

The Wisdom of the Soul: The Missing Key to Happiness and Positive Mental Health?

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Abstract

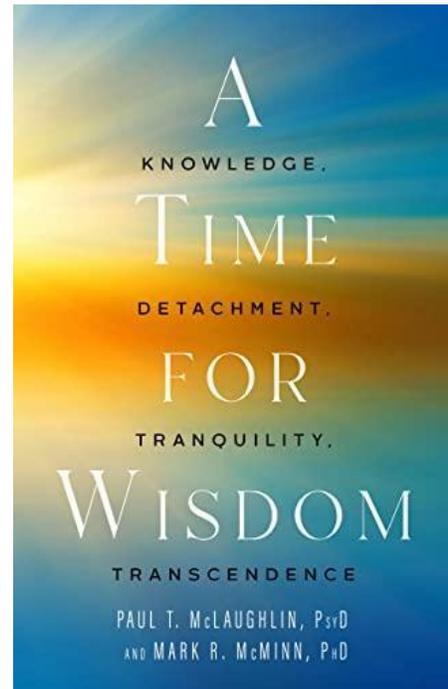
Are you tired of fake people or superficial relationships? Are you worried about being used or manipulated? Do you feel frustrated with all the positive news about how easy it is to be happy, even when the world is full of unhappy and depressed people? Are you drowning in a sea of sweet lies and psychology research findings? Are you hoping someone can rescue you with words of wisdom for living a deeper and more fulfilling life? If your answer to any of the above questions is affirmative, then *A Time for Wisdom* is the right book for you. Finally, here is a book which offers solid food rather than fluffy candy. Its fourfold path to wisdom based on knowledge, detachment, tranquility, and transcendence gets us out of our comfort zone of quick fixes and easy happiness and shows us how to live a happy and healthy life in a world full of suffering. This book is based on both psychological research and ancient wisdom from the East and West. Refreshingly, it even shares some truths from the Bible. In sum, this book shows us that the best possible life is a deep life based on the wisdom of the soul.

Keywords: wisdom, knowledge, detachment, tranquility, transcendence, happiness, wellbeing, mental health, suffering, temptation

Have you ever wondered why King Solomon is considered the wisest man ever lived? If God were to appear to you and say: “Just ask for whatever you want and I will give it to you,” what will you ask? Happiness? Success? Wealth? Good health? Love?

Solomon did not ask for any of these. Without hesitating, he asked for wisdom because he knew that all the good things which we desire in life depend on having it. Science is just beginning to catch up with Solomon, according to the recent book, *A Time for Wisdom*, by McLaughlin and McMinn (2022). It is an unusual psychology book because it is free from the stricture of positivist epistemology, and integrates mythology, philosophy, and spiritual traditions with psychological science.

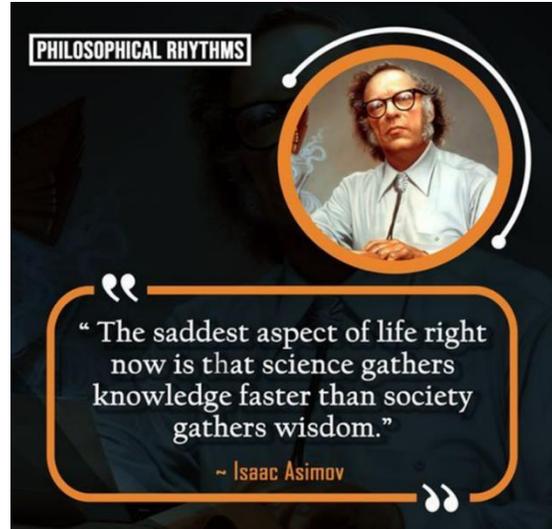
At a time when we feel overwhelmed by daily stress, rampant disinformation, polarized ideas, advertising on quick fix and instant gratification, and so much existential suffering beyond our control, where can we find a sanctuary where our mind can find peace, joy, and security?



At a time when traditional values, such as religion and communal living, are discredited, and new values are yet to be born, to whom can we turn for guidance?

At a time when we are inundated with the exponential growth of data, information, and scientific knowledge, who will provide the wisdom we desperately need to rescue us from drowning?

A Time for Wisdom is just the kind of book we have been looking for. It not only shows us how to get out of our predicaments, but also shows us how to appreciate and resolve contradictions, paradoxes, and dilemmas with a dialectical mindset (Wong, 2011, 2012).



What is Wisdom?

Wisdom is the apex of intellectual and moral judgement, experienced in the orchestration of emotions, desires, and life experience. It calls us to a higher self and a more noble way of existing in the world, and if there has ever been a time where we need higher selves, it is now. (McLaughlin & McMinn, 2022, p. 5)

Wow, what an uplifting grand vision! This kind of wisdom sounds like wisdom of the soul or spiritual wisdom, which is capable of transforming not only our minds, but also our innermost souls and our entire lives.

It is deeper than the practical wisdom of Aristotle or Vaillant's (1993) wisdom of the ego. It is also broader than the cognitive definition of wisdom, which is "morally grounded excellence in social-cognitive processing." (Grossmann et al., p. 103)

We need the kind of embodied and enlightened wisdom that enables us to regulate our emotions, open our minds to consider opposing views, tame our egos, and fill our hearts with empathy and compassion so that we can live in harmony with each other.

We need the kind of wisdom which goes beyond the individual and even humanity to encompass the transcendental realm and connect with God or Tao.

This definition of wisdom sets a high bar, calling us beyond mere cognition to full-bodied living, beyond self-interest to the betterment of shared humanity, beyond simple solutions to holding complexity and nuance. There is no easy formula for this sort of wisdom, but there is a path forward. (McLaughlin & McMinn, 2022, p. 27)

The authors summarized their research findings in the following four principles: Knowledge, Detachment, Tranquility, and Transcendence (KDTT):

1. **Receiving enlightened knowledge** – not the factual knowledge, but the kind of purified and enlightened knowledge resulting from self-reflection, critical contemplation, elevated insight, and enlightenment.

“Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom.”

~Aristotle



2. **Practicing detachment** – not just a matter of distancing ourselves, but the kind of letting go and complete surrender so that we become as detached as passengers in a train to a far away land and dispassionately watching the world go by.

3. **Experiencing tranquility** – not just keeping calm, but the kind of serenity or equanimity that comes from radical acceptance, surrender, contentment, and embracing the dark side of the self and human existence.

4. **Cultivating transcendence** – not just stepping outside ourselves, but a re-orientation away from egotistic concerns towards others and the highest ideals or the infinite.

This fourfold path to wisdom is a narrow and challenging path, which cannot be reduced to cookbook-like simple steps. But it is very liberating and rewarding to find out what the authors have to offer; it can save you from wandering in the wilderness and wasting your life. The main body of the book provide us with sufficient information for us to learn how to assimilate and accommodate perplexing problems and turn them into blessings.

I will now explain what these four principles are. I hope that this brief review will serve as an appetizer for you to study the entire book.

Practicing Enlightened Knowledge and Wisdom

It is widely recognized that wisdom is the appropriate application of knowledge. But it is more than that. Yes, wisdom begins with knowledge and ends with understanding and good applications. But wisdom also depends on a different kind of knowledge as described in Psalm 111:10: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His Praise endures forever!”

Grossmann (2017) proposes that enriched knowledge consists of the following characteristics:

1. Seeking broader perspective.
2. Integrating different perspectives.
3. Being humble.
4. Recognizing uncertainty and change.

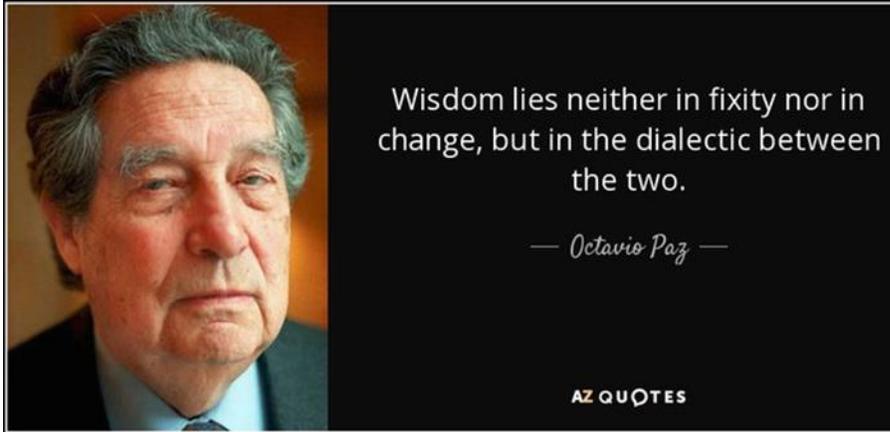
To the above, the McLaughlin and McMinn add a fifth: developing self-knowledge, which may be the most difficult and most rewarding kind of knowledge.

After reading the entire book, I feel that the authors really talk about enlightened knowledge that come from deep contemplation, critical self-reflection, and studying the Scriptures to rightly divide the word. Such knowledge has the following seven characteristics:

1. **It is humble.** Knowing our inherent limitations and the exhaustible richness of knowledge. “Humility invites us to admit that our thinking isn’t always correct, or at least that we can’t be sure of how correct we are. Some of the most exciting social science research these days is on the topic of intellectual humility, which is all about our relationship to the knowledge we hold.” (McLaughlin & McMinn, 2022, p. 45)
2. **It is integrative.** Capable of navigating a dynamic dialectic balance between two opposing views and distilling the essence of diverse perspective without losing one’s core beliefs. “Without integrating other perspectives while exploring our own, it’s inevitable that we will lose touch with nuance and balance in how we see the world.” (McLaughlin & McMinn, 2022, p. 43)
3. **It is timeless.** Having passed the test of time and shifting in values. For example, the golden rule of loving others as oneself is never too old-fashioned or out-of-date. “Shih-ying Yang (2013), a professor of psychology, sees wisdom as simultaneously building a good life for oneself and for others, and not just for the present moment but also for generations to come.” (McLaughlin & McMinn, 2022, p. 82)
4. **It is universal.** Not only true in one culture, but also true in all culture. “Explicating Aristotle’s view of happiness in relation to human nature, Green (2012) writes: ‘because all humans share a common nature, we all have a common happiness we are called to, though individuals will necessarily vary in their specifics’ (Green, 2012, p. 282).” (McLaughlin & McMinn, 2022, p. 82)
5. **It is deep.** It can be discovered only through perseverance in searching for it deep and wide until it is discovered. “Sometimes the compulsive data-drivenness and hasty superficiality that Solzhenitsyn described keep us too busy and preoccupied to dive in and explore the deepest contours of our problem.” (McLaughlin & McMinn, 2022, p. 71)
6. **It is existential.** Taking into account the big philosophical questions about human existence and one’s own identity. “Enriched knowledge asks us to consider big, existential questions with universal implications: Who am I? What am I living for? Is there meaning to life? Why is there something instead of nothing? Does God exist? These fundamental questions are bigger than what can be managed by the inward look of a buffered self or the reductionism of scientific materialism.” (McLaughlin & McMinn, 2022, p. 77)
7. **It is transcendental.** Exploring beyond the self and humanity, reaching to the highest ideals and aspirations. “This is an elevation out of the mundane, a breaking through to higher ground, and it reflects spiritual realities that cannot be captured in scientific materialism (Ramos, 2012). As such, a full-blooded psychology of wisdom calls us to imagine the possibility that we are finite beings capable of connecting to the infinite.” (McLaughlin & McMinn, 2022, p. 85)

Such enlightened knowledge is more trustworthy as a guide for living than psychological research findings, which may be challenged by new research findings and a lack of validity and relevance to our daily struggles.

It would be remiss of me not to mention that suffering, the search for meaning, and exemplars of heroic struggles play an important role in enlightened knowledge.



Detachment and Wisdom

Recall the importance of deep knowledge in the last section. Detachment makes it possible for us to plumb the depths of knowledge: “A detached and nonintrusive approach gives depth, a new level of knowledge emerges.” (McLaughlin & McMinn, 2022, p. 97)

We all struggle to see things as they truly are, and the less we self-reflect, the more we struggle. Our loss of objectivity leads to an inflated sense of subjective self-importance as our thoughts and feelings take center stage. (McLaughlin & McMinn, 2022, p. 99)

Most people do not realize the importance of detachment, because they are so closely identified with their own values and opinions, resulting in unnecessary arguments between couples or political debates in the public arena. A little self-distancing or detachment increases mutual understanding and avoids unnecessary conflicts.

Another reason for detachment is because in times of temptations and tribulations, once we consider ourselves as passengers in a train heading towards Home, all the attractions or atrocities we see outside the train window would have little effect on us. Detachment is difficult because it asks us to be:

Standing at the edge and observing life even as we participate in it. It is almost like bilocation: we live in the middle of our experience, but we simultaneously stand on the margin, observing ourselves and the world around. (McLaughlin & McMinn, 2022, p. 112)

In other words, we learn to distance ourselves from our own setbacks and suffering, observing them mindfully, and then extracting some meaning from it:

With detached contemplation, suffering becomes bearable and even meaningful: Hanh (2015) makes the compelling point that suffering is only holy if we embrace it and ‘looking deeply into it’ (p. 9). Otherwise, suffering is the ocean in which we drown. This sort of response to suffering grows out of ability to detach. (McLaughlin & McMinn, 2022, p. 122)

This detached perspective towards suffering and adversity gives us wisdom because it provides us with the time and space that we need to reflect deeply on how to best respond. This is

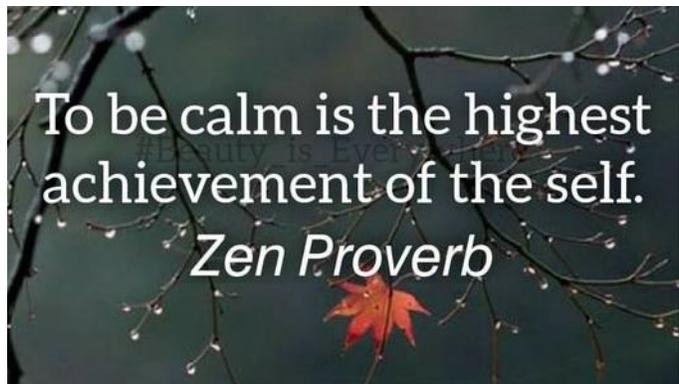
through cultivating the virtue of acceptance, patience, and endurance in digging deeper and broader in order to become fully functioning humans characterized by depth and wholeness:

In *Meditations of the Heart*, Thurman (1953) wrote that all of life – including the pain we encounter—has the potential to form our souls more deeply. This soul-forming is what gives us depth and makes us most fully human. It makes us whole. (McLaughlin & McMinn, 2022, p. 130)

Practicing detachment is a very important skill, because it enables us to keep calm and make wise decisions when we are under enormous pressure. It prepares us for the next step towards wisdom.

Tranquility and Wisdom

The above Zen proverb provides both the idea and the picture of tranquility. The English proverb “still water runs deep” conveys that same idea. This is an important topic for wisdom research, because only those who have mastered the wisdom of self-knowledge and self-control can stay centered and calm in battling the negative forces, both inside and outside oneself.



We are now near the climax of the KDTT model of wisdom and are dealing with the most difficult materials in this book.

The challenge to stay calm in times of storms has been a human concern from antiquity, because only a calm mind provides the holding place and mental clarity to decide on the most effective response to the predicaments and pressures of life.

It involves a lot more than just practicing detachment. Buddhism offers the pathway to tranquility based on enlightenment, mental discipline, and the end of desires.

Buddhism posits that one holds false selves, but by practicing meditation these can be shed, and the practitioner can reach towards enlightenment, where one is freed from self and experiences glimpses of the deeper truths of the world. (McLaughlin & McMinn, 2022, p. 192)

The Taoist concept of Wu Wei (nonaction) brings an antidote to the inner dragons we saw in the last chapter. Nonaction is not doing nothing but a participation in the natural rhythms of nature and accepting the sweet with the sour portions of life. (McLaughlin & McMinn, 2022, p. 172).

Thus, it is a matter of accepting the dark side of life as part of the natural ebb and flow of life. In addition, we need to learn how to navigate a dynamic balance between Yin and Yang with compassion, humility, and detachment, according to *Tao Te Ching*.

Psychotherapy can also help people to find inner peace:

Tranquility grows in simplicity. While psychotherapists are not typically called shrinks anymore, we have found that term quite well-suited for what happens in the consulting room: helping patients boil problems down and simplify issues in order [sic] gain a semblance of tranquility. (McLaughlin & McMinn, 2022, p. 149)

According to Kunzmann and Glück (2019):

The small but growing number of studies on the relationship between wisdom and emotional competencies clearly confirms that wisdom, if conceptualized and assessed as knowledge and reasoning, is positively related to emotional stability, certain positive emotions, emotion regulation, and a compassionate attitude towards other people. (p. 593)

In short, wisdom involves the emotional competencies of maintaining positive, stable, and regulated emotions with compassion for self and others. I developed a similar idea (Wong & Bowers, 2018), taking into account culture, spiritual, psychological, and contextual factors as shown in Figure 1.

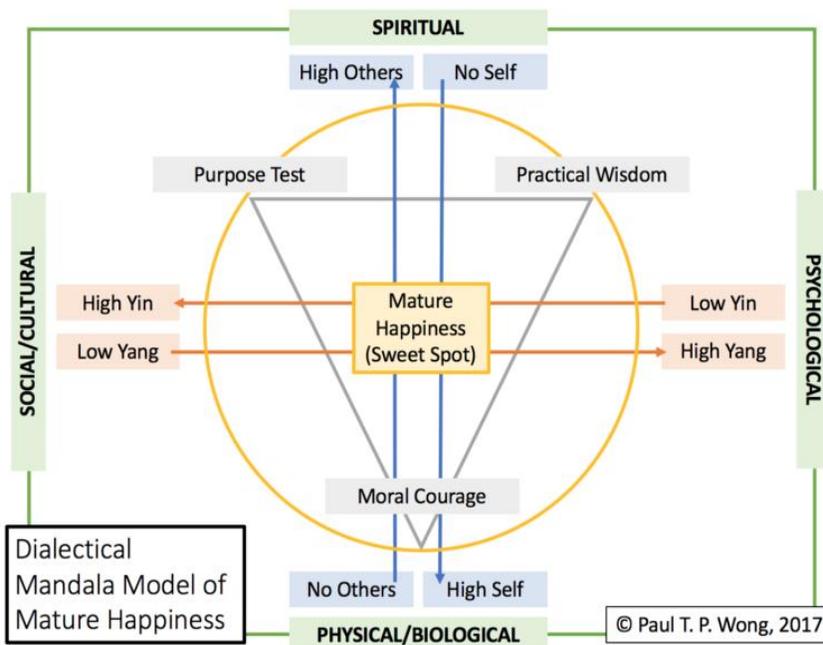


Figure 1. Dialectical Mandala Model of Mature Happiness

In a highly competitive world, where people are under pressure to defend and expand their territory or climb the dominance ladder, the still, small voice of tranquility tells us to slow down, to pause and smell the roses. It tells us to enjoy the simple pleasures of life, the beauty in mundanity, and the deep joy of just being alive.

Learn to breathe in life and breathe out gratitude. Our mind gains clarity when we are able to quiet the ego, tame the carnal desires, and stay detached from our emotions.

It also involves learning how to let go, be content with what we have, endure suffering as an opportunity to learn valuable lessons, and meditate on things that are good, kind, and noble.

The most difficult lesson is learning how to slay the inner dragons. We cannot experience tranquility until we have learnt how to confront our inner demons or Shadow, according to Carl Jung (1912/2003): “It is a frightening thought that man also has a shadow side to him, consisting not just of little weaknesses and foibles, but of a positively demonic dynamism.”

The monster inside all of us will grow stronger and stronger and eventually destroy us if we ignore or avoid it. The problem is that we cannot avoid or escape from it (Wong, 2022a). The toxic culture we live in also feeds and supports our inner demons:

This dragon lives right inside our minds, and in our neighborhoods, workplaces, states, and countries, insisting that we need to be special, to scramble and scratch and strive, to blaze a trail, to rise above the pack, to be upwardly mobile, to be above average in everything we do. (McLaughlin & McMinn, 2022, p. 170)

The authors’ brain-culture theory effectively explains what feeds the monster of narcissism: our well-developed brains and the ethos of a materialistic, egotistic, and consumerist culture which stifles the growth of wisdom.

The authors are correct that “wisdom happens faster in collectivist contexts, because people look to their elders from early in life, learning and following their examples.” (McLaughlin & McMinn, 2022, p. 170)

My only critique of this book is its treatment of inner dragons and the absence of the Christian way of being liberated from human bondage. Although the authors covered a lot of ground and cited a great deal of rich resources, I propose that the following points deserve some attention for wisdom seekers.

Cultural Differences in Attitude towards Suffering

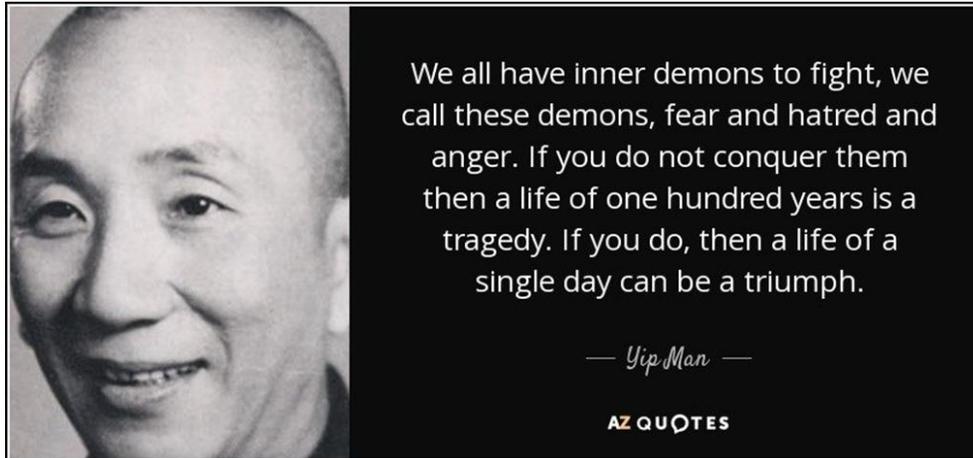
Asian youth may be wiser not just because of their collectivist culture, but also because of their knowledge of the long history of living with suffering. As I (Wong, 2021) explained to the Harvard Human Flourishing Institute, growing up in China, I learned repeatedly from both school and home that hardship or suffering is essential for maturity and happiness. We have also learned that without sacrifice, discipline, and hard work during our youth, we cannot survive and flourish in adulthood.

It is the pursuit of comfort and instant gratification that leads to deficiency in wisdom for the youth of today. Research has confirmed that the experience of suffering in childhood and the opportunity to learn how to endure and overcome is necessary for resilience, mature happiness, and flourishing (Wong & Worth, 2017).

I have written a great deal on flourishing through suffering (Wong, 2019; Wong, Mayer et al., 2021a). My main finding is that that suffering adds depth to our existence and wellbeing, as an antidote to shallowness. Therefore, deep life is the best possible life in turbulent times. As quoted by McLaughlin and McMinn (2020, p. 60), the Russian writer Solzhenitsyn (1978) in his Harvard commencement speech said that “Hastiness and superficiality are the psychic disease of the 20th century.” This continues to be an accurate diagnosis today.

Contextual Factors in Determining Which Demons Predominates

In addition of culture, context also determines which inner demons predominates. In the following quote, the famous martial art fighter Yip Man highlighted fear, hatred, and anger as the dominant demons one needs to conquer.



I understand Yip Man’s inner struggles, because as a fellow Chinese, I happened to grow up under Japanese occupation. I fully understand the demons of fear, hatred, and anger towards the Japanese occupiers, who made our lives miserable with their brutality. I had to find enough room in my heart to forgive those who had inflicted so much pain in my life.

I imagine that many Ukrainians today may feel the same anger and hatred towards their Russian occupiers, who reduced their homes to rubble, killed their loved ones, destroyed their peaceful life, and took away their freedom.

The Christian Approach to Liberation from the Human Bondage

Given the author’s own Christian background, I expected a deeper treatment of the unique Christian approach to overcoming inner demons. Apostle Paul describes the inner battle: “I don’t do the good that I want to do, but I do the evil that I don’t want to do.” (Romans 7:10) We can all relate to this, because there is a civil war raging on in all of us between good and evil, love and hate, the spirit and the flesh, or selfishness and self-transcendence. How can we be free from these endless struggles?

Christ promises his followers both freedom (“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” [John 8:36]) and inner peace or tranquility (“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid” [John 17:27]).

The unique Christian solution is that the pathway to freedom and peace is through faith in the grace of the redemptive love of Jesus Christ. “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I used to be like Apostle Paul, rejecting this Christian teaching as heresy until I came to the end of myself and desperately cried out to God for forgiveness and help. When I emptied my mind

in humility and repentance, God transformed me spiritually and filled me heart with peace and joy (Wong, 2017).

In other words, we need to be as helpless and trusting as a little child in order to experience spiritual rebirth as a new person. There must be some appeal is this simple faith-grace approach, because Christianity remains the largest religion today (World Population Review, 2022). It still offers a viable alternative to the Eastern ways (as described in the book) to be delivered from human bondage and filled with inner peace.

But this is only half of the Christian story because “faith without works is dead” (James 2:26). Victory over the seven deadly sins (Wildenberg, 2022) also depends on cultivating the seven virtues with the help of the indwelling holy spirit, as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Seven Virtues as Antidotes to the Seven Vices

These seven virtues may be considered as the fibers woven into wisdom as a grand virtue. The three treasures to experience freedom from human bondage and tranquility are faith, grace and virtue are complementary to the three treasures of compassion, simplicity, and humility in *Tao Te Ching*.

In sum, tranquility is a mental state necessary to perceive the invisible and transcendental. Tranquility also allows us to break through our limitations and connect with the infinite in going through trials and tribulations. “Tranquility is the bridge to transcendence. A tranquil mind creates an environment open to realities of a transcendental nature.” (McLaughlin & McMinn, 2022, p. 153)

Transcendence and Wisdom

Finally, we reach the climax of the fourfold path to wisdom in four ascending levels. Tranquility cannot be maintained for long without freedom towards something higher and transcendental.

The authors took pains to explain that although transcendence is traditionally associated with religions, it is a much broader construct “requiring both spirituality and psychology to understand” (p. 189). They cited Takahashi (2019) as an example. To this, I can also add the recent book *Transcend: The New Science of Self-Actualization* by Kaufman (2020) and my edited monograph on self transcendence (Wong, Mayer et al., 2021b).

“In both domains – religion and psychology – transcendence is seen as the capacity to get beyond oneself, out of the bubble, to see a fundamental unity in all things, and to connect to this unity in some meaningful way that ends up shaping our thoughts, values, motivations, feeling, and behaviors.” (McLaughlin & McMinn, 2022, p. 194)

For the more comprehensive definition and dimensions of self-transcendence, please see Wong, Arslan, and colleagues (2021). In this chapter, the authors focused on the three benefits of transcendence as follows.

Freeing Us From our Self-bubbles

Given the author’s earlier focus on inflated ego or narcissism as the chief demon, it is not surprising that they emphasized being freed from false selves in order to experience:

“Glimpses of the deeper truths of the word. In Christianity—especially the mystical tradition—one can learn to release a false, grasping self and discover a true self in union with God. This true self frees one to love God and neighbor.” (McLaughlin & McMinn, 2022, 192-193)

One question immediately pops up in my mind: Can we love God without obeying his commandments and fearing his punishment? Were Adam and Eve expelled from Paradise because they did not obey God’s commandment not to eat the forbidden fruit of knowing good and evil? Do we still need to obey God’s commandment not to eat the forbidden fruit? I submit that we still do. Recall that earlier, I cited Psalm 111:10 that “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” Is it possible to have wisdom without the fear of God, or without any fear?

According to 1 John, 5:3, “In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.” Jesus also said: “If you love me, you keep my commandments.” (John 14:15)

The logic is quite simple. Firstly, if you love someone, you will not do things contrary to the expressed wish of the beloved. Secondly, as finite creatures, we need to know our limitations and fear the consequence of violating our boundaries, whether we call it God’s punishment, karma, or the natural law of reaping what one sows.

Thirdly and more importantly, we all have our unique “forbidden tree”—the thing we desire most – whether it is pride, money, power, or sex. When our desire becomes our idol or our God, the end result is slavery and self-destruction.

The Bible clearly warns us to fear God and avoid evil (Proverb 3:7). The tragic stories of both King David and King Solomon stand as a warning to us about the danger of losing their fear of God. When we lose the fear of God in times of prosperity and success, we would more likely yield to the temptation of eating the forbidden fruit and suffering the terrible consequences.

In short, freeing oneself from one's self-bubble does not free us the responsibility of fearing God and his just punishment. If we love God wholeheartedly, love should constrain us to do the things that please him. In his infinite wisdom, God is both love and just.

Transcendence is Good for Us

Self transcendental positive emotions (STPE) such as awe, gratitude, love, and generosity are good for our wellbeing, because they re-direct our attention away from our self-bubble towards others or God (Van Cappellen et al., 2013, 2016).

For example, awe involves a sense of vastness and “requires us to challenge and change our existing mental structures in order to hold the new experience, and in the process, to move out of our self-bubbles.” (McLaughlin & McMinn, 2022, p. 195)

But according to Keltner and Haidt (2003), awe is a complex emotion—it is often mingled with feelings of fear, dread, and veneration. Wisdom requires a healthy balance between positive and negative emotions.

Transcendence can also increase our Negative Capability (defined in the book), which is needed for surviving and thriving in uncertain and turbulent times, because it includes a set of capabilities that include mindfulness, detachment, dialectical thinking, discerning a larger perspective, endurance, and a tolerance for uncertainty and complexity.

Negative Capability increases our ability to cope and overcome adversity and suffering. The authors cited Viktor Frankl's (1985) *Man's Search for Meaning* as a concrete example. Recently, I had expanded Frankl's work because it is also relevant to coping with the pandemic (Wong, 2020).

Transcendence Leads to Elevated Insight and Wisdom

The benefits of transcendence are broader and deeper than STPE or emotional transcendence; they also include a sense of interconnectedness and meaning and purpose: “Most humans throughout history have carried a sense of being incomplete on their own, thus seeking a way to connect with something or someone beyond themselves (Takahashi, 2019).” (McLaughlin & McMinn, 2022, p. 198)

This sense of connectiveness with a higher power and a community is important for psychological and spiritual transformation, leading to positive mental health and flourishing. Thomas Merton in his book *The Way of Chung Tzu* interprets the teaching to Taoism this way:

“The ambitious run day and night in the pursuit of honours, constantly in anguish about the success of their plans, dreading the miscalculation that may wreck everything. Thus, they are alienated from themselves, exhausting their real life in service of the shadow created by their insatiable hope.” (Merton, 1969, p. 100)

Conclusion

Given the above backdrop, I am more than excited to recommend *A Time of Wisdom* (McLaughlin & McMinn, 2022). It is like after travelling on a lonely journey for a long, long time, then unexpectedly, running into someone who speaks the same language. I had the same kind of feeling as I reviewed Soper's book recently (Wong, submitted). Maybe it is more than just synchronicity. Maybe, finally, a new science is emerging on the importance of wisdom and self-transcendence, when we are drowning in a sea of data and knowledge, but not knowing how to reduce or transform suffering (see my research project on this topic; Wong et al., 2022). Along with Robert Emmons' (2003) *The Psychology of Ultimate Concerns*, Fowers and colleagues' (2017) *Frailty, Suffering, and Vice*, Rosmarin's (2021) *The Connections Paradigm*, and Soper's (2022) *The Evolution of a Life Worth Living*, we now have a small library about how to live the best possible deep life with the wisdom of the soul.

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