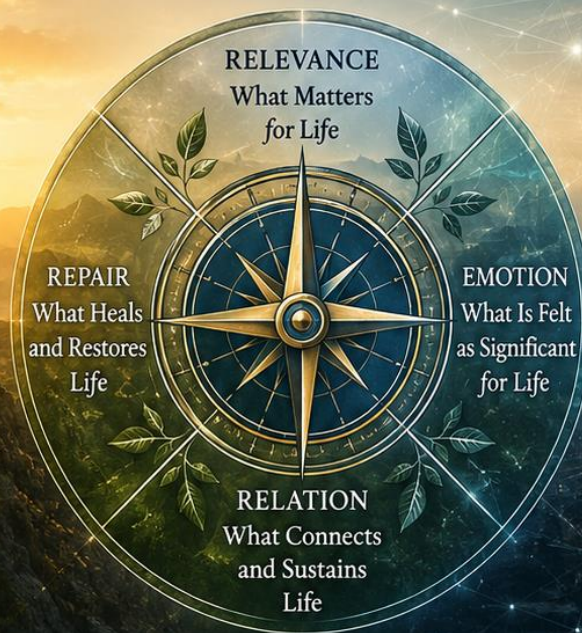


# TOWARD LIFE-COHERENCE WISDOM

Relevance, Emotion, Relation, and Repair  
*in the Service of Life*

A FRAMEWORK FOR LIFE-ANSWERABLE  
WISDOM IN A WORLD OF MISRELEVANCE



A LIFE-COHERENCE WISDOM COMPASS

SENSE VIABILITY | REALIZE RELEVANCE | REPAIR HARM | PROTECT LIFE |  
COORDINATE RELATION | LEARN THROUGH RE-ATTUNEMENT

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# Toward Life-Coherence Wisdom

Relevance, Emotion, Relation, and Repair in the Service of Life

Dr. Bichara Sahely, BSc (Biology), MBBS, DM (Internal Medicine)  
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The framework brings together multiple streams of inquiry: Katherine Peil Kauffman's understanding of emotional sentience; Humberto Maturana's biology of love, emotioning, language, and legitimate coexistence; John Vervaeke's account of relevance realization, insight, meaning, and wisdom; John McMurtry's life-value onto-axiology and critique of life-blind value systems; Johan Galtung's analysis of direct, structural, and cultural violence; and wider traditions of thought on wisdom, embodied cognition, affective neuroscience, enactive life, public reason, contemplative practice, systems learning, peacebuilding, ecological responsibility, and institutional transformation.

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The author remains fully responsible for the final conceptual framing, interpretive judgments, manuscript content, scholarly claims, and any remaining errors or omissions.

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## Abstract

The contemporary world is not suffering only from a lack of information, intelligence, innovation, morality, spirituality, policy, or governance. It is suffering from a deeper crisis of relevance. Persons, institutions, markets, technologies, religions, states, and societies increasingly organize attention, emotion, measurement, investment, identity, and action around signals that do not protect, repair, or expand life-capacity. The wrong things become urgent, visible, profitable, sacred, efficient, measurable, or unquestionable, while the conditions that allow life to live, heal, participate, repair, and flourish remain backgrounded, displaced, or sacrificed.

This white paper proposes a framework for life-coherence wisdom: the embodied, relational, self-correcting capacity to realize what matters for the protection, repair, and expansion of life-capacity. Building on prior life-coherent work in health, healing, progress, governance, spirituality, discernment, and repair, it argues that wisdom is not merely personal maturity, contemplative insight, moral virtue, cognitive intelligence, or practical judgment. Wisdom is life-answerable relevance realization. It is the capacity to sense viability, notice salience, name the frame, test life-value, reveal hidden harm, interrupt capture, reframe toward insight, act by repair, protect margins, coordinate across relations, and learn through re-attunement.

The paper develops a living triad of wisdom. Peil Kauffman shows that emotion is not irrational residue but biologically meaningful sentience through which living beings register significance. In the present framework, this is extended as viability sensing: the embodied registration of what supports, threatens, burdens, or repairs life-capacity. Maturana shows that emotion is not merely internal state but a relational domain of action through which worlds are brought forth. Vervaeke shows that cognition is not merely representation but relevance realization: the recursive, self-organizing process through which salience becomes insight, meaning, and wisdom.

The paper then adds two guardrails and one discernment test. McMurtry's life-value onto-axiology asks whether what appears relevant actually expands or reduces life-capacity. Galtung's peace and violence theory asks what direct, structural, cultural, ecological, commercial, digital, or institutional harm is hidden or normalized by a given frame. The discernment test asks what is being protected, sacrificed, or made ultimate, and whether that ultimate concern remains answerable to life.

The framework identifies failure modes of misrelevance: salience capture, affective capture, metric capture, sacred capture, algorithmic capture, and institutional capture. These occur when attention, emotion, measurement, ultimate concern, digital systems, or organizations make life-incoherent things matter. The paper culminates in the Life-Coherence Wisdom Compass and the Life-Coherence Wisdom Cycle, proposing a practical grammar for clinical care, education, public health, governance, artificial intelligence, peacebuilding, spirituality, and civilizational repair.

Its central claim is simple: wisdom is not knowing more. Wisdom is becoming less capturable by what does not serve life.

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## Keywords

Life-coherence wisdom, relevance realization, misrelevance, life-capacity, emotion, emotional sentience, emotioning, viability sensing, Peil Kauffman, Maturana, Vervaeke, McMurtry, Galtung, life-value, structural violence, cultural violence, positive peace, meaning crisis, salience capture, affective capture, metric capture, sacred capture, algorithmic capture, institutional capture, discernment, repair, margins, legitimate coexistence, embodied cognition, enactivism, wisdom science, public wisdom, AI ethics, life-answerability.

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## Executive Summary

This white paper argues that the next step in the life-coherent framework is wisdom.

Earlier life-coherent work developed a framework for health, healing, and human flourishing by defining health as life-capacity enabled, healing as life-capacity restored, and flourishing as life-capacity expressed in dignity, relation, meaning, participation, repair, and ecological belonging. That framework showed that persons are not isolated bodies placed in external environments. They are organisms-in-relation, continuously coupled with food, water, air, microbes, housing, work, care, culture, law, technology, institutions, ecosystems, and meaning. Health is sustained when harmful exposures remain within restorative capacity, when repair pathways are available, and when margins are protected. It is disabled when exposures accumulate, repair is blocked, margins collapse, and systems misrecognize or normalize preventable harm.

A second white paper extended this life-coherent logic into the Beyond GDP agenda. It argued that economic output cannot serve as the master measure of progress and that even broader dashboards remain insufficient if they measure harm without transforming the relations that produce harm. Progress was reframed as the expansion of life-capacity; wealth as life capital; peace as the reduction of avoidable life-harm; efficiency as the provision of life goods with less life-loss; and governance as the coordination of life-enabling conditions through legitimate coexistence.

A third white paper extended the framework into spirituality, religion, geopolitical conflict, discernment, and repair. It argued that the spiritual-political analogue of measurement is discernment. Measurement asks what counts as progress. Discernment asks what is worthy of ultimacy. It showed that persons, communities, religions, states, markets, and societies live by ultimate concerns: what they protect, sacrifice, defend, worship, refuse to question, and fear losing. When ultimate concern is captured by fear, trauma, revenge, certainty, purity, domination, or institutional self-preservation, living beings become disposable.

This white paper asks a deeper question beneath all three prior movements:

## **How do living beings, persons, institutions, technologies, and societies learn what truly matters?**

This question matters because the contemporary world does not suffer primarily from a shortage of information. It suffers from a failure of relevance. Scientific knowledge expands, yet ecological breakdown accelerates. Economic activity grows, yet many lives become more precarious. Digital systems connect people, yet attention, trust, and meaning fragment. Health systems generate more data, yet many persons experience care as rushed, fragmented, humiliating, or unable to address the conditions that make them ill. Religious and political traditions speak of peace, justice, freedom, and dignity, yet they can still sanctify domination, revenge, exclusion, and sacrifice. Institutions measure performance, yet often lose sight of the life they were created to serve.

The crisis, then, is not only that people do not know enough. It is that the wrong things have been made to matter.

This paper names that deeper pathology **misrelevance**.

Misrelevance is the condition in which attention, emotion, measurement, incentives, identities, technologies, institutions, or sacred narratives organize life around signals that do not protect, repair, or expand life-capacity. Misrelevance occurs when GDP becomes more relevant than ecological viability; when clinical throughput becomes more relevant than healing completion; when digital engagement becomes more relevant than attention, dignity, truth, or development; when security becomes more relevant than legitimate coexistence; when revenge becomes more relevant than children's lives; when institutional survival becomes more relevant than the persons an institution exists to serve.

Misrelevance is not simply misinformation, because a claim may be factually accurate and still be wrongly prioritized. It is not simply misframing, because it includes embodied emotion, institutional incentives, metrics, algorithms, sacred concerns, and material burdens. It is not simply Goodhart's law, because it applies beyond indicators to attention, affect, ultimacy, technology, and institutional self-preservation. It is not simply ideology, because it operates not only through belief but through salience fields, design systems, bodily states, habits, and practices.

Misrelevance names the disordered relation between what becomes actionable and what life requires.

To answer this crisis, the paper proposes **life-coherence wisdom**.

Life-coherence wisdom is the embodied, relational, self-correcting capacity to realize what matters for life, detect when relevance has been captured, and act by repair rather than domination.

This definition shifts wisdom from a private virtue into a living, relational, and institutional capacity. Wisdom is not merely intelligence. Intelligence can solve problems while optimizing

the wrong objective. Wisdom asks whether the objective itself is life-coherent. Wisdom is not merely information. Information can overload attention without guiding repair. Wisdom asks what the information is asking of us. Wisdom is not merely morality. Moral language can be captured by identity, purity, revenge, superiority, or institutional self-justification. Wisdom asks whether moral claims protect life or require disposability. Wisdom is not merely spirituality. Spirituality can awaken compassion, but it can also bypass suffering, absolutize certainty, or protect sacred abstractions. Wisdom asks whether ultimate concern remains answerable to life.

The paper develops this argument through a living triad of wisdom.

First, Peil Kauffman gives the framework a way to treat emotion not as irrational residue, but as biologically meaningful sentience through which life registers significance. In this paper, “viability sensing” is not presented as Peil Kauffman’s own technical phrase. It is a life-coherent extension of her broader argument that emotion belongs centrally to the biology of mind, value, and phenomenal experience.

Second, Maturana shows that emotion is not merely internal state. Emotion is a relational domain of action. Different emotions open different worlds. Fear opens a world of threat. Love opens a world in which the other appears as legitimate in coexistence. Shame may open a world of hiding. Anger may open a world of boundary defense or revenge. Maturana corrects any account of emotion that treats it too privately by showing that emotioning participates in world-bringing.

Third, Vervaeke shows that cognition is not merely representation. It is relevance realization: the recursive, self-organizing process through which living-cognitive systems continually determine what is salient, what counts as a problem, what information is usable, what actions are afforded, and how frames can be transformed. Wisdom involves recursive self-correction, humility, perspectival flexibility, participatory knowing, and the transformation of salience into right relation and right action.

The living triad is therefore:

**Peil Kauffman:** emotion senses viability.

**Maturana:** emotion opens relational worlds.

**Vervaeke:** relevance realization transforms salience into insight, meaning, and wisdom.

Yet the triad is not enough. Emotion can be captured. Relation can close into domination. Relevance can be hijacked by power, profit, ideology, technology, fear, sacred abstraction, or institutional self-preservation. The paper therefore adds three tests.

The first is the **life-value test**: Does this expand or reduce life-capacity?

The second is the **anti-violence test**: What harm is hidden or normalized?

The third is the **discernment test**: What is being protected, sacrificed, or made ultimate?

The paper identifies six major failure modes of misrelevance: salience capture, affective capture, metric capture, sacred capture, algorithmic capture, and institutional capture.

Against these failure modes, the paper proposes the **Life-Coherence Wisdom Compass** and the **Life-Coherence Wisdom Cycle**.

At the center of the compass is life-capacity: protection, repair, and expansion. Around it are the three living capacities of wisdom: emotion, relation, and relevance. Around these are the three evaluative tests: life-value, anti-violence, and discernment. The outer field names the failure modes of misrelevance. The bottom cycle translates the framework into practice:

**Sense viability → Notice salience → Name the frame → Test life-value → Reveal harm → Interrupt capture → Reframe → Repair → Protect margins → Coordinate → Learn and re-attune.**

The full cycle is for deep analysis. The portable core is for everyday discernment:

**What has been made to matter?**

**Does it serve life-capacity?**

**What harm is hidden?**

**What is being made ultimate?**

**What repair is required?**

The paper applies the framework to clinical care, education, public health, governance, artificial intelligence, and peacebuilding. In clinical care, wisdom means perceiving the organism–niche relation rather than only diagnosing disease. In education, wisdom means forming attention, care, judgment, inquiry, and participation rather than merely delivering information or ranking performance. In public health, wisdom means making life-conditions relevant before disease erupts. In governance, wisdom means deciding what becomes publicly visible, funded, protected, regulated, repaired, or de-implemented. In artificial intelligence, wisdom means refusing to confuse optimization with life-answerable relevance. In peacebuilding, wisdom means holding grief without hatred, security without domination, memory without revenge, and justice without dehumanization.

The central conclusion is this:

Wisdom is not escape from life, mastery over life, or abstraction about life. Wisdom is life becoming capable of recognizing, repairing, and conserving the conditions of its own flourishing.

**Life-coherence wisdom is life learning to let what truly matters matter again.**

## Table of Contents

Suggested Citation.....	2
Acknowledgements.....	2
Abstract .....	3
Keywords .....	4
<i>Executive Summary</i> .....	4
<i>Part I — The Crisis of Misrelevance</i> .....	16
<b>1. Introduction: When the Wrong Things Matter</b> .....	16
1.1 The next step in the life-coherent framework.....	16
1.2 The crisis beneath the crises.....	17
1.3 From information overload to relevance collapse.....	18
1.4 The guiding question .....	18
1.5 Key definitions.....	19
1.6 Central thesis.....	20
<b>2. From Meaning Crisis to Misrelevance Crisis</b> .....	22
2.1 The meaning crisis as a real but incomplete diagnosis.....	22
2.2 Misrelevance as the deeper pathology .....	22
2.3 Examples of misrelevance.....	23
2.4 Why intelligence is not enough.....	24
<b>3. Wisdom as Life-Answerable Relevance Realization</b> .....	26
3.1 Beyond wisdom as private virtue .....	26
3.2 Relevance realization as the bridge .....	27
3.3 Life-answerability as the missing criterion.....	28
3.4 The core formula .....	28
3.5 Transition to the living triad.....	30
<i>Part II — The Living Triad of Wisdom</i> .....	32
<b>4. Peil Kauffman: Emotion as Viability Sensing</b> .....	32
4.1 Emotion before cognition.....	32
4.2 Emotion as organismic evaluation.....	33
4.3 Emotional sentience and the life-coherent framework.....	34
4.4 Peil Kauffman’s correction of cognitive overreach.....	35
4.5 Failure mode: affective capture .....	35
<b>5. Maturana: Emotioning, Relation, and Worlds Brought Forth</b> .....	37
5.1 Emotion as domain of action.....	37
5.2 Love as the domain of legitimate coexistence.....	37
5.3 Language, emotion, and world-making.....	38
5.4 Maturana’s correction of internalism .....	39
5.5 Failure mode: relational closure .....	40

<b>6. Vervaeke: Relevance Realization, Insight, Meaning, and Wisdom .....</b>	<b>42</b>
6.1 Relevance realization as a general process .....	42
6.2 From salience to insight .....	42
6.3 From insight to meaning .....	43
6.4 From meaning to wisdom .....	44
6.5 Vervaeke’s correction of static emotioning.....	45
6.6 The living triad .....	46
<b><i>Part III — Corrections and Guardrails.....</i></b>	<b>47</b>
<b>7. Where Each Thinker Corrects the Others .....</b>	<b>47</b>
7.1 Why mutual correction is necessary.....	47
7.2 Peil Kauffman corrects Vervaeke .....	47
7.3 Maturana corrects Peil Kauffman .....	48
7.4 Vervaeke corrects both .....	49
7.5 The living triad restated.....	50
7.6 Why the triad is not enough.....	50
<b>8. McMurtry: The Life-Value Test of Relevance.....</b>	<b>52</b>
8.1 Relevant to life or relevant to system expansion? .....	52
8.2 Life-value as correction of false relevance.....	53
8.3 Life-capacity as the criterion of wisdom.....	53
8.4 Life-blind value and civilizational misrelevance.....	54
8.5 The life-value test.....	55
<b>9. Galtung: The Anti-Violence Test of Wisdom .....</b>	<b>56</b>
9.1 Wisdom must detect hidden harm .....	56
9.2 Direct, structural, and cultural misrelevance .....	56
9.3 Positive peace as relevance restoration.....	57
9.4 The anti-violence test .....	58
<b>10. The Discernment Test: What Is Being Made Ultimate?.....</b>	<b>59</b>
10.1 From measurement to discernment.....	59
10.2 Relevance and ultimacy .....	59
10.3 The danger of captured ultimacy .....	60
10.4 Discernment before de-implementation.....	61
10.5 The discernment test.....	61
<b>11. The Three Guardrails as One Discipline.....</b>	<b>63</b>
11.1 Life-value, anti-violence, and discernment together .....	63
11.2 The full diagnostic question .....	63
11.3 From guardrails to failure modes.....	64
<b><i>Part IV — Failure Modes of Misrelevance .....</i></b>	<b>65</b>
<b>12. Salience Capture .....</b>	<b>65</b>
12.1 When attention is hijacked.....	65
12.2 Salience and the nervous system .....	65
12.3 Personal salience capture .....	66

12.4 Institutional salience capture .....	67
12.5 Life-coherent correction.....	67
<b>13. Affective Capture.....</b>	<b>69</b>
13.1 When emotion becomes a closed world .....	69
13.2 Fear capture .....	69
13.3 Grief capture .....	70
13.4 Anger capture.....	70
13.5 Shame capture .....	71
13.6 Compassion capture.....	71
13.7 Life-coherent correction.....	72
<b>14. Metric Capture .....</b>	<b>73</b>
14.1 When what is measurable becomes what matters.....	73
14.2 The violence of narrowed visibility.....	73
14.3 Metric capture and burden displacement.....	74
14.4 Dashboards are necessary but insufficient.....	74
14.5 Life-coherent correction.....	75
<b>15. Sacred Capture.....</b>	<b>76</b>
15.1 When ultimate concern becomes life-incoherent .....	76
15.2 Sacred insecurity .....	76
15.3 Sacred memory and weaponized memory .....	77
15.4 Spiritual bypass and sacred abstraction .....	77
15.5 Life-coherent correction.....	78
<b>16. Algorithmic Capture .....</b>	<b>79</b>
16.1 When relevance is optimized without wisdom .....	79
16.2 Engagement is not wisdom.....	79
16.3 Algorithmic authority and hidden frames .....	80
16.4 AI and the automation of misrelevance .....	81
16.5 Life-coherent correction.....	81
<b>17. Institutional Capture.....</b>	<b>83</b>
17.1 When institutions preserve themselves before life .....	83
17.2 The emotional life of institutions .....	83
17.3 Institutional misnaming .....	84
17.4 De-implementation and institutional humility .....	84
17.5 Life-coherent correction.....	85
<b>18. The Pattern Across the Failure Modes .....</b>	<b>86</b>
18.1 One pathology, many forms .....	86
18.2 Why misrelevance is difficult to detect .....	86
18.3 The threshold question.....	87
<b><i>Part V — The Life-Coherence Wisdom Framework .....</i></b>	<b>88</b>
<b>19. The Life-Coherence Wisdom Compass.....</b>	<b>88</b>
19.1 From failure modes to framework .....	88

19.2 Life-capacity at the center.....	88
19.3 Protection, repair, and expansion.....	89
19.4 The inner triad: emotion, relation, relevance .....	90
19.5 The evaluative ring: life-value, anti-violence, discernment .....	91
19.6 The shadow ring: misrelevance.....	91
19.7 Figure 1 interpretation.....	92
19.8 Life-capacity is a criterion, not an algorithm.....	92
<b>20. The Life-Coherence Wisdom Cycle.....</b>	<b>94</b>
20.1 From compass to practice .....	94
20.2 Sense viability .....	94
20.3 Notice salience .....	95
20.4 Name the frame .....	95
20.5 Test life-value .....	95
20.6 Reveal harm .....	96
20.7 Interrupt capture.....	96
20.8 Reframe.....	97
20.9 Repair.....	97
20.10 Protect margins.....	98
20.11 Coordinate .....	99
20.12 Learn and re-attune .....	99
20.13 The cycle as recursive, not linear.....	99
<b>21. From Salience to Insight .....</b>	<b>101</b>
21.1 Salience as the beginning, not the end .....	101
21.2 Insight as reorganization of relevance .....	101
21.3 Insight and humility.....	102
21.4 Life-coherent insight .....	102
21.5 From insight to shared meaning.....	103
<b>22. From Insight to Repair .....</b>	<b>104</b>
22.1 Wisdom is completed in action .....	104
22.2 Repair as life-capacity restoration.....	104
22.3 De-implementation as repair.....	105
22.4 Non-forcing action .....	105
22.5 Repair and the protection of margins.....	106
22.6 Wisdom acts by repair, not domination.....	107
22.7 The transition to applications.....	107
<b>Part VI — Applications .....</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>23. Clinical Wisdom .....</b>	<b>109</b>
23.1 Beyond diagnosis alone .....	109
23.2 The consultation as relevance field.....	110
23.3 Medical misrelevance.....	110
23.4 The body as teacher .....	111
23.5 Clinical wisdom as repair.....	111

<b>24. Educational Wisdom .....</b>	<b>113</b>
24.1 Education as relevance formation .....	113
24.2 From information to discernment .....	113
24.3 Achievement capture .....	114
24.4 The classroom as relational world .....	114
24.5 Education for life-coherence wisdom.....	115
<b>25. Public Health Wisdom .....</b>	<b>116</b>
25.1 Making life-conditions relevant before disease erupts .....	116
25.2 Beyond risk-factor individualism .....	116
25.3 Commercial and digital misrelevance .....	117
25.4 Planetary health and the life-ground .....	117
25.5 From risk communication to relevance repair.....	118
25.6 Public health as civil commons protection.....	118
<b>26. Governance Wisdom .....</b>	<b>120</b>
26.1 Governance as collective relevance realization .....	120
26.2 From policy intelligence to policy wisdom .....	120
26.3 The public salience field.....	121
26.4 Legitimate coexistence as governance criterion .....	121
26.5 Institutions that can learn .....	122
<b>27. AI and Digital Wisdom .....</b>	<b>123</b>
27.1 Artificial intelligence and relevance without life.....	123
27.2 Synthetic misrelevance.....	123
27.3 Digital attention and developmental life .....	124
27.4 Life-coherent AI .....	124
27.5 The guiding AI question.....	125
<b>28. Peacebuilding and Spiritual-Political Wisdom.....</b>	<b>126</b>
28.1 Conflicts as relevance traps.....	126
28.2 Holding grief without hatred .....	126
28.3 Security without domination .....	126
28.4 Justice without revenge .....	127
28.5 Religion, spirituality, and the protection of life .....	127
28.6 Peace as life-conditions .....	128
<b>29. The Pattern Across Applications.....</b>	<b>129</b>
29.1 One question across many domains.....	129
29.2 Wisdom as relevance repair .....	129
29.3 Transition to practices and research .....	129
<b>Part VII — Practices, Research, and Conclusion .....</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>30. Practices for Cultivating Life-Coherence Wisdom .....</b>	<b>131</b>
30.1 Wisdom must be practiced.....	131
30.2 Personal practices .....	131
30.3 Relational practices.....	132
30.4 Institutional practices .....	133

30.5 Civilizational practices.....	134
<b>31. The Life-Coherence Wisdom Test.....</b>	<b>135</b>
31.1 Purpose of the test.....	135
31.2 The full test.....	135
31.3 The portable core.....	136
31.4 Use across domains .....	136
<b>32. Research and Measurement Agenda .....</b>	<b>138</b>
32.1 Studying wisdom without reducing it .....	138
32.2 Research domains .....	138
32.3 Indicators of life-coherence wisdom .....	139
32.4 Methodological pluralism .....	139
32.5 The danger of wisdom capture.....	140
<b>33. Discussion: Wisdom After the Meaning Crisis.....</b>	<b>141</b>
33.1 What this framework contributes .....	141
33.2 What the framework does not claim.....	141
33.3 The main risks .....	142
33.4 The creative advance .....	142
33.5 Wisdom as public capacity .....	143
33.6 Limits and scope.....	143
<b>34. Conclusion: Life Learning to Protect Life.....</b>	<b>145</b>
34.1 Return to the guiding question .....	145
34.2 The final synthesis .....	145
34.3 Wisdom after abstraction.....	146
34.4 Wisdom as repair.....	146
34.5 Final closing.....	147
<b><i>Appendix A — Glossary of Core Terms.....</i></b>	<b>149</b>
Life-coherence wisdom .....	149
Relevance .....	149
Relevance realization.....	149
Life-answerable relevance realization.....	149
Misrelevance.....	149
Life-answerability .....	149
Life-capacity.....	149
Viability sensing.....	149
Emotional sentience.....	150
Emotioning.....	150
Legitimate coexistence .....	150

Saliency capture.....	150
Affective capture.....	150
Metric capture.....	150
Sacred capture.....	150
Algorithmic capture .....	150
Institutional capture.....	150
Life-value test.....	151
Anti-violence test.....	151
Discernment test .....	151
Repair.....	151
Margins .....	151
De-implementation.....	151
Wisdom capture.....	151
<i>Appendix B — The Life-Coherence Wisdom Test.....</i>	<i>152</i>
Full form.....	152
Portable core .....	152
<i>Appendix C — Failure Modes of Misrelevance Checklist.....</i>	<i>154</i>
Saliency capture.....	154
Affective capture.....	154
Metric capture.....	154
Sacred capture.....	154
Algorithmic capture .....	154
Institutional capture.....	155
<i>Appendix D — Practice Templates .....</i>	<i>156</i>
Clinical review template.....	156
Education review template .....	156
Public health review template.....	156
Policy review template .....	156
AI/digital review template.....	157
Institutional review template.....	157

Peace/discernment review template.....	157
<i>Appendix E — Figure 1 Full Caption and Interpretation</i> .....	<b>158</b>
Figure 1. The Life-Coherence Wisdom Compass .....	158
Extended interpretation.....	158
<i>References</i> .....	<b>159</b>
<i>Author Bio</i> .....	<b>163</b>
<i>Analytical and Editorial Support</i> .....	<b>163</b>
<i>Back Cover Synopsis</i> .....	<b>163</b>

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# Part I — The Crisis of Misrelevance

## 1. Introduction: When the Wrong Things Matter

### 1.1 The next step in the life-coherent framework

Every framework eventually reaches the question of wisdom.

A framework for health can identify the conditions that enable or disable life-capacity. It can show how persons, communities, institutions, and ecosystems are injured when exposures exceed repair capacity and restorative margins collapse. It can name the blindspots and capture modes through which systems misrecognize harm. It can propose a method for recognizing, renaming, measuring, exposing, de-implementing, restoring, redesigning, protecting, coordinating, monitoring, and learning.

A framework for progress can show that gross domestic product was never designed to measure the full conditions of human and planetary flourishing. It can argue that broader dashboards are necessary but insufficient. It can reframe progress as life-capacity, wealth as life capital, peace as the reduction of avoidable life-harm, efficiency as life-good provisioning with less life-loss, and governance as the coordination of life-enabling conditions.

A framework for discernment can show that societies live by ultimate concerns. It can ask what is being protected, sacrificed, worshipped, defended, excused, and made unquestionable. It can distinguish spirituality from institutional capture, sacred memory from weaponized memory, security from domination, liberation from revenge, and peace from the silencing of violence. It can show that measurement asks what counts, while discernment asks what is worthy of ultimacy.

Yet beneath all these questions lies a deeper one.

**How do living beings, persons, institutions, technologies, and societies come to know what matters at all?**

This is the question of wisdom.

It is not enough to know that life-capacity matters if attention is captured by what does not serve life. It is not enough to measure well-being if institutions remain organized around metrics that displace burden. It is not enough to speak of peace if fear makes coexistence appear impossible. It is not enough to name ecological limits if economic systems continue to make extraction more relevant than regeneration. It is not enough to speak of compassion if digital systems train attention toward outrage, comparison, spectacle, and compulsion. It is not enough to have values if the field of salience keeps bringing forth a world in which those values are not actionable.

The next step, therefore, is to ask how relevance itself becomes life-coherent.

This paper extends three prior life-coherent movements. The first developed a framework for health, healing, and human flourishing by defining health as life-capacity enabled, healing as life-capacity restored, and flourishing as life-capacity expressed in dignity, relation, meaning, participation, repair, and ecological belonging. The second extended the framework into progress, wealth, peace, efficiency, and governance, arguing that measurement must become answerable to life-capacity rather than remain confined to GDP or dashboard description. The third extended the framework into spirituality, religion, geopolitical conflict, discernment, and repair, arguing that measurement asks what counts while discernment asks what is worthy of ultimacy. This fourth paper asks what faculty allows persons, institutions, technologies, and societies to realize what truly matters at all.

## **1.2 The crisis beneath the crises**

The contemporary world is usually described through multiple overlapping crises: climate instability, biodiversity loss, chronic disease, mental distress, loneliness, inequality, food insecurity, technological disruption, democratic erosion, geopolitical conflict, spiritual fragmentation, institutional mistrust, and meaninglessness. Each of these crises is real. Each has its own history, structure, evidence base, and field of practice. Yet they also disclose a deeper common pattern.

They show that modern societies have become increasingly skilled at generating signals, but increasingly poor at discerning which signals deserve to organize life.

The planet warms, yet short-term growth remains urgent. Children suffer, yet military victory remains urgent. Bodies burn out, yet productivity remains urgent. Communities fragment, yet engagement metrics remain urgent. Ecosystems degrade, yet extraction remains urgent. Public trust collapses, yet institutional reputation remains urgent. People feel lonely, anxious, exhausted, and disoriented, yet systems continue to treat these as private adaptation problems rather than field-level signals of life-incoherence.

The issue is not simply that important facts are unknown. Many facts are known. The issue is that knowledge does not automatically become relevance. A fact may be scientifically established and still politically irrelevant. A harm may be measured and still institutionally tolerated. A wound may be visible and still morally backgrounded. A future risk may be well described and still economically discounted. A person's suffering may be clinically documented and still relationally unheard. An ecological threshold may be crossed and still treated as external to the economy. A sacred tradition may preach love and still organize itself around fear.

The crisis beneath the crises is therefore a crisis of relevance.

Not everything that becomes salient is important. Not everything important becomes salient. Not everything measured is meaningful. Not everything meaningful is life-enabling. Not everything efficient is wise. Not everything sacred is life-protecting. Not everything urgent deserves

obedience. Not everything familiar deserves conservation. Not everything emotionally powerful tells the whole truth.

The contemporary world is not only overloaded with information. It is misorganized by relevance.

### **1.3 From information overload to relevance collapse**

Modern societies often describe themselves as living in an age of information overload. This is true, but incomplete. The deeper problem is not merely that there is too much information. It is that the relations among information, attention, emotion, value, judgment, action, and repair have become disordered.

Information overload becomes dangerous when the capacity to realize life-answerable relevance collapses.

A person may have access to more information than any previous generation and still not know what matters. A clinician may have more laboratory data, imaging, algorithms, protocols, and risk calculators while having less time to understand the patient's lived world. A policymaker may have dashboards, indicators, consultations, reports, and forecasts while remaining trapped in short electoral cycles or fiscal frames. A teacher may have learning analytics while losing sight of curiosity, belonging, and formation. A digital platform may know what captures attention while knowing little about what deserves attention. A society may count many things and still fail to care for what counts.

Information becomes wise only when it is organized by life-answerable relevance.

Without this organization, knowledge fragments. Expertise becomes siloed. Measurement becomes performative. Technology becomes self-accelerating. Markets optimize what can be monetized. Institutions protect what sustains them. Media amplify what provokes. Politics rewards what mobilizes identity. Religion defends what confirms belonging. Persons become overwhelmed by signals and undernourished in meaning.

The result is not ignorance in the ordinary sense. It is relevance collapse.

Relevance collapse occurs when living systems can no longer reliably distinguish what is urgent from what is important, what is meaningful from what is manipulative, what is adaptive from what is degrading, what is protective from what is defensive, what is healing from what is merely suppressive, what is sacred from what has become idolatrous, and what is intelligent from what is wise.

The life-coherent task is to restore this distinction.

### **1.4 The guiding question**

This white paper is organized around one guiding question:

## **How do living beings, persons, institutions, technologies, and societies learn what truly matters for the protection, repair, and expansion of life-capacity?**

This question is intentionally broad because relevance is not confined to individual cognition. What matters is realized biologically, emotionally, relationally, culturally, institutionally, technologically, ecologically, and spiritually.

The body realizes relevance through hunger, pain, fatigue, pleasure, inflammation, immune response, autonomic activation, sleep pressure, hormonal rhythms, energy metabolism, and felt sense. The person realizes relevance through attention, emotion, memory, imagination, meaning, judgment, and identity. Relationships realize relevance through trust, conflict, care, recognition, shame, belonging, betrayal, and repair. Institutions realize relevance through rules, incentives, categories, metrics, budgets, deadlines, procedures, and accountability systems. Technologies realize relevance through design choices, interfaces, rankings, recommendations, defaults, filters, and feedback loops. Cultures realize relevance through stories, rituals, taboos, metaphors, heroes, enemies, and sacred concerns. Societies realize relevance through what they protect, fund, extract, measure, sacrifice, celebrate, mourn, and pass on.

Wisdom cannot be understood if any one of these levels is isolated from the others.

A person may cultivate private insight while living inside institutions that punish repair. A society may celebrate innovation while degrading attention. A religion may teach compassion while conserving fear. A government may invoke well-being while funding conditions that produce distress. A health system may treat symptoms while ignoring the niche that keeps generating illness. An algorithm may optimize relevance in the technical sense while amplifying life-incoherent salience.

The question is therefore not simply how individuals become wise. It is how relevance itself becomes answerable to life across levels.

### **1.5 Key definitions**

**Relevance** refers to what becomes salient, meaningful, actionable, prioritized, or consequential within a field of perception, relation, measurement, institution, technology, culture, or governance.

**Misrelevance** is the organization of attention, emotion, measurement, incentive, identity, technology, institution, or action around signals that do not protect, repair, or expand life-capacity.

Misrelevance is not simply misinformation, because a claim may be factually accurate and still be wrongly prioritized. It is not simply misframing, because it includes embodied emotion, institutional incentives, metrics, algorithms, sacred concerns, and material burdens. It is not simply Goodhart's law, because it applies beyond indicators to attention, affect, ultimacy, technology, and institutional self-preservation. It is not simply ideology, because it operates not

only through belief but through salience fields, design systems, bodily states, habits, and practices.

Misrelevance names the disordered relation between what becomes actionable and what life requires.

**Life-answerability** means that a frame, claim, metric, practice, institution, technology, or policy remains open to correction by the life-capacities it affects.

**Life-coherence wisdom** is the embodied, relational, self-correcting capacity to realize what matters for life, detect when relevance has been captured, and act by repair rather than domination.

These definitions are not meant to close inquiry. They are meant to discipline it. Their purpose is to help persons and institutions ask better questions before action is captured by false urgency, false certainty, false measurement, false sacredness, false efficiency, or false intelligence.

## 1.6 Central thesis

This white paper proposes life-coherence wisdom as the embodied, relational, and self-correcting capacity to realize what matters for life.

Its central claim is that the contemporary crisis is not only a crisis of information, intelligence, morality, spirituality, policy, or governance, but a crisis of misrelevance: the organization of attention, emotion, measurement, technology, institutions, and ultimate concern around signals that do not protect, repair, or expand life-capacity.

Wisdom, in this framework, is life-answerable relevance realization. It senses viability through emotion, opens worlds through relation, transforms salience through insight, tests relevance by life-value, reveals hidden harm through anti-violence, discerns what has been made ultimate, and acts by repair rather than domination.

Each word matters.

It is **embodied** because relevance is not first an abstraction. Living beings sense viability through bodies: through affect, energy, pain, pleasure, fear, fatigue, immunity, metabolism, gesture, breath, and felt relation. Before life thinks value, life is already affected by value.

It is **relational** because what matters is never realized by an isolated mind alone. Relevance arises within organism–niche relations, histories of language, emotioning, culture, power, technology, ecology, and coexistence. What appears relevant depends on the world being brought forth.

It is **self-correcting** because salience can mislead. Emotion can be captured. Metrics can distort. Institutions can preserve themselves. Sacred concerns can become idolatrous. Algorithms can

optimize compulsion. Wisdom must therefore include the capacity to revise frames, learn from harm, receive correction, and re-attune to life.

It is the capacity to **realize what matters for life** because wisdom must be oriented by life-capacity: the real capacities of persons, communities, ecosystems, and future generations to live, develop, repair, participate, belong, and flourish.

It must **detect when relevance has been captured** because many failures are not caused by the absence of values, but by the capture of attention, emotion, meaning, measurement, and action by life-incoherent systems.

It must **act by repair rather than domination** because wisdom is completed not in possession of knowledge, but in the restoration of life-enabling relations. To dominate is to impose order by reducing the other's agency, dignity, or viability. To repair is to restore the conditions through which life can participate in its own flourishing.

Wisdom, in this framework, is not knowing more.

Wisdom is becoming less capturable by what does not serve life.

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## 2. From Meaning Crisis to Misrelevance Crisis

### 2.1 The meaning crisis as a real but incomplete diagnosis

The contemporary sense of disorientation is often described as a crisis of meaning. This diagnosis is important. Many people experience life as fragmented, accelerated, lonely, anxious, performative, and unmoored. Shared narratives lose credibility. Institutions no longer reliably confer trust. Religious traditions may no longer organize common life in the ways they once did. Work may no longer provide dignity. Politics may no longer sustain public truth. Digital environments may multiply connection while weakening presence, attention, and belonging.

A meaning crisis is not merely a private psychological event. It is a breakdown in the relations through which persons experience intelligibility, belonging, orientation, purpose, and participation. It is a failure of world-making. It is what happens when the surrounding field no longer helps persons discern where they are, what matters, whom they belong to, what is worth serving, what can be trusted, and how suffering can be integrated without becoming despair, resentment, numbness, or escape.

Yet the language of meaning crisis can remain incomplete if it stays too focused on subjective purpose, worldview loss, or existential dissatisfaction. The deeper question is not only whether people have meaning. It is whether the meanings being offered are life-coherent.

A person can have meaning in domination. A group can find meaning in revenge. A market can generate meaning through consumption. A nation can generate meaning through enemy formation. A religion can generate meaning through purity and exclusion. A digital platform can generate meaning through identity performance. An institution can generate meaning through prestige, ranking, growth, or procedural compliance. A society can generate meaning through mastery over nature.

Meaning is therefore not enough.

Meaning must be tested.

The question is not only whether a life, community, or society has meaning. The question is whether its meanings protect, repair, and expand life-capacity.

### 2.2 Misrelevance as the deeper pathology

This paper names the deeper pathology **misrelevance**.

Misrelevance is the condition in which persons, institutions, markets, technologies, religions, or states make the wrong things matter.

More formally, misrelevance occurs when systems of attention, emotion, measurement, interpretation, incentive, identity, or action become organized around signals that do not protect, repair, or expand life-capacity.

Misrelevance does not mean that nothing matters. On the contrary, misrelevance often produces intense mattering. It can make things feel urgent, sacred, necessary, obvious, efficient, inevitable, profitable, patriotic, righteous, or non-negotiable. Its danger lies precisely in the fact that it gives life-incoherent concerns the felt force of relevance.

Misrelevance is why societies can mobilize instantly for war but slowly for child poverty. It is why markets can respond rapidly to price signals but sluggishly to ecological breakdown. It is why institutions can protect reputation faster than they protect victims. It is why health systems can prioritize documentation over listening, throughput over continuity, and biomarkers over lived repair. It is why digital platforms can make outrage more visible than wisdom, and compulsion more profitable than attention. It is why sacred narratives can make sacrifice appear righteous when living beings have become background.

Misrelevance is not simply false belief. A belief may be factually correct and still misrelevant if it is placed in the wrong frame, given the wrong priority, used to conceal greater harm, or mobilized against repair. Misrelevance is not simply ignorance. It may be highly informed. Misrelevance is not simply immorality. It may speak in moral language. Misrelevance is not simply irrationality. It may be technically rational within a narrow system. Misrelevance is not simply emotionality. It may arise from real emotion that has been captured into a closed world.

Misrelevance names the disordered relation between salience and life.

## **2.3 Examples of misrelevance**

Misrelevance appears wherever a system makes something matter in a way that disables the life it claims to serve.

In economics, GDP becomes misrelevant when monetized activity becomes a proxy for progress even if that activity coexists with inequality, exhaustion, ecological degradation, loss of trust, poor health, and future insecurity. Economic output matters, but it does not matter as the master measure of life. When it is made ultimate, repair becomes secondary to growth.

This critique is consistent with the wider Beyond GDP tradition. The Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission was established to identify the limits of GDP as an indicator of economic performance and social progress and to consider what additional information would be needed for more relevant indicators. The life-coherent contribution is to add that better indicators must not only represent broader realities; they must help transform the relations that reduce life-capacity.

In health care, diagnosis becomes misrelevant when it names disease while obscuring the organism–niche relation that sustains illness. A test result may be accurate and still not reveal the

patient's exhaustion, grief, isolation, toxic exposure, financial insecurity, food environment, sleep collapse, humiliation, or loss of agency. The data matter, but they do not matter alone.

In education, performance becomes misrelevant when grades, rankings, standardized tests, credentials, and institutional prestige become more important than curiosity, discernment, belonging, critical thought, care, creativity, and the capacity to participate in repairing the world. Achievement matters, but not when it produces anxious success without life-capacity.

In governance, security becomes misrelevant when it is separated from justice, dignity, reciprocity, ecological stability, and legitimate coexistence. Security matters, but when one people's security requires another people's permanent insecurity, it becomes domination under another name.

In religion, certainty becomes misrelevant when it is protected more fiercely than compassion, humility, truth, and the living dignity of those outside the boundary of belonging. Faith matters, but when faith becomes closure against life, it becomes idolatry.

In digital systems, engagement becomes misrelevant when what captures attention is treated as what deserves attention. Engagement matters for platform performance, but it may degrade the attention, agency, truthfulness, and relational coherence required for human flourishing.

In institutions, procedure becomes misrelevant when compliance with process replaces responsibility to persons. Procedure matters, but it becomes life-incoherent when it protects the institution from being transformed by the suffering it administers.

In personal life, urgency becomes misrelevant when the nervous system treats every demand as immediate while the deeper needs for rest, relation, meaning, grief, repair, and reorientation remain unattended. Urgency matters, but when everything is urgent, the truly important becomes invisible.

Each example reveals the same pattern: something real is made too central, too isolated, too unquestioned, or too disconnected from life-capacity.

## **2.4 Why intelligence is not enough**

The crisis of misrelevance also explains why intelligence is not enough.

Intelligence is the capacity to solve problems, detect patterns, manipulate symbols, model consequences, adapt strategies, and optimize outcomes. These capacities are indispensable. But intelligence does not guarantee wisdom because intelligence can optimize within a frame without questioning whether the frame is life-coherent.

A corporation may intelligently maximize profit while degrading ecosystems, exploiting labor, manipulating desire, and externalizing harm. A military system may intelligently increase lethality while deepening insecurity. A digital platform may intelligently personalize content while fragmenting attention and amplifying outrage. A health system may intelligently reduce

costs while shifting burden onto families, caregivers, and patients. A bureaucracy may intelligently improve compliance while disabling care. An individual may intelligently succeed within a system that is making them sick.

The problem is not stupidity. The problem is frame capture.

Wisdom begins when intelligence becomes capable of questioning the relevance structure within which it operates.

Relevant to what?

For whom?

At what cost?

Across what time horizon?

With what hidden burdens?

Under what emotional field?

Serving what ultimate concern?

Protecting what institution?

Displacing what harm?

Enabling or disabling what life-capacity?

Without these questions, intelligence can become life-incoherent competence.

Wisdom is intelligence made answerable to life.

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## 3. Wisdom as Life-Answerable Relevance Realization

### 3.1 Beyond wisdom as private virtue

Wisdom has often been treated as a personal quality: the mature judgment of an elder, the contemplative insight of a sage, the prudence of a statesperson, the moral depth of a teacher, the discernment of a spiritual guide, or the practical intelligence of someone seasoned by experience. These images remain valuable. Wisdom does involve humility, judgment, patience, insight, moral orientation, and the capacity to act well under uncertainty.

But the contemporary situation requires a wider account.

Wisdom cannot remain only a private virtue when the most consequential relevance fields are organized by institutions, markets, algorithms, media systems, bureaucracies, militaries, education systems, health systems, religious bodies, and global infrastructures. A wise person living inside unwise systems may suffer, resist, adapt, or become exhausted. A wise clinician may be constrained by throughput metrics. A wise teacher may be constrained by testing regimes. A wise policymaker may be constrained by electoral incentives. A wise citizen may be surrounded by digital architectures that reward misrelevance.

Wisdom must therefore be understood not only as a property of individuals, but as a capacity of relations, practices, institutions, technologies, cultures, and societies.

A wise institution is one that can learn from harm, correct its frames, protect the vulnerable, de-implement damaging practices, restore trust, and align its procedures with the life it exists to serve.

A wise technology is one that supports attention, agency, truthfulness, care, learning, dignity, ecological responsibility, and repair rather than compulsion, manipulation, surveillance, or fragmentation.

A wise society is one that makes life-conditions publicly relevant before breakdown forces recognition.

A wise civilization is one that can distinguish development from life-ground destruction, security from domination, innovation from acceleration, freedom from abandonment, and prosperity from organized extraction.

Wisdom, then, is not merely the possession of insight. It is the organization of life around repair.

This formulation is continuous with contemporary wisdom science but also extends it. Baltes and Staudinger describe wisdom as a metaheuristic for orchestrating mind and virtue toward excellence; Sternberg's balance theory emphasizes tacit knowledge, values, the common good, and the balancing of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and extrapersonal interests; and Grossmann and

colleagues emphasize wise reasoning, perspectival humility, social-ecological context, and the challenges of wisdom in polarized worlds (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000; Grossmann et al., 2020; Sternberg, 1998). The present framework adds a life-coherent criterion: wisdom must be tested by whether relevance becomes answerable to the protection, repair, and expansion of life-capacity.

### **3.2 Relevance realization as the bridge**

The concept of relevance realization provides a crucial bridge.

Human beings do not encounter the world as a neutral inventory of facts. At every moment, perception, attention, memory, emotion, imagination, movement, and action must select what matters from an overwhelming field of possibilities. We notice some things and not others. We foreground some risks and background others. We interpret some signals as urgent, others as trivial, still others as invisible. We act from frames that determine what counts as a problem, what counts as evidence, what counts as success, and what counts as possible.

Relevance realization names this dynamic process. It is not merely cognitive calculation. It is the ongoing enactment of what matters.

Relevance realization is not merely attention selection. It is the recursive, self-organizing process through which cognition continually determines what is salient, what counts as a problem, what information is usable, what actions are afforded, and how frames can be transformed. Life-coherence wisdom extends this process by asking whether such relevance realization remains answerable to life-capacity, hidden harm, and repair.

This is why relevance is prior to problem-solving. Before a problem can be solved, it must be framed as a problem. Before evidence can be used, it must be recognized as evidence. Before action can be coordinated, a situation must be brought forth as requiring action. Before repair can begin, harm must be allowed to matter.

Insight occurs when relevance reorganizes. Something previously backgrounded becomes visible. A pattern becomes intelligible. A false frame loosens. A hidden relation appears. A person suddenly sees that the symptom is not merely biochemical but relational; that the conflict is not merely ideological but wounded; that the policy is not merely inefficient but burden-shifting; that the metric is not merely incomplete but distorting; that the sacred concern is not protecting life but protecting fear.

In this sense, wisdom depends on the transformation of salience.

It is not enough to add more facts to an unchanged frame. A life-incoherent frame can metabolize new facts without changing direction. Wisdom requires the capacity to see differently.

Vervaeke and Ferraro's formulation of relevance, meaning, and wisdom provides the cognitive-scientific bridge for this paper: wisdom depends not simply on accumulating representations, but

on transforming how relevance is realized, corrected, and integrated into a meaningful life (Vervaeke & Ferraro, 2013).

### **3.3 Life-answerability as the missing criterion**

Yet relevance realization requires a criterion.

What matters? For whom? In relation to what? Across which scales? With what hidden costs? Under which emotional field? Serving which ultimate concern? Answerable to which life?

Without a life-answerable criterion, relevance can be captured by anything powerful enough to organize salience: fear, pleasure, profit, identity, status, novelty, outrage, ideology, trauma, institutional survival, sacred certainty, or technological acceleration.

This is where the life-coherent framework contributes its central correction. Relevance must be tested by life-capacity.

The question is not merely, “What is salient?”

The question is, “What deserves salience because life depends on it?”

The question is not merely, “What is meaningful?”

The question is, “Does this meaning protect, repair, and expand life-capacity?”

The question is not merely, “What is efficient?”

The question is, “Efficient at securing life goods with less life-loss, or efficient at displacing burden?”

The question is not merely, “What is sacred?”

The question is, “Does this sacred concern protect life, or does it require sacrifice of the living?”

The question is not merely, “What is intelligent?”

The question is, “Does this intelligence help life learn, repair, and flourish?”

Life-answerability means that every relevance claim must remain open to correction by the conditions of life.

A frame is not life-answerable if it cannot see those it harms. A metric is not life-answerable if it improves while life-capacity declines. A policy is not life-answerable if it shifts burden onto the vulnerable. A technology is not life-answerable if it captures attention while degrading agency. A religious or political cause is not life-answerable if it requires the disposability of children, civilians, ecosystems, truth, or future generations. A personal practice is not life-answerable if it produces self-optimization while severing relation, humility, or responsibility.

Life-coherence wisdom begins where relevance becomes accountable to life.

### **3.4 The core formula**

The core formula of this white paper is:

**Wisdom = life-answerable relevance realization.**

This formula does not reduce wisdom to cognition. It expands relevance realization into a living, relational, ethical, and practical process.

Wisdom begins in sensing. Life is affected before it explains. The body registers danger, overload, safety, grief, desire, belonging, fatigue, pain, vitality, and possibility.

Wisdom deepens through relation. What matters emerges in worlds brought forth through emotioning, language, culture, memory, power, and coexistence.

Wisdom clarifies through relevance realization. Salience becomes insight when a frame reorganizes and hidden relations become visible.

Wisdom is tested by life-value. What appears relevant must be judged by whether it expands or reduces life-capacity.

Wisdom is tested by anti-violence. What appears normal must be examined for hidden, displaced, structural, cultural, ecological, commercial, digital, or institutional harm.

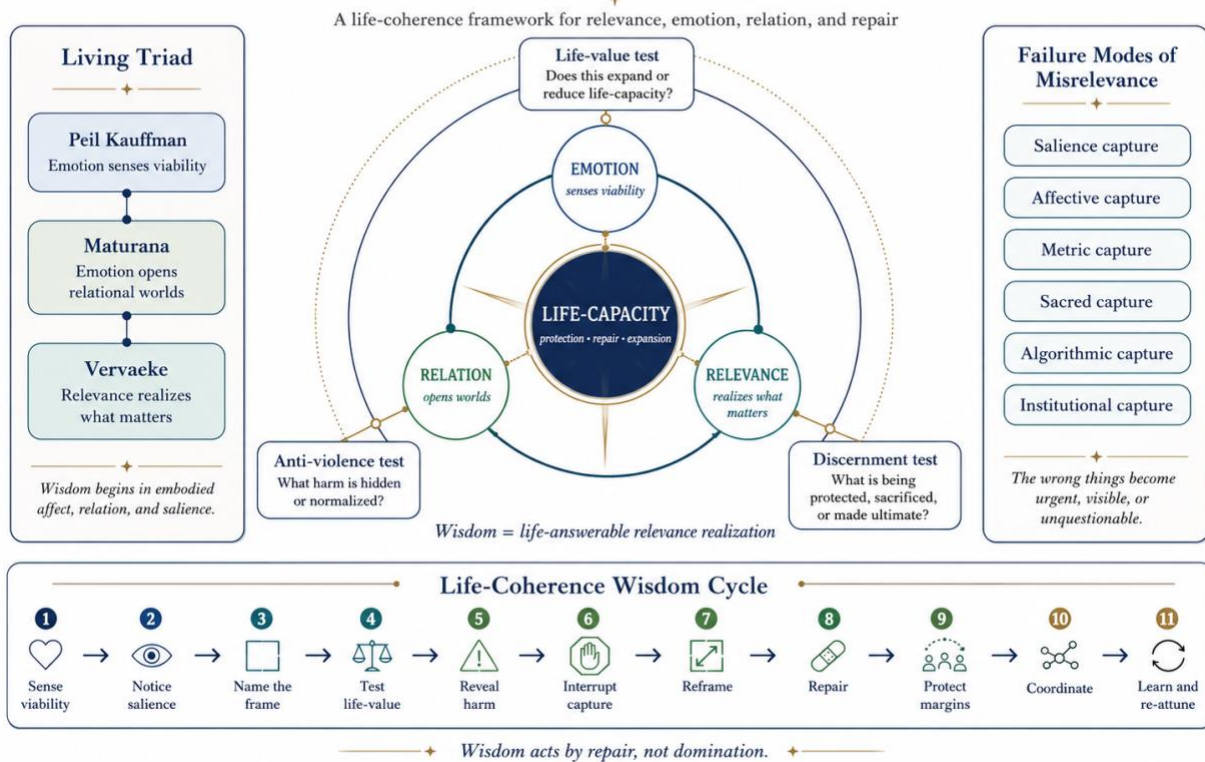
Wisdom is tested by discernment. What appears ultimate must be asked whether it protects life or demands sacrifice.

Wisdom is completed in repair. Insight that does not reduce burden, restore relation, protect margins, or transform conditions remains incomplete.

Wisdom remains alive through learning. No model, tradition, institution, science, technology, or spiritual practice exhausts life. Life must continually correct our abstractions.

# Toward Life-Coherence Wisdom

## *The Life-Coherence Wisdom Compass*



**Figure 1. The Life-Coherence Wisdom Compass.**

The diagram presents life-coherence wisdom as the embodied, relational, and self-correcting realization of what matters for the protection, repair, and expansion of life-capacity. The living triad integrates Peil Kauffman’s account of emotion as biologically meaningful sentience, extended here as viability sensing; Maturana’s understanding of emotioning as the opening of relational worlds; and Vervaeke’s account of relevance realization as the transformation of salience into insight, meaning, and wisdom. The evaluative ring introduces three guardrails: the life-value test, the anti-violence test, and the discernment test. The right panel identifies failure modes of misrelevance, while the bottom cycle translates the framework into practical movement from sensing viability to learning and re-attunement. Wisdom acts by repair, not domination.

### 3.5 Transition to the living triad

The argument now turns to the three thinkers who help bring the framework into focus.

Peil Kauffman brings wisdom back into the body by allowing emotion to be interpreted as biologically meaningful sentience, extended here as viability sensing.

Maturana brings wisdom into relation by showing that emotioning opens and closes worlds of action.

Vervaeke brings wisdom into self-correcting transformation by showing how relevance realization can move from salience to insight, meaning, and wisdom.

Together, they allow us to say:

Emotion senses viability.

Relation opens worlds.

Relevance realizes what matters.

But this triad must remain answerable to life-value, anti-violence, and discernment. Otherwise emotion can become capture, relation can become closure, and relevance can be hijacked by the very systems wisdom must learn to correct.

This is where life-coherence wisdom begins.

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## Part II — The Living Triad of Wisdom

### 4. Peil Kauffman: Emotion as Viability Sensing

#### 4.1 Emotion before cognition

If wisdom begins in realizing what matters, then it cannot begin only in abstract cognition. Long before the human being explains, measures, reasons, argues, calculates, or names, the living body is already affected. It hungers, startles, withdraws, reaches, warms, freezes, aches, relaxes, grieves, recoils, trusts, longs, and orients. The organism does not first encounter the world as neutral information. It encounters the world as relevant to viability.

This is where Katherine Peil Kauffman becomes essential.

Her contribution allows the life-coherent framework to recover emotion from its long exile as irrational residue, private feeling, subjective noise, or interference with reason. Emotion is not merely what must be controlled so cognition can think clearly. Emotion is one of life's oldest forms of evaluation. It is a way the organism registers whether its relation with the world is safe or dangerous, nourishing or depleting, coherent or incoherent, inviting or threatening, reparative or harmful.

Emotion is not opposed to intelligence. It is a primordial mode of living intelligence.

The fear response is not a philosophical error. It is the organism's way of registering threat. Grief is not dysfunction. It is the organism's way of registering loss of what mattered. Anger is not merely aggression. It is often the felt registration of boundary violation, injustice, obstruction, or violated care. Shame is not simply weakness. It is a powerful signal of exposure, exclusion, failed belonging, or relational danger. Disgust protects boundaries. Compassion registers another's suffering as relevant to one's own field of concern. Joy discloses coherence, vitality, play, and expanded participation. Awe opens the organism into a relation with vastness, humility, and wonder. Love discloses the other as not merely useful or threatening, but as intrinsically relevant.

In this sense, emotion is not an ornament added to cognition. It is a biological way of saying: this matters.

The life-coherent framework has already argued that health, healing, and flourishing depend on organism–niche relations: the recurrent coupling between living beings and the conditions that sustain, burden, repair, or degrade them. Health is not located only inside the body, nor only outside in the environment; it arises through the relation. Peil Kauffman's teaching deepens this by allowing emotion to be understood as one of the ways the organism registers significance from within.

Emotion is therefore not secondary to viability. Emotion is viability becoming felt.

## **4.2 Emotion as organismic evaluation**

Every living system must distinguish what supports life from what threatens it. It must approach some conditions, avoid others, conserve energy, mobilize energy, repair damage, coordinate with others, and learn from recurring patterns. Even before reflective consciousness, life is evaluative. It cannot be otherwise. To live is to be concerned with the conditions of continued living.

Emotion belongs to this evaluative architecture.

This does not mean that every emotion is accurate in a simple way. Emotions can be distorted by trauma, conditioning, ideology, fatigue, inflammatory states, developmental history, social context, and institutional design. Fear can overgeneralize. Anger can misidentify its target. Shame can attach to innocent needs. Compassion can be selectively distributed. Love can be confused with attachment, possession, rescue, or fear of abandonment. Yet the possibility of distortion does not make emotion irrelevant. It makes emotional discernment necessary.

The crucial point is that emotion is not meaningless simply because it is not infallible.

A thermometer can malfunction, but temperature still matters. A compass can be magnetically distorted, but orientation still matters. Pain can be neuropathic, disproportionate, or misleading, but pain remains one of the body's major warning systems. In the same way, emotion can be captured, exaggerated, suppressed, or misdirected, but it still discloses the organism's evaluative relation to the world.

Life-coherence wisdom therefore begins by neither obeying nor dismissing emotion. It listens.

It asks:

- What is this emotion registering?
- What viability concern is present?
- What burden is being carried?
- What boundary has been crossed?
- What loss has not been grieved?
- What danger is being anticipated?
- What relation is being sought?
- What repair is being requested?
- What world is this emotion trying to protect?
- What world might it be closing down?

This is a very different posture from both emotional suppression and emotional absolutism. Suppression treats emotion as an obstacle to reason. Absolutism treats emotion as unquestionable truth. Life-coherence wisdom treats emotion as a living signal that requires interpretation, relation, and correction.

Emotion is the beginning of wisdom, not its completion.

### **4.3 Emotional sentience and the life-coherent framework**

The concept of emotional sentience gives the life-coherent framework a necessary biological depth. It allows us to say that value is not first invented by abstract minds. Value is encountered by living bodies because living bodies must continually distinguish conditions that enable life from those that disable it.

Peil Kauffman's account of emotional sentience provides one important basis for this move, but the present framework uses it in a specific way. "Viability sensing" is not presented here as Peil Kauffman's own technical phrase. It is a life-coherent extension of her broader argument that emotion belongs centrally to the biology of mind, value, and phenomenal experience (Kauffman, 2015). Peil Kauffman gives the framework a way to treat emotion not as irrational residue, but as biologically meaningful sentience through which life registers significance.

This matters because many modern systems have become skilled at abstracting away from felt life.

Economies convert forests, caregiving, exhaustion, pollution, illness, extraction, and repair into prices, costs, externalities, productivity measures, and growth rates. Health systems convert suffering into diagnoses, codes, lab values, clinical pathways, and service outputs. Schools convert learning into grades, rankings, attendance, and performance indicators. Digital systems convert attention, curiosity, loneliness, desire, outrage, and belonging into engagement data. States convert insecurity, fear, memory, identity, and territory into strategic interests. Institutions convert moral injury into complaint procedures.

These abstractions are not useless. They may be necessary for coordination. But when abstraction loses contact with emotional sentience, systems can become life-blind. They can measure outputs while failing to feel the suffering their outputs produce. They can optimize performance while degrading dignity. They can protect procedure while ignoring humiliation. They can count trauma while failing to repair the wound. They can speak of human capital while exhausting human beings.

Emotional sentience interrupts this drift.

It insists that life is not only described from outside. Life is suffered, loved, feared, hoped, grieved, nourished, and repaired from within. A life-coherent framework must therefore remain answerable to what living beings feel when their capacities are enabled or disabled.

This does not romanticize feeling. It does not claim that all feelings are morally pure, politically sufficient, or epistemically complete. Rather, it restores affect to its proper place: the primary field through which life registers significance.

A society that cannot feel what it is doing cannot become wise.

#### **4.4 Peil Kauffman's correction of cognitive overreach**

Peil Kauffman corrects Vervaeke wherever relevance realization is heard too cognitively.

Relevance realization can easily be heard as a theory of attention, perception, inference, problem-solving, salience, insight, and meaning. These are indispensable. But if relevance is framed too cognitively, the living body becomes secondary. Emotion becomes a later overlay. The organism becomes a thinker rather than a living being whose thinking is rooted in affective, metabolic, neuroendocrine, immune, developmental, and relational processes.

Peil Kauffman reminds the framework that relevance is older than reflective cognition.

Life did not wait for language before it began distinguishing danger from nourishment, injury from repair, isolation from belonging, depletion from vitality, and loss from continuity. The cell, the immune system, the nervous system, the gut, the endocrine system, the microbiome, and the organism as a whole are already involved in evaluating the niche. Before explicit thought says "this matters," the body is already reorganizing around what matters.

This correction is crucial for life-coherence wisdom.

A cognitive account of wisdom might emphasize insight, perspective-taking, rational reflection, self-transcendence, humility, and problem-solving. All of these matter. But wisdom that is not embodied can become dissociated. It can speak beautifully while ignoring fatigue, trauma, pain, hunger, hormonal disruption, immune activation, sleep deprivation, loneliness, poverty, or fear. It can ask people to become wise while leaving them physiologically trapped in survival.

Life-coherence wisdom must therefore begin by asking whether the body has enough safety, nourishment, rest, time, trust, relational holding, and margin to perceive wisely.

A chronically threatened organism will realize relevance differently from a supported one. A sleep-deprived clinician, a hungry child, a humiliated worker, a grieving parent, a displaced family, a traumatized community, or an institution under constant threat will not inhabit the same relevance field as one held in safety and repair. Fear narrows salience. Exhaustion reduces flexibility. Shame collapses possibility. Chronic inflammation alters mood and perception. Isolation distorts meaning. Threat makes domination appear protective.

Thus, wisdom is not merely a higher cognitive achievement. It is dependent on conditions.

If relevance is embodied, then wisdom requires the protection of bodies.

#### **4.5 Failure mode: affective capture**

Emotion senses viability, but it can also be captured.

Affective capture occurs when an emotion that initially discloses a real concern becomes organized into a closed world. The emotion is no longer a signal within a wider field of discernment. It becomes the field itself.

Fear is perhaps the most obvious example. Fear may truthfully register danger. It protects life by mobilizing attention, energy, and boundary defense. But when fear becomes captured, it can reorganize the whole world into threat. Ambiguity becomes danger. Difference becomes enemy. Uncertainty becomes intolerable. Security becomes domination. Prevention becomes pre-emption. The other's life-protection becomes experienced as one's own vulnerability.

Grief can also be captured. Grief rightly registers loss. It honors what mattered. It refuses the cheapness of what has been taken. But when grief becomes captured, it can harden into revenge. The wound becomes identity. Memory becomes weapon. The suffering of one's own people becomes the justification for the suffering of others.

Anger can be captured. Anger may truthfully register violation and injustice. It can mobilize courage, boundary-setting, and resistance. But captured anger can become hatred, humiliation, cruelty, or permanent antagonism. It may begin as defense of life and end as destruction of life.

Shame can be captured. Shame may register relational rupture, exposure, or failed belonging. But captured shame can collapse agency or convert itself into domination. The humiliated person, group, institution, or nation may seek restoration not through repair, but through superiority.

Compassion can be captured. Compassion registers another's suffering as relevant. But without discernment, compassion can become selective, sentimental, performative, or exhausted. It may respond to visible suffering while ignoring structural causes. It may soothe the helper's identity without repairing the conditions that generate harm.

Even love can be captured. Love may open the field of legitimate coexistence, but when confused with possession, fusion, rescue, loyalty, or fear of loss, it can become coercive.

Affective capture is therefore not solved by becoming less emotional. It is solved by becoming more emotionally wise.

Life-coherence wisdom asks of every emotion:

What truth does this emotion carry?  
What partiality does it risk?  
What world does it bring forth?  
What action does it invite?  
What relation does it open or close?  
What harm might it justify?  
What repair does it make possible?

Emotion becomes wise when it remains open to life.

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## **5. Maturana: Emotioning, Relation, and Worlds Brought Forth**

### **5.1 Emotion as domain of action**

Maturana deepens and corrects the account of emotion by shifting it from inner state to relational domain.

In ordinary speech, emotions are often treated as feelings located inside individuals. A person has anger, has fear, has sadness, has love, has shame. These descriptions are not wrong, but they are incomplete. For Maturana, emotions are not merely internal experiences. They are domains of action. They specify what kinds of actions are possible, sensible, invited, inhibited, or excluded in a given relational field.

This is a decisive shift.

Fear is not only a feeling inside the body. It is a domain of action in which withdrawal, vigilance, defense, pre-emption, suspicion, and control become more available. Love is not only warmth or affection. It is a domain of action in which the other can appear as legitimate in coexistence. Anger is not only arousal. It is a domain of action in which obstruction, violation, or boundary defense becomes foregrounded. Shame is not only painful self-consciousness. It is a domain of action in which hiding, appeasement, collapse, or compensatory superiority may become available. Trust is not only belief. It is a domain of action in which openness, cooperation, risk, learning, and mutual dependence become possible.

Emotion, then, is world-disclosing.

It does not simply color a pre-given world. It participates in bringing forth the world in which we act. A child in fear does not inhabit the same world as a child in trust. A patient in humiliation does not inhabit the same consultation as a patient in dignity. A community in grief does not inhabit the same politics as a community in revenge. A state in existential insecurity does not inhabit the same diplomatic field as a state in relational confidence. An institution in reputational fear does not inhabit the same accountability process as an institution in humility.

This is why Maturana matters for life-coherence wisdom. If emotion opens domains of action, then wisdom cannot be only about what we think. It must ask from what emotional domain thinking, speaking, measuring, governing, healing, teaching, and intervening are occurring.

The same policy, diagnosis, religious teaching, or peace proposal can mean different things depending on the emotioning that carries it.

### **5.2 Love as the domain of legitimate coexistence**

Maturana's biology of love is often misunderstood if love is interpreted sentimentally. In this framework, love does not mean affection, preference, softness, approval, or emotional warmth. Love names the relational domain in which the other appears as legitimate in coexistence.

Maturana's language is especially important here because he does not treat love as mere sentiment. In his relational biology, love is the domain of actions through which another arises as a legitimate other in coexistence; aggression, by contrast, is a domain in which the other is denied that legitimacy (Maturana & Verden-Zöllner, 2008).

This is one of the central distinctions needed for life-coherence wisdom.

When the other appears as legitimate, the other does not need to be identical to the self, useful to the self, subordinate to the self, assimilated by the self, or erased by the self in order to be allowed to exist. Legitimate coexistence does not require agreement. It does not eliminate conflict. It does not deny accountability. It does not mean that all actions are acceptable. Rather, it means that the being of the other is not treated as a problem to be solved by domination or removal.

Legitimate coexistence does not abolish law, accountability, boundary, or protection. It means that even when harmful action must be stopped, the being of the other is not reduced to waste, enemy, object, or disposable life. Love, in this biological-relational sense, is compatible with firm protection because it refuses domination as the organizing emotional field.

Love, in this sense, is the emotional ground of life-coherent relation.

Without some domain of legitimate coexistence, wisdom cannot become collective. Dialogue collapses into strategy. Difference becomes threat. Conflict becomes annihilation. Institutions become defensive. Religion becomes boundary-policing. Politics becomes enemy production. Science becomes control without humility. Health care becomes intervention without listening. Education becomes correction without recognition. Governance becomes administration without participation.

Love is therefore not a private virtue added to wisdom. It is a condition for perceiving the other accurately.

When love is absent, the other is easily reduced to category: patient, client, enemy, consumer, illegal, believer, unbeliever, rival, data point, cost center, risk, burden, demographic, case, vote, market segment, or collateral damage. Once reduced, the other's life-capacity no longer appears as fully relevant. Harm becomes easier to justify. Exclusion becomes easier to normalize. Suffering becomes easier to background.

Life-coherence wisdom requires love because wisdom must allow life to appear.

### **5.3 Language, emotion, and world-making**

For Maturana, human worlds are conserved through languaging and emotioning. Human beings coordinate action through recurrent distinctions. We do not simply use language to describe a world already fully given. Through language, we bring forth domains of reality, relation, concern, possibility, and obligation.

This does not mean that reality is arbitrary. The body can be injured. Ecosystems can collapse. Children can hunger. Institutions can exclude. Violence can kill. But what is seen, named, measured, funded, blamed, protected, ignored, or repaired depends on distinctions made within histories of language and emotion.

A society that speaks of “economic growth” brings forth one world.

A society that speaks of “life-capacity” brings forth another.

A health system that speaks of “compliance” brings forth one patient.

A health system that speaks of “burden, agency, and repair” brings forth another.

A school that speaks of “performance” brings forth one learner.

A school that speaks of “formation, belonging, and discernment” brings forth another.

A state that speaks of “security threats” brings forth one political field.

A state that speaks of “shared life-protection” brings forth another.

A religion that speaks of “purity” brings forth one sacred world.

A religion that speaks of “mercy, justice, and life” brings forth another.

Language does not merely label relevance. It organizes relevance.

This is why misnaming is so dangerous. If structural harm is named as personal failure, repair is misdirected. If ecological destruction is named as development, life-ground loss becomes progress. If revenge is named as justice, violence becomes morally energized. If institutional betrayal is named as reputational risk, the institution protects itself from the wounded. If burnout is named as lack of resilience, the burden is shifted onto the exhausted.

Life-coherence wisdom therefore requires renaming. This is continuous with the life-coherent action method developed in earlier papers: recognize, rename, measure, expose, de-implement, restore, redesign, protect, coordinate, monitor, and learn. But here the emphasis is deeper. Renaming is not only a technical step. It is a transformation of relevance. To rename is to bring forth a different world of possible action.

## **5.4 Maturana’s correction of internalism**

Maturana corrects Peil Kauffman wherever emotion is treated too internally.

Peil Kauffman helps us see that emotion is biologically meaningful sentience, extended here as viability sensing. Maturana asks us to go further. What the organism senses is never merely inside the organism. Emotion is lived in relation. It shapes what actions become possible between beings. It opens and closes worlds.

This correction matters because modern culture often privatizes emotion. Fear becomes an individual anxiety disorder. Grief becomes an individual bereavement issue. Anger becomes an

individual regulation problem. Shame becomes an individual self-esteem problem. Loneliness becomes an individual social deficit. Burnout becomes an individual resilience problem. Even trauma can be reduced to symptoms inside persons rather than understood as a relational, historical, institutional, and ecological wound.

A life-coherent approach does not deny individual experience, diagnosis, or therapy. It insists that emotions are also field signals. They disclose organism–niche relations.

If many children are anxious, the question is not only what is wrong inside children. It is what world is making childhood anxious. If workers are burned out, the question is not only how they can become more resilient. It is what work arrangements are consuming restorative margins. If communities are enraged, the question is not only how to calm them. It is what injustice, humiliation, abandonment, or betrayal their anger registers. If citizens distrust institutions, the question is not only how to improve messaging. It is what histories of broken trust have made suspicion reasonable. If societies live in fear, the question is not only how to increase security. It is what forms of coexistence have failed.

Emotion is therefore diagnostic, but not only diagnostically internal.

It is diagnostic of relation.

## **5.5 Failure mode: relational closure**

If emotion opens domains of action, then one of the central failures of wisdom is relational closure.

Relational closure occurs when an emotional domain becomes so dominant that alternative worlds cannot appear. The field of action narrows. The other becomes fixed. The future becomes predetermined. Repair becomes unimaginable.

Fear can close the world into threat. Under fear, ambiguous gestures become suspicious. The stranger becomes danger. The neighbor becomes possible betrayer. The institution becomes enemy. The political opponent becomes existential threat. The future becomes catastrophe unless control is intensified.

Humiliation can close the world into revenge or withdrawal. The humiliated person or community may no longer be able to imagine dignity except through reversal, exposure, superiority, or destruction of the humiliating other.

Certainty can close the world into righteousness. Once a group is certain that it fully possesses truth, those who question it appear not as partners in inquiry but as threats, heretics, traitors, or corruptions.

Despair can close the world into impossibility. Nothing matters because nothing can change. The future collapses. Action feels naïve. Repair feels sentimental. Hope feels dangerous.

Even grief can close the world if the lost object becomes the only sacred reality. The living may be sacrificed to the dead when memory cannot become mercy.

Relational closure is not overcome by argument alone, because the closure is not merely cognitive. It is emotional, embodied, historical, and relational. A person or community in fear cannot be reasoned into trust if the field remains unsafe. A humiliated people cannot be lectured into reconciliation while humiliation continues. An institution cannot be made accountable by information alone if its emotional domain is defensiveness. A society cannot think wisely from panic.

Life-coherence wisdom therefore asks:

What emotional domain is organizing this world?

What actions does it make possible?

What actions does it make impossible?

Who appears legitimate here?

Who appears disposable?

What would need to change for another world to become livable?

The task is not to eliminate emotion. The task is to shift the emotional-relational domain so that life-protecting action becomes possible.

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## **6. Vervaeke: Relevance Realization, Insight, Meaning, and Wisdom**

### **6.1 Relevance realization as a general process**

Vervaeke gives the framework its process language for wisdom.

Living-cognitive beings do not process the world as a complete inventory of neutral data. They must continually select, foreground, ignore, interpret, and act. At every moment, there are indefinitely many possible features of the world that could be attended to, indefinitely many possible actions that could be taken, and indefinitely many interpretations that could be generated. Without relevance realization, cognition would drown in possibility.

Relevance realization is the dynamic process by which some aspects of the world become salient, meaningful, actionable, and integrated into ongoing cognition and behavior.

This process is not optional. It is the precondition of perception, attention, learning, problem-solving, communication, and action. To perceive is already to select. To attend is already to prioritize. To ask a question is already to frame. To solve a problem is already to decide what counts as relevant to the problem. To coordinate with others is already to share a field of relevance.

Relevance realization is not merely attention selection. It is the recursive, self-organizing process through which cognition continually determines what is salient, what counts as a problem, what information is usable, what actions are afforded, and how frames can be transformed. Vervaeke and Ferraro's account of relevance, meaning, and wisdom is therefore indispensable because it allows wisdom to be understood not as the possession of more information, but as the transformation of how relevance itself is realized and corrected (Vervaeke & Ferraro, 2013).

This makes relevance realization central to the life-coherent framework.

Health depends on realizing which signals matter for healing. Governance depends on realizing which conditions matter for collective flourishing. Education depends on realizing what is worth learning. Spirituality depends on realizing what is worthy of ultimacy. Peacebuilding depends on realizing what wounds must be honored and what harms must be stopped. AI depends on decisions about what should be amplified, recommended, filtered, predicted, or optimized.

Whenever relevance is misrealized, action becomes misdirected.

This is why the crisis of misrelevance cannot be solved by adding more information alone. The deeper task is to transform how relevance is realized.

### **6.2 From salience to insight**

Salience is what stands out. But what stands out is not necessarily what matters most.

A loud sound may be salient. A threat may be salient. A headline may be salient. A provocative image may be salient. A metric may be salient because it is displayed. A problem may be salient because it is politically useful. A person may be salient because they are powerful. A risk may be salient because it is immediate. A wound may be salient because it belongs to one's own group.

But wisdom requires the transformation of salience into insight.

Insight occurs when the field reorganizes. The person does not merely notice more. The person sees differently. A hidden pattern becomes visible. A false problem dissolves. A deeper problem appears. A rigid frame loosens. A neglected relation comes into view.

In clinical practice, insight may occur when symptoms are no longer seen as isolated complaints but as signs of cumulative exposure, blocked repair, and depleted margins. In public health, insight may occur when individual risk behaviors are reframed as affordance-field failures. In economics, insight may occur when growth is seen not as progress itself but as ambiguous unless it expands life-capacity. In spirituality, insight may occur when sacred certainty is recognized as fear seeking protection. In conflict, insight may occur when each side's security project is seen as generating the other side's insecurity. In digital life, insight may occur when engagement is recognized not as relevance, but as capture.

Insight is therefore a shift in the ecology of relevance.

The life-coherent question is whether insight reveals what must be protected, repaired, stopped, restored, reoriented, or de-implemented.

### **6.3 From insight to meaning**

Meaning arises when relevance is not merely momentary, but organized into a pattern of intelligibility, participation, purpose, and transformation.

A life becomes meaningful when its experiences are not only endured but integrated into a livable orientation. A relationship becomes meaningful when the other's presence matters in a way that shapes care, responsibility, memory, and future. Work becomes meaningful when action is connected to contribution, dignity, skill, and shared good. Suffering becomes meaningful not because suffering is good, but when it can be held within truth, relation, mourning, repair, and transformation. Spirituality becomes meaningful when ultimacy deepens responsibility to life rather than escape from it.

But meaning can also be captured.

This is why the meaning crisis cannot be solved by meaning alone. Human beings can find meaning in domination, revenge, purity, superiority, consumption, conspiracy, technological salvation, national glory, religious certainty, or institutional prestige. Meaning can integrate life around life-incoherent concerns.

Life-coherence wisdom therefore asks not only whether meaning is present, but what kind of life the meaning conserves.

Does this meaning expand life-capacity?  
Does it deepen relation?  
Does it reduce avoidable harm?  
Does it protect margins?  
Does it make the vulnerable more visible?  
Does it open repair?  
Does it tolerate correction?  
Does it remain humble before life?

Meaning becomes wise when it is answerable to life.

## **6.4 From meaning to wisdom**

Wisdom is more than relevance, insight, or meaning. It requires the self-correcting transformation of relevance in the service of life.

A wise person can notice when a first salience is misleading. A wise institution can notice when its metrics no longer serve its purpose. A wise community can notice when its grief is becoming revenge. A wise religion can notice when its sacred vessel is demanding the sacrifice of life. A wise health system can notice when its protocols are suppressing symptoms while blocking healing. A wise government can notice when security policies are generating insecurity. A wise technology system can notice when engagement is degrading attention.

Wisdom is not the absence of error. It is the capacity to be corrected.

This is why humility is central. Humility is not self-deprecation. It is openness to reality's correction. It is the recognition that life exceeds every model, frame, metric, doctrine, ideology, algorithm, and institution. Humility allows wisdom to remain alive because it allows the world, the body, the other, the wound, and the future to teach.

Wisdom also requires perspectival flexibility. A single frame rarely reveals the whole. The clinician must see biology, biography, family, culture, economics, ecology, and meaning. The policymaker must see immediate effects and long-term burden displacement. The peacebuilder must see each wound without allowing either wound to justify destruction. The educator must see performance and belonging, skill and wonder, discipline and freedom. The technologist must see innovation and attention, efficiency and dignity, prediction and agency.

Wisdom requires participatory knowing. It does not stand outside life as a detached spectator. It learns by entering relation responsibly. To know wisely is to be changed by what one comes to know.

Finally, wisdom requires action. Insight that does not repair remains incomplete. A person may see clearly and still fail to act. An institution may acknowledge harm and still preserve the

harmful arrangement. A society may understand ecological limits and still continue destructive practices. Wisdom is completed only when relevance becomes life-enabling action.

## **6.5 Vervaeke's correction of static emotioning**

Vervaeke corrects both Peil Kauffman and Maturana wherever emotioning becomes static.

Peil Kauffman allows emotion to be read as biologically meaningful sentience, extended here as viability sensing. Maturana shows that emotion opens relational worlds. But wisdom requires that emotional-relational worlds remain capable of transformation. Otherwise the organism may be trapped in a viability signal that no longer fits the present, or a relational domain that continues to conserve a wounded world.

A traumatized body may realize relevance through past danger. A fearful community may continue to perceive threat after conditions have changed. An institution may remain defensive long after accountability would be safer. A religious tradition may conserve a boundary that once protected identity but now prevents love. A political movement may remain organized around injury even when repair requires a new frame. A clinician may continue to see disease through familiar categories even when the patient's suffering requires another lens.

Relevance realization introduces dynamism.

It allows the field to reorganize. It allows salience to be questioned. It allows insight to break through. It allows meaning to be reconstructed. It allows action to become experimental, corrective, and adaptive. It allows wisdom to emerge not as fixed doctrine, but as living discernment.

This is where life-coherence wisdom becomes possible.

Emotion without relevance realization can become fixation.

Relation without relevance realization can become repetition.

Meaning without relevance realization can become ideology.

Spirituality without relevance realization can become certainty.

Measurement without relevance realization can become metric capture.

Governance without relevance realization can become institutional inertia.

Relevance realization keeps wisdom moving.

Yet Vervaeke also needs correction. Relevance realization must not float free as a cognitive process without life-value, embodied affect, relational legitimacy, and anti-violence. It must be asked what it serves. A system can realize relevance in order to manipulate, dominate, profit, surveil, polarize, or control. It can become brilliant at detecting what captures human attention while remaining indifferent to what heals human life.

Therefore, relevance realization becomes wisdom only when it becomes life-answerable.

## 6.6 The living triad

The three contributions now come together.

Peil Kauffman gives wisdom its embodied root: emotion senses viability.

Maturana gives wisdom its relational field: emotion opens worlds of action and coexistence.

Vervaeke gives wisdom its transformative process: relevance realization turns salience into insight, meaning, and wisdom.

Together, they form a living triad:

**Emotion senses viability.**

**Relation opens worlds.**

**Relevance realizes what matters.**

But the triad must not be flattened.

Emotion is not merely a feeling. It is life registering significance.

Relation is not merely context. It is the world in which action becomes possible.

Relevance is not merely attention. It is the self-organizing realization of what matters.

Wisdom arises when these three remain mutually correcting.

Emotion prevents relevance from becoming disembodied.

Relation prevents emotion from becoming private.

Relevance realization prevents relation from becoming static.

Yet even this is not sufficient. Emotion, relation, and relevance can all be captured. The next step is therefore to introduce the guardrails that make wisdom life-coherent: the life-value test, the anti-violence test, and the discernment test.

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## Part III — Corrections and Guardrails

### 7. Where Each Thinker Corrects the Others

#### 7.1 Why mutual correction is necessary

The living triad of Peil Kauffman, Maturana, and Vervaeke gives the framework its generative center. Emotion senses viability. Relation opens worlds. Relevance realizes what matters. Together, these three movements allow wisdom to be understood as embodied, relational, and self-correcting.

Yet no single thinker can carry the whole burden.

If emotion is emphasized without sufficient attention to cognition, it can become affective immediacy. What is felt may be mistaken for the whole truth. If relation is emphasized without sufficient attention to self-correction, existing emotional worlds may simply be conserved. If relevance realization is emphasized without sufficient attention to embodiment and life-value, wisdom may become too cognitive, too procedural, or too easily recruited by systems that optimize salience without protecting life.

Life-coherence wisdom therefore requires a logic of mutual correction.

This is not a weakness. It is the source of the framework's strength. Wisdom itself is not a single faculty operating from a single center. It is a living ecology of sensing, relating, realizing, testing, correcting, and repairing. The body corrects abstraction. Relation corrects private interiority. Relevance realization corrects static emotional worlds. Life-value corrects false relevance. Anti-violence reveals hidden harm. Discernment exposes captured ultimacy.

In this sense, the framework does not simply combine thinkers. It allows each to keep the others honest.

#### 7.2 Peil Kauffman corrects Vervaeke

Peil Kauffman corrects Vervaeke wherever relevance realization is heard too cognitively.

Relevance is not first a detached mental operation. It is not only a matter of attention, perception, problem-solving, insight, or meaning-making in the mind. Relevance is rooted in the living body's continuous concern for viability. Before a person frames a problem, the body has already been affected. Before cognition names a threat, the organism may already have tightened, withdrawn, accelerated, inflamed, mobilized, or collapsed. Before reason distinguishes value from disvalue, life has already been sensing nourishment, danger, boundary, overload, loss, belonging, and repair.

This correction matters because modern intellectual culture repeatedly overvalues cognition while under-reading the body. It assumes that if people are given enough information, they will act wisely. It assumes that misunderstanding is mainly a problem of knowledge deficit. It assumes that moral failure can be corrected by argument, that public health behavior can be corrected by messaging, that conflict can be corrected by rational negotiation, and that institutional dysfunction can be corrected by better data.

But a threatened organism does not process relevance in the same way as a safe one. A humiliated community does not reason from the same salience field as a dignified one. A sleep-deprived clinician does not perceive the consultation in the same way as a rested one. A grieving nation does not interpret risk in the same way as a secure one. A child in chronic stress does not learn from the same world as a child in trust.

Peil Kauffman reminds the framework that relevance is affective before it is reflective.

This does not diminish Vervaeke's contribution. It grounds it. Relevance realization becomes more powerful when understood as arising from the whole organism rather than from cognition alone. Insight is not merely a thought reorganizing. It may also be the nervous system finding safety, grief finding language, shame finding dignity, anger finding justice without revenge, or love finding a world in which the other can appear.

Life-coherence wisdom must therefore ask not only, "What is the correct frame?" but also, "What embodied condition makes frame transformation possible?"

### **7.3 Maturana corrects Peil Kauffman**

Maturana corrects Peil Kauffman wherever emotion is treated too internally.

Emotion is biologically meaningful sentience, extended here as viability sensing, but the body is never sealed off from relation. Human beings live in recurrent coordination with others. They are shaped through histories of care, neglect, language, touch, threat, recognition, culture, power, ecology, and institutions. Emotion does not simply report an inner state. It opens a domain of action.

This distinction is crucial.

If fear is treated only as an internal feeling, then the response may be limited to regulation techniques, medication, cognitive reframing, or personal resilience. These may help, but they do not ask what world is producing fear. If anger is treated only as dysregulation, then the violation it may be registering can be ignored. If shame is treated only as low self-esteem, then the social and institutional humiliations that generate shame remain intact. If burnout is treated only as exhaustion inside individuals, then the work arrangements that consume life-capacity remain unchallenged.

Maturana shifts the question.

What world is this emotion bringing forth?  
What actions does it make possible?  
What actions does it make impossible?  
Who appears legitimate inside this emotional domain?  
Who appears threatening, disposable, invisible, or impossible to hear?

This correction prevents life-coherence wisdom from becoming inwardness without world-transformation. It ensures that emotion is not privatized away from the conditions that shape it.

The person who is afraid may need support, but the relation may also need transformation. The community that is angry may need regulation, but it may also need justice. The institution that is defensive may need accountability structures that make truth safer than concealment. The society that is lonely may need more than therapy; it may need urban, digital, economic, and cultural redesign. The nation that is insecure may need not only stronger defenses, but a new architecture of coexistence.

Emotion is not merely inside the organism. Emotion is a way the organism and world are coupled.

Life-coherence wisdom must therefore ask not only what is felt, but what relational domain the feeling is conserving or calling forth.

## **7.4 Vervaeke corrects both**

Vervaeke corrects both Peil Kauffman and Maturana wherever emotioning becomes static.

Emotion senses viability, but an emotion may continue to organize perception after its original conditions have changed. A body may remain oriented to past danger. A family may conserve old patterns of shame. A community may remain organized around ancestral wound. A religious institution may preserve fear as loyalty. A state may continue to see enemies through historical trauma. A professional culture may repeat inherited categories long after they have ceased to serve healing.

Relation opens worlds, but worlds can become closed.

This is where relevance realization is essential. It introduces self-correction into the field. It asks how salience can shift, how frames can loosen, how hidden relations can become visible, how insight can emerge, and how meaning can be reconstructed.

Vervaeke's contribution is especially important because wisdom cannot be reduced to emotional authenticity or relational belonging. A person may feel sincerely and still be wrong. A community may belong deeply and still exclude. A tradition may conserve meaning and still block repair. A movement may embody solidarity and still become captured by revenge. An institution may have a caring mission and still perpetuate harm.

Wisdom requires the capacity to realize when the current way of realizing relevance has itself become the problem.

This is why insight matters. Insight is not simply the addition of a fact. It is the reconfiguration of the field in which facts appear. A clinician sees that the patient's "noncompliance" is not defiance but burden. A policymaker sees that "resilience" has become adaptation to preventable harm. A religious leader sees that "faithfulness" has become institutional self-protection. A peacebuilder sees that each side's wound has become a relevance trap. A technologist sees that engagement is not the same as meaningful attention.

Vervaeke corrects static emotioning by insisting that wisdom must remain capable of transformation.

But Vervaeke himself must also be corrected. Relevance realization does not automatically know what it should serve. It can serve manipulation, profit, domination, surveillance, polarization, addiction, or institutional self-preservation. The process of realizing relevance becomes wise only when it is answerable to life.

## 7.5 The living triad restated

The triad can now be stated more precisely.

**Peil Kauffman:** Emotion senses viability.

Emotion discloses the living organism's embodied evaluation of danger, nourishment, loss, boundary, belonging, overload, repair, and possibility.

**Maturana:** Emotion opens relational worlds.

Emotioning is not merely internal feeling; it specifies domains of action through which others appear as legitimate, threatening, useful, disposable, lovable, or impossible.

**Vervaeke:** Relevance realization transforms salience into insight, meaning, and wisdom.

The field of what matters is not fixed; it can reorganize through self-correction, insight, participatory knowing, and transformative action.

The triad is living because each movement requires the others.

Emotion without relation can become private intensity.

Relation without relevance realization can become repetition.

Relevance realization without embodied emotion can become disembodied cognition.

Emotion and relation without life-value can become captured.

Relevance realization without anti-violence can ignore hidden harm.

Discernment without repair can remain spiritual abstraction.

The framework therefore moves from triad to guardrails.

## 7.6 Why the triad is not enough

The triad gives wisdom its living process, but not yet its normative protection.

Emotion tells us that something matters, but not always whether it matters rightly. Fear may protect life or destroy coexistence. Anger may defend dignity or justify cruelty. Grief may honor loss or sanctify revenge. Compassion may open care or become selective and sentimental. Love may recognize the other or become possessive.

Relation opens worlds, but not every world is life-coherent. A community can bring forth a world of exclusion. A market can bring forth a world of competition without care. A religion can bring forth a world of purity and fear. A state can bring forth a world of permanent threat. A profession can bring forth a world in which persons become cases, codes, or risks.

Relevance realization makes salience dynamic, but relevance can be captured. A platform can realize relevance for engagement. A bureaucracy can realize relevance for compliance. A market can realize relevance for profit. A security system can realize relevance for threat detection. A political movement can realize relevance for mobilization. None of these are necessarily wise.

The triad therefore requires three tests:

**The life-value test:** Does this expand or reduce life-capacity?

**The anti-violence test:** What harm is hidden, normalized, displaced, or justified?

**The discernment test:** What is being protected, sacrificed, or made ultimate?

These guardrails do not suppress emotion, relation, or relevance. They make them answerable to life.

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## 8. McMurtry: The Life-Value Test of Relevance

### 8.1 Relevant to life or relevant to system expansion?

The first guardrail is the life-value test.

A thing may become relevant because it serves a system's expansion. It may increase profit, strengthen institutional authority, improve a ranking, raise output, mobilize voters, attract attention, defend identity, intensify belonging, or protect a sacred narrative. Yet none of these proves that it serves life.

This is the core correction offered by McMurtry's life-value onto-axiology. Value must be tested by whether it enables life-capacity. Disvalue must be recognized wherever thought, feeling, action, relation, development, ecological belonging, or future possibility is reduced, disabled, or destroyed. The central question is not whether a practice is profitable, efficient, traditional, legal, popular, innovative, measurable, or meaningful. The central question is whether it enables life to live more fully and coherently within the web of life.

This is where McMurtry's life-value onto-axiology becomes decisive. It gives the framework a criterion for distinguishing relevance that serves life from relevance that serves life-blind system expansion. The question is not whether something is valued by a system, but whether it enables or disables the life-capacities and life-conditions on which any coherent value depends (McMurtry, 2011).

This test is already implicit in the prior life-coherent papers. The health framework defined health as life-capacity enabled and healing as life-capacity restored. The Beyond GDP paper argued that progress must be evaluated by whether social, economic, ecological, technological, and institutional arrangements expand or reduce life-capacity. The discernment paper asked whether sacred stories, institutions, policies, memories, movements, and practices protect life or require the disposability of life.

In this paper, the life-value test is applied directly to relevance.

What appears relevant must be asked: relevant to life, or relevant to the self-expansion of a life-incoherent system?

This question is decisive because many systems generate their own internal relevance fields. In a profit-maximizing market, what matters is what can be monetized. In a reputation-protecting institution, what matters is what threatens legitimacy. In a militarized security system, what matters is what can be framed as threat. In a performance-driven school, what matters is what can be graded. In a data-driven bureaucracy, what matters is what can be documented. In a digital platform, what matters is what captures engagement.

Each of these relevance fields may be coherent on its own terms. But life-coherence asks whether those terms serve life.

## **8.2 Life-value as correction of false relevance**

False relevance occurs when something becomes salient, urgent, protected, or optimized in ways that reduce life-capacity.

A hospital may make bed turnover highly relevant while making relational continuity less relevant. Yet for a frightened patient with complex illness, continuity may be central to healing. A school may make standardized performance highly relevant while making curiosity, belonging, and moral formation less relevant. A government may make fiscal indicators highly relevant while making caregiver exhaustion less relevant. A company may make quarterly returns highly relevant while making ecological degradation external. A social media platform may make engagement highly relevant while making attention, truthfulness, and developmental integrity secondary.

False relevance is not always false because the thing does not matter at all. Bed turnover, performance, budgets, returns, and engagement may matter. They become false when detached from life-capacity and allowed to dominate the field.

The life-value test corrects false relevance by asking:

Does this expand or reduce the real capacities of persons and communities to live, heal, learn, relate, participate, repair, and flourish?

Does it preserve or degrade ecological conditions of life?

Does it strengthen or weaken civil commons?

Does it protect or consume restorative margins?

Does it reduce or shift burdens?

Does it enable or disable future generations?

Does it serve life, or require life to serve it?

This test transforms wisdom from subjective judgment into life-answerability.

## **8.3 Life-capacity as the criterion of wisdom**

Life-capacity is the central criterion because it allows wisdom to remain concrete without becoming narrow.

Life-capacity includes biological capacities: breathing, nourishment, movement, sleep, immunity, metabolism, development, reproduction, repair, and resilience.

It includes psychological capacities: attention, learning, memory, emotional regulation, imagination, meaning, agency, and hope.

It includes relational capacities: trust, belonging, care, recognition, reciprocity, forgiveness, boundary, and legitimate coexistence.

It includes social capacities: education, participation, voice, safety, dignity, livelihood, justice, and access to care.

It includes ecological capacities: clean air, drinkable water, nourishing food, biodiversity, climate stability, soil fertility, and the integrity of life-support systems.

It includes spiritual and existential capacities: awe, grief, gratitude, humility, purpose, ultimate concern, moral responsibility, and reverence for life.

It includes intergenerational capacities: the ability of future beings to inherit conditions in which life remains possible and meaningful.

A relevance field is wise only if it remains answerable to these capacities.

This is why life-coherence wisdom cannot be reduced to maximizing preference satisfaction, optimizing performance, preserving tradition, expanding choice, increasing efficiency, or intensifying meaning. Each of these may contribute to life, but each can also become life-incoherent when separated from the wider field of life-capacity.

Wisdom asks what kind of life becomes possible through this relevance field.

## **8.4 Life-blind value and civilizational misrelevance**

Modern societies are marked by many forms of life-blind value.

A financial asset may increase while the underlying life-ground deteriorates. A nation may grow economically while its people become lonelier, sicker, more anxious, or less secure. A corporation may innovate while producing dependency, ecological burden, or attention capture. A university may rise in rankings while students and faculty become exhausted. A hospital may improve operational metrics while patients feel unseen. A state may increase security spending while deepening the conditions of future conflict.

Life-blind value becomes social misrelevance when whole systems organize themselves around indicators and incentives that detach value from life.

This is why the Beyond GDP movement matters, but also why it is insufficient if it becomes only a better dashboard. The deeper issue is not just what societies measure. It is what their

measurements make relevant, what their relevance fields protect, and whether those fields transform the conditions producing harm.

A life-coherent society must learn to distinguish true value from life-blind value.

True value expands life-capacity without degrading the conditions of life.

False value appears beneficial within a narrow frame while reducing life-capacity elsewhere.

Life-blind value cannot see the life it consumes.

Life-coherent wisdom makes that life visible again.

## **8.5 The life-value test**

The life-value test can be stated simply:

### **Does this expand or reduce life-capacity?**

But in practice, it requires a disciplined set of questions:

Whose life-capacity is expanded?

Whose life-capacity is reduced?

Which capacities are being considered?

Which capacities are being ignored?

What burdens are being displaced?

What repair pathways are being strengthened or weakened?

What margins are being protected or consumed?

What ecological conditions are being preserved or degraded?

What future capacities are being enabled or foreclosed?

What would change if life, rather than system expansion, were the organizing concern?

These questions make relevance answerable to life.

They do not provide mechanical answers. Wisdom cannot be automated by a checklist. But the test prevents relevance from being captured too easily by power, abstraction, urgency, profit, ideology, or institutional self-preservation.

The life-value test is the first guardrail of life-coherence wisdom.

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## 9. Galtung: The Anti-Violence Test of Wisdom

### 9.1 Wisdom must detect hidden harm

The second guardrail is the anti-violence test.

If McMurtry asks whether relevance expands or reduces life-capacity, Galtung asks where life-capacity is being harmed, blocked, or denied through direct, structural, and cultural forms of violence.

This is necessary because harm is not always visible as harm.

Direct violence is usually easiest to see: killing, assault, injury, displacement, starvation, imprisonment, abuse, torture, and direct coercion. Structural violence is harder to see because it is built into arrangements: poverty, exclusion, preventable disease, unsafe housing, food insecurity, unequal access to care, environmental racism, gendered burden, labor exploitation, institutional abandonment, and policies that predictably shorten or degrade lives. Cultural violence is harder still because it makes direct and structural violence appear normal, deserved, necessary, sacred, efficient, inevitable, or invisible.

Galtung's distinction between direct and structural violence prevents wisdom from remaining confined to visible injury alone; his later account of cultural violence further shows how symbols, narratives, doctrines, and cultural forms can legitimate harm by making it appear normal, necessary, sacred, or inevitable (Galtung, 1969, 1990).

Wisdom must detect all three.

A society that only notices direct violence will repeatedly miss the conditions that produce it. A health system that only notices disease will miss the social and ecological arrangements that generate disease. A government that only notices unrest will miss the structural humiliations that make unrest intelligible. A religion that only condemns visible sin may miss the sacred narratives that justify exclusion. A school that only notices poor performance may miss hunger, fear, shame, disability, family burden, and cultural mismatch. A digital system that only notices policy violations may miss the slow violence of attention capture, social comparison, and developmental distortion.

The anti-violence test asks what harm is hidden by the frame.

### 9.2 Direct, structural, and cultural misrelevance

Misrelevance can operate at each level of violence.

Direct misrelevance occurs when immediate harm is minimized, justified, or backgrounded because another concern has been made more relevant. Civilian casualties are treated as collateral. Patient suffering is treated as anecdotal. Worker injury is treated as operational cost. Police brutality is treated as order. Domestic abuse is treated as private conflict. The immediate wound is visible but made less relevant than strategy, reputation, productivity, authority, or ideology.

Structural misrelevance occurs when harmful arrangements are not seen as violence because no single actor appears to be directly striking the blow. Children grow up hungry. Communities breathe polluted air. Patients cannot afford care. Workers lack rest. Elders are isolated. Caregivers are unsupported. Indigenous lands are degraded. Climate burdens are displaced onto the least responsible. These harms are normalized because they are distributed through systems.

Cultural misrelevance occurs when narratives, symbols, doctrines, assumptions, metrics, and traditions make harm appear acceptable. Poverty becomes laziness. Illness becomes personal failure. Ecological destruction becomes development. War becomes glory. Domination becomes security. Exclusion becomes purity. Exploitation becomes opportunity. Overwork becomes dedication. Surveillance becomes convenience. Attention capture becomes entertainment. Resilience becomes adaptation to preventable harm.

Wisdom fails wherever harm is made irrelevant.

### **9.3 Positive peace as relevance restoration**

Galtung's concept of positive peace is crucial because it shifts peace from the absence of direct violence to the presence of life-enabling conditions.

Negative peace asks whether overt violence has stopped. Positive peace asks whether the conditions that generate violence, deprivation, humiliation, exclusion, and insecurity have been transformed. Life-coherent positive peace asks whether the needs and capacities required for dignified life are being answered across the whole field of relation.

This has direct implications for wisdom.

A wise society does not wait until harm erupts into crisis before making life-needs relevant. It sees hunger before famine, humiliation before revolt, loneliness before despair, ecological strain before collapse, distrust before institutional breakdown, trauma before revenge, burnout before disability, and dehumanization before atrocity.

Positive peace is relevance restored before violence becomes visible.

This reframes wisdom as anticipatory repair. Wisdom does not only respond well after breakdown. It makes the precursors of breakdown matter early enough to change course.

This is continuous with the health framework's emphasis on exposure, repair, and margins. Health is sustained when exposures remain within restorative capacity; breakdown becomes

more likely when cumulative exposures exceed repair margins. The same logic applies to peace. Peace is sustained when social, ecological, cultural, political, and institutional exposures remain within the repair capacity of communities and their shared life-ground. Violence becomes more likely when burdens accumulate, dignity is denied, trust collapses, and repair pathways are blocked.

Positive peace is the social analogue of healing completion.

## **9.4 The anti-violence test**

The anti-violence test can be stated simply:

### **What harm is hidden or normalized?**

In practice, it requires asking:

What direct harm is being minimized or justified?

What structural harm is being treated as background condition?

What cultural narratives make this harm appear normal, deserved, sacred, efficient, or inevitable?

Who benefits from this invisibility?

Who carries the burden?

What forms of suffering are counted?

What forms are ignored?

What life-capacities are being reduced?

What would become visible if those most burdened defined the field of relevance?

What would repair require?

The anti-violence test prevents wisdom from becoming polite abstraction.

It asks every claim to intelligence, progress, development, security, spirituality, or efficiency to stand before the lives it affects.

If harm is hidden, wisdom must reveal it.

If harm is normalized, wisdom must denormalize it.

If harm is displaced, wisdom must trace it.

If harm is justified, wisdom must test the justification.

If harm is sacredized, wisdom must discern the sacred distortion.

If harm is profitable, wisdom must expose the life-blind value system.

If harm is bureaucratized, wisdom must restore responsibility.

Wisdom is not wise if it cannot see suffering.

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## **10. The Discernment Test: What Is Being Made Ultimate?**

### **10.1 From measurement to discernment**

The third guardrail is the discernment test.

The earlier life-coherent work on spirituality, religion, peace, and geopolitical conflict argued that the spiritual-political analogue of measurement is discernment. Measurement asks what counts. Discernment asks what is worthy of ultimacy.

This distinction becomes essential for life-coherence wisdom because relevance is always related to ultimacy. What a person, institution, or society treats as most relevant reveals what it ultimately serves. The ultimate concern may be explicit or hidden. It may be God, nation, security, growth, freedom, justice, purity, sovereignty, market expansion, technological mastery, identity, revenge, institutional survival, or personal success. It may be sacred, secular, ideological, emotional, or procedural. But every system has something it protects when trade-offs intensify.

Discernment asks whether that ultimate concern remains answerable to life.

A society may claim to value human dignity, but if economic growth is protected whenever dignity conflicts with profit, growth is functionally ultimate. A hospital may claim to value patients, but if reputation is protected whenever patients are harmed, reputation is functionally ultimate. A religion may claim to worship God, but if institutional authority is protected whenever victims speak, the institution has become functionally ultimate. A state may claim to protect security, but if its security requires permanent insecurity for others, domination has become ultimate. A technology company may claim to connect people, but if engagement is protected whenever attention and truth are harmed, monetized capture is functionally ultimate.

The discernment test reveals what is actually being worshipped, defended, sacrificed, and conserved.

### **10.2 Relevance and ultimacy**

Relevance becomes powerful when it is tied to ultimacy.

An ordinary preference can be negotiated. An ultimate concern cannot be easily compromised because it is experienced as identity, survival, sacred duty, moral necessity, or existential truth. This is why conflicts over land, religion, sovereignty, memory, security, and historical trauma can become so intractable. They are not merely disputes over resources. They are disputes over what is ultimate.

But ultimacy is not limited to religion or geopolitics.

In economic life, growth can become ultimate. In professional life, status can become ultimate. In institutional life, reputation can become ultimate. In digital life, visibility can become ultimate. In education, achievement can become ultimate. In medicine, control over disease markers can become ultimate. In politics, victory can become ultimate. In activism, moral purity can become ultimate. In personal life, self-optimization can become ultimate.

When a finite concern becomes ultimate, life becomes vulnerable to sacrifice.

The discernment test asks:

What is being protected at all costs?

What is being sacrificed to protect it?

Who is being asked to bear that sacrifice?

What becomes unquestionable?

What suffering becomes invisible?

What would happen if life-capacity became ultimate instead?

This is not a call to abandon all finite commitments. Societies need institutions, identities, traditions, laws, economies, technologies, and security arrangements. Persons need roles, projects, loyalties, and meanings. The problem is not that finite goods exist. The problem is when finite goods become absolute and are no longer corrected by life.

### **10.3 The danger of captured ultimacy**

Captured ultimacy occurs when an ultimate concern becomes closed against life.

Sacred memory becomes captured when honoring the dead requires hatred of the living. Security becomes captured when protection of one group requires permanent domination of another. Liberation becomes captured when freedom from oppression becomes permission to dehumanize. Religion becomes captured when fidelity to doctrine becomes indifference to suffering. National identity becomes captured when belonging requires exclusion. Institutional mission becomes captured when the institution demands loyalty even when it harms those it exists to serve. Economic freedom becomes captured when market autonomy overrides the life-ground. Technological progress becomes captured when innovation is pursued without regard for attention, dignity, labor, ecology, or future generations.

Captured ultimacy is dangerous because it gives life-incoherent relevance moral force.

It does not merely say that something matters. It says that something matters so much that other lives may be sacrificed for it. Once this occurs, ordinary ethical correction becomes difficult. Harm is reframed as necessity. Doubt is reframed as betrayal. Compassion is reframed as weakness. Accountability is reframed as attack. Repair is reframed as surrender. The suffering of others is reframed as unfortunate but unavoidable.

This is why the discernment paper insisted that no sacred story, national project, religious doctrine, security claim, liberation movement, economic system, or institution can be considered life-coherent if it requires the disposability of life.

Life-coherence wisdom carries that claim forward.

## **10.4 Discernment before de-implementation**

Discernment is necessary because systems cannot de-implement what they cannot correctly name.

If burnout is named as weak resilience, the response will be resilience training rather than workload redesign. If ecological destruction is named as development, the response will be mitigation at the margins rather than transformation of extraction. If civilian suffering is named as collateral damage, the response will be tactical regret rather than life-protective political change. If institutional abuse is named as reputational challenge, the response will be communication strategy rather than justice. If poverty is named as personal failure, the response will be behavioral correction rather than structural repair. If spiritual abuse is named as lack of faith, the response will be deeper submission rather than liberation.

Discernment exposes the wrong name.

Only then can de-implementation begin. Harmful patterns must be stopped, not merely supplemented with better intentions. Systems often try to add care without removing what causes injury. They add wellness programs without reducing overwork. They add diversity statements without changing exclusionary structures. They add sustainability language without ending destructive extraction. They add peace rhetoric without dismantling domination. They add trauma-informed language without ending practices that traumatize.

Wisdom requires subtraction.

Some things must be stopped so life can breathe.

## **10.5 The discernment test**

The discernment test can be stated simply:

**What is being protected, sacrificed, or made ultimate?**

In practice, it asks:

What is this system unwilling to question?

What does it protect when life is harmed?

What does it sacrifice when pressure rises?

Whose suffering is considered acceptable?

What story makes that sacrifice meaningful?

What fear holds the system together?  
What sacred or secular concern has become absolute?  
Does this ultimate concern protect, repair, and expand life-capacity?  
Or does it require the disposability of life?

This test prevents wisdom from becoming naïve.

It recognizes that many systems are not confused at the surface level. They are faithful to the wrong ultimacy. They continue to harm because something else has been made more sacred than life.

The life-coherent task is to return ultimacy to life.

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## 11. The Three Guardrails as One Discipline

### 11.1 Life-value, anti-violence, and discernment together

The three guardrails work together.

The life-value test asks whether relevance expands or reduces life-capacity.

The anti-violence test asks what harm is hidden or normalized.

The discernment test asks what is being protected, sacrificed, or made ultimate.

Each test reveals something the others might miss.

A policy may appear to expand life-capacity for some while hiding structural violence against others. The anti-violence test reveals the displacement.

A movement may expose real harm while making revenge ultimate. The discernment test reveals the capture.

A religious institution may speak of sacred values while reducing life-capacity through shame, exclusion, or silencing. The life-value and anti-violence tests reveal the contradiction.

A digital platform may create meaning and connection for users while capturing attention, amplifying comparison, and displacing developmental burden. All three tests are needed.

A health system may save lives through acute intervention while exhausting patients, families, and clinicians through fragmented care. The life-value test asks whether life-capacity is actually restored. The anti-violence test asks what structural harms are hidden. The discernment test asks whether throughput, liability, cost, or institutional reputation has become ultimate.

Together, the guardrails make wisdom difficult to fake.

### 11.2 The full diagnostic question

The full diagnostic question of life-coherence wisdom can be stated as follows:

**What has become relevant here, through what embodied emotion and relational world, under what frame, serving what ultimate concern, hiding what harm, expanding or reducing whose life-capacity, and inviting what form of repair?**

This question is demanding because wisdom is demanding. It refuses to isolate cognition from emotion, emotion from relation, relation from power, power from violence, violence from value, value from ultimacy, and ultimacy from life.

It also prevents premature certainty.

A situation may look simple because a frame has already hidden its complexity. Wisdom slows down enough to ask what has been excluded from relevance. It listens for the body, the wound, the silence, the margin, the displaced burden, the backgrounded ecosystem, the future generation, the unseen caregiver, the humiliated community, the uncounted cost, the institutional fear, the sacred abstraction.

Wisdom is not slowness for its own sake. Sometimes life requires urgent action. But wise urgency differs from captured urgency. Captured urgency narrows the field and suppresses correction. Wise urgency acts quickly while remaining answerable to life.

### **11.3 From guardrails to failure modes**

The next part of the paper turns to the major failure modes of misrelevance.

These are not merely errors in thinking. They are patterned ways in which attention, emotion, measurement, ultimacy, technology, and institutions make life-incoherent things matter.

Salience capture hijacks what stands out.

Affective capture closes emotion into a world.

Metric capture makes indicators substitutes for life.

Sacred capture absolutizes finite concerns.

Algorithmic capture optimizes relevance without wisdom.

Institutional capture protects organizations before life.

Each failure mode shows why wisdom must be more than intelligence, more than feeling, more than meaning, more than measurement, and more than institutional expertise.

Wisdom is the disciplined capacity to detect capture and return relevance to life.

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## Part IV — Failure Modes of Misrelevance

### 12. Salience Capture

#### 12.1 When attention is hijacked

Salience capture occurs when what stands out begins to control what matters.

This is one of the most basic forms of misrelevance. Human beings cannot attend to everything. Institutions cannot respond to everything. Societies cannot deliberate about everything at once. Attention must select. Some things come forward; others recede. Some signals become urgent; others remain background. Some harms are made visible; others are normalized by familiarity. Some futures are imagined; others become unthinkable.

Salience is therefore not trivial. It is the gate through which relevance enters action.

Yet salience is not the same as importance. What stands out may not be what most needs care. What provokes may not be what most needs repair. What is loud may not be what is deep. What is urgent may not be what is life-critical. What is measurable may not be what is meaningful. What is visible may not be what is causal. What is immediate may not be what is most consequential.

Salience capture occurs when systems exploit this gap.

A breaking headline becomes more salient than a slow ecological collapse. A viral outrage becomes more salient than patient institution-building. A market shock becomes more salient than chronic poverty. A visible act of violence becomes more salient than the structural arrangements that made violence likely. A political scandal becomes more salient than the conditions of children's lives. A symptom becomes more salient than the life pattern that keeps generating it. A single dramatic event becomes more salient than the cumulative erosion of margins.

The danger is not that salient events do not matter. They often do. The danger is that salience can displace proportion. It can organize attention around what captures the nervous system rather than what protects life-capacity.

Wisdom must therefore ask not only, "What is drawing attention?" but "What deserves attention?"

#### 12.2 Salience and the nervous system

Salience capture works because living beings are built to respond to signals. Threat, novelty, pain, uncertainty, social evaluation, loss, desire, and possibility all call attention. This is adaptive. A living organism that cannot detect what matters cannot survive.

But the same architecture can be hijacked.

Threat narrows attention. Novelty pulls attention. Outrage energizes attention. Shame fixes attention. Fear accelerates attention. Desire magnetizes attention. Social comparison fragments attention. Uncertainty keeps attention searching. Digital systems can exploit these tendencies at scale. Political systems can mobilize them. Markets can monetize them. Institutions can manage them. Media systems can amplify them. Sacred narratives can intensify them.

A captured salience field is not neutral. It shapes the world that appears.

If threat dominates salience, safety becomes the supreme concern and the other easily becomes dangerous. If competition dominates salience, cooperation becomes secondary. If performance dominates salience, formation becomes invisible. If spectacle dominates salience, slow repair becomes boring. If scandal dominates salience, structural analysis becomes difficult. If crisis dominates salience, prevention becomes underfunded. If metrics dominate salience, lived experience becomes anecdotal.

In such a field, wisdom is not simply a matter of better reasoning. It requires attention repair.

Attention must be re-trained to perceive what life requires.

### **12.3 Personal salience capture**

At the personal level, salience capture appears as distraction, anxiety, obsession, compulsive checking, outrage cycling, comparison, doomscrolling, overwork, rumination, and chronic urgency.

The person may sincerely want to live wisely, but the attention field has been colonized. The phone becomes more salient than the child. The notification becomes more salient than the body's fatigue. The email becomes more salient than grief. The deadline becomes more salient than the need for sleep. The imagined judgment of others becomes more salient than one's own life direction. The crisis of the day becomes more salient than the slow practice that would heal the pattern.

The captured person is not simply weak-willed. The person is living inside a salience ecology.

To respond wisely, one must not moralize attention failure. One must redesign the field: reduce needless signals, create rhythms of rest, protect deep work, restore embodied awareness, cultivate silence, make repair visible, and bring neglected life-needs forward.

Personal wisdom requires asking:

What repeatedly captures my attention?  
What does my body keep trying to tell me?  
What life-need is being backgrounded?  
What urgent thing is consuming the important?  
What would become possible if my attention were returned to life?

## **12.4 Institutional salience capture**

At the institutional level, salience capture becomes more consequential because organizations decide what will be seen, funded, counted, rewarded, investigated, ignored, or postponed.

A hospital may make waiting times, length of stay, and throughput highly salient while making continuity, dignity, caregiver burden, clinician exhaustion, and healing completion less visible. A school may make test scores salient while making belonging, curiosity, emotional safety, and moral formation secondary. A government may make fiscal indicators salient while making unpaid care, ecological depletion, public trust, and community cohesion background. A corporation may make quarterly earnings salient while making labor strain, supply-chain harm, and ecological burden external. A university may make rankings, publications, and grant income salient while making intellectual formation, mentorship, and student well-being secondary.

Institutions often claim that they are simply responding to reality. In truth, they are also producing reality by deciding what becomes salient.

This is why life-coherence wisdom must become institutional. It is not enough for individuals inside institutions to care. The institution's dashboards, incentives, deadlines, reporting requirements, accountability structures, and leadership narratives must be redesigned so that life-capacity becomes visible and actionable.

An institution becomes wiser when it learns to ask:

What do our systems force people to notice?  
What do they train people to ignore?  
What rises rapidly to leadership attention?  
What harm must accumulate before it becomes visible?  
What forms of repair are invisible because no one is rewarded for them?  
What would we measure, discuss, fund, and protect if life-capacity were truly central?

## **12.5 Life-coherent correction**

The life-coherent correction to salience capture is not to eliminate salience. It is to re-order salience around life.

This means making slow harm visible before crisis. It means making repair visible before breakdown. It means making margins visible before collapse. It means making the vulnerable visible before sacrifice. It means making future generations visible before irreversibility. It

means making the life-ground visible before depletion. It means making grief visible before revenge. It means making dignity visible before humiliation hardens into conflict.

The central corrective question is:

**What is urgent but not life-important, and what is life-important but made invisible?**

This question should become one of the practical tests of the framework.

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## 13. Affective Capture

### 13.1 When emotion becomes a closed world

Affective capture occurs when an emotion that begins as a viability signal becomes a closed world of interpretation and action.

Emotion is necessary for wisdom because emotion senses viability. But emotion can also narrow relevance. It can make some interpretations feel obvious and others feel impossible. It can bind identity to a wound. It can convert partial truth into total truth. It can protect the organism from unbearable complexity by simplifying the world into friend and enemy, safety and danger, purity and contamination, victory and humiliation.

Affective capture does not mean the emotion is false. Usually, the emotion carries some truth. Fear may register real danger. Anger may register real injustice. Grief may register real loss. Shame may register real exposure. Disgust may register real boundary threat. The problem is not that the emotion is meaningless. The problem is that it becomes sovereign.

The emotion no longer informs perception. It governs perception.

In affective capture, the question is no longer, “What is this emotion telling us?” The emotion has already answered: “This is the whole world.”

Wisdom begins when the emotion is honored without being enthroned.

### 13.2 Fear capture

Fear capture is one of the most powerful forms of misrelevance.

Fear protects life by mobilizing vigilance, caution, withdrawal, defense, and preparation. Without fear, organisms would fail to detect threat. But when fear becomes captured, the world is organized around danger. Ambiguity becomes threat. Difference becomes threat. Vulnerability becomes intolerable. Control becomes attractive. Domination begins to feel like protection.

At the personal level, fear capture can lead to avoidance, hypervigilance, compulsive control, distrust, and inability to receive care. At the institutional level, it can produce defensive bureaucracy, secrecy, punitive policies, reputational protection, and risk aversion. At the political level, it can produce securitization, surveillance, militarization, scapegoating, and permanent emergency. At the spiritual level, it can produce certainty, purity, exclusion, and obedience.

Fear capture is especially dangerous because it often speaks in the language of responsibility. It says: we must protect ourselves. We must be realistic. We cannot be naïve. We cannot risk

weakness. These statements may contain truth. But when fear is captured, protection becomes indistinguishable from domination.

Life-coherence wisdom asks:

What is fear rightly protecting?

What is fear falsely projecting?

Whose life-protection is being denied by this fear?

What would make safety possible without domination?

### **13.3 Grief capture**

Grief honors what has been lost. It is one of the deepest signs that something mattered. A person, place, tradition, homeland, relationship, future, innocence, trust, or world has been injured or taken. Grief refuses the reduction of loss to data or strategy. It keeps faith with the value of what has been broken.

But grief can also be captured.

Captured grief becomes identity without healing. It binds the living to the wound in a way that prevents repair. Memory becomes weapon. Mourning becomes grievance. The dead are made to authorize the suffering of the living. The original loss becomes morally extended into new harm.

At the personal level, grief capture can freeze development. At the communal level, it can conserve victimhood. At the national level, it can justify revenge. At the religious level, it can turn martyrdom into a demand for further sacrifice. At the geopolitical level, it can make compromise appear like betrayal of the dead.

Life-coherence wisdom does not ask communities to forget. Forgetting can itself be violence. But wisdom asks grief to remain answerable to life.

The question is:

Can memory protect life without demanding new victims?

### **13.4 Anger capture**

Anger is often morally intelligent. It registers violation, obstruction, humiliation, injustice, betrayal, and boundary crossing. Without anger, persons and communities may submit to preventable harm. Anger can energize resistance, truth-telling, protection, and change.

But anger becomes captured when it hardens into hatred or domination.

Captured anger no longer asks what repair requires. It asks who must be defeated, humiliated, exposed, punished, or destroyed. The energy of boundary protection becomes the energy of

dehumanization. The violated self or community becomes organized around the violator. The future remains tied to the enemy.

In public life, captured anger is easily monetized and mobilized. Outrage media, political polarization, ideological purity, and digital engagement systems all feed on anger capture. They keep people activated but not necessarily effective. They produce heat without repair.

Life-coherence wisdom does not pacify anger prematurely. It asks anger to become precise.

What boundary was crossed?

What dignity was violated?

What truth must be spoken?

What must stop?

What form of justice repairs life rather than reproducing harm?

Anger becomes wise when it serves repair.

### **13.5 Shame capture**

Shame is a relational emotion. It registers exposure, failed belonging, humiliation, or the sense that one's being has become unacceptable in the eyes of others.

Because human beings are relational, shame can be devastating. It can collapse agency, narrow attention, and make self-protection urgent. Captured shame may turn inward as self-hatred, withdrawal, addiction, or despair. It may turn outward as arrogance, contempt, domination, perfectionism, or cruelty. The humiliated self may seek restoration by humiliating others.

At institutional and collective scales, shame capture can become very dangerous. Nations, professions, religions, and organizations often cannot bear shame. When confronted with harm, they may deny, attack, minimize, deflect, or blame victims. The institution protects itself from humiliation rather than allowing shame to become accountability.

Life-coherence wisdom treats shame as a call to restore dignity, not as a reason for concealment.

It asks:

What dignity has been injured?

What truth is too humiliating to face?

What would accountability look like without annihilation?

What would restore belonging without denying harm?

Shame becomes wise when it opens humility.

### **13.6 Compassion capture**

Compassion appears safest, but it too can be captured.

Compassion registers another's suffering as relevant. It expands the field beyond self-interest. It is indispensable for care, medicine, justice, peacebuilding, and spiritual life. Yet compassion can become selective, sentimental, performative, paternalistic, or exhausted.

Selective compassion recognizes suffering in one's own group while ignoring suffering in others. Sentimental compassion feels deeply but avoids structural analysis. Performative compassion displays concern without changing burdens. Paternalistic compassion helps without restoring agency. Exhausted compassion collapses because the field of suffering is too great and repair structures are too weak.

Life-coherence wisdom asks compassion to become disciplined by justice and repair.

Who is suffering?

Who is not being seen?

What caused the suffering?

What keeps reproducing it?

What form of help restores agency?

What must be changed so compassion is not repeatedly required for preventable harm?

Compassion becomes wise when it moves from feeling-with to repairing-with.

### **13.7 Life-coherent correction**

The life-coherent correction to affective capture is emotional discernment.

Emotional discernment does not suppress emotion. It does not reduce emotion to pathology. It does not treat rational detachment as superiority. It asks emotion to disclose its truth, its partiality, its history, its world, and its invitation.

The central corrective question is:

**What is this emotion trying to protect, and what world is it bringing forth?**

A second question follows:

**Does that world protect, repair, and expand life-capacity, or does it make some life disposable?**

Emotion becomes wise when it remains open to correction by relation, life-value, anti-violence, and discernment.

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## 14. Metric Capture

### 14.1 When what is measurable becomes what matters

Metric capture occurs when indicators become substitutes for life.

Measurement is necessary. Without measurement, hidden harm may remain invisible. Without indicators, institutions cannot easily track inequity, health outcomes, ecological degradation, poverty, violence, access, quality, or progress. Measurement can reveal what ideology hides. It can make the neglected visible. It can support accountability.

But measurement becomes dangerous when what is measurable becomes what matters, and what matters becomes narrowed to what can be measured.

Metric capture does not begin with bad intentions. It often begins with reform. An institution wants accountability. A government wants transparency. A school wants quality assurance. A hospital wants safety. A funder wants results. A public agency wants evidence. Metrics are introduced to make systems more rational.

Then the metric begins to reorganize relevance.

People learn what will be counted. They adapt behavior to indicators. They prioritize what will be audited. They avoid what will not be rewarded. They simplify complex work into measurable outputs. They perform success. The metric becomes the field.

What began as a tool becomes a master.

This is consistent with the warnings often associated with Goodhart and Campbell. Goodhart's law is usually summarized as the loss of reliability that occurs when a measure becomes a target of control, while Campbell's law warns that the more a quantitative social indicator is used for social decision-making, the more vulnerable it becomes to corruption pressures and the more likely it is to distort the social process it was intended to monitor (Campbell, 1979; Goodhart, 1975). Metric capture, in the present framework, is the life-coherent extension of this problem: indicators do not merely become technically distorted; they can reorganize institutional relevance away from life-capacity and repair.

### 14.2 The violence of narrowed visibility

Metric capture harms by narrowing visibility.

In health care, measurable targets may displace listening, continuity, dignity, trust, and healing completion. In education, grades and test scores may displace curiosity, formation, belonging, and wisdom. In public policy, GDP may displace ecological viability, unpaid care, social trust,

and intergenerational responsibility. In policing and security, incident numbers may displace the quality of relationship between authority and community. In universities, publication counts may displace depth, mentoring, and intellectual courage. In digital platforms, engagement metrics may displace truth, attention, development, and care.

The problem is not that these indicators measure nothing. They measure something. But metric capture occurs when the something becomes mistaken for the whole.

The result is measurement violence: the reduction of living reality to categories that govern action while excluding what cannot easily be counted.

This does not mean the unmeasurable should escape accountability. It means the measurable must remain humble before life.

### **14.3 Metric capture and burden displacement**

One of the most dangerous effects of metric capture is burden displacement.

An institution may improve its indicators by shifting burden elsewhere. A hospital may reduce length of stay while increasing burden on families. A school may improve test performance while increasing anxiety and narrowing learning. A company may increase productivity while exhausting workers. A government may reduce spending while increasing unpaid care burden. A platform may increase engagement while degrading attention and mental health. An economy may grow while depleting ecosystems.

The metric improves, but life-capacity declines somewhere else.

This is why the life-coherent framework insists on exposure, repair, and margins. A metric is not life-coherent if it hides the exposures it creates, the repair it blocks, or the margins it consumes.

Metric wisdom requires tracing displaced burden.

Who pays for this apparent success?

Who absorbs the stress?

Whose time is consumed?

Whose body carries the cost?

Which ecosystem is depleted?

Which future is narrowed?

Which relationship is strained?

Which form of care becomes invisible?

### **14.4 Dashboards are necessary but insufficient**

The critique of metric capture should not be mistaken for anti-measurement.

The issue is not whether societies need better indicators. They do. GDP alone is insufficient as a measure of progress. Health systems need more than disease statistics. Public health requires data on determinants. Education needs more than examination results. Climate governance requires ecological metrics. Peacebuilding requires indicators beyond conflict deaths. Digital systems require accountability measures.

The issue is whether measurement remains answerable to transformation.

A dashboard can reveal inequality and still leave inequality intact. It can track ecological degradation and still permit extraction. It can measure loneliness and still design isolating systems. It can measure trust while institutions continue to betray. It can measure well-being while ignoring the power relations that shape well-being.

Measurement becomes wise only when it leads to recognition, renaming, exposure, de-implementation, repair, redesign, margin protection, coordination, and learning.

Otherwise measurement becomes a ritual of visibility without responsibility.

## **14.5 Life-coherent correction**

The life-coherent correction to metric capture is not less measurement, but wiser measurement.

Wiser measurement asks:

What does this metric make visible?

What does it hide?

What behavior does it incentivize?

What burdens does it displace?

Who designed it?

Who benefits from it?

Who is governed by it?

Can those most affected contest it?

Does it reveal life-capacity or merely system performance?

Does it support repair, or does it substitute for repair?

The central corrective question is:

**What does this metric make matter, and does that mattering serve life?**

A metric is life-coherent when it remains a servant of discernment and repair.

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## 15. Sacred Capture

### 15.1 When ultimate concern becomes life-incoherent

Sacred capture occurs when an ultimate concern becomes more protected than living beings.

This can happen in religious or secular forms. A doctrine can be captured. A nation can be captured. A market can be captured. A liberation movement can be captured. A security project can be captured. A historical memory can be captured. An institution can be captured. An identity can be captured. A technology can be captured. A vision of progress can be captured.

The sacred is not the problem. Human beings need ultimate concerns. They need meanings large enough to organize sacrifice, loyalty, courage, moral formation, memory, gratitude, grief, responsibility, and hope. Without some sense of ultimacy, life becomes thin and fragmented.

The problem arises when an ultimate concern ceases to protect life and begins to demand life's sacrifice.

Sacred capture occurs when the vessel becomes more important than the life it was meant to serve.

### 15.2 Sacred insecurity

Sacred capture often grows from sacred insecurity.

Sacred insecurity arises when trauma, identity, land, memory, religion, sovereignty, survival, or historical wound become fused into an ultimate concern. Under sacred insecurity, compromise appears as betrayal. The other's dignity appears as threat. The other's grief appears as propaganda. The other's security appears as one's own exposure. Violence appears defensive. Domination appears necessary. Peace appears naïve or dangerous.

Sacred insecurity is powerful because it organizes relevance at the deepest level. It does not merely say, "This matters." It says, "This matters absolutely." Once that happens, ordinary ethical correction is resisted. The sacred concern becomes protected from the suffering it causes.

This is visible in geopolitical conflict, but also in institutions, professions, ideologies, and personal identities. A hospital may treat its reputation as sacred. A nation may treat its founding myth as sacred. A political movement may treat its purity as sacred. A religious institution may treat its authority as sacred. A person may treat their wound as sacred. A company may treat growth as sacred. A technology culture may treat innovation as sacred.

Wherever ultimacy becomes closed against life, sacred capture is present.

### **15.3 Sacred memory and weaponized memory**

Memory is one of the most delicate domains of sacred relevance.

Sacred memory honors what must not be forgotten: suffering, sacrifice, ancestors, injustice, liberation, covenant, homeland, survival, and moral learning. It protects continuity. It prevents erasure. It allows grief to be carried across generations. It makes the past answerable to the future.

But memory becomes weaponized when remembrance is used to justify new harm.

Weaponized memory turns the wound into permission. It makes the suffering of one's own group uniquely real and the suffering of others secondary. It converts mourning into accusation without end. It makes repair appear like betrayal. It keeps the dead from becoming teachers of mercy because they are conscripted into the continuation of conflict.

Life-coherence wisdom does not ask memory to forget. It asks memory to become life-protecting.

The question is:

Does this memory deepen responsibility to protect life, or does it authorize new disposability?

### **15.4 Spiritual bypass and sacred abstraction**

Sacred capture can also occur through spiritual bypass.

Spiritual bypass occurs when spiritual language, mystical insight, religious doctrine, or universal compassion is used to avoid concrete suffering, power, accountability, grief, anger, or repair. It may speak of unity while ignoring injustice. It may speak of peace while avoiding truth. It may speak of forgiveness while bypassing accountability. It may speak of transcendence while leaving bodies in danger. It may speak of love while silencing the wounded.

This is sacred abstraction: life is affirmed in general while living beings are ignored in particular.

Life-coherence wisdom must therefore insist that the sacred be tested by the concrete.

Does this spirituality protect bodies?

Does it hear victims?

Does it repair relations?

Does it reduce domination?

Does it preserve dignity?

Does it confront structural harm?

Does it protect the vulnerable?

Does it allow life to appear?

A spirituality that cannot answer suffering is not yet wise.

### **15.5 Life-coherent correction**

The life-coherent correction to sacred capture is discernment.

Discernment asks:

What is being made ultimate?

What is being protected at all costs?

Who is being sacrificed?

What suffering is being justified?

What fear hides inside the sacred claim?

What would this ultimate concern look like if it were answerable to life?

Does this sacred story protect, repair, and expand life-capacity?

Or does it require the disposability of life?

The central corrective question is:

**Has the sacred become a vessel of life, or has life been made to serve the vessel?**

A sacred concern becomes wise when it deepens the protection of life.

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## 16. Algorithmic Capture

### 16.1 When relevance is optimized without wisdom

Algorithmic capture occurs when digital systems organize visibility, attention, recommendation, ranking, prediction, or decision-making according to objectives that are not answerable to life.

This is one of the defining relevance problems of the contemporary world.

Algorithms increasingly decide what people see, what news is amplified, what products are recommended, what risks are flagged, what applicants are ranked, what patients are prioritized, what students are monitored, what workers are evaluated, what routes are taken, what relationships are suggested, what desires are stimulated, what fears are reinforced, and what futures are imagined.

At one level, algorithmic systems are relevance machines. They sort overwhelming possibility. They select what is likely to matter according to a defined objective. But the crucial question is: matter for what?

Matter for engagement?

Matter for prediction?

Matter for profit?

Matter for control?

Matter for efficiency?

Matter for institutional convenience?

Matter for surveillance?

Matter for life?

Algorithmic relevance is not wisdom unless its objectives, training data, design, feedback loops, and governance are life-answerable.

### 16.2 Engagement is not wisdom

The clearest example is engagement.

Digital platforms often treat engagement as a central sign of relevance. Content that keeps users clicking, watching, scrolling, reacting, commenting, sharing, or returning is treated as successful. But engagement is not the same as life-coherent relevance.

This matters because digital platforms increasingly operate through recommender systems that decide what users encounter, and such systems often optimize revealed preferences such as clicks, likes, shares, viewing time, and other engagement signals. From a life-coherent perspective, the problem is not personalization as such, but the substitution of engagement for

wisdom. A system may become highly effective at predicting and amplifying what captures attention while remaining indifferent to what protects attention, dignity, truthfulness, agency, development, and repair.

Outrage engages. Fear engages. Comparison engages. Conspiracy engages. Tribal conflict engages. Humiliation engages. Narcissism engages. Doom engages. Fantasy engages. Addiction engages.

A system can become extraordinarily intelligent at capturing human attention while remaining indifferent to human flourishing.

This is synthetic misrelevance: the technological amplification of what captures attention without regard to what deserves attention.

The problem is not simply screen time. It is the training of salience. Digital systems teach nervous systems what to notice, what to desire, what to fear, what to imitate, what to envy, what to ignore, and what to become. They can fragment attention, intensify comparison, reward performance, accelerate outrage, and weaken the slow practices through which wisdom grows.

### **16.3 Algorithmic authority and hidden frames**

Algorithmic capture also occurs when algorithmic outputs gain authority while their frames remain hidden.

A risk score may appear objective. A recommendation may appear personalized. A search result may appear neutral. A prediction may appear scientific. A ranking may appear meritocratic. But every algorithmic system embodies choices: what data count, what outcomes matter, what errors are tolerated, what trade-offs are accepted, whose history is encoded, whose burden is ignored, and what objective is optimized.

When these choices are hidden, users and institutions may confuse output with truth.

Algorithmic systems do not merely process relevance. They enact relevance. They bring forth worlds by making some options visible and others invisible, some persons high-risk and others low-risk, some content authoritative and other content obscure, some futures probable and others neglected.

Life-coherence wisdom requires algorithmic humility.

No algorithm should be treated as wise simply because it is accurate within a defined task. Accuracy can still serve a life-incoherent objective. Prediction can reinforce historical injustice. Optimization can intensify burden. Personalization can isolate. Efficiency can dehumanize. Automation can displace responsibility.

The question is not only whether the model works.

The question is what world the model helps bring forth.

## **16.4 AI and the automation of misrelevance**

Artificial intelligence intensifies the issue because it can scale relevance production.

Generative systems can produce language, images, summaries, plans, recommendations, analyses, simulations, and decisions at great speed. They can support learning, creativity, medicine, research, governance, accessibility, and communication. They can also flood the world with plausible unreality, automate manipulation, intensify dependency, erode trust, simulate intimacy, accelerate institutional decisions, and create new forms of epistemic and affective capture.

AI does not automatically know what matters. It can infer patterns. It can optimize objectives. It can produce coherent responses. It can approximate relevance from data and prompts. But wisdom requires life-answerability, embodied vulnerability, relational responsibility, moral discernment, and accountability to those affected.

This does not mean AI cannot support wisdom. It means AI must be placed inside a life-coherent ecology of human judgment, institutional accountability, transparency, participatory governance, and repair.

The critique is not of algorithmic assistance as such. Algorithmic systems can support wisdom when they help reveal hidden burden, widen participation, detect risk early, support accessibility, reduce cognitive load, improve coordination, and make repair more actionable. The critique is of algorithmic relevance detached from life-answerability: systems that optimize engagement, prediction, efficiency, or institutional convenience without accountability to dignity, agency, truth, development, ecology, and repair.

The danger is not only that AI will be wrong. The deeper danger is that AI will make the wrong things easier, faster, more scalable, and more authoritative.

## **16.5 Life-coherent correction**

The life-coherent correction to algorithmic capture is digital wisdom.

Digital wisdom asks:

- What objective is being optimized?
- Who chose it?
- What becomes visible?
- What becomes invisible?
- What human capacities are strengthened or weakened?
- What emotions are amplified?
- What behaviors are trained?
- What burdens are displaced?

Who can contest the system?

Who is accountable when harm occurs?

Does this technology help humans and institutions realize what matters for life?

The central corrective question is:

**Does this system help life realize relevance, or does it automate irrelevance?**

A life-coherent digital system should support attention, dignity, agency, truthfulness, learning, care, ecological responsibility, democratic participation, and repair.

It should not merely capture, predict, rank, persuade, or optimize.

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## **17. Institutional Capture**

### **17.1 When institutions preserve themselves before life**

Institutional capture occurs when an organization makes its own survival, reputation, authority, funding, procedures, ideology, metrics, or continuity more relevant than the life it exists to serve.

This failure mode is pervasive because institutions are necessary and dangerous for the same reason: they conserve patterns.

Institutions allow societies to coordinate complex action across time. They preserve knowledge, roles, responsibilities, practices, standards, care systems, laws, rituals, and memory. Without institutions, life would be fragile, episodic, and dependent on individual goodwill. Health care, education, governance, science, religion, law, public health, humanitarian response, and ecological protection all require institutional forms.

But every institution faces a temptation: to make the vessel more important than its purpose.

A hospital exists to heal, but may protect throughput, revenue, hierarchy, or liability. A school exists to educate, but may protect rankings, discipline, credentialing, or bureaucratic compliance. A government exists to serve public life, but may protect power, party, state legitimacy, or administrative control. A religious institution exists to serve ultimate concern, but may protect doctrine, authority, identity, or reputation. A university exists to pursue truth and formation, but may protect prestige, funding, and publication metrics. A corporation may claim to serve customers and communities, but protect shareholder value above life. An international organization may exist to support human flourishing, but protect procedure, diplomacy, and institutional continuity.

Institutional capture is not always malicious. Often it is ordinary. People inside institutions learn what is safe to say, what is rewarded, what is punished, what is documented, what is ignored, what threatens leadership, and what can be postponed. Over time, the institution's self-protection becomes common sense.

### **17.2 The emotional life of institutions**

Institutions are not emotionless. They have emotional fields.

They may live in fear of scandal, litigation, funding loss, public criticism, political reprisal, internal conflict, or loss of authority. They may live in pride, convinced of their mission and unable to hear critique. They may live in shame, hiding harm because exposure feels annihilating. They may live in exhaustion, unable to imagine transformation. They may live in cynicism, treating reform as performance. They may live in urgency, responding only to crises. They may live in loyalty, confusing protection of leaders with protection of mission.

These emotional fields organize institutional relevance.

A fearful institution notices threats to reputation faster than threats to the vulnerable. A proud institution notices praise and dismisses critique. A ashamed institution conceals. An exhausted institution normalizes low standards. A cynical institution performs care. A bureaucratic institution notices procedural deviation more readily than suffering. A captured institution experiences truth as attack.

This is why institutional wisdom requires more than governance structures. It requires emotional and relational transformation.

Institutions must become capable of receiving reality without self-collapse.

### **17.3 Institutional misnaming**

Institutional capture depends on misnaming.

Harm becomes an incident.  
Abuse becomes a complaint.  
Exploitation becomes productivity.  
Humiliation becomes discipline.  
Neglect becomes resource constraint.  
Exclusion becomes standards.  
Silencing becomes unity.  
Delay becomes process.  
Defensiveness becomes prudence.  
Public relations become accountability.  
Adaptation to harm becomes resilience.

Misnaming protects the institution from the meaning of what it does.

Life-coherence wisdom requires renaming. This may be painful because renaming threatens the institution's self-image. But without renaming, repair cannot begin. An institution cannot repair betrayal if it calls betrayal a communication issue. It cannot repair structural racism if it calls racism isolated misunderstanding. It cannot repair burnout if it calls burnout weak resilience. It cannot repair spiritual abuse if it calls abuse lack of obedience. It cannot repair ecological harm if it calls harm externality.

Renaming is institutional metanoia.

It changes what the institution can see, confess, stop, and become.

### **17.4 De-implementation and institutional humility**

Institutions often prefer addition to subtraction.

They add policies, trainings, statements, dashboards, committees, campaigns, and initiatives. Some of these may help. But if the harmful pattern remains intact, additions become compensatory. Wellness programs are added while workloads remain impossible. Equity statements are added while exclusionary practices continue. Patient-centered language is added while appointment systems remain humiliating. Sustainability reports are added while extraction continues. Peace language is added while domination persists. Safeguarding procedures are added while power remains unaccountable.

Life-coherence wisdom requires de-implementation.

Some practices must stop. Some incentives must be removed. Some metrics must be retired. Some hierarchies must be flattened. Some silences must be broken. Some forms of growth must be refused. Some traditions must be reinterpreted. Some procedures must be redesigned. Some leaders must be held accountable. Some institutional self-images must die.

This requires humility.

Institutional humility is not weakness. It is the capacity of an organization to be corrected by the life it affects. It is the ability to let the wounded teach. It is the refusal to protect identity at the cost of truth. It is the willingness to redesign the vessel so that it serves life again.

## **17.5 Life-coherent correction**

The life-coherent correction to institutional capture is mission re-grounding in life-capacity.

An institution must ask:

What life were we created to serve?  
What do we now protect first under pressure?  
Whose suffering reaches decision-makers?  
Whose suffering is filtered out?  
What metrics have become substitutes for mission?  
What procedures protect us from accountability?  
What emotions organize our responses to critique?  
What must we stop doing?  
What margins are we consuming?  
What commons are we weakening or strengthening?  
What would we do differently if life-capacity were truly central?

The central corrective question is:

**What would this institution do differently if life, repair, dignity, and future generations were its organizing concern?**

An institution becomes wise when it can be transformed by the life it claims to serve.

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## 18. The Pattern Across the Failure Modes

### 18.1 One pathology, many forms

Salience capture, affective capture, metric capture, sacred capture, algorithmic capture, and institutional capture are not isolated errors. They are variations of one deeper pathology: the capture of relevance by life-incoherent systems.

Salience capture hijacks what stands out.  
Affective capture closes the emotional world.  
Metric capture narrows what counts.  
Sacred capture absolutizes finite concerns.  
Algorithmic capture optimizes visibility without wisdom.  
Institutional capture protects the vessel before life.

Each failure mode takes something necessary and turns it into a source of misrelevance.

Attention is necessary. Captured attention distracts from life.  
Emotion is necessary. Captured emotion closes worlds.  
Measurement is necessary. Captured measurement substitutes for life.  
Ultimate concern is necessary. Captured ultimacy demands sacrifice.  
Technology is necessary. Captured technology automates misrelevance.  
Institutions are necessary. Captured institutions preserve themselves before their purpose.

The life-coherent task is therefore not rejection, but reorientation.

Attention must become life-attentive.  
Emotion must become emotionally wise.  
Measurement must become life-answerable.  
The sacred must become life-protecting.  
Technology must become wisdom-supporting.  
Institutions must become repair-capable.

### 18.2 Why misrelevance is difficult to detect

Misrelevance is difficult to detect because it usually hides inside what a system already considers reasonable.

The market sees price.  
The institution sees procedure.  
The platform sees engagement.  
The state sees security.  
The school sees performance.

The hospital sees throughput.  
The movement sees justice.  
The religion sees faithfulness.  
The profession sees standards.  
The individual sees urgency.

Each may be partially right. That is why misrelevance is subtle. It does not usually begin as nonsense. It begins as partial relevance that becomes totalizing.

The life-coherent question is therefore not, “Does this matter?” but:

**Has this been made to matter in a way that disables life?**

### **18.3 The threshold question**

The threshold question of Part IV is:

**Where has relevance been captured, and what would it take to return relevance to life?**

This question prepares the movement into Part V, where the paper turns from failure modes to the positive framework: the Life-Coherence Wisdom Compass and the Life-Coherence Wisdom Cycle.

The aim is not merely to criticize misrelevance. It is to cultivate the capacity to sense, name, interrupt, reframe, repair, coordinate, and learn.

Wisdom begins when life can recognize where it has been made irrelevant.

Wisdom matures when life becomes capable of making itself matter again.

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# Part V — The Life-Coherence Wisdom Framework

## 19. The Life-Coherence Wisdom Compass

### 19.1 From failure modes to framework

The failure modes of misrelevance reveal why wisdom cannot be reduced to intelligence, emotion, morality, spirituality, measurement, technology, or institutional expertise.

Attention can be captured.

Emotion can be captured.

Metrics can be captured.

The sacred can be captured.

Algorithms can be captured.

Institutions can be captured.

This means that wisdom must include a disciplined capacity to detect when relevance has been misdirected. It must ask not only what matters, but why this has been made to matter, by whom, under what emotional conditions, through what frame, serving what ultimate concern, hiding what harm, and affecting whose life-capacity.

The Life-Coherence Wisdom Compass is proposed as a practical architecture for this task.

It is not a mechanical tool. It does not replace judgment. It does not claim to resolve every ethical dilemma or eliminate tragic choice. Rather, it offers a disciplined field of orientation: a way to keep attention, emotion, relation, relevance, value, harm, ultimacy, and repair in view at the same time.

At its center is life-capacity. Around that center are three living movements: emotion, relation, and relevance. Around those are three evaluative tests: life-value, anti-violence, and discernment. Around the whole are the failure modes of misrelevance. Beneath it is the practical cycle through which wisdom moves from sensing to re-attunement.

The compass exists because modern systems repeatedly detach relevance from life.

The task is to return relevance to life.

### 19.2 Life-capacity at the center

The center of the compass is **life-capacity**.

This is the anchor that prevents wisdom from becoming abstract, merely personal, merely cognitive, merely spiritual, merely institutional, or merely procedural. Life-capacity asks whether persons, communities, ecosystems, and future generations are actually more able to live, heal, relate, learn, participate, repair, belong, and flourish.

Life-capacity includes the biological conditions of living: nourishment, breathing, sleep, movement, immunity, metabolism, development, reproductive continuity, sensory attunement, and repair.

It includes psychological and emotional capacities: attention, agency, trust, grief, joy, meaning, memory, imagination, emotional regulation, courage, and hope.

It includes relational capacities: belonging, recognition, reciprocity, care, voice, accountability, forgiveness, boundary, solidarity, and legitimate coexistence.

It includes social and institutional capacities: education, health care, housing, safety, livelihood, public truth, legal protection, democratic participation, and access to commons.

It includes ecological capacities: clean air, drinkable water, fertile soil, biodiversity, climate stability, ocean health, and the regenerative integrity of the life-ground.

It includes spiritual and existential capacities: awe, gratitude, humility, moral responsibility, sacred memory, reverence, and the ability to live in relation with what exceeds the self.

Life-capacity is therefore not a narrow biological metric. It is the real field of conditions through which life becomes livable, repairable, meaningful, and continuous.

To place life-capacity at the center is to say that wisdom must remain answerable to life as lived, embodied, relational, social, ecological, and intergenerational.

### **19.3 Protection, repair, and expansion**

The compass identifies three movements inside life-capacity: **protection, repair, and expansion**.

Protection asks what must be safeguarded so life is not needlessly harmed. It includes protection from violence, deprivation, humiliation, toxicity, abandonment, domination, ecological destruction, and preventable overload. Protection is not domination. It is the preservation of the conditions that allow life to remain viable.

Repair asks what has been damaged and what must be restored. It includes biological healing, emotional processing, relational reconciliation, institutional accountability, ecological regeneration, trauma healing, truth-telling, and the restoration of trust. Repair is not sentimental. It is disciplined restoration of life-capacity after injury, distortion, neglect, or rupture.

Expansion asks what capacities can now grow. It includes learning, creativity, participation, development, meaning, freedom, joy, solidarity, ecological belonging, and future possibility. Expansion is not endless growth. It is the widening of life's coherent capacities within the limits and relations that sustain life.

These three movements correct one another.

Protection without repair can become defensive preservation.  
Repair without protection may repeatedly heal wounds that systems continue to inflict.  
Expansion without protection and repair can become extractive growth.  
Protection without expansion can become stagnation.  
Repair without expansion can become maintenance.  
Expansion without repair can become denial.

Life-coherence wisdom asks how protection, repair, and expansion can be held together in living balance.

#### **19.4 The inner triad: emotion, relation, relevance**

Around the center of life-capacity are three living movements.

##### **Emotion senses viability.**

This is the Peil Kauffman movement. Emotion registers danger, safety, loss, belonging, overload, boundary, possibility, and repair. It tells us that something matters before we can fully explain why.

##### **Relation opens worlds.**

This is the Maturana movement. Emotioning creates domains of action. Fear, love, shame, grief, anger, trust, and hope bring forth different worlds in which different actions become possible.

##### **Relevance realizes what matters.**

This is the Vervaeke movement. From the overwhelming field of possibilities, living-cognitive systems select, frame, and transform what matters. Relevance realization allows salience to become insight, meaning, and wisdom.

Together, these movements prevent wisdom from being reduced to any single faculty.

Emotion keeps wisdom embodied.  
Relation keeps wisdom world-forming.  
Relevance keeps wisdom dynamic and self-correcting.

The three must remain in conversation. When emotion is ignored, wisdom becomes disembodied abstraction. When relation is ignored, wisdom becomes private interiority. When relevance realization is ignored, wisdom becomes static repetition. When all three are held together, wisdom becomes a living process of attunement, discernment, and transformation.

## 19.5 The evaluative ring: life-value, anti-violence, discernment

The inner triad tells us how wisdom arises. The evaluative ring tells us how wisdom is tested.

The first test is the **life-value test**:

### **Does this expand or reduce life-capacity?**

This prevents relevance from being captured by profit, status, efficiency, tradition, ideology, urgency, novelty, or institutional self-expansion. It asks whether what appears relevant actually enables life to live, heal, participate, repair, and flourish.

The second test is the **anti-violence test**:

### **What harm is hidden or normalized?**

This prevents wisdom from becoming polite abstraction. It asks what direct, structural, cultural, ecological, commercial, digital, or institutional violence is being concealed by the current frame.

The third test is the **discernment test**:

### **What is being protected, sacrificed, or made ultimate?**

This prevents wisdom from becoming spiritually naïve. It asks whether the deepest concern organizing the situation remains answerable to life, or whether some finite good has been absolutized at life's expense.

Together, these tests make wisdom life-answerable.

They ask whether relevance serves life, whether hidden harm is revealed, and whether ultimacy remains grounded in life-protection rather than sacrifice.

## 19.6 The shadow ring: misrelevance

Around the compass is the shadow ring of misrelevance.

This ring names the ways wisdom is lost:

Salience capture makes what stands out control what matters.

Affective capture makes emotion into a closed world.

Metric capture makes indicators substitutes for life.

Sacred capture makes ultimate concern life-incoherent.

Algorithmic capture optimizes relevance without wisdom.

Institutional capture protects the vessel before life.

The shadow ring is necessary because wisdom cannot be cultivated by describing the ideal alone. It must also know how it fails. A framework that cannot diagnose capture will itself be captured.

The compass therefore has a double function. It orients toward life-capacity, and it warns against the capture of relevance.

## 19.7 Figure 1 interpretation

**Figure 1. The Life-Coherence Wisdom Compass** should be placed in the early part of the paper, after the conceptual definition of wisdom as life-answerable relevance realization.

The diagram presents wisdom not as a possession inside the individual mind, but as a relational field. At the center is life-capacity: protection, repair, and expansion. The inner triad shows the living process by which wisdom arises: emotion senses viability, relation opens worlds, and relevance realizes what matters. The evaluative ring shows how wisdom is tested: through life-value, anti-violence, and discernment. The outer field names the failure modes of misrelevance. The bottom cycle translates the compass into practice.

The diagram's central claim is simple:

**Wisdom is the life-answerable realization of what matters, in the service of repair.**

## 19.8 Life-capacity is a criterion, not an algorithm

Life-capacity is not a single measurable variable and does not eliminate tragic choice. It is a grounding criterion for disciplined inquiry. It asks what capacities are enabled or disabled, for whom, across which timescale, with what burdens, and under what ecological conditions.

Competing life-capacities may conflict. A policy may protect one group while burdening another. A clinical intervention may prolong biological life while intensifying suffering or reducing agency. An ecological restriction may protect future life-ground while imposing immediate hardship on workers or communities. A peace agreement may reduce direct violence while leaving unresolved wounds that require long-term repair. A public health intervention may protect populations while constraining individual freedom. A technology may expand access while introducing new forms of surveillance or dependency.

In such cases, life-coherence wisdom does not offer automatic answers. It requires participatory judgment, transparent reasoning, harm minimization, repair commitments, and ongoing re-attunement.

This clarification is essential. Life-capacity is not a slogan used to end debate. It is a discipline for beginning better debate. It asks who is affected, whose voice is absent, what burdens are displaced, what repair is promised, what margins are consumed, what future is being protected or foreclosed, and what evidence will be used to revise the action if harm appears.

The purpose of the life-capacity criterion is not to remove uncertainty. It is to keep uncertainty answerable to life.

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## 20. The Life-Coherence Wisdom Cycle

### 20.1 From compass to practice

A compass orients. A cycle moves.

The Life-Coherence Wisdom Cycle translates the framework into practice. It shows how persons, clinicians, educators, policymakers, institutions, technologies, religious communities, peacebuilders, and societies can move from raw experience to wise action.

The cycle is:

**Sense viability → Notice salience → Name the frame → Test life-value → Reveal harm → Interrupt capture → Reframe → Repair → Protect margins → Coordinate → Learn and re-attune**

This cycle does not replace the life-coherent action method developed in earlier health and progress work. Rather, it deepens it. The earlier action method asked how systems move from root causes to life-enabling action: recognize, rename, measure, expose, de-implement, restore commons, redesign affordances, protect margins, coordinate, monitor, and learn. The wisdom cycle asks how actors realize what matters before, during, and after such action.

It is the inner discipline of life-coherent transformation.

### 20.2 Sense viability

The first movement is to **sense viability**.

Before analysis begins, life is already registering. Something feels unsafe, depleted, blocked, painful, tense, heavy, urgent, hopeful, possible, or alive. A patient feels exhausted. A community feels humiliated. A child withdraws. A clinician feels moral distress. A river becomes polluted. A worker burns out. A public institution loses trust. A family carries unspoken grief. A society senses that something is wrong even before it knows how to name it.

Sensing viability means listening to the signals of life before reducing them to categories.

This includes bodily signals, emotional signals, relational signals, ecological signals, institutional signals, and cultural signals. It means taking seriously fatigue, pain, inflammation, loneliness, fear, grief, shame, anger, distrust, ecological degradation, public cynicism, youth despair, and moral injury as possible signs of life-capacity under strain.

The first question is:

**What is life already registering?**

### **20.3 Notice salience**

The second movement is to **notice salience**.

What is coming to the foreground? What is being treated as urgent? What is dominating conversation, measurement, emotion, funding, media, governance, or institutional attention? What is being repeatedly noticed? What is being ignored?

This movement does not yet judge the salience. It observes it.

A health system may notice readmission rates but not caregiver burden. A government may notice economic growth but not ecological depletion. A platform may notice engagement but not attention harm. A community may notice crime but not humiliation. A school may notice grades but not belonging. A religious institution may notice doctrinal conformity but not spiritual injury.

The key is to distinguish what is salient from what is life-important.

The question is:

**What has been made to stand out, and what has been pushed into the background?**

### **20.4 Name the frame**

The third movement is to **name the frame**.

Salience never appears outside a frame. A frame determines what counts as problem, evidence, solution, success, responsibility, failure, risk, value, and possibility. Without naming the frame, actors may believe they are responding to reality when they are actually responding to a patterned interpretation of reality.

A patient may be framed as noncompliant rather than overburdened. Poverty may be framed as personal failure rather than structural exclusion. Ecological destruction may be framed as economic development. Security may be framed as domination. Spiritual obedience may be framed as faithfulness even when it silences harm. Engagement may be framed as relevance. Institutional critique may be framed as disloyalty.

Naming the frame is an act of liberation because it allows the frame itself to become visible.

The question is:

**What story, metric, fear, role, ideology, model, institution, or sacred concern is organizing perception here?**

### **20.5 Test life-value**

The fourth movement is to **test life-value**.

Once the frame is named, it must be asked whether it expands or reduces life-capacity.

This is where wisdom refuses to be satisfied with internal coherence. A system may be coherent within its own terms and still life-incoherent. A market may efficiently allocate resources while degrading the life-ground. A bureaucracy may comply with procedure while humiliating persons. A technology may optimize engagement while degrading attention. A school may improve performance while increasing anxiety. A security policy may reduce one risk while producing deeper insecurity.

The life-value test asks:

**Does this frame protect, repair, and expand life-capacity — or does it reduce, disable, or displace it?**

## **20.6 Reveal harm**

The fifth movement is to **reveal harm**.

Even when life-value is reduced, harm may remain hidden. It may be hidden by distance, abstraction, complexity, ideology, normalization, professionalism, sacred language, metrics, or institutional filtering.

Revealing harm means asking where life is being injured and how the injury has been concealed.

Who carries the burden?

Who loses time, health, dignity, safety, trust, or future possibility?

Which bodies absorb the cost?

Which ecosystems are degraded?

Which communities are made disposable?

Which caregivers are exhausted?

Which workers are exploited?

Which children are sacrificed?

Which harms are called inevitable, efficient, necessary, deserved, or normal?

Wisdom must reveal harm because hidden harm cannot be repaired.

The question is:

**What suffering, burden, or life-loss has this frame made invisible or acceptable?**

## **20.7 Interrupt capture**

The sixth movement is to **interrupt capture**.

Once harm is revealed, the system's capture must be interrupted. This is often the most difficult step because capture is not merely intellectual. It may be emotional, institutional, economic, sacred, algorithmic, or political. It may be embedded in incentives, identities, fears, procedures, and livelihoods.

Interrupting capture may mean pausing an automatic response. It may mean refusing a harmful metric. It may mean stopping an abusive practice. It may mean naming a sacred distortion. It may mean redesigning a digital feed. It may mean protecting whistleblowers. It may mean creating space for grief before revenge. It may mean suspending a policy that is producing burden. It may mean refusing to let urgency suppress discernment.

Interruption does not always mean immediate transformation. Sometimes it means creating a break in inevitability.

The question is:

**What loop, incentive, fear, metric, narrative, or practice must be interrupted so life can reappear?**

## 20.8 Reframe

The seventh movement is to **reframe**.

Reframing is not public relations. It is not euphemism. It is not merely changing language while preserving the same pattern. Reframing is the transformation of the field of relevance so that life becomes visible differently.

The patient is not noncompliant; the care plan is unlivable.

The child is not failing; the learning environment is not meeting the child's life.

The worker is not weak; the workplace is consuming margins.

The community is not irrationally angry; harm has gone unanswered.

The conflict is not ancient hatred; wounds and structures are reproducing insecurity.

The ecological crisis is not an externality; it is life-ground degradation.

The metric is not neutral; it is training attention.

The algorithm is not just recommending; it is shaping desire.

A good reframe reveals a new path of repair.

The question is:

**What becomes possible when the situation is seen from the standpoint of life-capacity?**

## 20.9 Repair

The eighth movement is to **repair**.

Repair is the practical heart of life-coherence wisdom.

Repair may include treatment, restoration, apology, restitution, redesign, de-implementation, ecological regeneration, trauma work, institutional accountability, policy reform, relational reconciliation, or protection of vulnerable life. Repair is not merely a feeling of care. It is the restoration of conditions through which life-capacity can recover and grow.

Repair asks what life needs now.

Does the burden need reduction?  
Does the wound need acknowledgment?  
Does the body need rest?  
Does the relationship need truth?  
Does the institution need accountability?  
Does the ecosystem need regeneration?  
Does the community need resources?  
Does the policy need de-implementation?  
Does the sacred story need repentance?  
Does the technology need redesign?

The question is:

**What action restores life-capacity and prevents the harm from being reproduced?**

## **20.10 Protect margins**

The ninth movement is to **protect margins**.

Repair fails when margins remain depleted. A person cannot heal without time, sleep, nourishment, safety, trust, and support. A family cannot carry endless care burden without collapse. A clinician cannot practice wisely under constant overload. A community cannot remain peaceful under permanent humiliation. An ecosystem cannot regenerate under continual extraction. A democracy cannot deliberate under constant panic. A child cannot learn under chronic fear.

Margins are the reserves that allow life to absorb disturbance without collapse.

They include biological margins, emotional margins, relational margins, economic margins, ecological margins, institutional margins, time margins, attention margins, and spiritual margins.

Protecting margins means refusing systems that require life to live at the edge of breakdown.

The question is:

**What reserves must be restored so life can remain viable under disturbance?**

## 20.11 Coordinate

The tenth movement is to **coordinate**.

Life-coherence wisdom is relational. Many harms cannot be repaired by isolated individuals because they are produced by fields of relation. Clinical care, public health, education, ecological repair, peacebuilding, institutional reform, and digital governance all require coordination across actors, levels, and timescales.

Coordination means aligning action without erasing difference. It means creating legitimate coexistence among those affected. It means bringing together bodies of knowledge that are often separated: lived experience, professional expertise, scientific evidence, local memory, ecological understanding, ethical discernment, and governance capacity.

Coordination is especially necessary because misrelevance often persists through fragmentation. Each part of a system sees only its own task. The clinician sees symptoms. The school sees performance. The family sees behavior. The employer sees productivity. The government sees costs. The platform sees engagement. The community sees breakdown. Wisdom asks these fragments to meet.

The question is:

**Who must act together because the relation cannot be healed from one side alone?**

## 20.12 Learn and re-attune

The final movement is to **learn and re-attune**.

No action completes wisdom once and for all. Life responds. Conditions change. Interventions have unintended effects. Repair may reveal deeper wounds. A reframe may need refinement. A metric may begin to distort. An institution may revert. A technology may produce new capture. A community may require new forms of trust. A person may heal in unexpected ways.

Learning is not an afterthought. It is the condition that keeps wisdom alive.

Re-attunement means allowing reality to correct the frame. It means listening again to bodies, relationships, communities, ecosystems, data, wounds, resistance, and unexpected consequences. It means humility before life.

The question is:

**What did life teach us through this action, and what must now be renamed, stopped, restored, redesigned, or protected?**

## 20.13 The cycle as recursive, not linear

The Life-Coherence Wisdom Cycle is not a rigid sequence.

In practice, one may begin anywhere. A harm may force recognition. A metric may reveal a hidden pattern. An emotion may expose a frame. A failed intervention may require re-attunement. A conflict may require immediate interruption before full analysis. A crisis may demand rapid protection while deeper repair follows.

The cycle is recursive. Each movement informs the others.

Sensing viability may change what becomes salient.

Naming the frame may reveal hidden emotion.

Testing life-value may expose harm.

Revealing harm may require reframing.

Repair may require new coordination.

Learning may reveal that the original frame was too narrow.

Wisdom is not a straight path from ignorance to certainty. It is an ongoing discipline of life-answerable correction.

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## **21. From Salience to Insight**

### **21.1 Salience as the beginning, not the end**

Salience is the beginning of relevance, not its completion.

Something stands out. A symptom appears. A conflict erupts. A child acts out. A patient misses appointments. A community protests. A river dies. A metric worsens. A religious institution faces scandal. A digital platform amplifies outrage. A nation experiences threat. A person feels dread. A clinician feels moral distress.

The first salience says: attend.

But wisdom asks what kind of attending is required.

If the first salience is obeyed too quickly, the response may deepen misrelevance. The symptom may be suppressed without asking why it appeared. The protest may be policed without asking what wound it expresses. The child may be punished without asking what world the behavior reveals. The patient may be labeled noncompliant without asking whether the care plan is livable. The scandal may be managed without repairing the institution. The conflict may be securitized without addressing humiliation and fear. The emotion may be acted out without discerning its truth.

Salience is a doorway. Insight is what happens when we walk through the doorway without assuming we already know the room.

### **21.2 Insight as reorganization of relevance**

Insight is not merely the arrival of an answer. It is the reorganization of relevance.

Before insight, a situation is organized one way. After insight, the field changes. Something that was background becomes foreground. Something that seemed central becomes secondary. A hidden relation becomes visible. A rigid category softens. A new possibility appears.

The shift may be clinical: the disease is seen not only as pathology but as unfinished healing within an overburdened organism–niche relation.

It may be educational: the student's poor performance is seen not as lack of ability but as a signal of fear, exclusion, hunger, learning difference, or loss of belonging.

It may be institutional: the complaint is seen not as reputational risk but as truth arriving from the harmed edge of the system.

It may be economic: growth is seen not as progress itself but as ambiguous unless it expands life-capacity without degrading life-ground.

It may be spiritual: certainty is seen not as faith but as fear seeking protection from humility.

It may be political: security is seen not as domination over threat but as the co-creation of conditions in which no people's safety requires another's disposability.

Insight allows misrelevance to be interrupted because it changes what matters.

### **21.3 Insight and humility**

Insight requires humility because the current frame must loosen.

This is difficult. Frames are not merely ideas. They are attached to identity, training, status, livelihood, loyalty, emotion, memory, and institutional stability. To see differently can feel like losing competence, belonging, certainty, authority, or sacred ground.

The clinician may have to admit that the protocol is not enough.

The policymaker may have to admit that the dashboard hides burden.

The educator may have to admit that achievement is not formation.

The religious leader may have to admit that doctrine has been used to silence life.

The activist may have to admit that justice language has become revenge.

The technologist may have to admit that optimization has scaled harm.

The institution may have to admit that its self-image is false.

Insight therefore has a moral cost. It asks the knower to become vulnerable to correction.

This is why wisdom cannot be separated from humility. Without humility, relevance remains trapped inside the frame that protects the self or system from transformation.

### **21.4 Life-coherent insight**

Not every insight is life-coherent.

One can gain insight into how to manipulate, dominate, exploit, seduce, addict, evade, or control. Intelligence can produce strategic insight. Markets can produce consumer insight. Military systems can produce threat insight. Platforms can produce engagement insight. Institutions can produce risk-management insight.

Life-coherent insight is different.

It reveals what life requires.

It shows what must be protected, repaired, stopped, restored, redesigned, shared, grieved, or released. It makes hidden burden visible. It clarifies where violence has been normalized. It

reveals when the sacred has been captured. It restores the other as legitimate. It opens a path in which life-capacity can expand.

The test of insight is not merely whether it is clever, novel, or powerful.

The test is whether it serves repair.

## **21.5 From insight to shared meaning**

Insight becomes more powerful when it becomes shareable meaning.

A private insight may transform a person. A shared insight may transform a relationship, institution, community, or culture. But shared meaning requires language, symbol, narrative, practice, and coordination.

This is where the life-coherent framework itself functions as a language of shared insight. Terms such as life-capacity, organism–niche relation, exposure–repair balance, margins, life-value, civil commons, discernment, sacred capture, and misrelevance do not merely describe. They help bring forth a world in which repair becomes more visible and actionable.

A good concept is not only accurate. It makes better action possible.

Misrelevance is such a concept. It names a pattern that would otherwise appear as separate failures: distraction, emotional fixation, bad metrics, spiritual distortion, algorithmic manipulation, and institutional self-protection. Once named, these can be recognized as variations of the same deeper disorder: the wrong things have been made to matter.

Naming misrelevance opens the path toward relevance repair.

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## **22. From Insight to Repair**

### **22.1 Wisdom is completed in action**

Wisdom is incomplete until it acts.

This does not mean every insight requires immediate intervention. Sometimes wise action is restraint. Sometimes it is waiting, listening, witnessing, grieving, or refusing premature closure. Sometimes it is protecting a space in which life can reorganize itself. But even restraint is action when it is chosen in service of life.

The point is that wisdom cannot remain contemplation alone.

A person who understands harm but does not alter conduct is not yet wise. An institution that acknowledges injury but does not change practice is not yet wise. A society that measures ecological destruction but continues extraction is not yet wise. A religion that preaches compassion but protects abuse is not yet wise. A technology company that understands attention harm but optimizes engagement is not yet wise. A government that recognizes structural violence but preserves the structures is not yet wise.

Wisdom must become repair.

### **22.2 Repair as life-capacity restoration**

Repair is the restoration of life-capacity after harm, overload, distortion, neglect, capture, or rupture.

In the body, repair may mean rest, nutrition, immune resolution, rehabilitation, sleep, reduction of toxic exposure, and restoration of regulatory coherence.

In the person, repair may mean grief, therapy, meaning-making, agency, emotional integration, forgiveness where appropriate, boundary restoration, and the rebuilding of trust.

In relationships, repair may mean truth-telling, apology, accountability, changed behavior, restitution, dialogue, and renewed mutual recognition.

In institutions, repair may mean transparency, compensation, policy change, de-implementation, participation of those harmed, protection from retaliation, and redesign of incentives.

In society, repair may mean social protection, public health investment, educational transformation, housing, ecological regeneration, economic justice, legal reform, and restoration of civil commons.

In spirituality, repair may mean repentance, humility, restoration of mercy, protection of the vulnerable, and returning ultimate concern to life.

Repair is not the same as return to the previous state. Sometimes the previous state was the source of harm. Repair may require transformation.

To repair is not merely to fix what broke. It is to restore the conditions through which life can participate in its own flourishing.

### **22.3 De-implementation as repair**

Repair often requires stopping.

Modern systems prefer addition. They add programs, policies, apps, trainings, protocols, dashboards, statements, committees, and campaigns. Additions may be useful, but they can also conceal the refusal to stop what is causing harm.

Life-coherence wisdom insists on de-implementation.

A harmful practice must be stopped, not merely softened. A damaging metric must be retired, not merely supplemented. An exploitative workload must be reduced, not merely accompanied by wellness training. A toxic exposure must be removed, not merely monitored. A dehumanizing policy must be repealed, not merely administered more kindly. A captured sacred narrative must be renounced, not merely balanced with compassionate language. An attention-capturing design must be changed, not merely accompanied by digital well-being tips.

In health services research, de-implementation has emerged as a necessary complement to implementation science. It refers to the reduction or removal of practices that are low-value, ineffective, unnecessary, or harmful; importantly, reviews of the field show that de-implementation is not simply implementation in reverse, but requires attention to its own determinants, strategies, incentives, professional identities, and institutional barriers (Ingvarsson et al., 2022; Nilsen et al., 2020; Niven et al., 2015). In life-coherent terms, de-implementation is the disciplined refusal to ask life to keep adapting to preventable harm.

Repair begins when systems stop requiring life to adapt to preventable harm.

De-implementation is the wisdom of subtraction.

### **22.4 Non-forcing action**

Life-coherence wisdom also requires a certain quality of action.

Not every intervention that aims at good produces life. Some interventions impose control in ways that reduce agency, ignore context, override relational intelligence, or create dependency. They may be well-intentioned but still life-incoherent.

Non-forcing action does not mean passivity. It means acting with the living structure of the situation rather than imposing an external order that violates it. It means listening before intervening, reducing burden before demanding adaptation, restoring conditions before blaming behavior, aligning with healing processes rather than forcing outcomes, and allowing those affected to participate in repair.

In clinical care, non-forcing action means supporting the organism's healing capacity rather than merely suppressing signals. In education, it means cultivating curiosity and belonging rather than forcing performance. In governance, it means creating conditions for participation rather than imposing technocratic solutions. In peacebuilding, it means restoring life-conditions rather than dictating reconciliation. In ecological repair, it means working with regenerative processes rather than engineering domination.

Non-forcing action is not weak action. It may be decisive. It may stop harm firmly. It may set boundaries. It may dismantle structures. But its force is life-protective rather than dominating.

It acts so that life can act.

## **22.5 Repair and the protection of margins**

Repair cannot be sustained without margins.

If the repaired system remains overloaded, the harm will recur. A patient discharged into the same impossible conditions will relapse. A worker returned to the same exploitative workload will burn out again. A family given advice without support will collapse under care burden. A community given symbolic recognition without resources will remain injured. An ecosystem restored while extraction continues will degrade again. An institution that apologizes without changing incentives will repeat betrayal.

Margins are the buffer, reserve, and spaciousness that allow life to remain responsive rather than reactive.

Wisdom therefore asks not only what repair is needed, but what margins must be protected so repair can endure.

Time margins.

Sleep margins.

Financial margins.

Care margins.

Ecological margins.

Institutional margins.

Attention margins.

Relational margins.

Spiritual margins.

A marginless life cannot become wise because it is forced into survival relevance.

A marginless institution cannot become wise because it is forced into crisis response.

A marginless society cannot become wise because it consumes the future to maintain the present.

## **22.6 Wisdom acts by repair, not domination**

The central ethical claim of the framework is:

### **Wisdom acts by repair, not domination.**

Domination imposes order by reducing the other's agency, dignity, voice, complexity, or life-capacity. It may appear efficient. It may appear decisive. It may appear protective. It may even temporarily reduce disorder. But domination produces hidden injury. It silences rather than heals. It controls rather than coordinates. It stabilizes by suppressing life.

Repair works differently.

Repair seeks the restoration of life-enabling relation. It asks what has been injured, what must stop, what must be restored, who must be heard, what burdens must be reduced, what capacities must be strengthened, what margins must be protected, and what future must be made possible.

Repair does not exclude boundary, restraint, law, emergency action, or protective force where these are necessary to prevent immediate harm. The distinction is not between action and inaction, but between life-protective restraint and domination. Repair aims to restore the conditions of life, dignity, accountability, and future coexistence; domination aims to secure control by reducing the other's agency, legitimacy, or life-capacity.

Repair does not avoid conflict. It may require confrontation, accountability, law, boundary, and structural change. But its aim is not the humiliation or erasure of the other. Its aim is the restoration of conditions in which life can continue with dignity.

Domination asks: how do we make the system obey?

Repair asks: what does life need to become whole enough to participate?

Domination produces compliance.

Repair restores capacity.

Domination protects control.

Repair protects life.

## **22.7 The transition to applications**

The Life-Coherence Wisdom Compass and Cycle now allow the framework to move into practice.

The next part applies the framework across major domains: clinical care, education, public health, governance, artificial intelligence and digital systems, and peacebuilding. In each domain, the core question remains the same:

**What has been made relevant here, and does that relevance serve life?**

The applications are not separate from the theory. They are the test of it. A wisdom framework that cannot illuminate practice remains abstraction. A life-coherent framework must show how wisdom becomes clinical, educational, public, institutional, technological, ecological, spiritual, and political.

Wisdom becomes real where relevance is repaired.

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## Part VI — Applications

### 23. Clinical Wisdom

#### 23.1 Beyond diagnosis alone

Clinical wisdom begins where diagnosis meets the living person.

Modern medicine has extraordinary diagnostic power. It can identify pathogens, tumors, inflammatory pathways, genetic variants, metabolic disturbances, organ dysfunction, vascular lesions, immunological patterns, and psychiatric syndromes with increasing precision. These powers are indispensable. But diagnosis alone does not exhaust clinical wisdom.

A diagnosis names a pattern. Clinical wisdom asks what the pattern means in the life of this person, in this body, at this moment, within this family, under these burdens, with these fears, resources, exposures, margins, and possibilities.

This resonates with the renewed interest in *phronesis*, or practical wisdom, in medicine. Recent work argues that evidence-based medicine and clinical decision-making require more than technical knowledge; they require practical judgment, attentiveness to the patient, ethical-emotional capacity, reasoning amid complexity, and continual learning from experience (Boudreau et al., 2024; Conroy et al., 2021; Cosgrove et al., 2023). Life-coherent clinical wisdom builds on this tradition by placing the organism–niche relation, repair, margins, and life-capacity at the center of clinical judgment.

The life-coherent health framework already argued that health is not reducible to disease absence, but is better understood as life-capacity enabled, with healing as life-capacity restored and flourishing as life-capacity expressed in dignity, relation, meaning, participation, and ecological belonging.

Clinical wisdom is therefore the capacity to perceive the patient as an organism-in-relation.

The wise clinician asks not only:

What disease is present?

but also:

What burden is this person carrying?

What exposure is ongoing?

What repair is blocked?

What margins are depleted?

What fear, grief, shame, loneliness, or uncertainty is shaping the illness experience?

What social, ecological, occupational, digital, commercial, familial, or institutional conditions are entering the body?

What does healing completion require?

Clinical wisdom does not reject biomedical specificity. It deepens it.

## **23.2 The consultation as relevance field**

Every clinical consultation is a relevance field.

Some things are made salient: the chief complaint, vital signs, test results, medication list, risk factors, diagnosis codes, guideline targets, insurance requirements, time constraints, documentation demands, and clinician concerns. Other things may remain background: the patient's shame, the caregiver's exhaustion, financial insecurity, sleep collapse, domestic stress, unsafe housing, food quality, loneliness, spiritual distress, occupational strain, environmental exposure, fear of medication, mistrust of institutions, or previous humiliation by health systems.

Clinical misrelevance occurs when the consultation makes the wrong things matter.

A laboratory value may become more salient than the patient's capacity to live the treatment plan. A diagnostic label may become more salient than the person's story. A risk score may become more salient than relational trust. A medication adjustment may become more salient than ongoing exposure. A behavior may be labeled "noncompliance" when the more relevant reality is cost, confusion, fear, side effects, caregiver burden, cultural meaning, transport, food insecurity, or despair.

The clinical task is not to make every possible factor equally relevant. That would be impossible. The task is to realize what matters most for healing in this case.

Clinical wisdom asks:

What is the life-relevant signal here?

What is noise?

What is urgent but not central?

What is central but hidden?

What must be treated now?

What must be repaired over time?

What must be changed in the niche so that the organism can heal?

## **23.3 Medical misrelevance**

Medical misrelevance occurs when clinical systems organize care around signals that are medically legible but life-incomplete.

This can happen in many ways.

Disease categories may become more relevant than lived suffering.  
Guidelines may become more relevant than patient capacity.  
Documentation may become more relevant than listening.  
Risk reduction may become more relevant than meaning.  
Medication adherence may become more relevant than the reasons adherence is difficult.  
Specialist fragmentation may make organ systems more relevant than organismal coherence.  
Efficiency targets may make throughput more relevant than therapeutic relation.  
Technology may make data more relevant than touch, presence, and trust.

The danger is not that these clinical tools are useless. They are often necessary. The danger is that they can become totalizing. Once totalized, they produce a medicine that is technically active but relationally thin.

A life-coherent clinical wisdom asks:

Does this care plan expand or reduce the person's life-capacity?  
Does it reduce exposure or merely treat downstream effects?  
Does it support repair and healing completion?  
Does it protect the patient's margins?  
Does it restore agency, dignity, understanding, and participation?  
Does it make the patient more whole, or more managed?

### **23.4 The body as teacher**

Clinical wisdom also requires humility before the body.

The body often knows that something is wrong before the diagnostic system can name it. Fatigue, pain, palpitations, appetite changes, insomnia, dysregulated mood, inflammatory flares, menstrual disruption, bowel changes, dizziness, breathlessness, anxiety, and bodily dread may all be signals of disturbed organism–niche relation.

This does not mean every symptom is self-evidently diagnostic. Symptoms can mislead. Bodies can amplify danger. Trauma can distort salience. Anxiety can mimic disease. Disease can hide behind normal tests. But wisdom does not dismiss bodily signals because they are complex. It listens, investigates, contextualizes, and remains teachable.

A wise clinician does not worship data or feeling. The wise clinician brings them into disciplined relation.

The question is:

**What is the body trying to tell us, and what must be done so that life can repair?**

### **23.5 Clinical wisdom as repair**

Clinical wisdom culminates in repair.

Sometimes repair requires urgent intervention: antibiotics, insulin, surgery, anticoagulation, fluids, oxygen, immunosuppression, analgesia, psychiatric care, or resuscitation. Sometimes it requires subtraction: stopping a harmful medication, reducing treatment burden, de-implementing unnecessary tests, simplifying regimens, removing exposure, reducing workload, or protecting rest. Sometimes it requires relation: apology, trust-building, explanation, family support, grief work, trauma-informed care, or shared decision-making. Sometimes it requires social action: food access, housing, safety, transport, income support, workplace modification, environmental protection, or public policy.

Clinical wisdom is the art of knowing which form of repair is being asked for.

It does not treat the patient as a disease-bearing body alone. It treats the patient as a living being whose body, biography, relationships, conditions, meanings, and futures are all part of the healing field.

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## 24. Educational Wisdom

### 24.1 Education as relevance formation

Education is not merely the transfer of information. It is the formation of relevance.

A child does not only learn facts, skills, and procedures. A child learns what is worth noticing, what is worth asking, what is worth caring about, what counts as success, what counts as failure, whose voice matters, what kind of mistake is safe, what kind of person is valued, what futures are imaginable, and what forms of life deserve protection.

Every educational system trains salience.

If grades dominate, students learn that performance matters. If competition dominates, they learn that worth is comparative. If obedience dominates, they learn that safety lies in compliance. If curiosity is protected, they learn that the world is intelligible and inviting. If belonging is protected, they learn that learning occurs in relation. If repair is practiced, they learn that mistakes can become growth. If ecological responsibility is lived, they learn that knowledge belongs to the web of life.

Educational wisdom therefore asks:

**What kind of relevance field is this school, classroom, curriculum, or learning culture bringing forth?**

### 24.2 From information to discernment

The information age has made education's old task insufficient.

Students need knowledge, literacy, numeracy, history, science, art, and technical skill. But they also need discernment: the capacity to evaluate claims, detect manipulation, recognize hidden frames, regulate attention, understand emotion, participate in dialogue, repair conflict, and distinguish meaningful knowledge from noise.

A student can know many things and still be captured by misinformation, outrage, status anxiety, ideological certainty, digital compulsion, or despair.

This concern is consistent with the educational wisdom literature, especially Sternberg's argument that schools should teach not only analytical intelligence but also wisdom, creativity, values, perspective-taking, and common-good reasoning (Sternberg, 2001; Sternberg & Hagen, 2019; Sternberg et al., 2009). Life-coherent education extends this by asking whether learning environments form students' capacity to realize what matters for life, detect capture, and participate in repair.

Educational wisdom therefore shifts the question:

Not only, what should students know?

but:

What should students become capable of noticing, questioning, loving, repairing, and protecting?

This does not weaken academic rigor. It restores its purpose.

### **24.3 Achievement capture**

Educational misrelevance often appears as achievement capture.

Achievement matters. Students should develop competence. They should learn discipline, effort, memory, reasoning, creativity, and excellence. But achievement becomes captured when measurable performance becomes more relevant than life-capacity.

In achievement capture, grades become more relevant than learning. Rankings become more relevant than growth. Credentials become more relevant than wisdom. Institutional prestige becomes more relevant than student flourishing. Testing becomes more relevant than curiosity. Productivity becomes more relevant than attention, sleep, play, friendship, and meaning.

The result may be successful exhaustion.

Students may become high-performing but anxious, compliant but uncurious, credentialed but morally disoriented, competitive but lonely, informed but unable to discern what matters. Teachers may become deliverers of measurable outputs rather than cultivators of persons. Schools may become sorting machines rather than life-forming communities.

Educational wisdom asks:

Does this learning environment expand or reduce life-capacity?

Does it cultivate attention, agency, belonging, inquiry, courage, humility, and care?

Does it prepare learners to repair the world, or merely compete within it?

### **24.4 The classroom as relational world**

Every classroom is an emotional-relational world.

Fear produces one kind of learning. Trust produces another. Shame produces one kind of attention. Curiosity produces another. Competition produces one kind of self. Belonging produces another. Silence can mean respect, or it can mean fear. Discipline can mean structure, or it can mean humiliation. Challenge can build capacity, or it can crush margin.

Maturana's insight is crucial here: emotioning opens domains of action. A child in fear cannot learn from the same world as a child in trust. A child in shame cannot explore with the same freedom as a child in dignity. A child whose culture or language is devalued cannot participate from the same ground as one who feels recognized.

Educational wisdom asks not only what is taught, but what world the teaching brings forth.

Does the classroom make learners legitimate in coexistence?

Does it allow questions?

Does it protect dignity?

Does it repair rupture?

Does it form responsibility?

Does it help students sense life, not merely master content?

## **24.5 Education for life-coherence wisdom**

An education for life-coherence wisdom would cultivate several capacities.

It would teach embodied awareness: noticing fatigue, attention, emotion, stress, joy, and curiosity.

It would teach frame awareness: asking what assumptions organize a problem.

It would teach media and algorithmic discernment: noticing how attention is captured.

It would teach ecological literacy: understanding human life within the living Earth.

It would teach moral imagination: recognizing the life of others as relevant.

It would teach conflict repair: learning how truth, accountability, and dignity can coexist.

It would teach systems thinking: seeing consequences across scales and time.

It would teach humility: allowing reality to correct one's model.

It would teach civic participation: coordinating action for shared life.

The aim is not to create perfect students. It is to form persons capable of realizing what matters and acting by repair.

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## 25. Public Health Wisdom

### 25.1 Making life-conditions relevant before disease erupts

Public health wisdom begins before the clinic.

This aligns with the social determinants tradition, which defines health as shaped by the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and by the wider political, economic, and social forces that shape those conditions (World Health Organization, 2025). Life-coherent public health extends this by asking how those conditions enter bodies as exposure, repair, margin, dignity, agency, and life-capacity.

Public health wisdom asks what conditions are making populations sick, distressed, exposed, isolated, undernourished, overburdened, or unable to repair. It asks why disease is patterned by income, housing, work, food systems, education, race, gender, geography, pollution, digital environments, violence, commercial practices, and ecological instability. It asks why some bodies carry more burden than others.

Public health wisdom is therefore relevance at population scale.

It makes upstream life-conditions visible before downstream disease becomes inevitable.

The prior life-coherent health paper emphasized exposure, repair, margins, affordances, civil commons, capture, ethical principles, and learning as practical domains for evaluating policies, interventions, technologies, institutions, and clinical practices. Public health wisdom applies that same grammar to whole populations.

The question is:

**What conditions are repeatedly entering bodies, shaping behavior, constraining choice, disabling repair, and depleting margins?**

### 25.2 Beyond risk-factor individualism

Public health can itself become misrelevant if it reduces disease to individual risk factors without transforming the fields that produce those risks.

Diet is not only personal choice. It is shaped by food systems, income, marketing, time, culture, stress, transport, agriculture, trade, and commercial design.

Physical activity is not only motivation. It is shaped by safety, urban design, work schedules, green space, disability access, air quality, and childhood opportunity.

Substance use is not only behavior. It is shaped by trauma, despair, availability, social pain, commercial targeting, and regulation.

Mental health is not only brain chemistry. It is shaped by loneliness, precarity, digital life, meaning, family, work, violence, ecological anxiety, and social trust.

Chronic disease is not only biology. It is the embodiment of exposures across the life-course.

Public health wisdom does not deny agency. It restores agency to the conditions that make agency possible.

### **25.3 Commercial and digital misrelevance**

Public health wisdom must pay particular attention to commercial and digital determinants.

The commercial determinants literature is particularly important because it shifts attention from individual choice to the systems, practices, and pathways through which commercial actors shape health and equity (Gilmore et al., 2023). This supports the concept of commercial misrelevance: profitable exposures become normalized as personal lifestyle, while the organized production of health burden remains backgrounded.

Commercial systems can make profitable exposures relevant while making health burdens invisible. Ultra-processed food, alcohol, tobacco, pollution, gambling, exploitative labor, sedentary design, predatory lending, manipulative advertising, and attention capture are not merely individual temptations. They are organized relevance fields that shape desire, behavior, stress, and risk.

Digital systems now shape public health through attention, sleep, social comparison, misinformation, loneliness, polarization, body image, child development, and political trust. They can also support health education, community connection, access to care, and emergency response. The question is not whether digital tools are good or bad in general. The question is whether their design expands or reduces life-capacity.

Public health wisdom asks:

What exposures are being normalized because they are profitable?

What harms are being individualized because their causes are commercially or digitally organized?

What would prevention require if we treated attention, dignity, trust, sleep, food, housing, air, water, and belonging as public health commons?

### **25.4 Planetary health and the life-ground**

Public health wisdom also requires ecological grounding.

Human health cannot be separated from the conditions of the Earth system. Climate stability, biodiversity, soil fertility, ocean health, freshwater systems, forests, air quality, food webs, and microbial ecologies are not external to health. They are part of the life-ground through which bodies live.

Planetary health makes this explicit by showing that degradation of natural systems threatens human health and future health gains (Whitmee et al., 2015). Life-coherence wisdom extends this insight by asking how ecological degradation becomes misrelevant: how it is backgrounded as externality, deferred as future cost, fragmented into sectors, or treated as acceptable sacrifice for economic growth.

A society cannot be wise if it treats the life-ground as background.

Public health wisdom therefore asks:

What ecological conditions are entering bodies as disease, displacement, malnutrition, heat stress, mental distress, conflict, or future insecurity?

What forms of development are reducing the life-capacity they claim to improve?

What would policy look like if the biosphere were treated as the first public health infrastructure?

## **25.5 From risk communication to relevance repair**

Public health often emphasizes risk communication. This is necessary, especially in emergencies. But risk communication is insufficient if people lack the conditions required to act on the message.

Telling people to eat well without food access is misrelevance.

Telling people to exercise without safe space is misrelevance.

Telling people to reduce stress while leaving them in precarious work is misrelevance.

Telling people to sleep while designing an always-on economy is misrelevance.

Telling people to trust institutions that have betrayed them is misrelevance.

Telling people to prepare for climate events without changing the systems driving climate instability is misrelevance.

Public health wisdom moves from communication to relevance repair.

It asks how to make healthy action possible, supported, affordable, dignified, culturally meaningful, and repeatable.

## **25.6 Public health as civil commons protection**

Public health wisdom ultimately protects civil commons.

Clean water, breathable air, safe food, housing, sanitation, vaccination, education, public knowledge, green space, social trust, emergency preparedness, ecological protection, and

accountable governance are not optional amenities. They are shared life-support systems. The health framework explicitly identifies civil commons as shared life-support systems that enable life-capacity without requiring private purchase or market power as the primary condition of access.

Public health becomes wise when it protects these commons before their loss appears as clinical disease.

It does not ask clinics to compensate forever for poisoned air, unsafe water, precarious work, toxic food systems, degrading digital environments, ecological collapse, or political abandonment.

It asks society to stop producing preventable illness.

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## 26. Governance Wisdom

### 26.1 Governance as collective relevance realization

Governance decides what becomes publicly relevant.

Budgets, laws, regulations, indicators, planning systems, taxation, public consultations, courts, ministries, media, emergency declarations, procurement, development plans, and international commitments all shape what societies notice, fund, protect, punish, defer, or ignore.

Governance is therefore not only administration. It is collective relevance realization.

A government makes some harms actionable and others invisible. It makes some lives urgent and others statistical. It makes some futures investable and others expendable. It makes some forms of knowledge authoritative and others marginal. It makes some values operational and others rhetorical.

Governance wisdom asks:

**What does this system of public decision-making make matter?**

### 26.2 From policy intelligence to policy wisdom

A policy can be evidence-informed and still unwise.

It may use valid data but frame the problem narrowly. It may produce short-term gains while displacing burden. It may reduce fiscal cost while increasing unpaid care. It may improve one indicator while degrading trust. It may protect one population while exposing another. It may be efficient within a ministry while incoherent across the life-system.

Policy intelligence asks whether an intervention works.

Policy wisdom asks what it works to do, for whom, across which timescale, with what hidden burdens, and in service of what life.

The Beyond GDP paper argued that broader dashboards are necessary but incomplete if they measure harm without transforming the relations that produce harm. It proposed a life-coherent deepening that grounds progress in life-capacity, life capital, positive peace, ecological limits, civil commons, and transformation. Governance wisdom carries that logic into public decision-making.

The central question becomes:

**Does this policy expand or reduce the life-capacities required for persons, communities, ecosystems, and future generations to flourish?**

### **26.3 The public salience field**

Governments operate under intense salience pressure.

Elections make short-term visibility salient. Media cycles make scandal salient. Markets make investor confidence salient. Emergencies make immediate control salient. Bureaucracies make compliance salient. International rankings make performance salient. Security systems make threats salient. Powerful interests make their burdens salient while the burdens of the vulnerable remain diffuse.

Governance wisdom must therefore protect the public salience field from capture.

It must make slow violence visible. It must make future generations relevant. It must make ecological thresholds politically real. It must make unpaid care count. It must make institutional trust a form of life capital. It must make dignity and humiliation visible. It must make prevention more relevant than crisis response. It must make de-implementation possible when existing systems predictably harm life.

### **26.4 Legitimate coexistence as governance criterion**

Maturana's contribution becomes decisive in governance.

Governance is wise when it coordinates life-enabling conditions through legitimate coexistence. This does not mean that every demand can be granted or that conflict disappears. It means that those affected are not treated as objects of administration, obstacles to development, security threats, data points, or passive beneficiaries. They appear as legitimate participants in the shared world.

Governance without legitimate coexistence becomes domination, even when technically competent.

A life-coherent government asks:

Who is affected?

Who has voice?

Whose knowledge counts?

Who bears the burden?

Who benefits?

Who is excluded?

Who cannot speak for themselves?

What does the ecosystem require?

What do future generations require?

Governance wisdom makes public power answerable to the life it organizes.

## **26.5 Institutions that can learn**

A wise governance system must be able to learn.

This requires feedback loops that do not merely report success but reveal harm. It requires participatory evaluation. It requires protection for dissent and whistleblowing. It requires humility before unintended consequences. It requires the ability to de-implement policies that no longer serve life. It requires cross-sector coordination because life does not obey ministerial silos.

A government becomes wiser when it can say:

This policy produced hidden burden.

This metric distorted practice.

This regulation protected one group while harming another.

This program helped but did not reach those most exposed.

This development path improved income while degrading the life-ground.

This security strategy produced insecurity.

This institution must change.

Governance wisdom is public humility organized into accountable practice.

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## 27. AI and Digital Wisdom

### 27.1 Artificial intelligence and relevance without life

Artificial intelligence intensifies the problem of relevance.

AI systems can classify, predict, recommend, summarize, generate, optimize, translate, simulate, detect patterns, and support decisions. These capacities can assist medicine, education, public health, research, governance, climate action, accessibility, and creative work. But AI does not automatically know what should matter.

It operates within objectives, data, architectures, prompts, feedback loops, deployment contexts, institutional incentives, and economic systems. It may approximate relevance according to statistical patterns or user preferences, but that is not the same as life-answerable relevance.

AI can make something visible without making it wise. It can make something persuasive without making it true. It can make something efficient without making it life-coherent. It can make something scalable without making it reparative.

The question is not whether AI is intelligent.

The question is whether AI is placed inside a wisdom ecology.

### 27.2 Synthetic misrelevance

AI can scale misrelevance.

It can generate persuasive falsehoods. It can automate manipulation. It can amplify engagement capture. It can personalize ideological isolation. It can produce synthetic intimacy while weakening human relation. It can rank persons according to biased histories. It can optimize institutional convenience while reducing dignity. It can help organizations act faster without helping them discern better.

Synthetic misrelevance occurs when artificial systems make life-incoherent relevance more rapid, persuasive, scalable, or authoritative.

Zuboff's account of surveillance capitalism is relevant here because it describes a digital-economic order in which human experience becomes raw material for behavioral data, prediction products, and behavior-modification markets (Zuboff, 2019). Life-coherent AI and digital governance must therefore ask not only whether systems are accurate or useful, but whether their underlying economic and institutional logic makes human attention, behavior, and relational life available for extraction.

This danger is especially serious because AI systems may appear neutral, objective, or superhuman. Their outputs can carry an aura of authority even when they reproduce the frames, biases, omissions, and objectives embedded in their design.

Life-coherence wisdom must therefore ask:

What is this system making relevant?  
What objective is it optimizing?  
What data world is it inheriting?  
What does it make easier?  
What does it make harder?  
Who becomes visible?  
Who becomes governable?  
Who becomes disposable?  
What human capacities are strengthened or weakened?

### **27.3 Digital attention and developmental life**

Digital wisdom must attend to human development.

Children and adolescents are not merely users. They are developing organisms-in-relation. Their attention, self-image, emotional regulation, social belonging, sexuality, moral imagination, sleep, play, and learning are being shaped by digital environments.

An attention economy that treats engagement as relevance may train nervous systems toward comparison, compulsion, outrage, fragmentation, and performative identity. It may weaken boredom tolerance, embodied play, conversation, sustained reading, silence, and the slow formation of judgment.

Digital wisdom asks:

#### **What kind of person does this digital environment help bring forth?**

This question is more important than whether the platform is popular, profitable, or technically impressive.

### **27.4 Life-coherent AI**

Life-coherent AI would be designed, governed, and evaluated by whether it supports life-capacity.

In medicine, it would support clinical judgment without replacing relational care.  
In education, it would support learning without undermining curiosity, authorship, or formation.  
In public health, it would reveal exposure and burden without increasing surveillance or stigma.  
In governance, it would assist transparency and participation without automating domination.  
In ecology, it would support restoration rather than extraction.

In communication, it would support understanding rather than manipulation.  
In personal life, it would support attention, agency, creativity, and discernment rather than dependency.

Life-coherent AI requires design humility. It must be contestable, transparent where possible, accountable, bias-aware, context-sensitive, and subordinate to human and ecological flourishing.

It must not be allowed to define relevance purely by engagement, prediction, efficiency, or institutional convenience.

## **27.5 The guiding AI question**

The guiding question for AI and digital systems is:

**Does this system help humans and institutions realize what matters for life — or does it automate irrelevance?**

This question should accompany every AI deployment in clinical care, education, public administration, media, policing, finance, work, and personal life.

AI becomes wisdom-supporting only when it helps restore relevance to life.

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## **28. Peacebuilding and Spiritual-Political Wisdom**

### **28.1 Conflicts as relevance traps**

Many conflicts persist because each side lives inside a captured relevance field.

Each side's wound becomes central. Each side's fear becomes self-evident. Each side's memory becomes sacred. Each side's violence becomes defensive. Each side's civilian suffering becomes fully real, while the other's suffering becomes minimized, justified, or treated as consequence. The other's security appears as threat. The other's grief appears as manipulation. The other's dignity appears as concession.

Conflict becomes a relevance trap.

The earlier discernment and repair paper argued that many seemingly intractable conflicts persist because their failure modes are misnamed: security is not distinguished from domination, liberation from revenge, sacred memory from weaponized memory, faith from certainty, and peace from the mere silencing of violence.

Peacebuilding wisdom begins by interrupting these traps.

### **28.2 Holding grief without hatred**

A life-coherent peace process must honor grief.

No people's wound should be denied. Denied grief becomes resentment, radicalization, despair, or sacred insecurity. But no people's wound should be allowed to sanctify the destruction of another. Captured grief becomes revenge. Weaponized memory turns the dead into authorization for new suffering.

Wisdom holds grief without hatred.

This is not emotional neutrality. It is disciplined fidelity to life. It allows mourning to deepen responsibility rather than narrow humanity. It allows memory to teach protection rather than perpetuate disposability.

The question is:

**Can we remember in a way that protects the living?**

### **28.3 Security without domination**

Security is a real life-need. People require protection from violence, terror, displacement, invasion, humiliation, and existential threat. Any peace framework that dismisses security is naïve.

But security becomes misrelevant when separated from the security of others.

If one group's security requires another group's permanent insecurity, the arrangement is not peace. It is domination stabilized by force. It may reduce immediate threat for one side, but it reproduces the conditions of future violence.

Spiritual-political wisdom asks:

What form of security could become reciprocal?

What protections are needed by all affected lives?

What structures produce fear?

What humiliations must end?

What guarantees are credible?

What justice is necessary for security to become real?

Security becomes wise when it becomes shared life-protection.

## **28.4 Justice without revenge**

Justice is also a real life-need. Harm must be named. Responsibility must be assigned. Victims must be heard. Structures must change. Impunity destroys trust and perpetuates violence.

But justice becomes captured when it becomes revenge.

Revenge seeks reversal of suffering. Justice seeks repair of the moral and relational order. Revenge often needs an enemy to remain an enemy. Justice requires accountability without dehumanization. Revenge is satisfied by pain. Justice is satisfied by restored dignity, protection, truth, restitution, and prevention of recurrence.

Life-coherence wisdom asks:

**What form of justice repairs life rather than reproducing the wound?**

## **28.5 Religion, spirituality, and the protection of life**

Religion and spirituality can deepen peace when they return ultimate concern to life.

They can teach humility, repentance, mercy, forgiveness, sacred restraint, reverence for the vulnerable, hospitality to the stranger, care for creation, and courage before domination. They can hold grief ritually. They can protect memory from erasure. They can form communities of repair. They can remind politics that no state, market, nation, border, doctrine, or victory is ultimate.

But religion and spirituality can also be captured. They can sanctify land, identity, authority, purity, revenge, martyrdom, hierarchy, or institutional survival. They can make violence righteous and suffering invisible. They can turn God into the guarantor of group self-protection.

Spiritual-political wisdom therefore asks:

**Does this sacred story protect, repair, and expand life-capacity — or does it require the disposability of life?**

## **28.6 Peace as life-conditions**

Peace is not merely the absence of fighting.

Peace is the presence of life-conditions: safety, dignity, food, water, shelter, care, mobility, education, mourning, truth, justice, recognition, rights, ecological stability, political participation, and future possibility.

A ceasefire may stop killing, but without life-conditions, peace remains fragile. A peace agreement may silence violence, but without dignity and repair, it may conserve structural harm. Humanitarian relief may prevent death, but without political repair, it may become maintenance of injury.

Peacebuilding wisdom therefore moves through the full cycle:

Sense viability: where is life under threat?

Notice salience: whose suffering is visible?

Name the frame: what story organizes the conflict?

Test life-value: whose life-capacity is expanded or reduced?

Reveal harm: what violence is hidden or normalized?

Interrupt capture: what fear, revenge, or sacred distortion must be stopped?

Reframe: what does shared life-protection require?

Repair: what must be restored?

Protect margins: what reserves prevent relapse into violence?

Coordinate: who must act together?

Learn and re-attune: what is reality teaching?

Peace becomes wise when it protects the conditions through which former enemies can become co-inhabitants of a shared world.

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## **29. The Pattern Across Applications**

### **29.1 One question across many domains**

Across clinical care, education, public health, governance, AI, and peacebuilding, the central question remains the same:

**What has been made relevant here, and does that relevance serve life?**

In clinical care, the question reveals whether diagnosis serves healing.

In education, it reveals whether achievement serves formation.

In public health, it reveals whether risk communication serves life-conditions.

In governance, it reveals whether policy serves life-capacity.

In AI, it reveals whether optimization serves wisdom.

In peacebuilding, it reveals whether memory, security, and justice serve coexistence.

The domains differ, but the grammar is shared.

### **29.2 Wisdom as relevance repair**

The applications show that life-coherence wisdom is not an abstract ideal. It is a practical discipline of relevance repair.

It restores attention to what life requires.

It restores emotion to viability sensing.

It restores relation to legitimate coexistence.

It restores measurement to transformation.

It restores institutions to mission.

It restores technology to human and ecological flourishing.

It restores spirituality to protection of life.

It restores governance to public care.

It restores peace to life-conditions.

Wisdom is what happens when relevance becomes answerable to repair.

### **29.3 Transition to practices and research**

The next part turns from applications to cultivation.

If wisdom is life-answerable relevance realization, then persons, institutions, technologies, and societies can cultivate it. They can develop practices that protect attention, name emotion, reveal frames, test life-value, expose harm, interrupt capture, and coordinate repair.

They can also study it. But they must study it without reducing it to another narrow metric. Wisdom can be measured only if measurement remains subordinate to discernment and repair.

The task now is to ask how life-coherence wisdom can be practiced, evaluated, researched, and institutionalized without being captured by the very misrelevance it seeks to correct.

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## Part VII — Practices, Research, and Conclusion

### 30. Practices for Cultivating Life-Coherence Wisdom

#### 30.1 Wisdom must be practiced

If life-coherence wisdom is the embodied, relational, self-correcting capacity to realize what matters for life, then wisdom cannot be cultivated by information alone.

It must be practiced.

This is true at every level. A person cannot become wise merely by holding correct ideas. A clinician cannot become wise merely by knowing guidelines. A teacher cannot become wise merely by mastering curriculum. A policymaker cannot become wise merely by reading indicators. A religious leader cannot become wise merely by invoking sacred language. A technologist cannot become wise merely by optimizing performance. An institution cannot become wise merely by issuing values statements.

Wisdom develops through repeated forms of attention, emotion, relation, discernment, correction, and repair.

It grows when bodies are listened to.

It grows when emotions are named without being absolutized.

It grows when frames are made visible.

It grows when hidden harm is revealed.

It grows when the vulnerable are allowed to correct the powerful.

It grows when institutions can admit that their metrics distort.

It grows when sacred stories remain answerable to life.

It grows when technology is subordinated to dignity and agency.

It grows when action is followed by learning.

Wisdom is not a conclusion one arrives at once. It is a living discipline of re-attunement.

#### 30.2 Personal practices

Personal life-coherence wisdom begins with the restoration of attention to life.

This includes embodied noticing: pausing to ask what the body is registering before rushing to explanation. Fatigue, tension, numbness, restlessness, dread, warmth, vitality, grief, irritation, and relief are not final answers, but they are signals. They tell us that life is being affected.

It includes emotional naming: distinguishing fear from anger, grief from shame, loneliness from failure, exhaustion from laziness, and moral distress from weakness. Naming emotion restores interpretive space. It allows the person to ask what viability concern is being disclosed.

It includes salience review: asking what repeatedly captures attention and what remains neglected. A person may discover that their life is organized around urgency, performance, digital stimulation, comparison, resentment, fear, or responsibility for others, while sleep, grief, prayer, play, friendship, silence, movement, or ecological contact have become background.

It includes frame questioning: asking what story is organizing perception. Am I seeing this as threat, failure, competition, betrayal, duty, scarcity, humiliation, or possibility? What would become visible if I saw it from repair?

It includes margin protection: defending time, sleep, nutrition, movement, silence, relationship, and unstructured attention as conditions of wisdom rather than luxuries.

It includes repair action: making apologies, setting boundaries, restoring neglected relationships, reducing unnecessary burden, seeking care, telling truth, making restitution, and changing patterns that repeatedly injure life.

Personal wisdom begins when one asks:

**What is life trying to teach me through my body, emotions, attention, relationships, and recurring patterns?**

### **30.3 Relational practices**

Relational wisdom begins where another life becomes fully relevant.

This requires practices of listening that do not immediately categorize, defend, fix, advise, or debate. Listening is not passive. It is the discipline of allowing another's world to appear before imposing one's own frame.

Relational wisdom also requires repair conversations. These include truth-telling, acknowledgment of harm, responsibility without collapse, apology without self-defense, restitution where needed, and changed behavior. Forgiveness may come, but it cannot be demanded as a substitute for repair.

It requires conflict slowing. When fear, shame, anger, or grief capture a relational field, the first task may be to slow the escalation enough for the deeper concern to be named. What is being protected? What is being feared? What dignity is at stake? What wound is being repeated? What would repair require?

It requires perspective-taking, but not as a technique of moral superiority. Perspective-taking is the disciplined attempt to understand how the world appears from another embodied history. It

does not require agreement. It requires enough relational legitimacy for the other's experience to become real.

It requires shared discernment. Families, teams, communities, and institutions can ask together:

What has become most salient between us?

What emotion is organizing the field?

What frame are we trapped in?

What harm are we not naming?

What must stop?

What must be restored?

What would allow us to act by repair rather than domination?

Relational wisdom grows when the relationship becomes capable of learning from rupture.

### 30.4 Institutional practices

Institutions require practices because institutional misrelevance is not corrected by personal goodwill alone.

A hospital, school, ministry, university, religious body, corporation, or international organization must build routines that make life-capacity visible, contestable, and actionable.

One practice is the **life-capacity audit**. This asks whether institutional policies, metrics, workflows, technologies, and resource allocations expand or reduce the capacities of those affected. It includes patients, students, workers, families, communities, ecosystems, and future generations where relevant.

Another practice is the **misrelevance review**. Before adopting a metric, policy, technology, or reform, the institution asks: what will this make salient, what will it hide, what behavior will it incentivize, what burden might it displace, and what life-capacity might it reduce?

A third practice is the **harm-revelation process**. Institutions need protected channels through which those harmed can speak without retaliation. These processes must not merely collect complaints. They must transform institutional learning.

A fourth practice is **de-implementation review**. Institutions should regularly ask what practices, metrics, procedures, technologies, or traditions must be stopped because they no longer serve life.

A fifth practice is **margin protection**. Institutions should evaluate whether their demands consume the biological, emotional, relational, and professional margins of those within them. A marginless institution becomes reactive, defensive, and unwise.

A sixth practice is **participatory governance**. Those most affected by institutional decisions must have real voice in defining relevance. Without this, institutions will continue to see from the center while harm accumulates at the edges.

Institutional wisdom asks:

**What would we do differently if the life of those affected could truly correct us?**

### **30.5 Civilizational practices**

Civilizational wisdom requires practices that reorder public relevance.

The first is **life-coherent measurement**. Societies need indicators that reveal whether life-capacity is expanding or reducing across health, education, care, housing, ecosystems, trust, dignity, participation, peace, and future viability. But measurement must remain tied to transformation. A dashboard that reports harm without changing the relations that produce harm becomes another form of misrelevance.

The second is **civil commons restoration**. Water, food, public health, education, ecological stability, public knowledge, democratic trust, and peace infrastructure must be treated as shared life-support systems, not residual costs after market priorities have been served.

The third is **intergenerational accountability**. Future generations must be made relevant in present decision-making. Their absence from current markets and elections is one of the central failures of civilizational salience.

The fourth is **ecological re-grounding**. The life-ground cannot remain an externality. Climate stability, biodiversity, soil, oceans, forests, watersheds, and atmosphere are not sectors. They are conditions of all sectors.

The fifth is **digital public-interest design**. Attention, truth, developmental integrity, privacy, agency, and democratic discourse must be protected as public goods.

The sixth is **peace infrastructure**. Societies need institutions that can hold grievance, mediate conflict, reduce humiliation, expose structural violence, and create conditions for legitimate coexistence before violence erupts.

Civilizational wisdom is not achieved by a single doctrine, ideology, technology, or institution. It is cultivated by redesigning relevance fields so that life can correct power.

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## 31. The Life-Coherence Wisdom Test

### 31.1 Purpose of the test

The Life-Coherence Wisdom Test is a practical tool for persons, institutions, technologies, policies, educational systems, clinical decisions, spiritual communities, peace processes, and governance choices.

It is not meant to mechanize wisdom. Wisdom cannot be reduced to a checklist. The test is meant to slow misrelevance, reveal capture, and help actors ask better questions before they act.

Its purpose is to ensure that what becomes salient, meaningful, measurable, sacred, efficient, or actionable remains answerable to life-capacity.

### 31.2 The full test

The full test is designed for deep analysis. It may be stated through twelve guiding questions:

1. **What is life already registering?**  
What bodily, emotional, relational, ecological, institutional, or cultural signals are present?
2. **What has become salient?**  
What is being treated as urgent, visible, measurable, profitable, sacred, threatening, or unquestionable?
3. **What is being backgrounded?**  
What suffering, burden, relation, margin, ecosystem, history, future, or vulnerable life is being ignored?
4. **What frame is organizing perception?**  
What story, metric, model, ideology, institution, fear, role, or ultimate concern is shaping what can be seen?
5. **What emotion is organizing the field?**  
Is the field being governed by fear, grief, shame, anger, pride, compassion, love, despair, certainty, or hope?
6. **What world is this emotion bringing forth?**  
Who appears legitimate, threatening, invisible, useful, disposable, or impossible to hear?
7. **Does this expand or reduce life-capacity?**  
Whose capacities to live, heal, relate, participate, repair, belong, and flourish are enabled or disabled?
8. **What harm is hidden or normalized?**  
What direct, structural, cultural, ecological, commercial, digital, or institutional violence is being concealed?
9. **What is being protected, sacrificed, or made ultimate?**  
What concern is functionally sacred, and does it protect life or require life's disposability?

**10. What capture must be interrupted?**

Is the situation shaped by salience capture, affective capture, metric capture, sacred capture, algorithmic capture, or institutional capture?

**11. What repair is being asked for?**

What must be stopped, restored, redesigned, protected, forgiven, mourned, compensated, regenerated, or coordinated?

**12. What must be learned and re-attuned?**

How will reality correct the frame after action is taken?

### **31.3 The portable core**

The full cycle is for deep analysis; the portable core is for everyday discernment.

The portable core asks five questions:

**What has been made to matter?**

**Does it serve life-capacity?**

**What harm is hidden?**

**What is being made ultimate?**

**What repair is required?**

These five questions are not a shortcut around complexity. They are a doorway into it. They help a person, institution, or community pause before obeying the first salience, the first fear, the first metric, the first sacred claim, the first institutional reflex, or the first technological recommendation.

The portable core can be used in a clinical consultation, policy discussion, classroom, board meeting, family conflict, spiritual discernment process, peace negotiation, AI design review, or personal decision.

It asks life to interrupt capture.

### **31.4 Use across domains**

In clinical care, the test asks whether the care plan supports healing completion or merely manages disease.

In education, it asks whether learning forms discernment and life-capacity or merely performance.

In public health, it asks whether intervention changes life-conditions or merely communicates risk.

In governance, it asks whether policy expands life-capacity or displaces burden.

In technology, it asks whether the system supports wisdom or automates misrelevance.

In spirituality and peacebuilding, it asks whether ultimate concerns protect life or sanctify sacrifice.

The test is not the wisdom. It is a doorway into wisdom.

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## 32. Research and Measurement Agenda

### 32.1 Studying wisdom without reducing it

A research agenda for life-coherence wisdom must begin with caution.

Wisdom is not a variable like blood pressure, income, or school attendance. It cannot be fully captured by a score. It is embodied, relational, contextual, developmental, institutional, cultural, ecological, and moral. It appears in judgment under uncertainty, in the capacity to revise frames, in the reduction of hidden harm, in repair after rupture, in humility before reality, and in the protection of life-capacity across scales.

To study wisdom poorly would be to capture it.

If wisdom becomes another performance metric, institutions may learn to display wisdom while avoiding transformation. If it becomes a psychological scale alone, its institutional and ecological dimensions may disappear. If it becomes a leadership competency, it may be severed from power and accountability. If it becomes a spiritual ideal, it may bypass material harm.

The research task is therefore to study wisdom in ways that remain answerable to life.

### 32.2 Research domains

Several domains are especially important.

#### **Affective relevance.**

Research can explore how emotions shape relevance perception, decision-making, moral judgment, clinical reasoning, conflict escalation, institutional defensiveness, and public salience.

#### **Embodied cognition and health.**

Research can examine how sleep, stress, inflammation, trauma, metabolic health, autonomic regulation, and social safety affect the capacity for wise judgment.

#### **Relevance realization and insight.**

Research can study how people and groups shift frames, generate insight, escape fixation, and reconstruct meaning.

#### **Institutional learning.**

Research can investigate how organizations detect harm, receive critique, de-implement damaging practices, protect margins, and learn from failure.

**Algorithmic relevance.**

Research can evaluate how digital systems shape salience, emotion, attention, belief, social comparison, polarization, and developmental trajectories.

**Public health relevance.**

Research can study how societies decide which life-conditions become policy priorities and which remain individualized.

**Peacebuilding and sacred relevance.**

Research can examine how grief, memory, fear, identity, sacred narratives, and humiliation become captured or transformed into repair.

**Education for wisdom.**

Research can examine how schools cultivate discernment, emotional literacy, ecological literacy, dialogue, critical thinking, digital attention, and repair capacity.

**32.3 Indicators of life-coherence wisdom**

Indicators may be useful if they remain subordinate to discernment.

Possible indicators include:

Capacity to detect hidden harm.

Capacity to correct frames when evidence reveals burden.

Capacity to de-implement harmful practices.

Capacity to protect restorative margins.

Capacity to include affected voices in defining relevance.

Capacity to reduce avoidable suffering.

Capacity to restore trust after rupture.

Capacity to coordinate across sectors and scales.

Capacity to identify burden displacement.

Capacity to make future generations relevant.

Capacity to distinguish security from domination, justice from revenge, and measurement from transformation.

These indicators should not become a narrow dashboard of virtue. They should be used as prompts for learning.

**32.4 Methodological pluralism**

Life-coherence wisdom requires methodological pluralism.

Quantitative methods can reveal patterns, trends, inequities, burdens, outcomes, and system effects.

Qualitative methods can reveal lived experience, meaning, emotion, humiliation, trust, fear, grief, and institutional betrayal.

Participatory research can allow affected communities to define what matters.

Systems mapping can reveal feedback loops, burden displacement, and capture mechanisms.

Narrative analysis can reveal sacred stories, institutional myths, and frames of meaning.

Developmental evaluation can support learning in complex systems.

Case studies can show how wisdom or misrelevance unfolds in real contexts.

No single method is sufficient because wisdom itself is multi-level.

### **32.5 The danger of wisdom capture**

A research agenda must also study wisdom capture.

Wisdom capture occurs when the language of wisdom is used to preserve the very patterns wisdom should correct. An institution may speak of wisdom while avoiding accountability. A government may invoke long-term thinking while silencing dissent. A religious body may invoke discernment while protecting hierarchy. A corporation may market mindful technology while optimizing engagement. An educational system may teach wisdom while preserving achievement capture.

This danger is real. Every powerful concept can be absorbed by the systems it critiques.

Life-coherence wisdom must therefore include self-diagnosis. The framework must be willing to ask of itself:

Where might this language become vague?

Where might it become moralistic?

Where might it be used to control?

Where might it bypass material harm?

Where might it become another metric?

Where might it protect the author, institution, or movement from critique?

A framework becomes wiser when it can diagnose its own failure modes.

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## 33. Discussion: Wisdom After the Meaning Crisis

### 33.1 What this framework contributes

This white paper contributes a life-coherent theory of wisdom organized around relevance.

Its central claim is that many contemporary crises are not only crises of knowledge, policy, morality, spirituality, technology, or governance. They are crises of misrelevance. The wrong things have been made to matter, while the conditions required for life to live, heal, participate, repair, and flourish have been backgrounded.

The paper therefore proposes a new formulation:

**Wisdom = life-answerable relevance realization.**

This formulation brings together the living triad of Peil Kauffman, Maturana, and Vervaeke. Emotion senses viability. Relation opens worlds. Relevance realizes what matters. It then tests the triad through McMurtry's life-value criterion, Galtung's anti-violence diagnostic, and the discernment question of ultimacy.

The result is a framework that treats wisdom as embodied, relational, self-correcting, ethically grounded, anti-violent, and repair-oriented.

### 33.2 What the framework does not claim

The framework does not claim to replace cognitive science, affective neuroscience, clinical medicine, education theory, public health, peace studies, moral philosophy, religious discernment, AI ethics, or governance research.

It offers a relational grammar for integrating them.

It does not claim that every conflict has an easy resolution. Some choices remain tragic. Some harms cannot be undone. Some conflicts involve real danger. Some institutions resist reform. Some ecological thresholds may not be reversible. Wisdom does not eliminate grief, uncertainty, or loss.

It does not claim that life-capacity automatically answers every moral question. Life-capacity is a grounding criterion, not a mechanical algorithm. It requires interpretation, participation, evidence, humility, and discernment.

It does not claim that emotion is always trustworthy. Emotion can guide wisdom, but it can also be captured.

It does not claim that relevance realization is automatically good. Relevance can serve manipulation as easily as repair.

It does not claim that institutions can become wise through language alone. They must change practices, incentives, governance, accountability, and relations.

### **33.3 The main risks**

The first risk is vagueness. A broad framework can lose operational force if its core terms are not disciplined. This is why the paper defines misrelevance, life-capacity, capture modes, guardrail tests, and the wisdom cycle.

The second risk is moralism. Life-coherence wisdom could be misread as a way of declaring oneself life-coherent and others life-incoherent. The framework must instead begin with self-application. Every person, institution, tradition, and movement must ask how its own relevance field may be captured.

The third risk is spiritual abstraction. Wisdom language can become elevated while leaving material conditions unchanged. This paper insists that wisdom is completed in repair.

The fourth risk is technocratic absorption. Institutions may convert wisdom into a dashboard, competency framework, or compliance exercise. This is why the paper cautions that measurement must remain subordinate to discernment.

The fifth risk is underestimating power. Misrelevance is not merely a cognitive error. It is often profitable, institutionalized, sacredized, or enforced. Wisdom must therefore include de-implementation, accountability, and structural change.

The sixth risk is overextension. The framework crosses many domains. Its value depends on whether it can generate concrete distinctions and practical repair, not merely conceptual elegance.

### **33.4 The creative advance**

The creative advance of this paper is the concept of **misrelevance**.

Misrelevance names a failure deeper than misinformation, irrationality, immorality, inefficiency, or meaninglessness. It names the condition in which salience is disconnected from life. It explains how systems can be informed but unwise, meaningful but destructive, efficient but harmful, sacred but violent, intelligent but life-blind, and institutionally successful while disabling the life they claim to serve.

Misrelevance allows multiple crises to be seen together:

The ecological crisis is a crisis of making economic throughput more relevant than the life-ground.

The health crisis is a crisis of making disease management more relevant than organism–niche healing.

The education crisis is a crisis of making performance more relevant than formation.

The digital crisis is a crisis of making engagement more relevant than attention and dignity.

The governance crisis is a crisis of making institutional survival and short-term salience more relevant than future viability.

The spiritual-political crisis is a crisis of making sacred abstractions more relevant than living beings.

The peace crisis is a crisis of making one wound so relevant that another people’s life becomes disposable.

This is why wisdom must become life-coherent.

### **33.5 Wisdom as public capacity**

The framework also shifts wisdom from private virtue to public capacity.

Modern societies often treat wisdom as optional, personal, spiritual, or old-fashioned. Yet public systems are constantly realizing relevance. They decide what appears on dashboards, what receives funding, what enters curriculum, what gets recommended, what becomes law, what is treated as emergency, what is called development, what is named violence, and what is allowed to disappear.

If societies do not cultivate wisdom publicly, misrelevance will be organized by default through markets, algorithms, bureaucracies, fear, spectacle, and power.

Wisdom must therefore become a design principle for institutions.

Not as paternalistic control.

Not as expert rule.

Not as moral superiority.

But as a discipline of making public systems answerable to life.

A wise society is not one without conflict or uncertainty. It is one that can learn from harm, repair relations, protect margins, de-implement life-reducing practices, restore commons, and let life correct its abstractions.

### **33.6 Limits and scope**

This white paper offers a relational grammar of wisdom, not a substitute for domain-specific science, clinical judgment, public policy, peacebuilding, education theory, AI governance, or spiritual discernment.

Its purpose is to help these domains ask a shared question:

**What has been made relevant, and does that relevance serve life-capacity?**

The framework is integrative, not exhaustive. It cannot eliminate tragic choice, settle all moral conflict, or replace empirical inquiry. It must be specified, tested, and revised in each domain through evidence, participation, and lived consequences.

The framework must also remain self-critical. The language of life-coherence can itself become vague, moralistic, institutionalized, or performative. The first use of the Life-Coherence Wisdom Test must therefore be self-application. Any person, institution, movement, discipline, religion, technology, or framework can become captured. The framework remains life-coherent only if it can be corrected by those it affects, by evidence of harm, and by the realities of life it claims to serve.

Life-coherence wisdom is not a final doctrine. It is a grammar of correction.

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## **34. Conclusion: Life Learning to Protect Life**

### **34.1 Return to the guiding question**

This white paper began with a question:

**How do living beings, persons, institutions, technologies, and societies learn what truly matters for the protection, repair, and expansion of life-capacity?**

The answer cannot be information alone. The world is already saturated with information.

It cannot be intelligence alone. Intelligence can optimize the wrong objective.

It cannot be emotion alone. Emotion can be captured.

It cannot be meaning alone. Meaning can organize life around domination, revenge, or illusion.

It cannot be measurement alone. Measurement can report harm without transforming it.

It cannot be spirituality alone. Spirituality can become abstraction or captured ultimacy.

It cannot be governance alone. Governance can administer life without hearing it.

The answer is wisdom understood as life-answerable relevance realization.

### **34.2 The final synthesis**

Life-coherence wisdom begins when emotion senses viability.

It deepens when relation opens worlds.

It clarifies when relevance realization transforms salience into insight, meaning, and self-correcting action.

It is tested when life-value asks whether life-capacity is expanded or reduced.

It is disciplined when anti-violence reveals hidden harm.

It is purified when discernment asks what has been made ultimate.

It becomes practical when capture is interrupted.

It becomes ethical when repair replaces domination.

It becomes durable when margins are protected.

It becomes collective when coordination restores legitimate coexistence.

It remains alive when learning allows life to correct the frame.

This is the full movement:

Sense viability.

Notice salience.

Name the frame.

Test life-value.

Reveal harm.

Interrupt capture.

Reframe.

Repair.

Protect margins.

Coordinate.

Learn and re-attune.

### **34.3 Wisdom after abstraction**

Modern society has become powerful in abstraction.

It can calculate, model, predict, optimize, automate, monetize, surveil, classify, and measure at immense scale. These powers are not inherently wrong. They can serve healing, education, ecology, justice, accessibility, and peace. But when abstraction loses contact with life, it becomes dangerous.

The map replaces the territory.

The metric replaces the person.

The model replaces the world.

The market replaces value.

The platform replaces relation.

The institution replaces mission.

The sacred vessel replaces life.

The strategy replaces peace.

The future is discounted because it has no present vote.

Life-coherence wisdom is the return of abstraction to life.

It does not reject science, policy, technology, measurement, or institutions. It asks them to become humble enough to be corrected by the bodies, communities, ecosystems, and futures they affect.

### **34.4 Wisdom as repair**

Wisdom is often imagined as stillness, serenity, detachment, or contemplation. These may be dimensions of wisdom. But in a wounded world, wisdom must also repair.

It must repair attention where it has been captured.

It must repair emotion where grief, fear, shame, anger, and compassion have been distorted.

It must repair language where harm has been misnamed.

It must repair measurement where indicators have displaced life.

It must repair institutions where vessels have replaced purposes.

It must repair technology where optimization has outrun discernment.

It must repair spirituality where ultimacy has become sacrifice.

It must repair governance where public power has forgotten the life it serves.

It must repair peace where security and justice have been severed.

Wisdom acts by repair, not domination.

### **34.5 Final closing**

The world does not need more information without discernment.

It does not need more intelligence without life-value.

It does not need more optimization without wisdom.

It does not need more growth without life-capacity.

It does not need more spirituality without repair.

It does not need more security without coexistence.

It does not need more measurement without transformation.

What it needs is the recovery of the capacity to let life matter again.

The task is not to make life fit our relevance systems, but to make our relevance systems answerable to life.

Life-coherence wisdom is not escape from life, mastery over life, or abstraction about life. It is life becoming capable of sensing its wounds, recognizing its relations, correcting its frames, protecting its margins, repairing its worlds, and conserving the conditions of its own flourishing.

**Life-coherence wisdom is life learning to let what truly matters matter again.**

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# Appendix A — Glossary of Core Terms

## **Life-coherence wisdom**

The embodied, relational, self-correcting capacity to realize what matters for the protection, repair, and expansion of life-capacity.

## **Relevance**

What becomes salient, meaningful, actionable, prioritized, or consequential within a field of perception, relation, measurement, institution, technology, culture, or governance.

## **Relevance realization**

The recursive, self-organizing process through which living-cognitive systems determine what is salient, what counts as a problem, what information is usable, what actions are afforded, and how frames can be transformed.

## **Life-answerable relevance realization**

Relevance realization tested by life-capacity, hidden harm, ultimate concern, and repair.

## **Misrelevance**

The organization of attention, emotion, measurement, incentive, identity, technology, institution, or action around signals that do not protect, repair, or expand life-capacity.

## **Life-answerability**

The condition in which a frame, claim, metric, practice, institution, technology, or policy remains open to correction by the life-capacities it affects.

## **Life-capacity**

The real capacities of persons, communities, ecosystems, and future generations to live, heal, develop, relate, participate, repair, belong, and flourish within the web of life.

## **Viability sensing**

The embodied registration of what supports, threatens, burdens, or repairs life-capacity. In this paper, the phrase extends Peil Kauffman's work on emotional sentience into the life-coherent framework.

## **Emotional sentience**

The biological significance of emotion as central to phenomenal experience, value, and mind-body integration.

## **Emotioning**

The relational flow of emotion through which different domains of action are opened or closed.

## **Legitimate coexistence**

The relational condition in which the other appears as legitimate in coexistence, even amid difference, conflict, accountability, or necessary boundary.

## **Salience capture**

A failure mode in which what stands out begins to control what matters, even when it does not serve life-capacity.

## **Affective capture**

A failure mode in which emotion becomes a closed world of interpretation and action.

## **Metric capture**

A failure mode in which indicators become substitutes for life and begin to govern practice in ways that reduce life-capacity.

## **Sacred capture**

A failure mode in which an ultimate concern becomes more protected than living beings.

## **Algorithmic capture**

A failure mode in which digital systems optimize visibility, recommendation, prediction, ranking, engagement, or control without life-answerable wisdom.

## **Institutional capture**

A failure mode in which an institution preserves its own authority, reputation, procedure, funding, ideology, or survival before the life it exists to serve.

## **Life-value test**

The question: Does this expand or reduce life-capacity?

## **Anti-violence test**

The question: What harm is hidden, normalized, displaced, or justified?

## **Discernment test**

The question: What is being protected, sacrificed, or made ultimate?

## **Repair**

The restoration of life-capacity after harm, overload, distortion, neglect, capture, or rupture. Repair includes stopping harm, restoring capacity, reducing burden, repairing relation, protecting margins, preventing recurrence, and regenerating life-enabling conditions.

## **Margins**

The reserves of time, energy, safety, trust, ecological stability, social support, institutional flexibility, biological resilience, and attention that allow life to absorb disturbance without collapse.

## **De-implementation**

The disciplined reduction, removal, or refusal of low-value, ineffective, unnecessary, or harmful practices.

## **Wisdom capture**

A failure mode in which the language of wisdom is used to preserve the very patterns wisdom should correct.

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# Appendix B — The Life-Coherence Wisdom Test

## Full form

- 1. What is life already registering?**  
What bodily, emotional, relational, ecological, institutional, or cultural signals are present?
- 2. What has become salient?**  
What is being treated as urgent, visible, measurable, profitable, sacred, threatening, or unquestionable?
- 3. What is being backgrounded?**  
What suffering, burden, relation, margin, ecosystem, history, future, or vulnerable life is being ignored?
- 4. What frame is organizing perception?**  
What story, metric, model, ideology, institution, fear, role, or ultimate concern is shaping what can be seen?
- 5. What emotion is organizing the field?**  
Is the field being governed by fear, grief, shame, anger, pride, compassion, love, despair, certainty, or hope?
- 6. What world is this emotion bringing forth?**  
Who appears legitimate, threatening, invisible, useful, disposable, or impossible to hear?
- 7. Does this expand or reduce life-capacity?**  
Whose capacities to live, heal, relate, participate, repair, belong, and flourish are enabled or disabled?
- 8. What harm is hidden or normalized?**  
What direct, structural, cultural, ecological, commercial, digital, or institutional violence is being concealed?
- 9. What is being protected, sacrificed, or made ultimate?**  
What concern is functionally sacred, and does it protect life or require life's disposability?
- 10. What capture must be interrupted?**  
Is the situation shaped by salience capture, affective capture, metric capture, sacred capture, algorithmic capture, or institutional capture?
- 11. What repair is being asked for?**  
What must be stopped, restored, redesigned, protected, forgiven, mourned, compensated, regenerated, or coordinated?
- 12. What must be learned and re-attuned?**  
How will reality correct the frame after action is taken?

## Portable core

The full cycle is for deep analysis; the portable core is for everyday discernment.

**What has been made to matter?**

**Does it serve life-capacity?**

**What harm is hidden?**

**What is being made ultimate?**

**What repair is required?**

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# Appendix C — Failure Modes of Misrelevance Checklist

## Salience capture

What is urgent but not life-important?  
What is life-important but invisible?  
What repeatedly captures attention?  
Who benefits from this salience?  
What would become visible if attention were re-ordered around life-capacity?

## Affective capture

What emotion is governing the field?  
What truth does it carry?  
What partiality does it risk?  
What world does it bring forth?  
What harm might it justify?  
What repair might it make possible?

## Metric capture

What does this metric make visible?  
What does it hide?  
What behavior does it incentivize?  
What burden does it displace?  
Who designed it?  
Who can contest it?  
Does it support repair, or does it substitute for repair?

## Sacred capture

What is being made ultimate?  
What is being protected at all costs?  
Who or what is being sacrificed?  
What suffering is being justified?  
Does the sacred protect life, or demand life's disposability?

## Algorithmic capture

What objective is being optimized?  
What does the system train people to notice, desire, fear, ignore, or become?  
What capacities are strengthened or weakened?  
Who can appeal or contest?  
Who is accountable for harm?  
Does the system support wisdom or automate misrelevance?

## **Institutional capture**

What does the institution protect under pressure?  
Whose suffering reaches decision-makers?  
Whose suffering is filtered out?  
What metrics have replaced mission?  
What must be stopped for the institution to serve life again?  
What would the institution do differently if life-capacity were truly central?

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# Appendix D — Practice Templates

## Clinical review template

What is the diagnosis?  
What is the patient's life-world?  
What exposures are ongoing?  
What repair is blocked?  
What margins are depleted?  
What care plan is livable?  
What must be reduced, restored, stopped, simplified, or coordinated?  
What would healing completion require?

## Education review template

What does this learning environment make salient?  
Does it cultivate attention, curiosity, belonging, discernment, and repair?  
Where is achievement becoming capture?  
What supports life-capacity in learners and teachers?  
What kind of person is this system helping bring forth?

## Public health review template

What conditions are entering bodies as exposure, burden, or blocked repair?  
Which risks are being individualized?  
Which commercial, social, ecological, or digital determinants are being backgrounded?  
What civil commons must be protected?  
What would prevention require if life-conditions were made central?

## Policy review template

What problem is being framed?  
Who defined the problem?  
Who is affected?  
What life-capacities are enabled or disabled?  
What burden is displaced?  
What evidence would reveal harm?  
What must be de-implemented?  
What commons or margins must be protected?  
How will the policy be corrected if harm appears?

## **AI/digital review template**

What is being optimized?  
What is being amplified?  
What is being hidden?  
What capacities are strengthened or weakened?  
What emotions are being trained?  
What behaviors are being rewarded?  
Who can appeal or contest?  
Does this system support wisdom or automate misrelevance?

## **Institutional review template**

What life was this institution created to serve?  
What does it now protect first under pressure?  
What forms of suffering does it filter out?  
What does it call success?  
What practices must stop?  
What margins are being consumed?  
What would allow those affected to correct the institution?

## **Peace/discernment review template**

Whose wound is visible?  
Whose wound is denied?  
What fear organizes the field?  
What memory has become weaponized?  
What security is domination?  
What justice is revenge?  
What sacred claim requires sacrifice?  
What would shared life-protection require?

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# Appendix E — Figure 1 Full Caption and Interpretation

## Figure 1. The Life-Coherence Wisdom Compass

The diagram presents life-coherence wisdom as the embodied, relational, and self-correcting realization of what matters for the protection, repair, and expansion of life-capacity. The living triad integrates Peil Kauffman’s account of emotion as biologically meaningful sentience, extended here as viability sensing; Maturana’s understanding of emotioning as the opening of relational worlds; and Vervaeke’s account of relevance realization as the transformation of salience into insight, meaning, and wisdom. The evaluative ring introduces three guardrails: the life-value test, the anti-violence test, and the discernment test. The right panel identifies failure modes of misrelevance, while the bottom cycle translates the framework into practical movement from sensing viability to learning and re-attunement. Wisdom acts by repair, not domination.

### Extended interpretation

At the center of the diagram is life-capacity: protection, repair, and expansion. This center prevents wisdom from floating into abstraction. Around the center, emotion, relation, and relevance form the living triad through which wisdom arises. The evaluative ring ensures that this triad remains answerable to life-value, hidden harm, and ultimate concern. The shadow field names the major ways relevance becomes captured. The action cycle grounds the whole framework in practice.

The diagram’s core proposition is:

**Wisdom is the life-answerable realization of what matters, in the service of repair.**

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Dr. Bichara Sahely, BSc (Biology), MBBS, DM (Internal Medicine), is a physician, systems thinker, and independent scholar based in St. Kitts and Nevis. His work integrates clinical medicine, public health, ecological responsibility, autopoiesis, life-value onto-axiology, peace theory, civil commons, spirituality, and governance into a life-coherent framework for health, healing, progress, discernment, wisdom, and civilizational repair. His recent white papers develop a relational grammar for evaluating whether persons, institutions, technologies, economies, and societies expand or reduce the life-capacities required for human and planetary flourishing.

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## Back Cover Synopsis

The contemporary world is not suffering only from a lack of information, intelligence, innovation, morality, spirituality, policy, or governance. It is suffering from a deeper crisis of relevance: the wrong things have been made to matter.

*Toward Life-Coherence Wisdom* proposes a new framework for understanding wisdom as life-answerable relevance realization: the embodied, relational, self-correcting capacity to realize what matters for the protection, repair, and expansion of life-capacity.

Building on prior life-coherent work in health, progress, governance, discernment, spirituality, peace, and repair, the paper develops a living triad of wisdom: Peil Kauffman's emotion as viability sensing, Maturana's emotioning as the opening of relational worlds, and Vervaeke's relevance realization as the transformation of salience into insight, meaning, and wisdom. It then tests this triad through McMurtry's life-value criterion, Galtung's anti-violence diagnostic, and the discernment question of what is being made ultimate.

The paper introduces the concept of misrelevance: the condition in which attention, emotion, metrics, sacred narratives, algorithms, and institutions make life-incoherent things urgent, visible, profitable, sacred, or unquestionable. It identifies six failure modes — salience capture, affective capture, metric capture, sacred capture, algorithmic capture, and institutional capture — and offers a practical Life-Coherence Wisdom Cycle for moving from sensing viability to repair, coordination, and re-attunement.

Its central claim is simple: wisdom is not knowing more. Wisdom is becoming less capturable by what does not serve life.