

Practically applying the character quality of

wisdom

vs. Foolishness

"Making practical applications of truth in daily decisions."

By: Steve Becker

February's character quality of the month is Wisdom, a quality that we all strive. However, we sometimes realize that our best wisdom is hindsight after making a decision that was not that wise. Looking back over the last year, I will be the first to admit that not all of my decisions were wise. Life is best understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards.

So how does one get wisdom? Is it from education? I think education certainly is important; however, how many people do you know that have an excellent education yet seem unable to enjoy wise decisions in their life as a result of their formal education. Knowledge is learned in the classroom; however, wisdom is seldom learned in the classroom today. Education has changed over the years from a focus on "thinking" to a focus on "learning" and from a focus on "wisdom" to a focus on "knowledge".

Here are seven suggestions on how we can develop wisdom.

1. Apply lessons from your experiences. If you make a mistake today, turn it into a learning experience and do not repeat it tomorrow.

2. Apply what you learn from history. History tends to repeat itself. We can learn patterns of behavior by studying the past. Consequences of right and wrong decisions are well documented in history.

3. Apply what you learn from biographies. Pick a great leader, such as Abraham Lincoln, and learn how they conducted their lives and made decisions.

4. Apply what you learn from discerning the truth. Wisdom must be rooted in an unwavering commitment to truth. Unwise decisions are often based on false ideas we wished were true, instead of on what all the objective evidence reveals to be the truth.

5. Apply what you learn from wise counsel. I like to say "Buy wisdom and get it cheap." Ask someone who may have paid dearly for their wisdom and they may give you their wisdom for free. Don't you wish your children would learn this one?

Going back to #4 let me ask you a question. Do you have someone in your life who will always tell you the truth, even if they know you do not want to hear it? If you do, then you have a true friend who

genuinely cares about you and has your best interests at heart.

6. Apply what you learn from relationships. Relationships are dynamic. Learning how our attitudes, words and actions impact relationships is critical if we desire to become wise. All the money in the world is useless if we have no friends to share it with.

7. Apply what you know to be the "right thing to do" at a heart level. When in doubt, follow your heart. Some things that seem to suggest a logical response in one direction fly in the face of what our gut tells us is the "right thing to do". A clear conscious is always worth more than a compromise of our standards when we try to justify wrong actions.

If I am really wise....

- I won't compromise my integrity
- I won't antagonize your anger
- I won't minimize your feelings
- I won't criticize your suggestions
- I won't emphasize your mistakes
- I won't disguise my motivations

Don't be wise in your own eyes. Knowledge can puff up our egos, but true wisdom is always humble.