

# ***The Wisdom School – Part 2: The Wisdom Way of Knowing***

by Alan Krema / Originally published in Spirit Journal January 2016

Cynthia Bourgeault's book, "The Wisdom Way of Knowing" (WWoK) is an excellent starting point and introduction to Wisdom. She describes Wisdom as, "a specific and precise lineage of spiritual knowledge...an ancient tradition, not limited to one particular religious expression but at the headwaters of all the great sacred paths."



If you feel called to work with this Wisdom tradition, I will invite you at the end of this article to respond to that call and join a practice group.

The wisdom practice engages our entire being. This includes three centers: the intellectual center, the heart center, and the moving center. To deepen our experience of the methods of centering prayer, lectio divina, and the welcoming prayer, we practice observing these three aspects of the self. This leads to a way of knowing that engages the full self, not just the brain or intellect. In seeking wisdom, we must also use the knowledge of the heart and the body to become more deeply aware.

Centering Prayer is the core practice and it envelops all the other Wisdom School activities. It is the method we use to search for, and hopefully discover, our True Self. The primary element of Centering Prayer is our *intention* to consent to the divine presence and action within. In WWoK, Cynthia writes, "When our center begins to wobble, it's a pretty sure bet that what is lacking is not means but *depth*. Depth is obtained by engaging more of our self in our experience... Using the ancient tools of Wisdom, we discover once again just how precious these tools really are. Mindful work, sacred chanting, meditation, prayer, and above all an *intentional* rhythm and balance to the day: these are not just activities; they are gateways of perception – *floodgates* of perception, in fact."

WWoK describes seeing with the heart as the flow of divine energy and love into our living form. It is possible to train this ability — we have to see, or know, with our heart. Our heart is an instrument of spiritual perception. The heart lies deeper in our being than the mind or the emotions. The heart is the source of psychic awareness, intuition, wisdom, a sense of unity, aesthetic and creative faculties, and image-forming and symbolic capacity.

The heart is our connection to the cosmic mind. We so often sense connections to the cosmic human family. We are so connected today, informationally, that our mind has difficulty managing it all. Have you ever thought you need to stop spending so much time on Facebook? But because of the information, we can readily connect to Syrian refugees, the spread of terrorism, the violence perpetrated in our cities. Too often our interpretation of these connections is helplessness or fear. This is because of the inadequacy of rational explanation and management of the whole of the world.

When we are able to train our heart to perceive, we connect to others in a way that is pure and simple. We hold a resonance with others, and compassion is the result. From the point of this deep connection, right and mindful action will take place.

In the introduction to the WWoK, Thomas Moore calls out: “You don’t need factual knowledge nearly as much as you need the special kind of wisdom described in these pages. Take the vision offered here and create your own path, guided by centuries of sharp, perceptive insight into the spiritual life. Be serious about your spiritual ideas and practice. Take a radical position in relation to your secular milieu. Most important of all, do everything you can to nurture your spiritual intelligence. It is your only genuine source of hope, direction, meaning, and comfort.”

The deepening of our Centering Prayer practice is the place to begin, and to begin again, as a practice of Wisdom. If you feel you are drawn to participate in a Contemplative Outreach Wisdom practice group, you can email me at [alkrema@gmail.com](mailto:alkrema@gmail.com).