a problem I am having or ideas for how I can accomplish my goals. I am not limited by my experiences. Neither are you.

Share your wisdom and let others share with you. That sharing provides you with opportunities for discernment. This way you learn how to recognize if what you understand to be true is the whole picture or if there is more to it than what you already think you know. Be willing to rethink what you know. Make new choices with the new wisdom you gain. Try asking yourself for the next week, "What would a Wise (wo)man do? " before you act this week. Your experiences are your wisdom learned.

Laura Steward Atchison is a creative entrepreneur and writer who brings wit and wisdom to her fans. Her current endeavor is founding Wisdom Learned, LLC. Ms. Atchison gave birth to the idea of a new company that focuses on educating other business leaders through experience and lessons learned from the trenches. Her current book in process is entitled, " What Would a Wise Woman Do? Questions I Should Have Asked Along the Way". Link to www.lauraatchison.com for lot'smore.