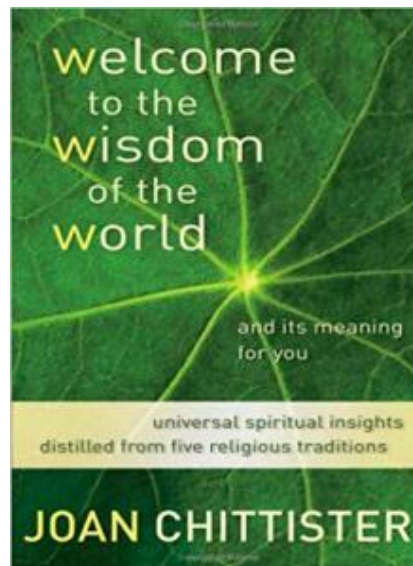


## Discussion Questions

# Welcome to the Wisdom of the World and it's Meaning for You



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## Prologue: Answers from the Ages

1. On page xiv, Sister Joan writes that, “Each great spiritual tradition, in its own way, suggests a model of what it means to be a holy person.” What does your spiritual tradition say about this?
2. “In every culture, the essence of holiness, the ground of maturity, lies not so much in avoiding sin as it does in the cultivation of spiritual consciousness” (xiv). What does this sentence mean to you?
3. What sentence in this Introduction impacted you the most? Why?

## Hindu Wisdom

### 1. WHY DOES MY LIFE FEEL SO HECTIC

1. Answer the 3 questions at the top of page 6.
2. What sentence in this chapter impacted you the most? Why?

### 2. WHY DOES THE THOUGHT OF GETTING OLDER BOTHER ME?

1. Sister Joan writes on page 16, “Worse, the messages of ageism are everywhere.” Identify 3-4 places where you see such messages.
2. What sentence in this chapter impacted you the most? Why?

### 3. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO “MAKE A DIFFERENCE”?

1. “In the end, the sight of goodness undeterred has more power than all the forces on earth arrayed against it” (25). Share what you think are two or three examples of “goodness undeterred” in the US today.
2. What sentence in this chapter impacted you the most? Why?

#### 4. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A SPIRITUAL PERSON?

1. Do you agree with the way Sister Joan has described the difference between religion and spirituality on page 26? Explain why or why not.
2. What sentence in this chapter impacted you the most? Why?

#### 5. HOW CAN I LEARN TO LET GO OF THE PAST?

1. Sister Joan asks on page 33, “What do we do when we simply cannot move on in life and, at the same time, simply cannot escape the pain that comes with not moving on?” How would you answer this question?
2. What sentence in this chapter impacted you the most? Why?

### Buddhist Enlightenment

#### 1. WOULD I DO IT ALL AGAIN?

1. Illustrate with an example from your life the truth of this quote from Sr. Joan: “Life is the process of coming to see what is not seeable, to hear what is not said, to become what we are but never knew we were” (45).
2. What sentence in this chapter impacted you the most? Why?

#### 2. HOW DO I KNOW THE RIGHT THING TO DO?

1. How would you describe your worldview? What are 5 key aspects of that world view. How did each become a part of your worldview? Is there an aspect of your worldview that needs to change? Explain.
2. What sentence in this chapter impacted you the most? Why?

#### 3. HOW DO I KNOW WHO TO FOLLOW?

1. In the middle of page 57 Sr. Joan asks several “What” questions. Answer at least two of them.

2. What sentence in this chapter impacted you the most? Why?

#### 4. WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO SUCCEED?

1. Sr. Joan writes, “There is no doubt that we will succeed. The only question is, In what?” (64) “In what” can you say you have succeeded at this point in your life?
2. What sentence in this chapter impacted you the most?

#### 5. IS IT POSSIBLE TO MAKE UP FOR PAST MISTAKES?

1. Zenkai believe it was possible to change, to repent, to undo damage we may have caused, to become the kind of person we wish to become. Do you share these beliefs? Why or why not?
2. What sentence in this chapter impacted you the most? Why?

## Jewish Community

### 1. WHERE DID I LOSE MY IDEALISM?

1. On page 78 Sr. Joan writes, “Where did we lose our idealism? In our hunger for approval. How can we revive it? By refusing to ignore the cries of the people for the sake of the system, by refusing, always, to be silent.” Do you see any evidence of this among current politicians in the US Congress? Discuss why or why not.
2. What sentence in this chapter impacted you the most? Why?

### 2. WHY DO I FEEL STUCK?

1. Have you ever felt stuck in life? How did you become “unstuck?”
2. What sentence in this chapter impacted you the most? Why?

### 3. WHAT CAN I DO WHEN ENOUGH IS ENOUGH?

1. Sr. Joan suggests that the spirituality of balance requires five attributes: equilibrium, variety, self-awareness, re-creation, and

- appreciation of the value of imperfection. (89) Which of these is a strength of yours? Which a limitation? Discuss why.
2. What sentence in this chapter impacted you the most? Why?

#### 4. DOES ANYTHING REALLY MATTER?

1. What is it that really matters to you? (see page 95).  
What sentence in this chapter impacted you the most? Why

#### 5. WHY WAS I BORN?

1. “. . . we are born to finish what God has left undone,” declares Sr. Joan. (101) Are you doing this? Please share some examples of how.
2. What sentence in this chapter impacted you the most? Why?

### Christian Love

#### 1. WHY CAN'T I JUST GET AWAY FROM IT ALL?

1. “The purpose of life is to go where we need to go. . .” (110) Share 3-4 “places” where you needed to go at different times in your life to give it purpose and meaning.
2. What sentence in this chapter impacted you the most? Why?

#### 2. WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO PUT EXCITEMENT BACK INTO LIFE?

1. “If the question is, What does it take to put excitement back into life?, the answer is a simple one”. (116). What answer(s) does Sr. Joan give to this question? Share an example from your own life or the life of someone you admire who has modeled one or more of the answers.
2. What sentence in this chapter impacted you the most? Why?

### 3. HOW WILL I KNOW THE TRUTH WHEN I SEE IT?

1. “There is no one truth that is the total truth of God,”(121) writes Sr. Joan. Do you find this comforting or disturbing? Or both? Discuss.
2. What sentence in this chapter impacted you the most? Why?

### 4. WHAT’S WRONG WITH ME: WHY CAN’T I CHANGE?

1. Re-read page 126 prayerfully. Recall/face “the thorn or thorns” in your flesh/life. Write yourself a letter to acknowledge how you are struggling with one or more particular “thorns.”
2. What sentence in this chapter impacted you the most? Why?

### 5. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF LIFE?

1. “. . . we have a responsibility to do what we can for those who can do little or nothing for themselves” (132). Do you think most citizens of the USA believe this at this point in time? Do you think most members of Congress do? Discuss why or why not?
2. What sentence in this chapter impacted you the most? Why?

## Islamic Submission

### 21. WHAT IS THERE TO GET UP FOR IN THE MORNING?

1. Share a story from your own life that illustrates this: “. . . the essentials of life, the unchanging values of life, take time to find” (140).
2. What sentence in this chapter impacted you the most? Why?

### 22. WHERE IS GOD?

1. Choose any five sentences from this chapter that say something important to you about God. Then share why for each one. What do you think your choices say to you about your relationship with God?



2. What sentence in this chapter impacted you the most? Why?

### 23. WHAT IS HAPPINESS?

1. Imagine you are having a conversation with Sr. Joan and she asks you, “What is it that we really have when all we have is money?” How would you answer her question?
2. What sentence in this chapter impacted you the most? Why?

### 24. WHAT’S IMPORTANT IN LIFE?

1. What things are really important in *your* life?
2. What sentence in this chapter impacted you the most? Why?

### 25. WHY DO I FEEL THAT SOMETHING IS MISSING IN MY LIFE?

1. If you have ever experienced “something missing in your life” how did you deal with that emptiness? Share a story, song or poem that best captures your response.
2. What sentence in this chapter impacted you the most? Why?

## Epilogue: The Roots of Tradition

### 26. HINDU WISDOM AND ETERNAL MEANING

1. View this video: A Walk Through the Upanishads; share your response.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXknmkLJ\\_oA&t=12s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXknmkLJ_oA&t=12s)
2. What sentence in this chapter impacted you the most? Why?

### 27. BUDDHIST ENLIGHTENMENT AND DESIRELESSNESS

1. View this video on Buddhism and then share your response:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IjtWtakwsjw>
2. What sentence in this chapter impacted you the most? Why?

## 28. JUDAISM: COMMUNITY OF JUSTICE AND JOY

1. View this video on Judaism and then share your response:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJbg\\_cXYFyM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJbg_cXYFyM)
2. What sentence in this chapter impacted you the most? Why?

## 29. CHRISTIANITY: THE CALL TO THE BEATITUDES

1. View this video on The Beatitudes and then share your response.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XHmTcxYHzy8>
2. What sentence in this chapter impacted you the most? Why?

## 30. ISLAM: COMMUNITY OF WITNESS AND SUBMISSION

1. View this video on Islam and then share your response.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgP\\_OSOS3IA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgP_OSOS3IA)
2. What sentence in this chapter impacted you the most? Why?

## Overview of the Book

1. What piece of wisdom did you discover from each of the major religions?
2. Has reading this book changed your view in any way about a religion other than your own?