Wisdom and Courage

Our character is what we do
when we think no one is looking
Wisdom and Courage

Often studied together
erroneously

Considered to be 2 of 4 cardinal virtues

"Wisdom is not a product of schooling but of the lifelong attempt to acquire it."
Wisdom
God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, The courage to change the things I can, And the wisdom to know the difference.

God, give me grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed, **Courage** to change the things which should be changed, and the **Wisdom** to distinguish the one from the other.
There is nothing more uncommon than common sense

- Speak when you are angry, and you will make the best speech you'll ever regret.
- To be old and wise, you must first have to be young and stupid
- It is not white hair that engenders wisdom. 324BC
- Enjoy the little things, for one day you may look back and discover they were the big things.
- The only people with whom you should try to get even are those who have helped you.
- The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool.
Some definitions offered…

- Ability to make proper judgments based on good sense and moral value
- Possession of insight or wealth of knowledge
- Reflective ability to discern inner qualities and relations
- Emotional-spiritual strength needed to deal with life’s uncertainties or to show compassion to others
Theories of Wisdom:
3 distinct conceptualizations:

1. Found in contemplative people (sophia)
2. That of a practical nature (phronesis)
3. Scientific understanding (episteme)
The whole problem with the world is that fools and fanatics are always so certain of themselves, and wiser people so full of doubts.

-Bertrand Russell

Theories of Wisdom

Excellence in living displayed by ordinary people

or

Fuzzy quality possessed only by sages
Implicit Wisdom

“While you’re young, your job is to download and store as much data as possible, no matter how strange some of it seems. Then, one day, you’ll realize that a very cool utility program called ‘wisdom’ has interlaced with your operating system, and BINGO! Life will make a lot more sense!”

Reprinted from The Funny Times / PO Box 18530 / Cleveland Heights, OH phone: (216) 371-8600 / e-mail: ft@funnytimes.com
Clayton asked people to describe the dimensions of a wise person…

Experience
Intuition
Introspection
Pragmatism
Understanding
Gentleness
Empathy
Intelligence
Peacefulness
Knowledge
Humor

Wisdom is the *integration of characteristics related to one’s mind, spirit, and conduct.*

Being wise requires the ability to appropriately apply one’s skills and capabilities in the face of life’s complexities, uncertainties, and challenges

(Karellitz et al., 2010).
Implicit Theories of Wisdom
Clayton (1975)

1. Affective
2. Reflective
3. Cognitive

“Dream as if you'll live forever, live as if you'll die today.”

The Dalai Lama, when asked what surprised him most about humanity, answered "Man. Because he sacrifices his health in order to make money. Then he sacrifices money to recuperate his health. And then he is so anxious about the future that he does not enjoy the present; the result being that he does not live in the present or the future; he lives as if he is never going to die, and then dies having never really lived.”
Implicit Theories of Wisdom
Sternberg (1985)

- 1. Reasoning ability
- 2. Sagacity
- 3. Learning from ideas/environments
- 4. Judgment
- 5. Expeditious use of information
- 6. Perspicacity
Implicit Theories of Wisdom
Holiday & Chandler (1986)

- 1. Exceptional understanding
- 2. Judgment/communication skills
- 3. General competence
- 4. Interpersonal skills
- 5. Social unobtrusiveness
Implicit Theories of Wisdom

Baltes (1993)

1. Addresses important/difficult life matters
2. Special knowledge, judgment, or advice
3. Extraordinary scope/depth of knowledge
4. Combines mind and virtue
5. Hard to achieve; easy to recognize
Implicit Theories of Wisdom

By Cultural Context

Western Perspectives

Eastern Perspectives
LIVE IN SUCH A WAY THAT YOU WOULD NOT BE ASHAMED TO SELL YOUR PARROT TO THE TOWN GOSSIP.

~Will Rogers

Explicit Theories of Wisdom
Explicit Theories of Wisdom

- Focused on behavioral manifestations
- Intertwined with personality and cognitive development
- Emphasize pragmatic knowledge
Explicit Theories of Wisdom
Reigel (1973)

- From Piaget’s cognitive theory
- Dialectical operations stage
- Reflective thinking
- Integration of opposing views
- Logical and subjective processing
Explicit Theories of Wisdom
Erickson (1959)

Wisdom part of optimal development
Concerned more for collective than self

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approximate Age</th>
<th>Psycho Social Crisis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infant - 18 months</td>
<td>Trust vs. Mistrust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 months - 3 years</td>
<td>Autonomy vs. Shame &amp; Doubt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - 5 years</td>
<td>Initiative vs. Guilt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-13 years</td>
<td>Industry vs. Inferiority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 - 21 years</td>
<td>Identity vs. Role Confusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 - 39 years</td>
<td>Intimacy vs. Isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 65 years</td>
<td>Generativity vs. Stagnation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 and older</td>
<td>Ego Integrity vs. Despair</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(C) The Psychology Notes Headquarter - http://www.PsychologyNotesHQ.com
Explicit Theories of Wisdom
Robert Sternberg, Yale

- Balance Theory of Wisdom

- Wisdom = forming a judgment amongst competing influences & no clear resolution
Figure 9.1  Sternberg’s Balance Theory of Wisdom

Explicit Theories of Wisdom
Baltes and colleagues

Berlin wisdom paradigm
Wisdom = the ways and means of planning, managing, and understanding a good life
Explicit Theories of Wisdom
Baltes Group

- 1. Factual knowledge
- 2. Procedural knowledge
- 3. Life-span contextualism
- 4. Relativism of values
- 5. Recognition and management of uncertainty
Developing Wisdom

• Resolution of conflict/daily crises
• Builds on knowledge, cognitive skills, and personality traits
• Via exposure to wise models
• Fluid intelligence, creativity, openness, and life experiences combined
Characteristics of Wise People

• Experience greater life satisfaction
• Quality of social life in early adulthood matters
• Cognitive and affective integration
Characteristics of Wise People

- Wise acts occur in public for men and in private for women.
- Begins in adolescence/young adulthood; declines in the late 70s.
- More common in clinical psychologists.
Wisdom Project: University of Chicago

- MORE
- Mastery
- Openness
- Reflectiveness
- Emotional Regulation

- Challenging Life Experiences
- How dealt with and reflected upon
- How integrate into life story
WISDOM Research

http://wisdomresearch.org/
Courage
Courage

- A hero is no braver than an ordinary man, but he is braver five minutes longer. *RWE*

- We can't all be heroes because somebody has to sit on the curb and clap as they go by. *WR*

- I think of a hero as someone who understands the degree of responsibility that comes with his freedom. *BD*

- With great power comes great responsibility *SL*
Theories of Courage

• Courage appreciated in many cultures
• 18 different conceptualizations of courage
Implicit Theories of Courage
O’Byrne, Lopez, & Peterson (2000)

- Attitude
- Behavior
- Mental strength
- Physical strength
- Risk-taking
- Role of fear
Implicit Theories of Courage

Figure 9.2  Exemplars of Three Types of Courage

Moral Courage
Rosa Parks stood up to injustice when she sat in a seat in the front of a Birmingham bus during a time of extreme prejudice.

Physical Courage
Firefighters completing a training exercise prepare for their life-threatening work.

Vital Courage
Elie Weisel devoted his life to fighting for human rights after he survived youth in a concentration camp.

Sources: Rosa Parks: © Reuters/CORBIS; Firefighters: Comstock/Thinkstock; Ellie Wiesel: © Ramin Talaie/Corbis.
Implicit Theories of Courage
Peterson & Seligman (2004)

- VIA Classification: courage as a core human virtue comprising strengths of:
  - 1. Valor
  - 2. Authenticity
  - 3. Enthusiasm/zest
  - 4. Industry/perseverance
Implicit Theories of Courage
Putman (1997)

- Psychological courage:
- Strength in facing one’s destructive habits
- Form of vital courage
Implicit Theories of Courage
Greitemeyer and colleagues (2007)

• Civil Courage =
• Brave behavior accompanied by anger and indignation that intends to enforce societal and ethical norms
Implicit Theories of Courage

- Courage in those with physical illnesses
- Courage of physicians
- Courage of caregivers
Becoming and Being Courageous

- Age is related to definitions of courageous behavior in children
- Related to levels of social responsibility, empathic concern, risk-taking, & altruistic moral reasoning
Figure 9.3 Subjective Experience of Courage

Social Forces
- Normative influence
  - Interdependence
  - Social Identity
  - Cohesion
  - Informational Influence

Values and Beliefs
- Duty, Selflessness
- Integrity, Honor,
- Valor, Loyalty,
- Independence,
- and Life

Impact of Reflection on Values

Impact of Reflection on States

Perception of Risk → Experienced Fear → Courageous Behaviours

Positive Traits
- Openness to Experience
- Conscientiousness
- Core Self-Evaluation

Positive States
- Self Efficacy
- Collective Efficacy
- Mean Efficacy
- State Hope
- Resiliency
- Positive Emotions

The Measurement of Courage

• Numerous brief self-report measures
• Further development of measures needed
• Woodard-Pury Courage Scale
• VIA Inventory of Strengths
Relations Between Fear & Courage

- Relation not well understood
- Frightened people can perform courageous acts
- Perseverance despite fear = pure courage
What were the Key Topics?
What are your clarification questions?