

# *Obtaining Knowledge, Leveraging Wisdom*

## **Chapter 4**

“Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit; wisdom is not putting a tomato in a fruit salad”—Miles Kington. Acquiring knowledge through learning is fundamental for personal growth, but wisdom plays a crucial role in applying that knowledge effectively. While knowledge enriches our understanding, wisdom guides us in making reasoned decisions and planning life purposefully. Both are indispensable, each complementing the other. It's important to note that possessing one without the other offers limited benefits. However, the synergy of knowledge and wisdom not only significantly enhances the prospects for a fulfilling life but also opens a world of personal growth and development that is truly transformative. Hence, it begs the question: what sets apart knowledge from wisdom?

- **Knowledge** is all about the facts and information acquired through study, research, investigation, observation, or experience.
- **Wisdom** is the ability to use sound judgment to apply knowledge logically.

From the descriptions provided, it's clear that knowledge and wisdom are distinct concepts. Knowledge is acquired through action and learning, something inherent to human existence from birth to death. It's a potent tool, provided it's the right kind of knowledge. Yes, I'm emphasizing 'right' because knowledge isn't inherently good or bad; it depends on its content and application. We gather knowledge constantly—from family, friends, strangers, education, media, and other sources. While knowledge generally holds value, it can be detrimental if predominantly negative. Our daily interactions expose us to a plethora of information, but not all is positive.

Without the wisdom to discern between the beneficial and harmful, we risk being overwhelmed by false realities, a situation that can hinder our personal growth and development.

For instance, consider a medical student who has diligently studied textbooks, attended lectures, and passed exams with flying colors, acquiring a wealth of knowledge about various diseases, treatments, and procedures. However, they may struggle to apply that knowledge appropriately when faced with real-life patient scenarios. Without the wisdom gained from practical experience, empathy, and understanding of human nature, the medical student might make mistakes in diagnosis or treatment or fail to communicate effectively with patients and their families. Although the individual has abundant knowledge, their lack of wisdom hinders their ability to make sound decisions and truly help those in need, which can be challenging and humbling.

So, let's talk about wisdom. It's something we gain through the situations we encounter in life, the experiences we gather from those situations, and the outcomes we come to accept. As we mature, we naturally become wiser. Life has a knack for humbling us sincerely; through these humbling moments, we truly grasp the power of wisdom. George Bernard Shaw stated, "We are made wise not by the recollection of our past, but by the responsibility for our future." This quote implies that true wisdom doesn't solely come from reflecting on past experiences; instead, it is the concept of taking accountability for shaping and guiding one's future. It suggests that focusing on learning from mistakes and successes and actively working towards creating a better future ultimately leads to wisdom. It emphasizes the importance of forward-thinking and proactive decision-making in pursuing wisdom.

So, when the moment of enlightenment arrives, compelling us to acknowledge the countless opportunities lost due to trivial matters, we stand at a crossroads. We can embrace this realization, leveraging the lessons of our past to forge a brighter tomorrow. Alternatively, we can look the other way, perpetuating the cycle of mistakes and squandering the wisdom we've acquired. It's a pivotal juncture where our response determines the trajectory of our lives.

### **Who's Journey: Rosemary or her Gift.**

#### **(Part 4 – Ignorance is Bliss)**

Rosemary, renowned for her intelligence in her quaint town, lacked the practical wisdom to navigate life successfully. Despite her smarts, she struggled to build a stable and prosperous future. Shortly after welcoming J-Mart into the world, Rose crossed paths with a young man from the bayou—a term used in Louisiana to denote areas near swampy sections of rivers or lakes. Just three months postpartum, Rosemary found herself at a dimly lit blues joint nestled in the heart of the bayou, encountering a captivating, dark-skinned, light-brown-eyed young man with a crown of wavy hair who went by the nickname Freddy Mack.

As Rosemary and Freddy Mack's eyes locked amidst the hazy allure of the blues joint, an electric current surged between them, igniting a fierce attraction that consumed their senses. In that fleeting moment, wisdom took a backseat to raw desire as they gravitated toward each other with an irresistible magnetism. Every glance, every touch felt like a revelation, as if the universe had conspired to unite them in a whirlwind of passion. Lost in the intoxicating allure of the attraction, they surrendered to the primal pull of their desires, convinced that fate had woven their destinies together on that humid afternoon.

Rosemary and Freddy Mack's unexpected encounter stemmed from Rory's need to meet his supplier to restock his narcotics inventory. Rosemary tagged along with Rory due to her

feeling restless from the confines of home life after the birth of J-Mart. Accompanying Rory on his errand, Rose became increasingly intrigued by the urban underworld. Little did she know this fateful choice and her lack of wisdom at this point would lead her into a situation she would love but ultimately regret. Rose's lack of knowledge didn't help her understand that Freddy Mack was a familiar face in Rory's circle, though not directly involved in drug distribution. Rather, Freddy Mack was known to indulge in recreational substances.

However, just like her first true love, Drac, when Rosemary laid eyes on Freddy Mack, she felt love at first sight. As soon as he spoke to her, she got tangled in his web, and unfortunately, there was no escape. Rosemary and Freddy Mack hit it off, and a week after meeting, they began dating. To Rosemary, Freddy Mack was kind, sweet, and caring, and most of all, he accepted J-Mart into his life. His entire family accepted both Rosemary and J-Mart as one of their own. After dating for a few years, Rosemary and Freddy Mack tied the knot and became husband and wife.

After marriage, Rosemary moved to Freddy Mack's hometown, and not long after, they had their first child together, a baby girl. Two years later, they brought another girl into the world. In the beginning, they lived a happy life. Freddy Mack worked as a welder in a shipyard, and Rosemary worked her way up to manager at Burger King. Life was good for Rosemary. She was happy and got the white picket fence from her dream, even though it was around a mobile home and not a house.

Over the passing years, Rosemary and her family resided just a few houses away from Freddy Mack's family home in the bayou. One evening, returning from work, Rosemary stumbled upon a crushed soda can with perforations on the back porch of her home. Traces of a white substance adorned its rim, while burn marks marred its surface. Rosemary, aware of her

brother's history with soda cans being used to do drugs, instantly became nauseous. She knew what was occurring in her home, and with no hesitation, she confronted Freddy Mack, suspecting his involvement. Despite his denial, Freddy Mack exhibited classic symptoms of being high off crack cocaine - bloodshot eyes, profuse sweating, slurred speech, and unsteady movements.

Equipped with the knowledge from her past experiences, Rosemary detected that her husband was addicted to drugs. Though she knew how to address the situation decisively, Rosemary chose to look the other way, hoping to maintain family harmony. As time passed, Freddy Mack's behavior deteriorated further. He brought home less money, household items disappeared, and his affectionate demeanor transformed into distant and secretive behavior, prioritizing late-night outings over family.

As time went by, Rosemary finally started to allow her wisdom to play a role in her future choice of marriage to Freddy Mack. Rosemary began considering it was time to call it quits and move on with her kids to take them away from an environment that had become toxic and violent. Well, the moment of truth was upon Rosemary, the moment a situation pushed her to choose to end her life with her second love. When J-Mart, who was eleven at the time, fell ill, Rosemary spent one morning trying to ease his pain before deciding to take him to the hospital later that evening. Upon asking Freddy Mack to watch their daughters while she took J-Mart to the hospital, he stops her and begins to dismiss J-Mart's condition, causing a heated argument. Despite Rosemary's usual kind demeanor, messing with her kids overwrote this side of her and instead triggered a fierce protective instinct. The argument escalated, resulting in objects being thrown at Freddy Mack, who tried to dodge them, but in the end, he ended up with a few bruises.

Fed up, Freddy Mack stormed out, leaving Rosemary to handle the situation alone. J-Mart's condition worsened in his absence, with symptoms including vomiting blood, a high

fever, and severe abdominal pain. When Freddy Mack returned home in a drug-induced state that evening, Rosemary insisted on taking J-Mart to the hospital, to which Freddy Mack callously responded that maybe J-Mart should die—a comment he would regret.

In a fit of rage, Rosemary attacked Freddy Mack, leaving him with a bloody nose. Unable to defend himself due to his drugged state of mind, Freddy Mack witnessed Rosemary's wrath. Following the ass whipping, Rosemary loaded the children into the car and drove them to the hospital. There, they discovered J-Mart had appendicitis, a potentially life-threatening condition that required immediate medical attention.

After spending ten sleepless hours in the hospital, Rosemary's sister Linda and her husband Mike finally arrived to check on J-Mart. Concerned about Rosemary's exhaustion, Linda insisted Rosemary go home with the girls, rest, and change clothes while she and Mike stayed with J-Mart. Rose reluctantly agreed and headed home; upon arrival, she was greeted by a familiar car in the driveway—a sign of trouble she knew all too well.

Suppressing her tears, Rosemary composed herself for the sake of her daughters before walking them to her mother-in-law's house. Entrusting her children to her care, Rosemary left to confront the issue at her home, determined to handle it head-on.

Entering the front door, she hears the noises she feared from her bedroom—moans, humming, and the familiar sound her and Freddy Mack's bed would make during their intimacy. Rage consumed her; she grabbed J-Mart's baseball bat from the side of the door, clenching the bat tightly, and approached her bedroom door. Peeking in, seeing Freddy with her co-worker Cindy riding him like she was auditioning for a rodeo show intensified her anger. Right before busting in the door and bashing both their heads in, she stopped, realizing the possible consequences of her actions if she let her emotions control her state of mind. One instant thought

was she couldn't risk losing her freedom or her kids. So, instead of going home run derby on them, she left, heartbroken, questioning her worth; it was then that her marriage to Freddy Mack was over, and she returned to her hometown with her kids.

You see, Rosemary lacked the wisdom to apply the knowledge from her experience with Drac. She failed to realize that hastily falling for a man solely based on physical attraction could lead to adverse situations, experiences, and outcomes. Her decision to prioritize superficial qualities in her pursuit of a partner ultimately led to her marriage's downfall.

This is just not Rosemary's fault. Regrettably, despite gaining abundant knowledge from various situations, we often lack the wisdom to implement the knowledge obtained accurately. A.D. Williams, the American football player from the 1950s, stated, "Knowledge comes from learning, and wisdom comes from living." Despite gaining knowledge, Rosemary was still young; she had yet to live and gain the wisdom needed to succeed fully.

Consider this: "Does wisdom only come with age and experience?" The truth lies in a nuanced interplay of yes and no. Living a rich life is a prerequisite for wisdom; wisdom emerges through our experiences. Each experience has its mark upon us, contributing to a reservoir of enlightening and cautionary insights. This reservoir expands with time, offering a wealth of guidance for navigating life's complexities. However, the challenge lies not in accumulating wisdom but in discerning which insights to apply in any given circumstance.

# The End



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