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Cultivating wisdom



Making wise decisions is more than just being smart. It also comprises the qualities of flexibility, calm, selflessness, and social insight. Difficult to describe, but you know it when you see it.

And who doesn't want to be wiser? Wisdom allows us to solve complicated problems in a way that leads to gracious outcomes. It reduces stress and builds positive relationships and esteem.

Contrary to what many assume, wisdom doesn't come automatically with age, although circumstances of aging can lead you there.

Here are some tips to cultivate wisdom beyond the school of hard knocks:

- **Embrace curiosity.** Aristotle (wisely) commented that "the wise man knows he knows nothing." Practice "not-knowing." Become receptive to new ideas and maintain a commitment to lifelong learning. Engage problems with an open mind, ready to be creative and think outside the box. By brainstorming ideas from multiple viewpoints (without preconceived judgments about their suitability), you'll discover options you might not have otherwise considered.
- **Practice self-reflection.** The more you understand yourself and have an honest assessment of your strengths and weaknesses, the easier it will be to seek input that compensates for any blind spots. Take time to pause and check in with yourself regularly. Know your triggers and learn from your failures as well as your successes. Clarify your values so you can apply those ethics to the decisions before you.
- **Develop emotional intelligence.** Prioritize the ability to name, and moderate, your emotional responses. Decisions made in a hot moment are less likely to pan out well. Emotional intelligence also involves empathy and compassion for the feelings and circumstances of others. For this, read or spend time with people you admire for their wisdom. Also people who think differently or live differently than you do. Listen as they express their reasons and choices. Find your common humanity and common desires, hurts, etc.
- **Seek a larger perspective.** When we make wise decisions, we draw upon a variety of perspectives and often consider the needs of a group as well as the needs of a particular individual. Draw upon your spiritual beliefs to approach the problem from a more transcendent understanding beyond the pressures of daily life. Engaging in creative pursuits can also train your mind to think outside the box and recognize ways to apply insights from one area of life to issues in another. A wider scope of thinking can help you synthesize the practical with the ideal to arrive at nuanced solutions.

Do you value wisdom and experience?

We are the experts in aging well. Give us a call at 206-456-5155.



Aging Wisdom —
Your Experts in
Aging Well

206-456-5155

Aging Wisdom supports individuals and families in King and south Snohomish Counties as they plan for aging.



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