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BEYOND MERITOCRACY:
THE ANTHOLOGY

WELCOME INTRODUCTION
THE ANTHOLOGY

World Wide Wave of Wisdom

by Larry Culliford

Solution

Better than an equation is a solution. 'IQ plus Effort' has the virtue of simplicity and much to commend it as a formula, but is weakened through being corruptible by self-interest, with the accompanying risk of over-emphasizing materialistic success. This is unacceptable in the global village of the 21st century. Humankind urgently now needs a visionary, unifying solution promising a cleaner, safer, happier world for all. One such solution

would be to promote a *'World Wide Wave Of Wisdom'*.

Put simply, wisdom is the knowledge of how to be and behave for the best for all concerned in any given situation. The 'WWWOW' is conceived of as a free, natural movement, rather than an organization. What follows is the reasoning behind these assertions.

The Double Brain

Neuroscience research has revealed something important, that the two halves of human brains function differently, working simultaneously on separate agendas. Calculation, including equation-solving, depends on the left hemisphere, which functions in a dualist, mechanical way - a *serial* processor of information. As well as computing the pluses and minuses of worldly success and failure, this left-brain is also the primary seat of language. It thinks in words and symbols, operating a binary system, as in *'either-or'*: thus, black-or-white, right-or-wrong, good-or-bad, Us-or-Them, etcetera. It divides things into separate parts, acting on them like a spotlight.

The holistic, creative, intuitive, non-verbal, right hemisphere, in contrast, is a *parallel* processor of information. It 'experiences' everything as immediate and whole, the parts seamlessly interconnected - as in *'both-and'*: thus, *both* black *and* white, plus all possible shades of grey *and* colour. It sees things in context, acting more like a floodlight. In today's out-of-kilter society, the busy, self-important, vocal, impatient left side has come to dominate this neglected, humbler, timeless, silent right.

Dimensions

Five seamlessly inter-linked 'dimensions of experience and understanding', cover everything known to humankind:

Physical (energy and matter) – the miracle of existence

Biological (organs and organisms) – the miracle of life

Psychological (mental activity) – the miracle of consciousness

Social (relationships) – the miracle of love

Spiritual (souls and the sacred) – the miracle of unity

Science's ways of examining its subjects depend heavily on left-brain mediated thought processes like calculation and measurement. The same methods (including 'objective' statistical techniques, also word-based, qualitative, questionnaire studies and descriptive research) can yield valuable information about the holistic or 'spiritual' dimension, but investigating this more meaningfully depends on 'subjective' research. It depends on a person quieting the noisy left-brain, allowing the promptings of the intuitive right - the '*wisdom mind*' - to break through and be more influential. It therefore involves people paying more attention to the effects of the spiritual dimension in their lives. This is of paramount importance because the spiritual dimension appears to act as an over-arching, originating principle, seamlessly forming, linking and reforming the other four.

Wisdom

Science and wisdom are not in opposition. Science represents the knowledge of facts: describing and knowing about things in terms of other things.

Wisdom, in contrast, is a more fluid kind of knowledge that, as stated earlier, involves knowing what to say and do for the best in problematic circumstances. The two support each other.

Universal and intuitive, wisdom does not depend on holding any particular beliefs, whether scientific, ideological, political, religious or non-religious. It does depend, though, on having a deeply personal, right-brain mediated experience of wholeness, according to which you feel intimately connected - to nature, to the universe and to everyone (living, dead or to come), regardless of age, race, creed, colour, sexual preference or any other distinguishing feature.

Such an experience may appear suddenly or gradually, and be either evanescent or sustained; resulting, to a greater or lesser extent, in transformational changes in attitudes and values that lead us to take increasingly mature responsibility for our thoughts, words and actions. Such Wow! experiences, silent epiphanies, moments of insight, can be hard to describe, and easy therefore for others to dismiss. Nevertheless, they remain subjectively incontrovertible, so that eventually growth in wisdom automatically and necessarily becomes the central aim of one's life. This may sound daunting, but there is little need for worry. Teachers are available and plentiful teachings. Wisdom itself summons courage, sets the pace and proves an infallible guide.

Two Sets of Values

In a science-dominated, secular, materialist, consumer society, the left-brain binary approach creates divisions. It fosters Us-Them splitting, emphasizing differences in terms of superiority and inferiority. It conditions people towards holding worldly, material ambitions, desiring 'success' in terms of position, profit, property, possessions, and power over others. Its primary goals include luxury, wealth and fame. Other people are treated as either supporters or competitors, friends or foe. We create rivals and opponents, real or imagined, threatening our wealth and well-being. *'If you're not a success, you're a failure... If not with us, you're against us!'* These destructive, die-hard, left-brain generated formulae urgently need of revision.

The right-brain unitary approach, in contrast, considers everyone as equal, sharing each-other's fortunes and misfortunes, fostering a sense of universal kinship, according to an intuitive awareness that in essence, as the 20th century spiritual genius Thomas Merton once said, *'We are already one'*. The words 'kin', 'kind' and kindness' are related. Spiritual values, based on fellow-feeling, therefore include kindness, also honesty, humility, generosity, tolerance, patience, perseverance, liberty, joy, humour, gratitude, forgiveness, courage, compassion, beauty, hope and love. All contribute to wisdom.

Folly

Folly is the opposite of wisdom, demonstrating inexperience and either ignorance or suppression of the right-brain's 'wisdom mind'. Its consequences are everywhere. Consumerism, for example, the relentless imperative of growth economics, leads people headlong into competition for wealth, territory and resources, and so towards warfare

and violence, equally to widespread pollution and massive eco-destruction, to climate change - with increasingly forceful and frequent disasters like wild-fire, flood and drought - contributing in turn to catastrophic famine, poverty, starvation, sickness epidemics and the displacement of millions of people, adding to the huge numbers already fleeing genocidal intolerance, wars and the destruction of cities.

Everything affects everything else. Multiple interpenetrating vicious circles are operating.

Vulnerable refugees, already prone to sickness and malnutrition, become helpless fodder for financial exploitation, people smuggling, sex trafficking, drug running and worse. Worse yet, all this devastation reciprocally fuels terrorism, political corruption, organised crime, general violence, and related gun and knife attacks. The consequences fill our screens, continually invading our homes, exacerbating a growing epidemic of psycho-somatic disorders, anxiety and depression. Similarly, the proximity of human misery contributes to the widespread use of heavily (legally and illegally) promoted habit-forming alternatives to feeling stressed, helpless and hopeless. Despair is resisted and numbed by (often multiple) addictions to: shopping, eating, social media, gaming, gambling, sexual behaviour, to the abuse of nicotine, alcohol, prescription medication and so-called 'recreational' and 'hard' drugs. What transpires is a malign process, forever turning the circles and tightening the screws of human suffering. But wisdom is capable of unlocking all this, setting its followers free.

The Wave

Folly causes suffering, so an equation expressing

the solution might be: '*Greater wisdom equals less misery*'. However, inventively tailored fresh each moment, wisdom firstly holds to no formula. Secondly, it offers much more than pain-reduction. Surprisingly simple in concept, if challenging in practice initially, the plain task involves individually restoring a healthy balance: between the two halves of our brains; between personal, unitary experience and impersonal, binary thought processes; between spiritual and material attitudes and values.

In achieving this, daily periods of stillness and silence are effective. Mindfulness, stilling, meditation and silent prayer are different names for similar styles of practice, reversing unhealthy conditioning, improving discernment by raising awareness moment-by-moment throughout the five dimensions.

Many other wisdom practices, religious *and* secular, produce the necessary equilibrating effect. Genuine 'wisdom seekers' might choose therefore to commit their efforts to engaging with a personal spiritual development plan (SDP) including, for example: daily quiet time; regular reflective study of wisdom material (e.g. scripture, philosophy, literature and poetry); establishing and maintaining multiple goodwill relationships; and, engaging in frequent acts of kindness and service. Wisdom seekers thus become vital contributors to - and beneficiaries of - a free natural movement, a vital aspect of humankind's spiritual evolution, a '*world wide wave of wisdom*'.

No man-made campaign or organization, this wave has exemplars and ambassadors but no leaders or officers. Success is not measured. People share and co-operate, rather than compete. There is no

need to try too hard; if you fail or falter, don't worry! Simplify your aims and try again. Do your best. Be patient. Reject folly and immaturity, and you may rest content that rewards will come. Whether small or large, ripple or splash, make your mark. As the wave grows, day by day, year by year, generation by generation, the world will assuredly become safer, cleaner and happier. This is life with meaning. Think of it as a solution. Think of it as an adventure. Think of it as an invitation. Plunge, whenever you're ready, into the welcoming ocean of wisdom... Catch the wave!



Dr. Larry Culliford

Dr. Larry Culliford is one of three self-appointed promoters (with Duncan Christie-Miller and Simon Edwards) of the World Wide Wave Of Wisdom, whose website has recently gone live at www.wwwow.net. A former physician and psychiatrist, Larry's passion is to help people better understand themselves and each other. He is a regular blogger with Psychology Today, and

the author of several books, including *'Love, Healing & Happiness'*, *'The Psychology of Spirituality'* and *'Seeking Wisdom - A Spiritual Manifesto'*. In 1998, he was a co-founder of the Royal College of Psychiatrists' *'Spirituality and Psychiatry'* special interest group, and is also a former Chair of the Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain and Ireland. A regular church-goer, Larry's hobbies include writing crime fiction, playing golf, and learning to play the classical guitar. He is happily married and lives in West Sussex.

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