Wisdom Defined

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We all know the story in which science supposedly demonstrates a Bumblebee only flies because it doesn't know it can't. That's not the real conclusion to the story but like I that one better because the bumblebee still goes about its daily tasks, unencumbered by knowing about all the impossible parameters which are being erroneously applied to its existence.

My effort to define wisdom is a lot like the life of the Bumblebee. Because I was not formally educated I did not know it would be an impossible task. Not knowing this allowed me to study wisdom from a practical point of view with the expectation of actually finding an answer.

Wisdom is a human activity. As such, a definition must reflect what wise people do. It cannot be found in activities people cannot do. If knowledge is not knowable and ethical questions cannot be answered, a usable definition of wisdom will not be found in metaphysics, epistemology, or ethics. So there is scant hope the philosophers will define it any time soon, having been at it already for twenty-five centuries without success. And the Psychologists, the real experts of the human mind, have been studying "crazy" people so long they are unable to recognize or understand sanity at all.

Don't get me wrong. I am not saying philosophers aren't wise, because most demonstrate considerably more wisdom than the average and they ask tough questions. We really need them. But the goal of their profession is not to be wise; it is asking complex questions and to use Logic to govern their exchanges.

We ordinary folks can't do those things. It is not because we lack the capacity but that we lack the time, inclination, and financial support which must be present to enable such a continued effort.

I am writing this because I believe a workable and usable definition of wisdom is not an impossible task. As a matter of fact, looking at how we mortals use it, the definition is fairly simple. **"Wisdom is the altruistic use of our best critical thinking skills to determine an optimum decision or solution for a situation."**

As such, we can see why wise decisions stand out like beacons in a fog. They are examples of the heights we can attain when we choose to do so. Defined thus, wisdom is obviously a teachable and learn-able skill.

Our real problem is not with the lack of wisdom per se, it is with its implementation. The larger, and more pressing problem today is the lack of integrity and courage necessary to choose the wise course, to actually do the things our wisdom dictates.

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