

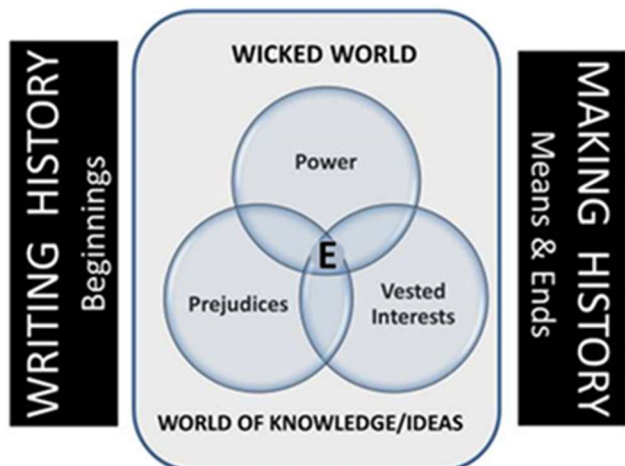
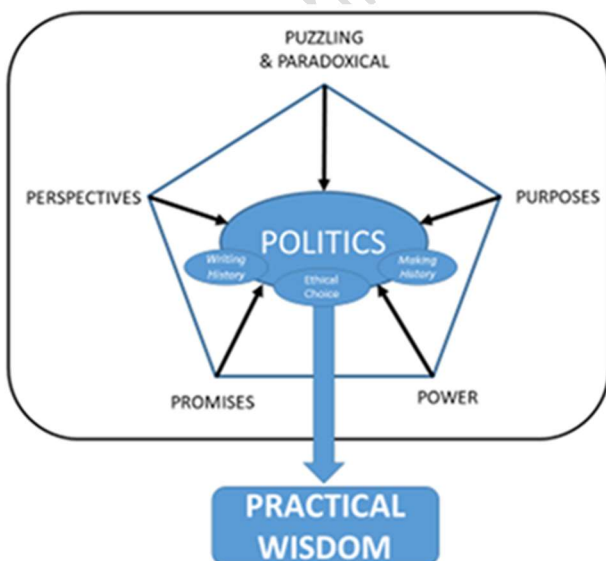
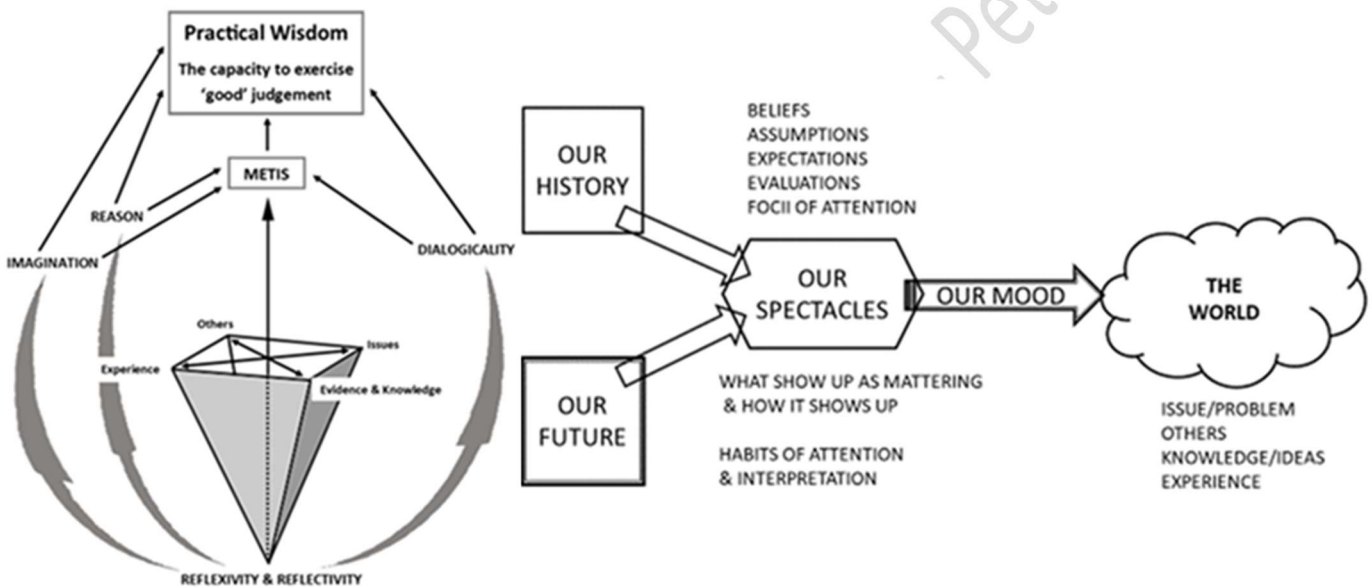
## Practising Practical Wisdom – the 9<sup>th</sup> P

*"We do not learn from experience... we learn from reflecting on experience."* [Dewey]

I have left the writing of this reading to the very end but, sadly, not because it is the last of the series. For me it is the hardest one to write, not because it targets the bringing together of many things, but because it attempts to deal with the **HOW** of Practical Wisdom. We have spent much time 'talking' about the 'what & the why' of practical wisdom, but not so much about 'the how'. We have asked 'why?' & 'what?' many times, and provided some putative answers, but we have not, as yet, asked many 'hows'.

It is possible to write about the 'how' of managing & leading, and of many other practices. It may even be possible, as I here attempt, to write about 'the how' of practical wisdom – but even if I succeed, once I have turned the work of the wise one into words, could anyone actually turn those words back into the work? As my good friend Professor Mike Zundel says – *"we must not mistake the menu for the meal; a map is not the terrain to be traversed"*.

In the words used so far, using the model developed, I have attempted to provide easily decipherable guides, maps & menus to assist you on your path to Practical Wisdom and good judgement. Four of which are shown below as a timely reminder.



Understanding the maps & menus that our words may provide us is, however, not enough. They may make clear why the journey is necessary, describe the territory that we must traverse, alert us to the potential hazards & difficulties of our travels, and provide many signposts to our destination of practical wisdom. But, problematically, the good walking of the path is in itself our actual destination.

No amount of walking, will assist the learning of HOW to walk. Practical Wisdom, like walking, is a practice and the only way to learn a practice is by practising.

*“That which we most need to learn before doing, we can only learn by doing” [Dewey]*

We have talked a lot about the walk on which the wise one must proceed, and perused a lot of maps & menus – but you must now attempt *walking the walk of the wise one and, in the process, learn how to walk the walk.*

In this short reading, and the activity that accompanies it, we re-visit elements of the maps and menus we have so-far encountered and revisit them with the practicalities of ‘walking the walk’ to the front of our minds.

### ***A Mindful Manager is a Disciplined Manager***

It is somewhat ironic that, as I have already admitted, I have been so ill-disciplined in the writing of this reading & activity, when the topic to which we now turn is the one of **self-discipline**.

It is our **cognitive discipline, collaborative discipline and emotional discipline** that enables the enactment of the dispositions that underpin practical wisdom, and the deployment of its constituent capabilities. It is having a **reflective discipline** that enables us to develop these 3 disciplines of conduct, and tread the path of practical wisdom. **We have to have reflective discipline if we are to develop & sustain the dispositions and capabilities of the wise one, and have the cognitive, collaborative and emotional discipline to enact them in our conduct.**

During the programme you have engaged in learning threads that have focussed on ReFLECTivity and ReFLEXivity. The former has focussed on the development of a reflective habit & your skills of reflection – it has had as its emphasis experiential learning. In parallel the ReFLEXivity thread has attempted to drive your understanding of your ‘somewhere’ and provoke you to reflect on the attitudes of mind/dispositions that you have and why you take them.

Years of experience with the Mindful Manager programme gives me confidence that you will have now developed the requisite skills for productive reLECTION & reFLEXion. I am also confident that in the Reflective Cycle & Personal Kaizens we have given you highly effective tools for the task. But, am I confident that we will have succeeded in imbuing you with the necessary reflective discipline? – NO - I am not. When we are pressed to reflect, as you have been on this programme, we do it and we mostly do it well. Students always develop **the skill**, but, even when their on-programme reflective practice has led to highly positive conduct enhancement, they most usually do not develop **the will** to carry it forward into their everyday life. Without **Reflective Discipline – the will** - the reflective skills you have acquired are useless.

We know we can reflect – We have learnt that we gain much by doing it – But still we do not do it – we make excuses! The two most common are – *I simply could not find the time & I had no experience worth reflecting on.*

**Everyone has to find and walk their own path to practical wisdom** but for both excuses above the smart phone provides a possible response.

- When you note/have an experience which you feel has potential for significant experiential learning immediately send yourself an email – you only have to write a few words – just enough to remind you of the experience – write only in the title line maybe – just catch the experience - you can reflect on it later.
  - Do this as many times as is necessary – it literally takes seconds – more is good

- Leave the emails in your Inbox as a persistent reminder, or file them in an email folder called 'Experiences'. I prefer the former.
- Carry an image of the Reflective Cycle on your Phone
- Make a repeat reflection appointment with yourself for 30 minutes once per week and mark it private & 'out of office'
  - In the 'appointment' look at your 'experiences' emails and carry out a 'WHAT – SO WHAT – NOW WHAT' in 'the notepad' on your phone.
  - Keep a copy of Reflexivity Activity 7 on your phone – now take a look, reflect & update

Messages to my future self about my dispositions towards Problems/Issues, Experience, Evidence & Knowledge and Others:				Messages to my future self about my collaborative, cognitive & emotional conduct:			
When engaging with [XXX] I should -	Stop	Start	Improve the way I -	In my [xxxxx] conduct I must -	Stop	Start	Improve the way I -
Issues/problems				Collaborative [Dialogue focus]			
My Experience/experiences				Cognitive [Reasoning & Imagination focus]			
Evidence & Knowledge				Emotional			
Others				I must get out of the habit of:			
				I must get into the habit of:			
				I must keep my habits of:			

Thanks to smart phones you can now do this anytime & anywhere and our forgetting of things is reduced – smart phones can help us gain smart habits!

To do it well it only takes a few minutes per day of self-emailing, and maybe at most 60 minutes per week of reflection. It is a trivial amount of time and this most powerful of learning opportunities is free! When we say we do not have the time to reflect we simply have the wrong priorities. The best classroom is life itself! **Get smart like your phone! - have the right priorities - have self-discipline – get into the reflective habit!**

### A Mindful Manager 'remembers'

Talking about memory, I think it was Nietzsche that said *"How could there be a God so cruel as to make a creature for whom remembering is so important, and to make it so very forgetful"*. As ever our German friend hits the nail on the head! Mindfulness is Right Remembering – it is about striving to have the Right Habits of mind, mouth and ears - including the reflexive-reflective habit of noticing & questioning our habits.

To be mindful is to have an ever-present understanding of the sought dispositions that influences every moment of our conduct - we must remember to xxxxxx - we must remember not to xxxxx. - we must always xxxxxxxx - we must never xxxxxxxx.

To be wise we must always remember to be reflexively hesitant and 'exhibit the right disposition towards others', 'the right disposition towards evidence & knowledge', 'the right disposition towards our experience', and 'the right disposition towards issues & problems/the wicked world'. The wise one always remembers to hesitate, not leap to assumptions or jump to interpretations, to be Ccritical, to be present & engaged, to be interested in interests & motives, and to speak softly to the world!

We often remember/know what we should do but these conduct guiding memories are not to the front of our mind and thence they do not influence our conduct. We need to get into the habit of 'being a certain way' towards the world. We can only try and try and try again to bring our understandings to the front of our mind, enable them gain traction in our conduct and to create good habits of disposition.

We have to give ourselves the best chance to succeed in this endeavour by giving ourselves easy memories. This is why throughout the course I have used metaphors - buckets, spectacles and houses, clubs, fog, triangular ladders – often embedded in cartoons! To help I have also tried to give you one-liners that are easy to bring to mind - appended is a list of many of them. If I were you I would memorise the one-liners and have the cartoons on the wall of my office.

**BUT we all need to find and walk our own path to Practical Wisdom - you must craft your own HOW – the accompanying exercise should help you get started.**

### **THE MINDFUL MANAGER 'ONE LINERS'**

*Doubt is an uncomfortable position - certainty is a ridiculous one*

*One can manage/lead without wisdom but no one manages/leads well without it*

*Practical wisdom has been shown as a fruit which can grow only in the soil of a person's experience and character*

*To judge is to choose and not to simply act in habit or by rule*

*A wise one 'chooses to choose'*

*To know thyself is the beginning of wisdom*

*To whom to listen is your choice and a choice of immense importance!*

*Mindful one must be of the clubs in the room*

*A Mindful Manager is at peace with no peace!*

*A Mindful Manager deals with 'the world as it is' not as s/he might wish it to be*

*Mindfulness is a form of ever-present understanding that influences every moment of one's conduct*

*The only thing I know is that I know nothing!*

*The only thing of which I can be certain is that I cannot ever be certain*

*That which we most need to learn before doing we can only learn by doing"*

*We must LISTEN not 'hear' and we must OBSERVE not 'see'*

*Judge a man by his questions, not by his answers*

*One can have had much experience and have gathered little experience"*

*If one is on auto-pilot one goes through an experience without experiencing it*

*It is the experiencing that counts not the experience*

*We don't learn from experience but by reflecting on experience*

*Your experience must be a resource not a trap*

*Mindful Conduct is - Right Thought, Right Talk, Right Action at Right Time*

*To be reflexive is to interpret one's own interpretations, to look at one's own perspectives from other perspectives, to be capable of turning an eye onto one's prejudices*

*One is always looking through prejudicial spectacles*

*'There are no innocent interpretations'*

*There is no tabula rasa – no blank slate*

*There are no facts, there are only interpretations*

*A Mindful Manager strives for an innocence of the eye*

*The mind is in a hurry to see what it expects to see*

*The mind searches for familiarity*

*A Mindful Manager becomes reflexive because s/he is reflective and reflective because s/he has become reflexive*

*Reflexivity is a striving not a state*

*A Mindful Manager seeks a 'learned ignorance'*

*You must learn to walk the tightrope between an empty head and an open mind*

*On your path to wisdom the mind of a child you must seek*

*What? So what? Now what?*

*'There is such a thing as a view from nowhere'*

*'Learning is limiting' - as well as illuminating*

*A mindful manager is mindful that we have 2 ears and only one mouth and that we should maybe use them in proportion*

*There is always a club in the room*

*Computers are useless they just give answers – they do not ask questions*

*Dialogue is a deliberation with a centre not sides*

*Reason persuades people – emotion moves them*

*If you are not fired with enthusiasm you will be fired with enthusiasm*

*If you cannot coach you cannot manage*

*The work is not in the hammer it is in the hammering and the imagination of what should be*

*Do you pick your tools or do you let the tools pick you?*

*Which tool you use is your choice and a choice of immense importance*

*All situations are weak, some are just weaker than others*

*The view is always from somewhere - Objectivity is a striving not a state achieved*

*The harder you stare, the more you will see what you want or feel you should see*

*The truth is that, which in the longer run and on the whole, we find expedient to believe*

*Mindful one must be of the clubs one carries*

*All problems are wicked, some problems are just more wicked than others*

*You have your way. I have my way. As for the right way, and the only way, it does not exist*

*In this wicked world there are no facts only stronger or weaker arguments*

*What everyONE knows about a business/industry/market is an opportunity for everyONE that does not"*

*Reflexivity is the first step to creativity*

*Act with Vu jade NOT Déjà vu*

*A wise one listens to the world - does not speak loudly to it - lets the world speak to her/him - lets it reveal itself in all its possibilities*

*The mind is like a parachute.....it only works when it is open!*

*You have to be mad to trust anyone BUT if you do not trust anyone you will go mad*

*In whom to trust is your choice and a choice of immense importance*

*Managerial work involves the melding of the subjective into the intersubjective and of individual interests around collective interests*

*All managerial work is political.. but some managerial work is more political than others...*

*The ENDS justify the MEANS..but only if the ENDS are the greater good - but what constitutes the 'greater good' and who decides?*

*Peter Lenney - Mindful Manger - Peter Lenney*

