

A leader is a dealer in hope. Those who do not move, do not notice their chains. Don't set sail on someone else's star. In the long history of humankind, those who learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed.



Quick Guide v1.4

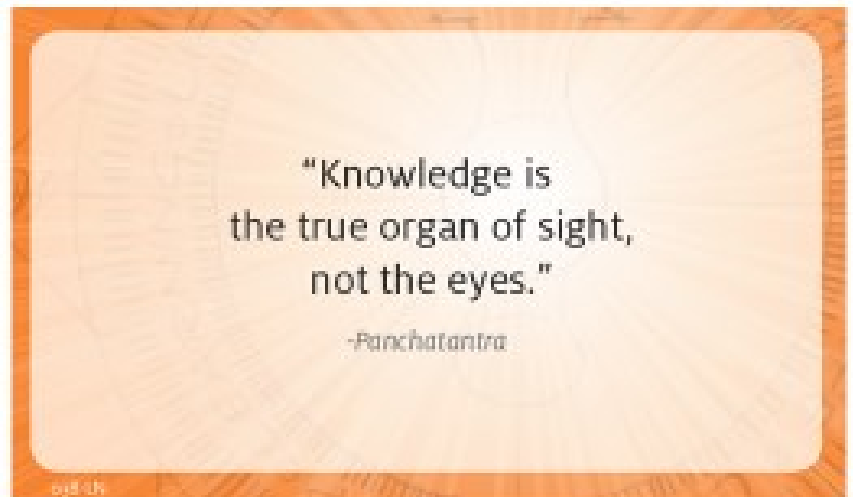
This version of **Wisdom Explorer™** is brought to you by [CCL Labs](#) at the Center for Creative Leadership, and is part of the Leadership Explorer™

series. Your feedback is welcome. Please send us your stories and photos of using WE, and your questions. contact David Magellan Horth (horthd@ccl.org) and Charles J. Palus (palusc@ccl.org).

More info at www.leadingeffectively.com/leadership-explorer/about-wisdom-explorer/

Wisdom Explorer™ is a tool for stimulating creative conversations in a wide variety of settings. WE is a portable deck of 101 wisdom quotations covering the three realms of *leadership*, *learning*, and *life*. WE is typically used in leadership development and educational settings to promote wisdom in thought and action. WE works by putting wisdom from around the globe and across the ages into the middle of a conversation, enabling reflection and dialogue.

In a typical session, each person selects one or more quotations in response to a framing question related to leadership, learning or life. For example a framing question might be "What key insights do I have from this week's program?" Participants are asked to choose one or more cards that speak to the framing question—not necessarily "answering" the question directly but representing a challenging insight or point of view. Try: "Let the card pick you." A creative conversation about the question and chosen quotation ensues. Participants may then keep their cards as a memento, paste the cards into journals, paste them into a group collage, and so on. Possibilities include:



Reflection and dialogue in a leadership program. *After receiving feedback from a variety of sources, each person browses the cards and chooses one or more in response to the question: "What am I learning? What does this feedback mean to my leadership? What wisdom do I need to lead, learn and live the way I want?"*

When the music changes, so does the dance. By seeking and blundering we learn. There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so. We do not see things as they are. We see them as we are. We meet no Stranger, but Ourselves.

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Individual reflection and journaling precedes small group dialogue about the meanings and implications of the quotes.

One-on-one or self-coaching. *The coachee chooses one or more cards that represent insights needed for the challenges he or she faces. A coaching dialogue emerges from mutual exploration and interpretation.*

Youth leader development. *In classrooms or retreats, ask students to choose a card for personal journaling and/or group discussion. "What am I learning about myself? What wisdom do I need in my life? What wisdom do I live by now? Where do I want to go in my leadership, learning, and life?"*

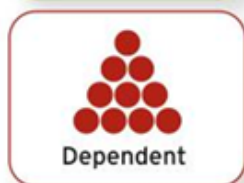
The quotations on the cards cover a range of increasingly more complex and mature leadership logics or "stages of wisdom": *Interdependent* (collaborator), *Independent* (achiever), *Dependent* (conformer). Different kinds of wisdom are appreciated at different stages of one's life. (The logic of course is also in the mind of the reader and others in the dialogue.)



Interdependent wisdom is about the relationship of all things and the mysteries of existence.



Independent wisdom is about the journey of the self and the power of reason and experience.



Dependent wisdom is about tradition, power, survival and authority.

Wisdom Explorer™ may be combined with other Leadership Explorer™ tools. For example, use Visual Explorer™ to explore complex challenges faced by the organization and Leadership Metaphor Explorer™ to explore leadership culture & Values Explorer™ to discern the values required.

Here's a story of Wisdom Explorer in combination with Visual and Metaphor Explorers, from our colleague Dave Altman. Dave is an early adopter and shaper of the Leadership Explorer™ tool series. Dave is EVP of Research, Innovation and Product Development, at the Center for Creative Leadership.

"CCL offers Leadership at the Peak, a program for C-level senior leaders from organizations around the globe. One of the challenges we have in this program, and others we run, is to build in enough time for participants to reflect on the data they receive, to analyze the experiences they have had during the

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program, and to set goals for the future. In LAP we now provide participants with a few hours of relatively unstructured reflection time preceding an intense day of both peer feedback and one-on-one executive coaching.

The following approach, in my experience, enhances the effectiveness of this period of reflection. Prior to participants' arrival, I spread throughout the room cards from Wisdom Explorer, Leadership Metaphor Explorer and Visual Explorer. When participants enter the room, they are dazzled with a potpourri of stimuli that gives them a shot of energy and piques their curiosity!

I then provide them with framing questions related to their current challenges and their goals going forward. I change the wording of the specific questions based on the climate of the classroom and the needs of the participants.

I then ask participants to select a card that represents their current challenge and a card that is emblematic of a high priority goal. In all but a handful of cases, participants flat out reject my advice that they limit their selection to two cards! Many take 4-5 cards and some take even more than that.

It's very clear that there is huge variability in Explorer card preferences. Some people will select multiple cards within a single deck (e.g., only Wisdom Explorer), while others will mix and match.

Whatever cards they select, a large majority of participants relate how important the card is to them and ask whether they can take the card home. Some weave passionate stories about the cards they select. Most want to share their cards and stories with other participants (which we encourage, but not require them to do).

There are many lessons to be learned from these experiments to promote robust reflection. An important one is to provide participants with multiple Explorer sets, as it increases the likelihood that their reflections on being a leader will be substantive, thought-provoking and lasting.

Further resources including a spreadsheet listing all the quotations is available on the Wisdom Explorer Resource Blog:

<http://www.leadingeffectively.com/leadership-explorer/about-wisdom-explorer/>

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