

## Definition Essay Sample

### Wisdom

Wisdom is a personality possession that one gains over a lifetime of experience. It is a possession that is bestowed upon a person, rather than one that the person recognizes on his or her own. Wisdom incorporates many other traits, but the requirement that it is recognized by people other than the ones possessing it set wisdom apart from other personality traits. Wisdom is a compilation of a life's experience marked by humility, kairos, and unselfishness.

Wisdom is an idea that is often confused with or improperly attributed to old age. Not all old people are wise, though many are. Conversely, not all wise people are old. One often hears the phrase "wise beyond years" in reference to a young person who displays the traits of wisdom. However, true wisdom is a result of strong life experiences. Naturally, older folks have had more experiences from which to draw wisdom, so it is easy to limit wisdom to old people. But, the key to wisdom is the strength of the experience. A young person may have an extraordinary experience which teaches him or her a powerful lesson. Lessons of this type often transform into wisdom.

Experience is just one of the major ingredients of wisdom; humility is also a requirement. Because wisdom is bestowed upon a person by virtue of others' recognition, humility must be a possession of the wise person. To claim wisdom for oneself is foolishness. Humility is characterized by a person's unwillingness to be the centre of attention or by a person's quickness to share credit or place others in a superior position. One who is wise recognizes that the standing of others should take precedence to his or her own standing. Therefore, the wise person takes in account what is best for others when offering advice or information.

In addition to experience and humility, wisdom also incorporates the Greek term kairos. Kairos means proper timing and measure in all things. A wise person does not offer more than is required, nor does he or she omit relevant information. The mark of true wisdom is also a sense of timing that is most beneficial to the inquirer. As with humility, a wise person does not take in account what will be most timely for his or herself, but what is best for the other person. The wise person knows when to step into a situation and when to let things run their courses. The wise person has the ability to understand not only a situation, but the people within that situation. The last mark of wisdom is unselfishness. Unselfishness differs from humility in the respect that humility requires someone to be praised or recognized in order to deflect that praise or recognition

onto others. Unselfishness requires nothing more than the constant thought of others' interests and wellbeing over ones' own. This mark of wisdom sets true wisdom apart from mere intelligence or learning. Anyone can have the right answer at the right time, but only those who possess true wisdom are ready to sacrifice themselves and their own interests to provide sound advice or information to others. This is the essential part of unselfishness as it marks wisdom.

True wisdom requires all three qualities: humility, kairos, and unselfishness. The experienced person who has one or two of the three qualities, but not all three, cannot be truly wise. The experienced person who possesses all three traits must also have these qualities recognized by others, rather than recognize and claim the traits for him or herself. Only the possession of experience, humility, kairos, unselfishness, and the recognition of others makes for a truly wise person.