6 COMPASSION AND WISDOM

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SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL I

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Material 2

COMPASSION AND WISDOM

Buddha showed a path to lasting happiness. He gave teachings on the way to experience the world (view), meditation and behavior in everyday life. Perfecting compassion and wisdom is an essential part of his teaching.

Understanding that all living beings want to experience happiness and at the same time realizing that one's own happiness is not separate from that of others, one develops the desire to be able to benefit others. Beyond personal compassion and wisdom do not exclude any living being and are independent of whether one likes someone or not.

Enlightenment mind (Sanskrit: bodhicitta), the attitude of developing oneself with compassion and wisdom for the good of all and attaining enlightenment, is the foundation in the Great Way (Mahayana) and the Diamond Way (Vajrayana).

Buddhists distinguish love and compassion: love is the deep wish that all beings may be happy; compassion is wishing that no being ever suffers.

Practitioners of the Great Way and Diamond Way are called Bodhisattvas, which translates as "enlightened courageous ones." They are courageous because a Bodhisattva is fearless and always supportive, no matter whether adverse circumstances or obstacles arise. Thinking of the welfare of others is included in his every action. The active implementation of this Bodhisattva attitude is through the **"Six Liberating Actions"** (Sanskrit.: paramitas). These are generosity, meaningful behavior, patience, joyful action, meditation, and the wisdom that results from them. Buddhist meditation is a method of allowing inherent qualities such as fearlessness, joy, and love to emerge. As one develops **beyond personal compassion and wisdom**, one becomes increasingly independent of external conditions, while one's natural inclination to do something meaningful for others increases. Perfect love and perfect, energetic compassion are an expression of enlightenment.

The **"Four Immeasurable"** wishes express this Bodhisattva attitude:

May all beings have happiness and the cause of happiness (= love).

May they be free from suffering and the cause of suffering (= compassion).

May they never be separate from true happiness, which is without suffering (=sympathetic joy).

May they abide in great equanimity, free from attachment and aversion =(equanimity).

According to these wishes, one acts for the best of all in every circumstance as best one can. Compassion extends a helping hand, but does not get involved in the difficulties. From a position of strength, surplus, and insight, one can help others in a meaningful and long-term way. Compassion and wisdom work together, for those who act only compassionately and without wisdom make mistakes. Wise people act in such a way that all can develop well. One sees the potential of others and strengthens their abilities. So compassion is included in every decision.

Wisdom means seeing how things are and not how they superficially appear. One experiences continuously that the doer, the act itself and the object of the act are inseparably connected - otherwise a (compassionate) act would never reach its goal. With wisdom, one recognizes what is real and can intuitively grasp a situation correctly. Wisdom is the ability to distinguish things completely clearly from each other, i.e. to recognize and know in a beyond personal way, unhindered by limiting ideas and prejudices. Under this condition, one is able to act meaningfully for the best of all. Finally, wisdom and compassion become so natural that every act arises spontaneously and without the notion of "I am doing something with you or for you" and contributes to the welfare of other beings.

Wisdom has many faces: There is a practical wisdom, namely to recognize what leads to happiness and what brings suffering; one acts accordingly. This creates more space and the view for others becomes increasingly free. The less one's own interests interfere, the more one feels connected to others and can be there for them.

Unwaveringness arises through the understanding of the transience of all phenomena, when one understands that occurring difficulties are not permanent, ultimately not even real.

Through unfolding intuitive wisdom, coupled with active compassion, a Bodhisattva opens access to each being's inherent qualities - each thereby becoming a tangible example of meaningful existence.

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

COURSE OF LESSON – SECONDARY LEVEL I

OBJECTIVES

The students will be able to:

- reflect on whether and to what extent acting for the benefit of others can be beneficial for all.
- explain the Buddhist understanding of the terms "compassion" and "wisdom".
- explore the balance between "compassion" and "wisdom" in the Buddhist understanding of the terms using exemplary cases.

(PERSONAL VARIANT) TRANSFER	Apply the understanding of compassion and wisdom to your everyday life.	**WS 5** **Answers to WS 5** Students reflect on their own scope of action
(GENERAL VARIANT) TRANSFER	Compassion and wisdom should be balanced. Distinguish balance and imbalance.	**WS 4** for group **A, B, C** Students evaluate case examples **Answers to WS 4**
EXERCISE 2	Compassion and Wisdom in Buddhism	**WS 3** **Answers to WS 3** Students work on terminology **Material 1** Students explain how compassion and wisdom work together
EXERCISE 1	Examines motivation and effects in actions.	**WS 2** **Answers to WS 2** Students compare egoism and altruism Students formulate core statement
INTRO	Make a judgment: Am I stupid when I act for the benefit of others?	**WS 1** Students evaluate the song of Die Prinzen

BASIS

What might interest the students about the topic:

- Are egoists always at an advantage?
- What can I use to guide my actions in difficult situations?
- Are happiness and meaningful action related at all?

INROMATION FOR TEACHERS

DIDACTIC REFERENCES – SECONDARY LEVEL I

OBJECTIVES

The students will be able to . . .

1. reflect on whether and to what extent acting for the benefit of others can be beneficial.
2. explain the Buddhist understanding of the terms "compassion" and "wisdom".
3. explore the balance between "compassion" and "wisdom" in the Buddhist understanding of the terms by means of exemplary cases.

NOTES

"Honesty doesn't pay", as the saying goes. It seems as if the egoist, the assertive person, gets ahead in terms of personal gain and achieves the generally accepted external social goals: recognition, a full bank account, status and professional success. But there are people who are successful and at the same time have the well-being of others in mind.

From a Buddhist perspective, these external characteristics of success are secondary in the long term, even beyond this life. The Buddhist Bodhisattva attitude is expressed as follows: to do meaningful things for as many people as possible for as long as possible, while gathering so many good impressions in the mind that the future, even beyond this life, becomes ever more powerful and joyful. A Bodhisattva acts with compassion and wisdom for the benefit of all beings.

INTRODUCTION

With the thought-provoking song lyrics on **Worksheet 1**, the students reflect on the supposed benefits of selfish actions and assertiveness. The students deal with the question in individual work. The **Answers for WS 1** give suggestions. The class discussion begins only after the impulse from the following worksheet.

EXERCISE 1

With the parable in **Worksheet 2** it is shown that the attitude for the good of all can be the smartest solution, in which everyone is happy. With the help of the tasks in individual and group work, the students come to the conclusion that the egoist is not necessarily the smart one and the one who prudently includes others is not the stupid one. The **Answers to WS 2** offer suggestions.

Now the Buddhist view can be introduced in a next step. In Buddhism the attitude of consciously doing something for others is called enlightened mind or Bodhisattva attitude. A Bodhisattva is someone who develops compassion and wisdom for the good of all.

EXERCISE 2

After discussing the core statement of **Worksheet 2**, the step to understanding the Buddhist concepts of compassion and wisdom is done via **Worksheet 3** and **Material 1**.

In individual work, the students read the text on **Worksheet 3** and gain an understanding of the core concepts of compassion and wisdom and answer the question. Using the illustration on **Material 1**, the students then explain in plenary that one needs compassion and wisdom in order to act in the best possible way.

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

A general or personal variation is available for selection, both steps can also be performed consecutively.

General Variation

Finally, the students receive **Worksheet 4** with assignments for group work (**A, B, C**). They weigh the balance of compassion and wisdom in everyday situations. They record the lack of compassion or wisdom or their imbalance. The students are sensitized to recognize the coldness and hardness of too much wisdom or the sweetness and softness of too much compassion. The **Answers for WS 4** offer suggestions.

Personal Variation

Worksheet 5 gives the students an impulse to reflect on their own behavior in concrete life situations. In this way, the Buddhist concept of compassion and wisdom is applied as a practical recommendation for life. The teacher decides whether an exchange takes place in class; it is important to leave the students the freedom to make their own assessment. **Answers to WS 5** offer suggestions.

WORKSHEET 1

DO YOU HAVE TO BE SELFISH TO BE SUCCESSFUL?

In the german song lyrics "Schwein sein" by the group "Die Prinzen" the refrain is:

You have to be a pig in this world, (be a pig).
You have to be mean in this world (be mean)
Because if you want to go through life honestly (honestly)
You get a kick in the ass as a thank you (dangerous)

Cause I know that I can afford it,
I'll stand in line anywhere,
And is one gentle and weak,
Listen to me laugh at that.

(The teachers can find something comparable in their own language)

Question for consideration: Am I stupid if I work for the benefit of others?

EXERCISES

1. Make a drawing or cartoon of the selfish "pig" and the "honest".

2. Is the song right? Who has more success and who acts more sensibly? The "pig" or "the honest one"?

3. Answer and give reasons for who you think is stupid.

WORKSHEET 2

WHAT ATTITUDE LEADS TO SUCCESS? THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL

In hell, many people sit at a richly set table with all the delicacies you can imagine, the juiciest roast, plus the finest vegetables, sweetest desserts and choicest wines. Everyone has cutlery in hand, but their spoons are over a meter long. So everyone tries desperately to guide the good food to their own mouths, but no one succeeds. The food falls to the ground, everyone spills it, and no one can satisfy their hunger, let alone enjoy the delicacies.
What is it like in heaven? There, too, people sit at the richly set table. Everything is the same as in hell. The spoons of the diners are also over a meter long. But how do they behave? Here in heaven, people shove the delicious food into each other's mouths with their long spoons.

EXERCISES



1. Make a connection between the Princes' song lyrics and this parable about the "difference between heaven and hell". Answer the question "am I stupid when I act for the good of others?"



2. Do you know people who act with a compassionate attitude for the benefit of others?



3. Formulate a core statement about happiness and success and present it in plenary.

ANSWERS TO WS 2

WHAT ATTITUDE LEADS TO SUCCESS? THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL

In hell, many people sit at a richly set table with all the delicacies you can imagine, the juiciest roast, plus the finest vegetables, sweetest desserts and choicest wines. Everyone has cutlery in hand, but their spoons are over a meter long. So everyone tries desperately to guide the good food to their own mouths, but no one succeeds. The food falls to the ground, everyone spills it, and no one can satisfy their hunger, let alone enjoy the delicacies.
What is it like in heaven? There, too, people sit at the richly set table. Everything is the same as in hell. The spoons of the diners are also over a meter long. But how do they behave? Here in heaven, people shove the delicious food into each other's mouths with their long spoons.

EXERCISES



1. Make a connection between the Princes' song lyrics and this parable about the "difference between heaven and hell". Answer the question "am I stupid when I act for the good of others?"

   In the parable you can see that selfishness is stressful, does not lead to success, but to frustration. A benevolent attitude, thinking of others, leads to happiness and success. Contrary to what is stated in the Princes' song, altruism is wise.



2. Do you know people who act with a compassionate attitude for the benefit of others?

   - from one's own personal surroundings
   - well-known personalities, e.g. scientists, doctors, artists
   - non-profit associations and organizations



3. Formulate a core statement about happiness and success and present it in plenary.

   - Whether we experience heaven and hell depends on our actions.
   - Selfishness is limited, only a few have an advantage.
   - Including others makes one happy.

WORKSHEET 3

COMPASSION AND WISDOM IN BUDDHISM

Buddha taught a path to lasting happiness. We can consciously examine and change our attitudes and also personal habits.

COMPASSION

Buddhists have the desire to achieve enlightenment for the benefit of all beings. This attitude is based on the understanding that one's own happiness is not more significant than the happiness of other beings. On the contrary, one is only one person, while countless other beings also wish to attain happiness. Compassion in Buddhism is the wish that all sentient beings may be happy. The "Four Immeasurable" wishes express it like this:

May all beings have happiness and the cause of happiness.
May they be free from suffering and the cause of suffering.
May they always experience happiness, which is totally free from suffering.
May they remain in the great equanimity, which is without attachment and aversion.

According to these wishes, one acts for the good of all in every circumstance as best one can. Compassion is clearly distinguished from **pity** in Buddhism. Compassion extends a helping hand, but does not get involved in the trouble. Only from a position of strength, surplus and insight can one truly help others in a meaningful and long-term way.

WISDOM

Wisdom is a beyond-personal understanding of contexts. Wisdom fully recognizes how things are and not how they superficially appear. Enlightenment is compared to waking up from the dream of ignorance. One experiences lasting joy, fearlessness, and compassionate love.

Instead of putting on blinders for egoistic reasons, one can freely grasp a situation with an overview and correctly understand connections.



In meditation, many Buddhists align themselves with the Buddha of Compassion. His four arms symbolize LOVE, COMPASSION, SYMPATHETIC JOY and EQUANIMITY

Bodhisattvas act with this attitude for the benefit of all beings - called enlightened mind. They are also called "heroes of the enlightened mind", and they work for the benefit of others with strength and joy. Compassion and wisdom work together, because those who act only compassionately and without wisdom make mistakes. Wise people act in such a way that everyone can develop well.

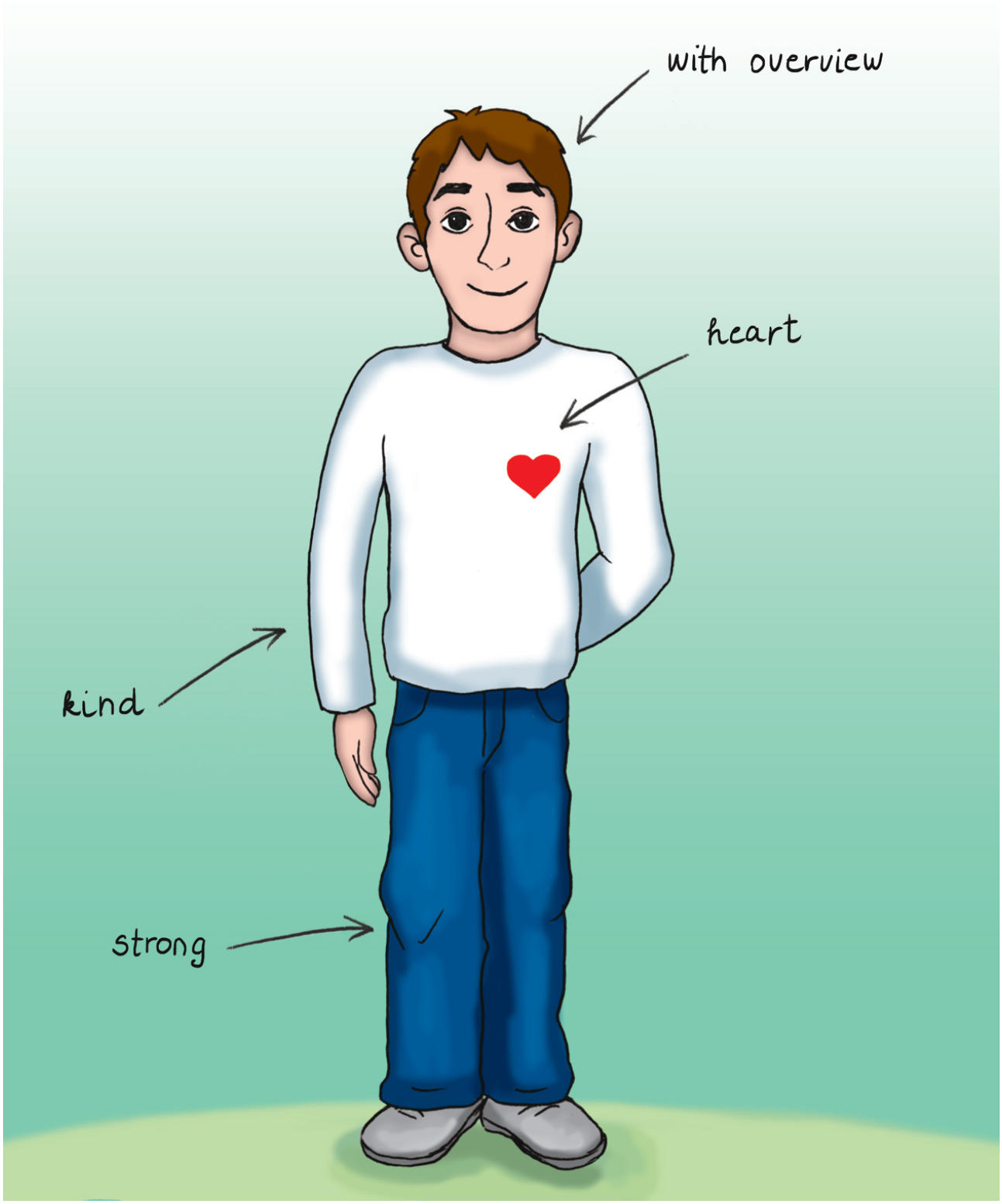
EXERCISES

1. Read the text and underline the statements that are important to you.

2. Why does a Buddhist want to be compassionate and wise?

MATERIAL 1

COMPASSION AND WISDOM WORK TOGETHER



WORKSHEET 4A

COMPASSION AND WISDOM WORK TOGETHER

EXERCISES

1. Evaluate the following situations from a Buddhist perspective: Are compassion and wisdom in balance?
2. Draw a scale for each case study with a heart for compassion and a light bulb for wisdom to represent your decision.
3. In groups, work out a tip for each case: this is how people should behave so that compassion and wisdom are in balance.
4. Present the result in the plenary.







EXAMPLES

1. A compassionate passerby gives money to a drunken homeless man, who immediately buys another bottle of liquor in return.

TIP _____

2. The parents ground the son because he has been late home several times and stress that he needs to learn punctuality.

TIP _____

3. In his disaster-stricken country, a politician is using the available aid money to build many schools to enable women in particular to receive vocational training.

TIP _____

WORKSHEET 4B

COMPASSION AND WISDOM WORK TOGETHER

EXERCISES

1. Evaluate the following situations from a Buddhist perspective: Are compassion and wisdom in balance?
2. Draw a scale for each case study with a heart for compassion and a light bulb for wisdom to represent your decision.
3. In groups, work out a tip for each case: this is how people should behave so that compassion and wisdom are in balance.
4. Present the result in the plenary.







EXAMPLES

1. A classmate who is good in a certain subject, e.g. mathematics, refuses to help the other with his homework, saying that he has no time and that the other person is to blame for his lack of knowledge.

TIP

2. A teacher pleads for the expulsion of a student who threatens all other students. He notifies a social worker who takes care of the student.

TIP

3. A friend always stays home with his girlfriend on weekends because she is shy and anxious.

TIP

WORKSHEET 4C

COMPASSION AND WISDOM WORK TOGETHER

EXERCISES



1. Evaluate the following situations from a Buddhist perspective: Are compassion and wisdom in balance?



2. Draw a scale for each case study with a heart for compassion and a light bulb for wisdom to represent your decision.



3. In groups, work out a tip for each case: this is how people should behave so that compassion and wisdom are in balance.



4. Present the result in the plenary.







EXAMPLES

1. In a flood disaster, the residents are evacuated in order to bring them to safety. They are forbidden to return to the house to get things they left there.

TIP

2. A father buys his daughter everything she wants so that she is well off.

TIP

3. A mother gives her child painkillers every time she has a headache so that she doesn't suffer.

TIP

ANSWERS TO WS 4A

COMPASSION AND WISDOM WORK TOGETHER

IN PRINCIPLE, SEVERAL (WELL-JUSTIFIED) SOLUTIONS ARE POSSIBLE. THE SOLUTIONS AND TIPS SHOWN SERVE AS ORIENTATION.

GROUP A



1. A compassionate passerby gives money to a drunken homeless man, who immediately buys another bottle of liquor in return.

TIP
Contributions in kind (food, clothing, etc.) make more sense here in the long term than monetary contributions.



2. The parents ground the son because he has been late home several times and stress that he needs to learn punctuality.

TIP
The son may become hardened by the parents' harshness. Trust and an agreement can be found in an understanding conversation.



3. A politician has many schools built in his disaster-stricken country with the aid money available to enable women in particular to receive vocational training.

TIP
This case can be judged as balanced because education offers a way out of the poverty trap.

ANSWERS TO WS 4B

COMPASSION AND WISDOM WORK TOGETHER

IN PRINCIPLE, SEVERAL (WELL-JUSTIFIED) SOLUTIONS ARE POSSIBLE. THE SOLUTIONS AND TIPS SHOWN SERVE AS ORIENTATION.

GRUPPE B



1. A classmate who is struggling in a particular subject, e.g. math, refuses to help the other with his homework, saying that he has no time and that the other person is to blame for his lack of knowledge.

TIP
The classmate is probably right, but his reaction is too cold-hearted. He could give the other person practice problems and check them with him instead of telling him the correct solution.



2. A teacher pleads for the exclusion of a student who threatens all other students. He notifies a social worker who deals with the student.

TIP
This case can be judged as balanced because it protects the class while offering help.



3. A friend always stays home with his girlfriend on weekends because she is shy and anxious.

TIP
The boyfriend should also make his needs clear to his girlfriend and help her overcome her weaknesses so that both can enjoy a long-term fulfilling relationship.

ANSWERS TO WS 4C

COMPASSION AND WISDOM WORK TOGETHER

IN PRINCIPLE, SEVERAL (WELL-JUSTIFIED) SOLUTIONS ARE POSSIBLE. THE SOLUTIONS AND TIPS SHOWN SERVE AS ORIENTATION.

GRUPPE C



1. During a flood disaster, the residents are evacuated in order to bring them to safety. They are forbidden to return to the house again to get their possessions.

TIP
This case can be judged as balanced, so as many lives as possible are saved.



2. A father buys his daughter anything she wants so that she will be well off.

TIP
This overabundance of objects is not wise and cannot replace love and attention. The father should perceive what his daughter really needs.



3. A mother gives her child painkillers every time he has a headache so that he does not suffer.

TIP
The mother should find out (e.g. with the help of a doctor) the causes of the headache and find other forms of therapy without side effects.

WORKSHEET 5

COMPASSION AND WISDOM WORK TOGETHER

Here you can find some personal questions about this topic:

Are there examples in your life where you acted too kindly (with too much compassion)?

Were there situations where you were wise, but cold-hearted (with wisdom, but with little compassion?)?

Name situations where you were happy with your action and the other person was happy too (where compassion and wisdom were balanced).

Find examples of situations where you could act differently than you have in the past by incorporating the good of others.

Draw an avatar who heroically copes with a difficult situation with compassion and wisdom.

ANSWERS TO WS 5

COMPASSION AND WISDOM WORK TOGETHER

Here you can find some personal questions about this topic:

Are there examples in your life where you have acted too kindly (with too much compassion)?

- I borrow money and notice that the other person wastes it and doesn't think to give it back. I feel sorry for her/him and don't trust her/him with the good solution.

Have there been situations where you were smart but cold-hearted (with wisdom but little heart)?

- I give a solution too quickly without encouraging her/him to find a solution herself/himself. I give wise advice without helping. Maybe she/he would have needed warmth and understanding too.

Name situations where you were pleased with your action and the other person was also pleased (where compassion and wisdom were balanced).

- I comforted a child who fell while roller skating and explained how to brake properly.
- I didn't just let them copy when they did their homework, I also explained the way to solve it.

Find examples of situations where you could act differently than you have in the past by considering the wellbeing of others.

- Instead of looking the other way when a classmate is being bullied, I address the problem openly.
- I help my parents around the house and take on regular chores.

Draw an avatar that heroically handles a difficult situation with compassion and wisdom.

- A creative, fun illustration is encouraged.