



My Wisdom Tool

We are all unique. In this *Unveiling Youth Potential* program, we want to get to know each individual youth who decides to be involved. To participate in this program, each individual youth must first share their **wisdom** by answering the following two questions: ***Who am I? And, what difference do I seek to make in my community?***

And, we ask the same of mentors and champions!

Your wisdom story is different than your life story. What makes a good wisdom story?

It helps you understand your “powers”:

- Helps you generate the “powers” you need to meet life’s challenges – not political power, not power in the way we traditionally think of power. Your wisdom story helps you generate your “power” = abilities and capabilities
- Your wisdom story is a good story if it helps you build the powers that you need to build a good life. For example, being a child soldier in Africa may give you power, but that story may not give you the power you need to build a good life.
- Helps you to evaluate powers...ask what this power allows me to do...and what this power doesn't allow me to do? (E.g. connection to a powerful gang...).

It helps you to be adaptive and resilient:

- Allows us to be adaptive to changing needs (e.g. religion is powerful but we have to use it in a way that allows us to be adaptive)
- Your wisdom story will help you in times of conflict and challenge – e.g. some people write a personal Code of Conduct to guide them, as an extension of your story, and carry it with them in their wallet; some people look to quotes or poetry to remind them of their Wisdom Story
- It is a story that supports you...even when your family and friends are reacting in ways that aren't helpful. This story has to sustain you in good times and in bad times.

It is living and sustaining:

- Your wisdom story must evolve and be alive...you must continually update and refresh your wisdom story. These wisdom stories are living and must be updated throughout your lives and throughout this program.
- A better quality wisdom story allows you to transcend self interest.

It is connecting – internally and externally:

- Connects to your inner drive (e.g. predisposition for leadership)
- It is a story that can access and put together the best from all communities (that is why this program includes your connection to a global network of youth entrepreneurs)

HOW can you capture and remember your wisdom story?

- You must find ways to capture and remember your wisdom story...what works for you (songs, poems, stories, other ideas)? Your wisdom can be shared in any medium that you choose: a YouTube video, a written story, a community experience, a poem, a picture.
- Capturing your wisdom story does require a commitment on your part...a significant commitment.
- When you write your wisdom story, think about cultural parallels (e.g. Aboriginal rites of passage); recognize cultural storytelling that happens (e.g. in Yemen – your family history is really important). Leverage these cultural assets and values by introducing cultural relevant stories and symbols into your wisdom story.
- Life stories have differing qualitative attributes; not all stories are of the same quality. The powers that you can develop by living your wisdom are directly dependent on the quality of your wisdom story and the kinds of life experience you engage with...and we can learn to develop stories with higher and higher levels of quality.
- This is not a record of your life history or genealogy...it is instead, capturing and refining the driving force of who you are to achieve your life purpose.
- You are responsible for your own learning and leadership journey. This isn't taught. No one is going to ask for this. It is something you choose to take responsibility for on your own.
- Get inspired by others! When you are writing your wisdom story, you can access the wisdom of others (inside your community and outside) for guidance.
- Communities are full of cultural assets – mentors, books, records and other successful community projects.
- Collect your wisdom: Use a shoebox to collect things that help you to remember your wisdom story: go through a magazine and cut out pictures that inspire or relate to your wisdom story and make a collage; make a collection of music or songs that inspire or related to your wisdom story
- Look at our resources: examples of good life stories that Bridges has collected (e.g. Martin Luther King, Gandhi, mentor's wisdom stories)

WHY write your Wisdom Story? What are the benefits of writing, directing and acting upon your wisdom?

- You can recognize how adversity is needed to shape your individual powers...and you can understand how you need to seek out the kinds of life challenges you require to become the person you want to be.
- You realize that the way you engage in life is more important than whether you win or lose.
- You accept responsibility for your own life journey...self-determination is the ability to choose your own path...you have the power to make your own journey happen.
- You will understand that failures and mistakes are going to happen, and that the important thing is your response. What do you learn from failure and mistakes?
- Feeds your natural human desire to sacrifice your smaller personal interests to serve the greater good.
- You will be able to identify the gaps in your own learning...and you will be able to identify ways to fill these gaps through experience.
- Makes it easier to “just do it” and step forward and make positive things happen in your community without being asked to do so or told that you should.