

Coalesce Podcast

Episode 003 – Wisdom’s Way of Knowing

Note, terms, scripture, practice



Tobin Hart, author of *From Information to Transformation* and a professor of psychology, maps six interrelated layers of knowing and learning (Tobin Hart, *From Information to Transformation*):

- 1) information;
- 2) knowledge (where direct experience brings information to the level of mastery and skill);
- 3) intelligence (integrating intuitive and analytic),
- 4) understanding (seeing with the eye of the heart);
- 5) wisdom (blending truth with an ethic of what is right);
- 6) and finally transformation.

“but awakening is not that easy, and as a Master of Wisdom, Jesus had mixed success. As the four Gospels all record, some people glimpsed what he was saying while others missed it altogether. Some people got it part of the time and missed it the rest. Some people woke up and others remained asleep....” (Cynthia Bourgeault, *The Wisdom Way of Knowing: Reclaiming an Ancient Tradition to Awaken the Heart*, p. 5).

The first principle: only Love can be entrusted with Wisdom, or with Big Truth.

The second principle is that truth is on some level always beautiful—and healing—to those who honestly want truth.

“It is God’s pleasure and rapture to place his whole nature in this true place—because it is God’s own identity too,” says Meister Eckhart.

[Philippians 2:12-13](#)

“[The Wisdom way of knowing] requires the whole of one’s being and is ultimately attained only through the yielding of one’s whole being into the intimacy of knowing and being known.... It doesn’t happen apart from complete vulnerability and self-giving. But the divine Lover is absolutely real, and for those willing to bear the wounds of intimacy, the knowledge of that underlying coherence—‘in which all things hold together’—is both possible and inevitable” (Cynthia Bourgeault, *The Wisdom Way of Knowing: Reclaiming an Ancient Tradition to Awaken the Heart*, p. 10).

The spiritual faculty of heart: “a quality of intuitive awareness...a sense of inclusive, compassionate, undefended, direct in-touch-ness”. –Tilden Edwards

Over-explanation separates us from astonishment. –Eugene Ionesco

“Instead of grasping for certainty, wisdom rides the question, lives the question.... When the quest for certainty and control is pushed to the background, the possibility of wonder returns. Wonder provides a gateway to wise insight” (Tobin Hart, *Information to Transformation*, p. 11).

kataphatic knowing, through images and words

apophatic knowing, through silence, images, and beyond words

[1 Corinthians 13:12](#)

[John 14:6](#)

[John 6:35](#)

[John 17:21-22](#)

[John 14:6](#)

Most of Jesus’ teaching is

walking with people on the streets,
out in the desert, and
often into nature.

His examples come from the things he sees around him:

birds,
flowers,
landlords and tenants,
little children,
women baking and sweeping,
farmers farming.

“Thisness” is the actual spiritual doorway to the everywhere and the always, much more than concepts.

[Mark 12:30](#)

[Jeremiah 31:33](#)

[Deuteronomy 30:11-14](#)

Basic Breath Practice

Sit quietly with an erect spine and breathe naturally.

Bring attention to the present moment and breathe, silently counting the breath. Begin counting your breath, counting the first inhalation as “one,” the exhalation as “two,” and so on.

Breathe in while counting “one,”

breathe out, “two,”

breathe in “three,” and so forth

Start over after you reach “ten.”

Between the in and out breath, rest the mind. Pay special attention to the stillness between each breath.

Whenever your mind wanders, go back to “one” and continue to count the breaths. Set an engaging, gently challenging standard. It’s your choice:

You can go back to “one” only when you lose count.

If you find you are adept at multitasking (That is, able to count while daydreaming), you may want to set a sterner standard, going back to “one” whenever thoughts take over the foreground of your attention and the breath, count, and present moment become background.

You can return to “one” whenever any thought arises, even if it hasn’t distracted you from the counting.

A Simple Summary

Follow the breath with the mind,

counting each breath,

resting the mind between the in and out breaths,

and return to “one” if your mind wanders.