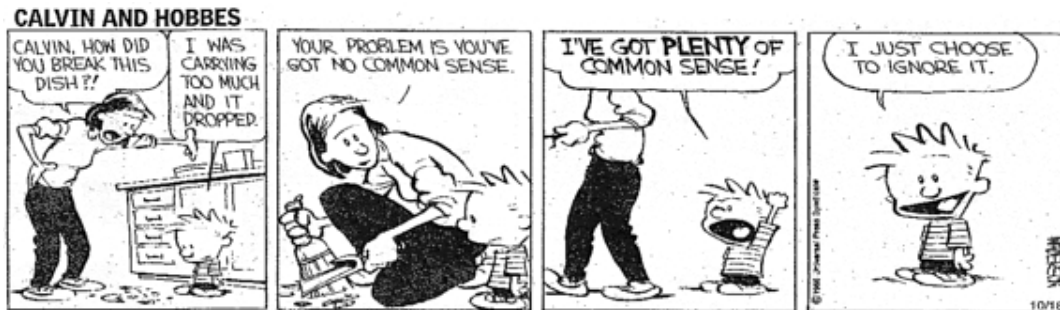


Commonsense

What is commonsense? Over the years, I've had reason to ask the individuals and groups that I work with that question. The responses I receive are diverse, though invariably each boils down to 'just knowing the rightness of a decision or a position I take at the time'. This knowing [often referred to as intuition, gut-feel or 'a feeling of rightness'] requires no justification, thought-out argument or even a sense of logic - we just know. At times like this, there is a sense of peace and contentment. We are at peace with our decision, and there are no regrets or recriminations.



The essence or origin of commonsense [or what some call inner wisdom] is often part of these discussions. Is this knowing something learnt, has it to do with personal intelligence, the accumulation of life experience - or is it a moment of fresh insightfulness? Such experiences feel fresh and bring simplicity to what sometimes feels complex. Knowing is more about freshness in the moment, freedom to see what is without any obstruction, and a capacity to have a free and uncluttered mind. From this unrestrained and unconditional mind we see what is required without fear, hesitation or indecision. Clarity and responsiveness exist in the ordinary and trivial [Calvin's carrying too many plates] and the extraordinary or important moments. I can imagine Calvin being full of opposition, his thoughts filled with "Heck! There's a TV show I want to watch and it starts in a few minutes!" He, like many of us, has fallen into the trap of haste and conflict and is ignoring his commonsense.

It's all about state of mind...

It's all about our state of mind. Whether we break the plates because our minds are cluttered, busy, in a tug-of-war with competing thoughts - or whether we are available to our commonsense. Our busy minds prevent us from seeing the obvious and our decisions are shaky. We might subsequently say 'where was my head when I made that decision?'

Calvin's claim "I've got plenty of commonsense!" has a ring of truth. We *do* have plenty of commonsense - available to us when our minds are clear, free and not obsessed with how this or that circumstance should be. Though again, as Calvin's closing comment reveals, we tend to ignore our natural commonsense. Relaxed and calm regardless of all the demands, we have a natural source of serviceable and original ways of thinking.

Relaxed and calm despite all the demands, we have a natural source of serviceable and original ways of thinking...

The connection between a cool-head, a secure mind and commonsense is self-evident. For many of us, the little voice of commonsense is drowned out by the throng of what looks more urgent: critical and important decisions to be made, actions taken etc. We feel compelled to react to the life of circumstance instead of listening to commonsense.

Pause, relax and reflect...

Self-awareness [or consciousness] allows us to recognise that our minds and feelings are not in service to a commonsense way of life. And in listening to this commonsense we deeply appreciate the power of our thinking to determine how life will unfold. Importantly, our feelings guide us toward this appreciation. They are reflective of a secure or insecure state of mind - telling us that we either have inner presence of mind, or are busy ignoring the little voice of commonsense [the intuitive knowing that this or that is right]. Next time you catch yourself speaking too quickly, or apologising for something you knew at the time was off [but ignored] - pause, take the moment offered - and allow your commonsense to find that place of calmness within. ■ ■

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