

## **Convergent wisdom: The most important lessons I learned from wise authors, leaders, philosophers and scientists**

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Best-selling authors warn - don't give it to them right at the beginning. Yet, I will shatter your anticipation and get to the core of humanity now.

Suspense, the prolonged wining that teases you to continue reading would benefit us all. Namely its essence - loyalty and patience. Yet, as the most recent research suggests there is already too much [anxiety](#) in our minds today. Let's dissolve it.

Countless wise minds support the most important lessons that recently kept crossing my path as if on rewind:

What makes you happy is your mind.

You cannot doubt it. You can decide for or defeat your happiness. Different, divergent even contradictory views of what happiness exactly is are therefore clues to truth. Consider these:

Some call attitude into the helm of joy, others selflessness (often moralist and spiritual definitions) and neuroscientists would add conscious effort. Two millennia ago **Marcus Aurelius** saw it qualitatively: *"The happiness of your life depends upon the quality of your thoughts"*. I could add [curiosity](#), but what are the other *"qualities"* in your thinking? We know now that positive thinking is not a cure all and that genetic purists are irrelevant in the magnifying mirror of lifestyle.

Spiritual leaders like [Thich Nhat Hanh](#) would argue that judgement and prejudice blind true wisdom. And wisdom is happiness, isn't it? The wise are happy, as many other ancient philosophers mused. Such openness further suggests that happiness does not matter much. Indeed, [happiness](#) like wisdom is individual. That is how I see it.

Getting back to the suspense, patience, broadening imagination and employing our brain circuits in increasingly complex ways evolved us to homo sapiens. We are who we are these days with gratitude to how we thought and dealt with in our past. Not only a quest for survival of the fittest but we crave [longevity](#). Why living long if life and the world sucks?

Quality of life matters more than counting years from your birth date. Even biological age is only a slice of the whole - the physical. Learning feels [rejuvenating](#) and my best learning experiences in 2018 were so fertile that I shed at least a decade from my individual numeric calendar.

Further, knowledge differs from wisdom. The former recites what is commonly understood as facts. Yet facts can change, truths can be uprooted by new evidence, scientific inquiry and by other truth diggers. What prevails and individually evolves over time is wisdom. The universal ancestral truths that we have intimately discovered for ourselves, that's wisdom. Jung called these [archetypes](#) dwelling in "*the collective unconscious*". Bound to instinct they manifest through our consciousness and behaviour.

Ancient Chinese wisdom condensed millennia of truth searching in the contemplative pursuits of its sages. As the East increasingly converges with the West through globalisation and technology, traditional thinking and cultures mingle more closely, therefore allow me to elaborate briefly on the greatest Chinese minds.

**Confucius** (Kong Fu-Zi 6-5th c. BC) humbly stressed that he had invented nothing, for he merely invigorated the common principles of harmony which had existed in China for ages lived long before him. I sign up for this Eastern restraint as opposed to the Machiavellian power manoeuvring. To the later authoritarian regimes and the church succumbed to, and a wise person with high level of integrity cannot support. For paranoia is weakness. Supporting social harmony is gazillions smarter for a common wellbeing. As **Sun Tzu**, the praised author of *The Art of War* would prudently add - create victories where battles have become unnecessary! Strategic wisdom worded out in poetry.

The other, life-changing lesson assists at work and while studying in the distracting, plugged in culture. Efficiency and productivity are desired by most of us. Michael Townsend Williams like myself skips suspense by juicing out the message into his title:

Do/Breathe/

Calm your mind. Find focus. Get stuff done.

It's is as simple, your breath is your best friend in whatever you do and when you think. It's is the only helper that is there for you until your last breath.

The island monks at the [Abbey of Lerins](#) in the Mediterranean reminded me what the purpose of work should be. I was pleased to realise that I live by their devote philosophy. Making one's living from sharing goodness with others regardless of the material gains (I don't make any money from La Muse Blue) naturally leads to contentment and integrity with my work.

Japanese wisdom courts [ikigai](#), the purpose of one's life supported by its community regardless of one's age or retirement. Your *ikigai* can evolve, important is to be aware and connected to it - the meaning. Knowing where you go makes even an extremely challenging journey more enjoyable on a daily basis. The Japanese artist **Yayoi Kusama** summoned her purpose, her quest for inspiring harmony between cultures in the anxious world today in her brilliant creative work. "*In awe of the wonder of life*" she was driven through the seven decades of her life until she "*expires*". Her *ikigai* was expressed on her colourful canvases and the globally famous pumpkin sculptures.

Goal setting is glued to purpose. Map your goal and take small, achievable and rewarding steps towards it. Seeing these small goals completed encourages and motivates you to continue without losing your direction. This "Champion's Blueprint" comes from a lifelong experience, a mentor to world-class athletes, platinum albums selling bands, and millionaire businessmen, an Olympic medal winner, leading chiropractor (Tour de France), artist and author [Dr. Jeff Spencer](#).

## REAL LIFE, REAL TIME, MORE REAL CONNECTEDNESS

Looking back at my best recent learning experiences also revealed how fallible memory is and it is only getting worse. Some had to be contemplated, flipped over, while others sparked fireworks right from their outset, but most were recalled only upon lifting them up from my digital library. We rely too much on electronic devices — the 'smart' phones are outsmarting us.

The La Muse Blue [quest for balance](#) strengthened my resolve to slow down, switching to an analogue, film camera, while **training my human memory** instead of snapping all information into my iCloud. I trust my brain's firewalls more than the easily hackable internet and intranet. Nets are connected and thus more vulnerable. The artistic, closer to real, slow, and reflective quality of *Roma*, the movie of the year for many critics, reminded me of cinema before special effects. Lost to action and excitement, the majority of current productions are a step further escapes from the reality.

Joining meet-ups in London (writing) and New York (philosophy and psychology theory) organised online, but happening in real time with real people enriched me with sociable encounters that mean a lot to us. Love has the power to connect. As the revered Persian mystic Rumi hinted, "*between you and everything*", which can also mean love yourself in order to connect with yourself.

In China, I attended an inspiring conference in Beijing, where one of the most globally viewed Tv hosts, Lan Yang, empowered women through knowledge. I had the honour to sit next to **Jon Kabat Zinn**, PhD world-renowned American neuroscientist, whose mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) captured me at university. Knocking back at 'what makes you happy is your mind' Kabat Zinn advised me his *Full Catastrophe Living* as the one book that my struggling father should read for inspiration to combat his health struggle.

Interviews taught me another drop of wisdom. [Shinichiro Ogata](#), the award winning Japanese designer shared his pursuit of *simplicity* so alluringly that it became my new mantra when organising my home and travels. Another artist, a calligraphy abstract Moroccan artist [Larbi Cherkaoui](#) revealed that there cannot be creativity without freedom. So true! Yet, I might argue with him that "*the start of freedom is the end of ignorance*", since liberty in democratic societies today seems to sustain oblivion. Having choices does not mean we will responsibly select from them, and this is the weakness of democracy.

There is already too much [anxiety](#) in our minds (competitive culture, social media and technology largely contribute). We need to remedy it through reading, since the wisdom of experienced others can assist us without drugs. [Meditation](#) and [mindfulness](#) are the mind's tools to alleviate the fears we face.

Aside to the above mentioned literature, the book that imprinted my mind with its bold, science-meets-intuition, ideas most recently was The [River of Consciousness](#) by the late-neuroscientist Oliver Sacks. Read [my review](#) for the essence of its wisdom.

The irony of our choices, the banality of human behaviour, but above all realistically surreal wisdom are exposed in **Milan Kundera**'s novel from 1969 **Life Is Elsewhere**. I read the translation into my native Czech language by this francophone Czech emigré. Fiction often speaks the mind, and the naivety of a poet in Kundera's book serves this purpose. Perhaps unexpectedly, Life is Elsewhere taught me to appreciate contemporary art through his invaluable insight. Kundera clarifies its aim poignantly. Technical mastery can be learned, yet what is most fascinating is when an artist or any individual allows for his/her inner world to get out. Shouting one's unique self out should not be irresponsible. The author pours more acuity into the right to do so. *"First, we have to get to know the world as it is, for only then we can radically change it."* I understand this as being open to all aspects of reality since my own biases blur truth. Once I am able to clear the ego, prejudice, partiality and other fogs of the mind I am in a neutral position. Grounded in its objectivity, I can change the world.

What were the essential lessons I took from these wells of wisdom? I live too fast. So I told myself to slow down and empty my mind regularly. Some of the places that physically and mentally slow me down are libraries. The wonderland of bookshelves casts a lost-in-time spell on my usually spinning mind. Focus suddenly becomes natural and I flow with an ease of a bird in nature.

In my next post I will suggest the best places for learning, where distraction more easily diminishes. Certain activities improve focus, and I will further reflect on those I have personally tried. So do some apps - use technology to your benefit.

Be a *nefelibata* (literally a cloud walker). Like **Coco Chanel** forge your own path, think for yourself and live the way that is true to who you are. Be unconventional and dreamer if you deeply want to. Be creative in your own way, so you feel rejuvenated from inside out.

I am daily watering my tree of wisdom with an open mind. Only then I can learn more truths about life.