

WISDOM

- Wisdom is the product of knowledge and experience, but it is more than the accumulation of information.



- It is the coordination of this information and its deliberate use to improve well-being.
- In a social context, wisdom allows the individual to listen to others, to evaluate what they say, and then offer them good advice.



- In recent psychological history, two major research groups stand out as major contributors to the scientific study of wisdom:
 - Paul Baltes and his colleagues at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin and
 - Robert Sternberg and his colleagues at Yale University.
- There is much overlap between the way the two groups theorize wisdom and their research findings are often complementary.

- Baltes and colleagues define wisdom as ***expertise in the conduct and meaning of life.***



- According to their theory, a wise person is someone who knows what is most important in life and how to get it.
- He or she knows what constitutes the meaningful life and how to plan for and manage such a life (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000).

Balance Theory of Wisdom



-Robert J. Sternberg

- The balance theory defines wisdom as the use of one's intelligence, creativity, common sense, and knowledge and as mediated by positive ethical values toward the achievement of a common

good balance among

- (a) intrapersonal,
- (b) interpersonal, and
- (c) extra personal interests,

over the

- (a) short and
- (b) long terms

to achieve a balance among

- (a) adaptation to existing environments,
- (b) shaping of existing environments, and
- (c) selection of new environments.

- *Intrapersonal interests* affect only the individual. They have to do with one's own sense of identity and may include such things as the desire for self-actualization, popularity, prestige, power, prosperity, or pleasure.
- *Interpersonal interests* involve other people. They relate not only to one's sense of self but also to desirable relationships with others.
- *Extrapersonal interests* are those that affect a wider organization, community, country, or environment.

- First, wise decisions do not just require intelligence and explicit knowledge, they typically draw on, or implicit, knowledge gained through experience as well.

- Second, the definition draws heavily on the idea of *balance*.
- The balance among multiple interests, immediate and lasting consequences, and environmental responses.
- Balance needs to exist, not only for intrapersonal interests, but also for interpersonal and extra-personal interests, as well as among the environmental responses.

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- *Interpersonal interests* involve other people. They relate not only to one's sense of self but also to desirable relationships with others.
- *Extrapersonal interests* are those that affect a wider organization, community, country, or environment. In addition to multiple interests, the consequences of each decision are assessed in order to balance short- and long-term objectives.

- Third, the balance in the balance theory of wisdom does not mean that each interest, consequence, or response is weighted equally.
- The relative “weightings” are determined by the extent to which a particular alternative contributes to the achievement of a common good.
- A large part of wisdom is in finding a truly common good and in influencing others of its suitability.

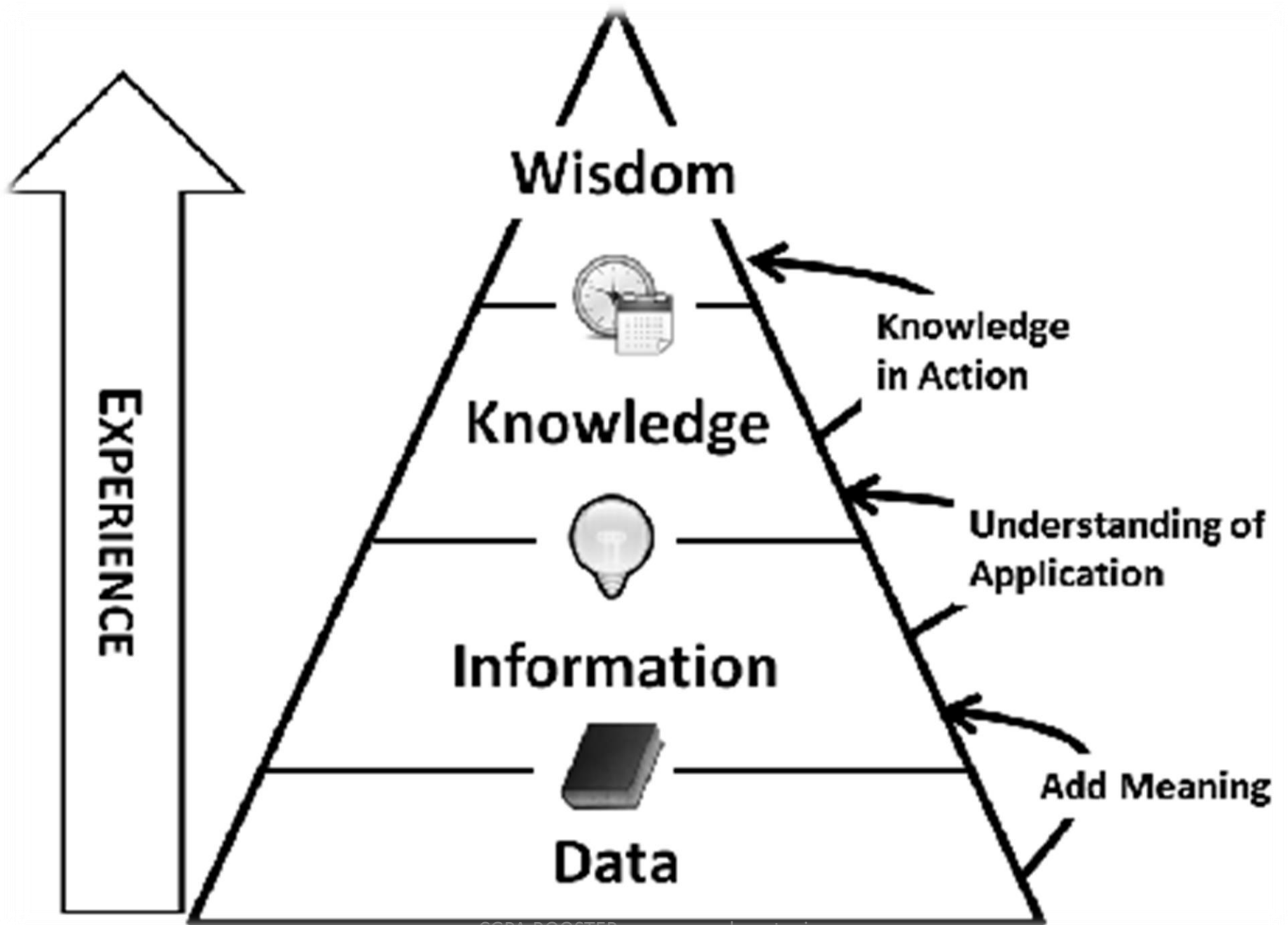
SUMMARY:

- Sternberg's most recent definition of wisdom stems from his "balance theory of wisdom."
- According to this theory, people are wise to the extent that they use their intelligence to seek a common good.
- They do so by balancing their own interests with those of other people and those of larger entities (e.g., family, community, country).
- Wise people can adapt to new environments, change their environments, or select new environments to achieve an outcome that includes but goes beyond their personal self-interest (Sternberg, 1998)

- Although currently, our societies tend to emphasize analytical intelligence in their assessments of individuals in school, college, and beyond, one could argue that assessments of wisdom would be more valuable.
- When citizens and leaders fail in the pursuit of their duties, it is more likely to be for lack of wisdom than for lack of analytical intelligence.

- Peterson and Seligman (2004) viewed this strength(wisdom) as being different from intelligence and is the higher form of knowledge.
- Wisdom provides a great advantage to human beings.
- Knowledge and wisdom, Aristotle once said that,

“Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom.”



- Wisdom is distinct from intelligence as measured by IQ tests (Sternberg, 2000).
- Sternberg goes so far as to suggest that intelligent, well-educated people are particularly vulnerable to four fallacies that inhibit wise choices and actions.

- **The Egocentrism Fallacy:** thinking that the world revolves, or at least should revolve, around you. Acting in ways that benefit yourself, regardless of how that behavior affects others.
- **The Omniscience Fallacy:** believing that you know all there is to know and therefore do not have to listen to the advice and counsel of others.

- **The Omnipotence Fallacy:** believing that your intelligence and education somehow make you all-powerful.
- **The Invulnerability Fallacy:** believing that you can do whatever you want and that others will never be able to hurt you or expose you.

- *Perspective or wisdom could be developed through life tasks, adjustment, coming to terms with life choices, life changes, and stressful life experiences.*



Knowledge
SPEAKS
Wisdom
LISTENS