

BookLife Book Review: “Common Wisdom”

<https://booklife.com/project/common-wisdom-8-scientific-elements-of-a-meaningful-life-94443>

KEY QUOTES:

“intuitive debut”

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BOOK REVIEW

Physician and researcher Gabayan shares her journey creating The Wisdom Research Project, born out of her experiences navigating her own physical health issues, **in this intuitive debut**. Hoping to “understand wisdom from a scientific perspective,” she interviews 60 adults, probing their values, advice for younger generations, coping skills for the rough patches in life, and more, teasing out eight common elements—resilience, kindness, positivity, spirituality, humility, tolerance, creativity, and curiosity—that relate to wisdom. Those elements, Gabayan asserts, will help guide readers in developing their own wisdom, “to build a stronger, more supportive society and connection with one another.”

Beyond Gabayan’s scientific-based research, this guide offers readers several opportunities for personal reflection, in the form of journaling prompts and interactive questions, that drive home the advice Gabayan gleaned from each interview. Her interviewees are an eclectic group—ranging from scientists to ministers to authors—with dynamic pointers that cover an array of topics, including the need to understand others’ perspectives when resolving conflict, how tolerance can enhance self-esteem, and why “creativity is essential to our growth as a people.” Also important, writes Gabayan, is the skill of playfulness in the face of life’s difficulties: “have a sense of humor about yourself as much as possible. Doing this will lighten any mood” she encourages.

Gabayan consistently returns to her eight wisdom elements throughout the guide, **with accessible language that makes the counsel easy to follow**. She closes by revisiting her initial quest to define wisdom, identifying her emerging elements of wisdom as universal (“incorporating them will enrich your life in ways you might not even have imagined. They will give your life more meaning and a greater purpose” she writes), while still urging individuality and balance when mastering them. **Above all, she reminds readers that the “search for wisdom is just the beginning of a journey to a better life.”**

Takeaway: Researcher defines wisdom through a scientific lens.

Comparable Titles: Paul Roden’s *5,000 Years of Wisdom*, Ervin Laszlo’s *The Wisdom Principles*.

Production grades

Cover: **B**

Design and typography: **A**

Illustrations: **N/A**

Editing: **A**

Marketing copy: **A**

