

You're receiving this email because of your relationship with Ara Norwood of Leadership Development Systems. Please [confirm](#) your continued interest in receiving email from us. To ensure that you continue to receive emails from us, add ara@aranorwood.com to your address book today.

You may [unsubscribe](#) if you no longer wish to receive our emails.

Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

In This Issue

[Being Self-Aware
On Opposing World-
Views](#)
[Ara's Journal](#)
[World of Words](#)

Quick Links

[Ara's Web Site](#)
[Facebook Page](#)

Join Our List

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

Issue: # 003

May 11, 2011

Greetings!

I am delighted you are still along for the ride. It is an honor to be able to provide you with concepts and ideas about things that matter.

This issue has us turning inward and reflecting upon ourselves in order to continually improve. Sometimes professional development is preceded by personal development.

I also shine some light on an old debate, not so much to put forth my own position as to enable us to better perceive the contours of the conflict.

I'm well under way with editing Issue #4 which should be out within two weeks. In the meantime, I encourage you to continue to forward this email to people in your database whom you believe would find this content of interest.

Thanks for spreading the word.

Warm regards,

Ara Norwood

Being Self-Aware

I am struck by how unaware many of us seem to be. There are all kinds of personas around us, some pleasant, some engaging, some, . . . obnoxious. I am thinking about a team of engineers at a firm I do some training for. I notice that one senior engineer, who has an otherwise fine personality, has a propensity to talk far, far

longer than is normal. He can monologue for 20 to 30 minutes, spewing out sentences in rapid-fire succession. During this verbal marathon, the other members of his audience can scarcely get a word in. They listen politely, but seem hog-tied when it comes to contributing to the conversation. The strange thing about all of this is that on one level the talkative engineer seems somewhat cognizant of this, as he occasionally will say, after about 25 minutes of rambling, "Ok, I've just got one more thing to say and then I'll shut up" - before launching into yet another ten-minute monologue. As I've observed this tendency on his part, I have to wonder if he really is aware of how others are experiencing him. I see these others cringe every time he launches into one of his famous pontifications.

I don't think he is unique. Perhaps he is in terms of his particular quirk. But all of us, myself included, have personalities and mannerisms that could use some refining from time to time. Like the non-mechanical pencil that needs periodic sharpening, how we come across to others is a phenomenon that also could use some fine-tuning here and there.

I think the key is to strive to be more self-aware. By merely asking ourselves how we might be coming across to other people, we can usually self-correct or adjust our approach or our style in an appropriate manner. It's when we turn off our radar that we can get into trouble. If we strive to allow for a fair amount of balance in our interactions with others, combining listening to our speaking, and give others a chance to contribute so that we really can listen, we can vastly improve the outcomes in our communications with others.

Painful though it may be, it is important that we look in the metaphorical mirror with some regularity.

What happens when an irresistible force meets an immovable object?

I am currently reviewing what may be the most significant series of debates in all of American history - the Lincoln-Douglas



debates. These debates, which took place in the late summer and early autumn of 1858, were about slavery. Neither man was a presidential candidate at the time, but both would go on to vie for the United States presidency in 1860, which Lincoln would win.

It is very interesting to ponder the implications of the Lincoln-Douglas debates from a larger perspective. Both men were articulate and thoughtful. Yet both men had very opposing views about slavery (though not everything they believed was at odds.) It seems they saw the world very differently.

I believe a similar dichotomy is present in today's America. We may not be debating a single issue like slavery. But there seems to be a whole host of issues that cause large numbers of us to see things one way, and other large numbers of us to see the same issue in a completely different light. I guess that's the meaning of the word *controversy*. But it is the fact that two types of people see the same issue in such different ways is what fascinates me.

I perceive a line of demarcation separating two groups from the middle of the road, or what I will call The Center. It seems that a true "centrist," if there was such a thing, would possess total neutrality and lack of bias. In my experience, such persons are quite rare.

There seems to be a faction on one side of this center line; we could identify them as being "right

of center," and another group on the other side of this center line; we could refer to them as "left of center."

Like Lincoln and Douglas of the 19th century, these two groups seem to have diametrically opposing world-views on most things. (Note: I am not suggesting that either Lincoln or Douglas fit into the modern-day categories as I have begun to describe them here - just that the two men possessed drastically different ways of seeing the world around them, as do today's proponents of leftist values and right-of-center values do.)

In upcoming issues of Uncommon Sense, I intend to shine some light on these two world-views. I think it is important that the rest of us who may not be quite so partisan should become acquainted with the values and the world-views and the political philosophies of the major contenders and advocates who see the key issues of the day so differently. Stay tuned.

Shameless Plug: Is Your Resume Hurting You?

Some of you have a resume that isn't enabling you to put your best foot forward. I have assisted quite a few in taking a mediocre resume and transforming it into a winning document that got them noticed -- and got them an interview. If you are ready to position yourself in like manner, I am offering a special 50% discount for Uncommon Sense subscribers.



Email me for details: ara@aranorwood.com

Standard Price: \$500
Discount Price: \$249
Offer Ends: May 31st

From Ara's Journal

I have twin daughters, now age 16. One of them was involved in a car accident the other day. She was supposed to be home, but instead she was out running around with friends -- without permission.



Further, she was in one of our several family cars which we have allowed her to drive, but she was driving with another 16-year-old, when she is not legally allowed to drive with anyone outside of her immediate family who is under age 21. Further, she turned the wheel over to her friend, who is uninsured, and the friend, predictably, drove at an unsafe speed on a dirt road and lost control, driving the car off the road and into a sort of gully. The airbags deployed, the car is probably a total loss, and my daughter ended up with a concussion and also now suffers from significant neck pain.

All of that is a backdrop to set a context for an interesting question: How, as a parent, did I handle the situation with my daughter?

If I was honest, I'd have to say I earned a grade of somewhere between a C- and a C+ -- certainly not a B-. Nothing to write home about, but thankfully, not a failing grade.

On the one hand, I have to face the fact that when I arrived on the scene about an hour after the incident just as the tow truck was preparing to extricate the vehicle from the gully, I got out of my car and marched past my wife and daughter and other onlookers, speaking not a word to them, making a bee-line for the vehicle to examine it. I had been told initially that there were no injuries, so I didn't feel it necessary to ask my daughter how she was feeling. (The injuries didn't really manifest themselves till the next day.) But it sure seems as if I was rather aloof, and task-driven, rather than relationship-driven, in that action.

On the other hand, I never raised my voice to my daughter, and was sparring with the words of chastisement, knowing that she was well aware that the consequences she now faced of physical

pain and loss of the car -- not to mention a loss of trust by her parents -- was the direct result of her choices. What periodic chastisement was engaged in was accompanied by (and tempered by) expressions of sympathy and a commitment that she is now and will always be a treasured member of our family, accepted in every way, and valued.

I think the reason I am writing about this is because I need to follow my own counsel as contained in the opening article of this issue of "Uncommon Sense." I think it important to regularly review my performance, however painful the process might be, in everything from my work life, to my spiritual life, to my relationships with my friends, to what kind of neighbor I am, to what kind of father I am. Such self-analysis is often painful and hard to face up to. But there is growth in doing so.

Last night, five days after the accident, I received from this daughter two spontaneous hugs, and this from a daughter who is not often demonstrative. Perhaps the C- to C+ grade range is a bit austere.

Maybe it's a B- after all.

The World of Words

Building Your Power of Expression

Emblematic, adj

Pronunciation: emblə'matik

Meaning: As an emblem refers to an object or figure or pictorial device that represents something else (i.e., a quality, an institution, a concept such as justice, etc) our word here is the descriptive rendering of the term.

Something that is said to be *emblematic* is suggestive of something else, is reflective of something else, or could be said to be symbolic of something else.



Usage:

- *He appeared wearing his crown, emblematic of his status of royalty.*
- *The legislature's insistence on raising taxes without cutting spending is a key part, indeed, is emblematic of, the current fiscal crisis facing California.*
- *The mild, pleasant weather seemed emblematic of life in the Caribbean.*

Subscribers, the Special Report "11 Ways to Beat the Odds" is now complete and has been sent out. If you have not received it, please communicate that to me via email (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

Sincerely,

Ara Norwood
Leadership Development Systems