

# Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Dear David,

Welcome to the final issue of *Uncommon Sense* for 2019. Christmas is behind us, I am away on a "working vacation," and the New Year approaches. I wish all of you a most splendid, festive, and safe New Year celebration and a very successful life in the year ahead.

I am really pleased with the **Self-Development** column in this, our 206th issue. Read it, apply it, and you will undoubtedly see results you can be proud of!

In this issue's **Elephant in the Room** column, I offer some rough thoughts I have about a Leftist obsession, that of diversity and inclusion.

The **From Ara's Journal** column contains some random perceptions about two alternative approaches to life. . . For what it's worth.

And as always, the **World of Words** column delivers yet again another dandy word that you should add to your vocabulary.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood



## **Self-Development**

### Goals

Most achievers have a regular list of tasks they wish to accomplish on a daily basis. *Go to the gym. Work on that project. Send over the PowerPoint deck to a colleague. Process the notes from the quarterly planning meeting.* For me, completing the writing of this very newsletter is on today's task list. But I am not writing about the achievement of such tasks in this column. They are merely an illustration of what I am *not* writing about.

In other words, the micro-tasks of a daily task list are necessary but insufficient for true greatness.

Thus, while one could think of the tasks on a daily task list as goals for the day, they are usually inconsequential in the big picture.

Instead, to achieve extraordinary greatness, and to enjoy a life of meaning and fulfillment, one must set lofty goals. I learned this as a young man back in about 1979 from a towering influential figure in my life, Don Atkinson (pictured to the right), who, at that time, was a Vice President for the commercial real estate firm, Marcus & Millichap. I've never forgotten his lessons, as they were transformative. Taking Don's inspiring advice, and building on that foundation with the keen insights from others, I am now in a position to offer you some important instruction on the power of goals, goal-setting, and goal-achievement. Here is is.



Don Atkinson

First, you need to limit your loftiest goals to a very small number for a given point in time. In fact, having only one lofty goal is not unacceptable, but probably quite prudent. It is important to resist the urge to commit to many lofty goals at the same time. Having a small number of goals, one, or perhaps two - three at the absolute maximum - at one time greatly increases the likelihood that you will achieve greatness, because those one or two lofty goals do represent significance. They are highly consequential. Achieve one goal of this caliber and you are achieving greatness by definition. However, if you succumb to the temptation to commit to five or six or ten goals at one time, all of them being lofty, you will almost certainly achieve none of them. You will be stymied. You will be overwhelmed. You will lose your focus. Your frustration will spike. Do not make the mistake of taking on too much at one time. Instead, follow my advice and only commit to one or perhaps two (absolutely no more than three!) lofty goals.

Second, your goals should involve matters that cause you to salivate. These types of goals make your blood boil - not in the sense of angering you, but in the sense of galvanizing you. Your goals should concern things that inspire you and motivate you to muster the energy and the focus and the resources necessary to have staying power. Think of a classic boxing match for the heavyweight championship of the world. Those things were scheduled for 15 rounds. If you can imagine the pursuit of your lofty goals to be like a 15-round bout, you must have the energy and the stamina to come out just as strong in the 15th Round as you did in the 1st Round. You simply must not lose focus, nor throw in the towel, before you achieve victory.

Third, you must have a time-frame in mind that you are committed to. There must be a deadline. Most lofty goals of significance are not - cannot be - achieved in only a few months. (If they can be, I have to question just how significant and daunting the goals were in the first place.) For many people, they think in terms of one year. This is something I do as well. However, there really is no innate validity to a one-year time frame. It's an artificial construct. Those of us who set goals with a one-year time frame in mind do so out of sheer convenience. Western society (and much of world society) has arbitrarily placed significance on a one-year cycle due to nature's templates (i.e., the natural phenomenon of the time it takes the earth to circle the sun.) But your goals do not necessarily have to be limited to such strictures. Lofty goals could conceivably have a time frame of 8 or 9 months to complete. Conversely, they could have a time frame of 14 months, or 19 months, or 16 months. The time frame for the achievement of your lofty goals can be whatever you decide is a realistic, plausible time horizon. But once you

commit to that time frame, you must stake your honor on accomplishing the goal by that deadline. You must take that time frame very seriously.



Fourth, if the goal you set is truly significant, you have to recognize that there are various layers or dimensions that lead to the attainment of your ultimate goal. Think of your huge, bodacious goal as this giant boulder you have to move. What kind of leverage points will help you to move it? What sort of broad activities will lead to the attainment of that king-sized goal? There are usually some moderately-sized activities that have direct influence on the attainment of your major goal.

Let me give you a simple example: Let's imagine your goal was a very personal one involving your physical health. Let's say you wished to lose 30 pounds within 8 months. Now, doing so is certainly achievable. But it won't happen without serious focus and effort. So think about it: what sorts of leverage points would influence the process of losing weight to the tune of 30 pounds?

Two things come to mind immediately:

- Food intake (or, how many calories you consume)
- Exercise (or, how many calories you burn)

Once you know that your direct influence over how much food you consume and how much exercise you do will lead to the ultimate attainment of your commitment to lose 30 pounds, you can begin to make regular, weekly decisions about what you are going to commit to at the micro-level to eat the proper amount (and types) of food and to get the proper amount (and types) of exercise.

Here's a different example: If your lofty goal was to generate \$600,000 in revenue over the course of a year, selling whatever it is you sell, you would realize that you need to generate approximately \$11,540 each week on average for the entire year. What activities would you have to engage in to ensure you are performing at that level? Perhaps it involves a certain amount of internet marketing or some form of advertising. Perhaps it involves picking up the telephone and placing a certain number of phone calls per day to prospects and existing clients. Perhaps it means you must make at least 4 actual presentations to qualified decision-makers each week. Perhaps it involves setting up a referral program where you reward people who refer you to qualified leads. In other words, if you do the advertising, make the requisite number of phone calls, conduct the right number of presentations to decision-makers consistently, and work your well-designed referral program, you will achieve your weekly goal of generating \$11,540 in sales revenues, and thus, you will hit the \$600,000 in total annual revenues.

Fifth, and finally, you have to have a system in place for keeping track of your progress towards your goal. You have to know if you are on track to succeed or to fail. You have to have a scoreboard of some kind so you can know where you

stand in real-time. The pursuit of lofty goals is much like running a race. You have to know if you are on track to win the race. If you are, that's great - you just keep on going all the way to the finish line. But if you find you are not on track to win the race, you must pick up the pace. You have to run faster! Losing is not an option. You must sacrifice. You must draw upon untapped energy reserves. You must give it your all. You must bleed a little to ensure you win. Goal achievement is not for the faint of heart. So be sure to set up some sort of system so that your progress is being measured at all times, and that you know where you are in the game at any moment in time.

Whether your lofty goals involve your health and fitness, your financial strength, your mastering of a skill, your relationships, your knowledge base, your habits, your character or mannerisms, or some tangible thing you wish to acquire, if you follow the principles I have outlined above, you will bend the odds in your favor that you will attain your goals.

And in attaining your goals, you will have achieved true greatness.

## **The Elephant in the Room**

### **The Inclusion and Diversity Conundrum**

What I am about to write will be sure to drive the so-called Progressives a bit crazy. And while that is always entertaining to watch, that is not why I am writing this. I'm writing this to enlighten fair-minded individuals and to open their eyes to something odd that is happening.

The so-called Progressives (which, truth be told, are actually Regressives) of the Left have their pet projects and their code language, trendy slogans they spew out with regularity. Among their favorite terms are the words *diversity* and *inclusion*. And the Left has done an impressive job of taking over college campuses (and many businesses) and forcing them to set up departments of diversity and inclusion. The stated reasons for them doing so seem to be noble. In the case of inclusion, they portray themselves as looking out for the underdog and the marginalized and wanting to include such outcasts into the public square and out from the shadows of society. They do this, they assure us, because they are kind, loving, and caring. As for diversity, the Leftists claim that their religious devotion to the ideal of diversity is employed so that a greater variety of voices can be given air time.

But the entire thing is a farce.

When Leftists say they believe in diversity, what they mean is they wish to move aberrant behavior from the margins of society to center stage. For Leftists, their love affair with diversity meant, to cite but one example, taking a sexual preference, in this case, homosexuality, and making it more mainstream and more acceptable. And they succeeded. High school-aged boys and girls who were homosexual in their orientation would have been very quiet about it in, say, the mid-1970s. Today they are very loud about it, making sure everyone knows they are attracted to those of the same gender. Indeed, their sexual orientation is the defining characteristic of their being. Today, hardly anyone will admit to believing homosexuality or bisexuality is even peculiar.

Similarly, transgenderism is all the rage currently. Stories about it appear in the news media with stunning regularity, as if 80% of the population is transgendered and therefore all of society should bend to their will. It won't be long before most of the American population gives up in exasperation, and being transgender is thought of as normal. Then the Left will turn their attention to a new aberration and work to make it more "inclusive." This pattern will continue until everything that is not normal will be considered normal, and everything that is normal will be considered abnormal (except that Leftists won't attempt to include such newly ostracized folks in their inclusion campaign.)



And therein is the farce. The Left claim to love diversity, but their stated commitments to embrace diversity are not sustainable.

Here's why: Judeo-Christian values, which have withstood the test of time, are antithetical to immorality, perversity, and foolishness. One cannot embrace both Judeo-Christian values *and* secularism in all its varieties and with all its factions (e.g., the LGBT agenda, the atheist agenda, the illegal immigration agenda, the soft-on-crime agenda, the radicalized environmental agenda, etc.) The Left claims to value diversity, yet the Left absolutely wishes to disenfranchise religious conservatives. The Left does not wish to provide a seat at the table for those with whom they disagree. Their stated allegiance to true diversity is a lie. They wish to silence conservative voices and exclude religious perspectives.

So the next time you hear a Leftist tout the notions of diversity, ask them point blank if they value the diversity of opinions that come from a conservative world-view. Chances are they will say that they do not, because they don't allow for what they glibly call "hate-speech" (i.e., any speech with which they happen to disagree.) And the next time you hear a Leftist advocate for inclusion, just remind them that inclusion means including people with ideas different from their own.

Then watch them struggle to say, with a straight-face, that they cannot possibly include everyone (by which they mean religious conservatives.)

Then just point out the hypocrisy and the fraud they are perpetrating.

And that, my friends, is the latest elephant in the room.

Check out [my website](#) for tools to help you with your career, your presentations, and other matters.

## Shameless Plug

### Need Help Preparing For That Next Big Interview?

So you have trouble with job interviews? You get nervous? You feel unprepared? You get psyched out? I understand. And that is why I am pleased to alert you to my eBook: ***Your Interview Roadmap***. At over 12,000 words and with six appendices, this guide book will open your eyes to what really goes on in the world of interviewing from both sides of the table, and will prepare job seekers to hit it out of the park 80% of the time. (OK, more like 90%, but I prefer to be understated.)



If you are interested in purchasing the product, you can [click here](#) to make your purchase. The

advice you will glean from this eBook is golden! I would charge you six times the price of the eBook to give you the same advice in person.

If you've done poorly in job interviews in the past, you can turn it around. The answers are there. Take action!

## From Ara's Journal

### Macro- and Micro-Values

While I am using the term "values" to differentiate between the Macro and the Micro, I probably could have used a number of other terms instead (e.g., Micro-issues, Macro-concepts, Micro-situations, etc.)

Macro-Values are employed when dealing with large-scale, ponderous realities. Micro-Values



are turned to more often when dealing with the here-and-now, or when dealing with individual people.

Thus, a Macro-Value might be something along these lines: *When speaking of broad principles, I seek to uphold **standards**.* A Micro-Value, by contrast, might be: *When dealing with an individual who, perhaps, clashes with said standards, I try to employ a certain level of **understanding, empathy, and diplomacy**.*

On Facebook, where I post a lot of news stories along with my own comments, I am usually operating from the vantage point of a Macro-Value, meaning I am speaking of broad principles and important standards of conduct and decency. I am speaking both descriptively (what actually happened) and prescriptively (what I believe good standards would dictate should have happened.) Some people who read my commentary imagine that is how I would carry myself when speaking one-on-one with an individual. They imagine I would be hard, unyielding, and combative. While all of those things are certainly possibilities, history has suggested such is not always the case.

In fact, such is often not the case.

When I am in front of another person, in a face-to-face encounter, unless the person is exhibiting inordinately aggressive behaviors, or if we are in a pre-planned, formal debate, I am generally thinking in the Micro- realm: listening, learning, discerning, offering questions, being gracious, offering tentative but alternative points of view, trying to provoke thinking without being incendiary. None of this in any way means I'm a sell-out to my principles. None of it means I am cowardly or afraid to confront. It means, instead, that I am aware I am dealing with a person, not an object, and that I wish to learn from that person as well as influence that person.

There are people I interface with on Facebook who sometimes convey grave misgivings about the way I express myself. Sometimes they are justified (such as was the case recently with LL). Other times, their misgivings are misplaced for the simple reason that they are not distinguishing between a Macro-Value and a Micro-Value. Both approaches have their place. The Micro- approach is not the only valid approach, contrary to the assertions and assumptions of some.

## The World of Words

### Stratify

#### Building Your Power of Expression

**Stratify**, v.

**Pronunciation:** 'stradəfɪ



**Meaning:** To stratify a thing is to arrange or to classify that thing. It is the act of dividing or arranging into classes, or castes, or social strata.

## Usage:

- *Our next task is to stratify the patients into well-defined risk groups.*
- *The industry stratifies customers in a manner similar to the airlines.*
- *Society will stratify itself according to the laws of social gravitation.*

New subscribers, the Special Report "11 Ways to Beat the Odds" should have been sent out to you already. If you have not received it, please communicate that to me via email ([ara@aranorwood.com](mailto:ara@aranorwood.com)).

For more information on my work, follow me on Twitter ("Ara Norwood"), or on Facebook (keyword "Leadership Development Systems") or via my website: [www.aranorwood.com](http://www.aranorwood.com)

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