

Gaining Wisdom is a Lifetime Process

By Liz Gibbons

Our culture focuses on youth and does not place much value on its older citizens. They are often looked upon as extra mouths to feed. Many other cultures revere the elderly and look to them for guidance and wisdom. But in our society the older generations are seldom sought out and asked to share the wisdom they've gained over a lifetime.

Wisdom does not arrive one day in a neat box tied with a pretty bow. It is a constantly evolving process that grows throughout our life. Young children often blurt out a wise statement, but they usually do not have the experience or understanding to really know how to utilize that wisdom. They have not developed the context of life experiences to see the bigger picture or the lesson learned from their insight.

My mother loved the Winnie-the-Pooh books and read them over and over to my brother and me. I think she got more out of them than we did. Looking back I realized that Winnie-the-Pooh exhibited a lot of wisdom in the simple statements he made, and perhaps that is part of the reason she loved his books. I also think the enduring appeal of Dr. Seuss and the Peanuts Gang may be in the simple wisdom that their characters exhibit. While they do not have the philosophical complexity of Aristotle, Plato, or Socrates dialogues, they do instill some common sense on which to build wisdom and improve wellbeing.