

## **The Wisdom Pattern**

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Francis: Used his own tradition, as opposed to mere religious repetition of old formulas. He sought direction in the mirror of creation itself, as opposed to mental and fabricated ideas or ideals. He looked to the underside of his society. The goal was to view the actual as opposed to the ideal. (5) The antidote to confusion and paralysis is always a return to simplicity. (6)

The postmodern mind forms a deconstructed worldview. It does not know what it is for, as much as it knows what it is against and what it fears. The postmodern mind assumes that nothing is truly knowable, that everything is a social or intellectual construction that will soon be discounted by new information. The irony is that the same postmodernist also believes that he or she knows more than anybody else – that there are no absolutes, no patterns that are always true. We end up with a being who is both godlike and utterly cynical. (8) Post modern thinking allows us to discredit and discount everything. Philosophically, it's called nihilism – nihil meaning “nothing.” It affects all of us in some way, but most especially those at the top and the bottom of any society. The elite have the freedom to dismiss and discount everything beneath them. The oppressed finally have an explanation for their sad state. (9)

In a market-driven culture like ours, things no longer have inherent value, but only exchange value. Once we lose a sense of inherent value, we have lost all hope of encountering true value, much less the Holy. If there is no criterion for quality, we can at least compensate with quantity. (10)

As long as we keep trying to deal with the mystery of evil in some way other than forgiveness and healing, we will continue to create negative ideologies like fundamentalism and nihilism in all their endless forms. One demands perfect order; the other denies that it is even possible. Private feelings are our form of truth today, a kind of ultimate self-absorption. (11)

Every viewpoint is a view from a point. (12)

Great religion always said that the best we could hope for would be metaphor, symbol, and image. Here, we do not know as much as we are known; we do not make the connections as much as realize that we are connected. (15)

There is little in the biblical revelation that ever promised us an ordered universe. The whole Bible is about meeting God in the actual. A journey always initiated and concluded by God. Chaos often precedes great creativity. Darkness creates the desire for light. Faith actually precedes great leaps into knowledge. Our uncertainty is the doorway into mystery. (16)

The dualistic mind seemingly has a preference for knowing things by comparison. The comparison is always idealized and the other demonized, or at least minimized. The greater the opposites we can hold together, the greater the soul we usually have. (17)

The best criticism of the bad is the practice of the better. (20)

Spirituality = what we do with our pain. (23) Most human pain has been transmitted to others. (27)

The higher the level of leader someone is, the more anxiety he or she must be capable of holding. Leaders who cannot hold anxiety will never lead us to anyplace new. Expelling what we can't embrace gives us an identity, but it's a negative identity. It's not life energy, it's death energy. Formulating what we are against gives us a very quick, clear, and clean sense of ourselves. People more easily define themselves by what they are against. Faith only builds on that totally positive place within. It needs an interior "Yes" to begin. Education is not the same as transformation. (33)

Jesus identifies forgiveness with breathing. (34)

We focus much better during a time of crisis. We like a clear enemy, and when the enemy is not clear, it is everywhere. (35)

Guilt is about things we have done or not done, but our shame is about the primal emptiness of our very being – not what we have done, but who we are and who we are not. Shame is not about what we do, but where we abide. (38)

The mind can only take pictures using the film with which it's been loaded. Our inner myths determine what we do and don't notice, what we consider significant and what we ignore. (49)

**Metanoia:** Grace from nowhere; the recipients always know for sure that it is an utterly unearned gift. (50)

Healthy religion = AND. Healthy religion – which profits both the individual and the society – will be both romance AND reason, faith AND intelligence, symbol AND science, experience AND essence. (53) In hostile situations, we find that Jesus either kept silent, reframed the question, or put a question back to the speaker. Opposition gives us a sense of standing for something, a false sense of control and power. Faith, frankly, demands faith – not proof, certitude, predictability, control, or the comforts of authority assuring us that we are always right. Our temptation is often to create a non-relational Christianity and non-relational leadership styles. (57)

**Reform:** We cannot think ourselves into a new way of living; we must live ourselves into a new way of thinking. (58)

Jesus does not directly take on social reform. He preaches a life that is simply outside the system of power, money, and control. More than directly fighting the system, he ignores it, and builds an alternative worldview where power, prestige, and possessions are not sought out or even admired. (58)

People can look conservative and merely be afraid of larger truth, imagination, intelligence, risk, and finally, faith. True traditionalists are not always conservative by temperament. True traditionalists just know that there are some old boundary markers that were put there for a reason. (63)

Most of us are not free to say "yes" before we say "no." Hope is a participation in the very life of God. (62)

Jesus was never into expelling or excluding – only transforming and integrating. Healthy religion gives us a foundational sense of awe. (65)

Normally, the way God pushes us is by disillusioning us with the present mode. If we can trust the pain, and not get ride of it until we have learned its lessons, the suffering can be seen as part of the greater pattern of how God is transforming all things. (67)

Junk religion is usually characterized by fear of the present and fear of the future (which is really fear of God). What we hear when people have really met God is that there is no fear of the present because it is always full, there is no fear of the future because God's in charge, and there is no fear of the past because it has been healed and forgiven. (74)

The recurring patterns in transformative Tradition are always patterns of growth, change, and repentance – which actually increase anxiety- and not just patterns of repetition to take away our anxiety. Transformative traditionalism leads us right into our anxieties, so we have to meet God and change – or die. All the great religions actually taught methods of under-simulation as the primary spiritual discipline. (76)

Priesthood simply means the one who names the connection between the transcendent world and this world. If you make that connection, you're a priest. This is the priesthood that all Christians are called to by virtue of being baptized as “priest, prophet, and king.” (79)

Psychologists say that planned change is even more disruptive than unplanned change. We've been experts at planning change, and it has become a mindset and way of life. (82)

The attitude that is needed for deep and panoramic seeing is not a fixing, calculating stance, but much more an attitude of listening, trusting, and waiting. (83)

Everybody has a faith in something in order to survive, even if it is faith in cynicism. (84)

The word “change” normally refers to new beginnings. But “transformation” more often happens not when something new begins, but when something old falls apart. It invites, and sometimes forces, the soul to go to a new place because the old place is falling apart. (84)

Nothing is profane once we have learned how to see. We are the sad exceptions, living in a dualistic and finally shattered universe, which is no longer a uni-verse (“that which turns around one”) at all. (85)

Either we see God in everything, or we have lost the basis for seeing God in anything. Once the dualistic mind takes over, the ego is in a “pick, choose, and decide” game, which is the beginning of exclusionary, punishing, and even violent religion. Anthropologically, religion begins with the making of a distinction between the pure and the impure. Jesus consistently ignores such a distinction. We have confused relative with relational. Relative thinking allows us to dismiss or decrease the energy in everything; relational thinking allows us to increase and kneel in awe before God-in-all-things. If God is not the center, we are burdened with being the center ourselves. (87)

Truth is never self-actualized until it becomes my truth – suffered, owned, and internalized. (94)

There is no other way that we will give up control until we are led to the limits of our own resources. (102)

If we are going to be rebuilders, we need to be rebuilt ourselves. The three domes of meaning: My Story; Our Story; The Story. (103) The stage isn't big enough for us all to be special on this little earth – except under the sacred canopy of the larger domes of meaning. (106) True reconstruction will be led by those who can see reality at all three levels simultaneously. They will appreciate the needs and context of “Our Story” and not dismiss it as mere cultural trappings or meaningless traditions. They won't say that “My Story” is not important either. They won't demean or dismiss people who are working on personal issues or addressing important identity concerns of the first half of life. Most importantly, don't think you can separate one from the other. It is no sequential, but simultaneous. (115)

Boundaries seem to be the only way that human beings can find a place to stand, a place to begin, a place from which to move out. Even those who think they don't have any boundaries usually do. We discover them when we trespass against them. (115)

The Law is given for the sake of information, education, and transformation, but it is not, itself, enlightenment. Even though allegiance to boundaries, limits, and laws is almost universally confused with religion and even salvation itself, “the law will not save anyone.” Law has to do with the pattern of how transformation happens. The struggle with boundaries and law creates the wrestling wing, but it is not itself, the encounter or the victory. Human beings seem to have a need to fight and engage with something before they can take it seriously – and before they can discover what they really need or want. People who never fight religion, guilt, parents, injustice, friends, marriage partners, and laws usually have no deep and free respect for their power and importance. (116)

Obedience to norms is not the same as “the obedience of faith.” Loyalty to norms prefers order; faith operates in chaos. We need them both because they need one another to work, but the second is more necessary for any creative or new future. (118)

Confidence is really a blend of both faith and hope together. Hope is different from optimism. (120)

Only the whole self is ever ready for the whole God. We had to reflect on how we knew, before we could clearly see what we knew. (121)

**Six Ways of Knowing:** 1. Intellect: science, reason, logic; 2. Will: making choices, commitments, and decisions; 3. Emotion: to experience a new reality afterward with a new ability to connect. Senses; 4. Images: words are simply too brittle, narrow, and culturally limited to ever be a broad or solid basis for unity; 5. Aesthetic; 6. Epiphany: parting of the veil, a life-changing manifestation of meaning. (131)

Out de facto worldview determines what catches our attention and what we don't notice at all. (135) The way we pray shapes the way we believe. (137)

Nor can “virtue” be enforced; it is enforced, it is not virtue. (139)

It will probably not be easy for you to name your operative worldview objectively. It's the grid of your deepest experience. Most of us will usually misinterpret our experience until we have been moved out of our false centers. Until then, there is too much of the self in the way. Most of us do not see things as they are; we see things as we are. (141)

The God-image, the self-image, and the world-image are deeply connected. Normally, when one of them changes, the other two have to readjust. (142) One way to tell if you've gone too far is to consider what offends you. Who-you-are-in-God, or love, takes no offense. The True Self is an indestructible image. An honest self-image needs neither to be asserted nor defended. It just is, and it is enough. Only the True Self can rest. The false self is inherently restless. The saint neither dominates nor grovels but can do either if the moment rightly calls for it. The holy person is thus the ultimately free person. If you need to dominate, you are not free to not dominate, and that is not freedom for you or anybody else. In the spiritual journey, you will naturally detach from self-images as you draw closer to God. When God always has to come in our preferred form, then we are in charge, and God is no longer God, or we will meet a very small part of God. Our self-image is not the deepest self. My deepest self is God. How you see is what you will see. (147)

**Saint Bonaventure:** God is within all things but not enclosed; outside all things, but not excluded; above all things, but not aloof; below all things, but not debased. (150)

Jesus tried desperately to keep us within and connected to the Great Chain of Being by taking away from us the power to scapegoat and project onto enemies and outsiders. He commanded us to love the enemy and gave us himself as Cosmic Victim so we would get the point – and stop creating victims – but we are transformed into Christ very slowly. (151)

Two-thirds of the teaching of Jesus is directly or indirectly about this mystery of forgiveness. When we forgive, we choose the goodness of the other over their faults, we experience God's goodness flowing through ourselves, and we also experience our own goodness in a way that surprises us. (155) In forgiveness, we live up to our truest dignity. We operate by a power not our own. All the world is a poem about God. All of reality is an analogy for God. (159) Forgiveness is the great thawing of all logic, reason, and worthiness. It is a melting into the mystery of God as unearned love, unmerited grace, the humility and powerlessness of a Divine Lover. Forgiveness is the beginning, the middle, and the end of the whole gospel. Grace is certainly the one gift that must always be free, perfectly free, in order for it to work. Without forgiveness, there will be no future. (162)

Hate unites a group quickly; it gives a person an identity. It takes away doubt and all free-floating anxiety. Hate is much more common, and more immediately effective, than love. There is no other way to save us from ourselves, to save us from one another, and therefore to "save us," unless we are saved from our need to hate. We have produced so much utopian talk about Jesus and love, but Jesus had a very hard time getting to the issue of love. First, he had to expose and destroy the phenomenon of hate. Once he exposed the lie and illusion of hate, love could show itself clearly – and it did. Hate, it seems, is the ordinary, daily agenda. Love is the totally enlightened, entirely nonsensical way out of the ordinary agenda. (163)

Fear is almost always behind hate. It is almost always fear that justifies hatred, but a fear that is hardly ever recognized as such. The best and most convincing disguise for fear is virtue itself, or godliness. Then it never looks like fear. For fear of survival, it must look like reason, prudence, commonsense, intelligence, the need for social order, morality, religion, obedience, justice, or even spirituality. It always works. What better way to vengeance than to call it justice? What better way to cover greed than to call it responsible stewardship? The process of both denying and projecting our fears and hatreds is called "scapegoating." (164)

Religion is, ironically, the safest place to hide from God! In its healthy forms, it is also the place to find God. It is a genuinely new story: redemptive suffering instead of redemptive violence. (167)

One of the bad effects of the philosophy of progress is that it allowed a group of people to grow up without a sense of appropriate and necessary limits. A sense of limits offers a much more honest attitude about what we can expect from life. We are set up for anger and judgment when we expect too much from one another, from the world, and from institutions. (173)

The True Self can never be hurt, nor has it ever been hurt. The false self is necessarily insecure and always hurts. The True Self is indestructible and cannot be offended. When we stand in the immense abundance of the True Self, there is no time or space for being hurt. We are always secure, at rest, and foundationally grateful. (176)

Virtue is not one isolated value, but a relationship between several values. When we have a new insight of experience, we tend to absolutize that experience and dismiss everything prior to it. Either/or thinking never leaves room for the wonderful third something. (179)

Darkness is always present alongside the light. Pure light blinds. Only the mixture of darkness and light allows us to see. Shadows are required for our seeing. Western civilization has failed to learn how to carry the shadow side. It is always all-good or all-bad, never both crucified and resurrected at the same time. (183) It's been a constant dilemma of the church. It wants to live in perfect light, where God alone lives. It does not like the shadowland called earth, it's only home. Patience comes from our attempts to hold together an always-mixed reality, not from expecting or demanding a perfect reality. (184)

The stupidity of blaming is that it absolves us from solving the problem within ourselves. Blaming will not do the soul work. It will not remain with the paradox. It splits instead, releasing the good stress, the creative anxiety. Staying with the paradox, refusing to compartmentalize the good and the bad, might be the most courageous thing we have ever done. Out of chaos comes the greatest creativity. The only thing that can endure deep doubt is faith. Those who can endure great doubt have been those who rise to great faith. Faith gets purified every time we go through the cycle of doubt and failure. (189)

It takes spaciousness inside to give spaciousness to others. (190)

The way through is always much more difficult than the way around. Cheap religion gives us the way around. True religion gives us the way through. Cheap religion denies the shadows. True religion steps right into them. The enemy carries our shadow side. Look carefully for those you resent, because they're normally carrying at least some of what you hate or deny or reject within yourself. (192)

If all we can do is criticize and negatively point out the shadow side, however, we have another set of problems. There's no gift of hope or positive energy here; there is only paralysis. An insecure community or group cannot tolerate criticism. We are also as healthy as the way we criticize. (194)

Any experience of grace tells us that history is not about us. How can we know the light if we've never named the shadows? (196)