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# Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Issue: # 010

August 31, 2011

## Greetings!

I truly hope this issue of *Uncommon Sense* finds you in good spirits. While all sorts of busyness and complexity swirls around us, I stay grounded by remembering a few simple guidelines:

- Learning never ends
- If I want to be a writer, then I need to write regularly
- To thine own self be true

That latter adage (taken from the Bard of Avon) essentially means to stay true to your values. Of course, to stay true to ones values presupposes that one has adopted certain values, a topic I take up in the opening article below.

OK, let's get started!

Warm regards,

Ara Norwood



## Governing Values

I recently revisited my Governing Values. I had selected about nine values that I wished to emulate. But on further thought, I pared them down to three.

The reason I did so was that I began to sense that the higher the quantity of values I had claimed as my Governing Values, the harder it was to focus on them, let alone personify them. I found that doing a little pruning was a wise move.



Today, my Governing Values encompass these three:

- Truth
- Virtue
- Integrity

That's it. I am finding I can keep those three in the forefront of my mind with some consistency. And it does impact my behavior and my mannerisms.

What about you? Have you taken the time to define your Governing Values? And if you have, is the number of values you have adopted as your own small enough to manage?

If you have not taken the time to decisively select that small handful of values that constitute your core, go back to my Special Report, *11 Ways To Beat The Odds: A Primer For Successful Individuals* and take the time to complete the values exercise found therein. You'll be glad you did.

## Conservative vs. Liberal Mindsets: *What Would You Do If You Were President of the United States?*

Just over one week ago, the *New York Times* ran an [interesting article](#).

Written by one Jesse Kornbluth, the article sought out a variety of people who are neither politicians nor media personalities to answer the question, *What would you do if you were President of the United States?*

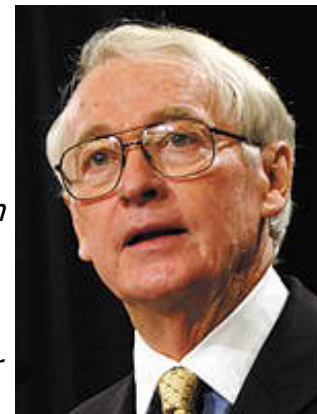
The responses of a dozen individuals were included in the article. As near as I can tell, all of the respondents, with one exception, entertain political views that are Left of

center - the one conservative in the group being the eminent James Q. Wilson who has taught at Harvard, UCLA, Pepperdine, and now, approaching age 80, teaches at Boston College.

While articles of this type are generally of only mild entertainment value, I consider the article rather informing in that it conveys some distinct differences between the way a conservative thinks and the ways others who are Left of center tend to think.

Take James Q. Wilson's response:

*With my staff, I would decide what my administration was for. Once I had clarified that, I would write several speeches on how to cope with a stagnant economy, how to deal with countries (such as Iran and Syria) that harass their own populations, and how the United States is committed to the survival of Israel. These speeches would not attack the other party or previous presidents but would describe the views I supported. On the economy: do I favor tax cuts or increases, expenditure reductions or increases? On terrorist regimes: what sanctions will I support? On Israel: under what circumstances would an attack on Israel be regarded as an attack on the United States? People would disagree with some of what I said, but they would know where I stand. After delivering the speeches, I would submit to Congress my specific proposals, on which I would ask them to vote.*



By contrast, here is what poet Sharon Olds had to say:

*I'd grant the very rich the boon of helping them help others, as a form of gratitude for their good fortune. I'd also connect every creative writing program with a hospital, a school, a library, a prison, a neighborhood center - workshops in the supermarkets! ("Aisles full of husbands! Wives in the avocados, babies in the tomatoes!")*



So we have a conservative who would develop clear and precise policies on major issues, who would then work to get congress to vote on specific policy proposals, and we have a liberal who would tax the "very rich" and then hold creative writing workshops in supermarkets.

I think the distinctions in thought process and worldview between Left and Right could not be clearer, and I am grateful to the *New York Times* for providing yet another clarifying moment.

### Shamless Plug

I am giving a 3-day management development workshop September 7-9 in Southern California. Any meeting planners who would like to observe any portion of the program are invited.

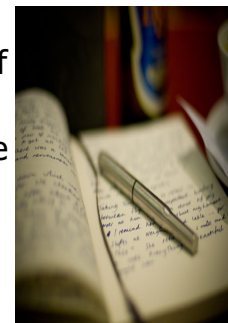
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### From Ara's Journal

One of the most meaningful metaphors to me is the Boiled Frog syndrome. The gist of the fable is that if you take a frog and drop it in a pot of boiling water, the frog will take immediate action and jump out of the cauldron to save itself. If that same frog is then dropped in a pot of tepid water, the frog will stay put - no danger, no need for action. However, if you take that pot of room temperature water and place it on a heat source, such as a stove, and turn up the heat, the frog will continue to stay put, even as the water temperature slowly, imperceptibly rises steadily. The water eventually reaches the dangerous boiling point of 212° yet the frog perishes - it boils to death. It does so for the simple reason that the internal apparatus which enables the frog to detect and avert danger is calibrated to sudden, drastic changes in the environment - not slow, subtle, nuanced changes.



While a fascinating metaphor to ponder, it's sobering to realize that all around me (and you) are potential boiled frog scenarios. The Boiled Frog Syndrome is ever-present. There is a gradual erosion that seems to affect every aspect of our lives.

Take the mental dimension. Even as I become more learned with time, as I maintain a very healthy appetite for

new knowledge (derived from books, from conversation, from debate, from listening to the world around me, and from living life to its fullest) the aging process appears to have a slightly dulling tendency of the cognitive faculties.

Or take the physical dimension. At age 53, I am reasonably consistent in running a mile twice a week in about 8 minutes. Yet I still sense a continual increase in my gut, a loss of muscle, and sometimes I get up out of a chair after prolonged sitting with much stiffness of body. I realize I have to do more to stay in shape.

I am aware that the Boiled Frog syndrome could negatively impact one's social life. If a person is not mindful of his/her friends and family members, his work associates or neighbors, he could adopt a cantankerous posture which could alienate others, causing them to distance themselves, until, little by little, he finds he has few if anyone standing in his corner - a lonely outcome.

The Boiled Frog Syndrome seems to attack one's economic life as well. Finances get mismanaged, more is spent than is earned, principal is eroded, nothing is saved, and the hapless person ends up broke - dependent on others.

My greatest worry with respect to the Boiled Frog Syndrome is with respect to the spiritual dimension of one's life. When our very conscience is compromised, and we lose our sense of the moral, nothing else seems to matter. Our ability to be good and do good is lost and we become barbaric, selfish, and sometimes downright evil. I think it is very important that above all else, we protect and nurture the core of who and what we are. Prayer, apologizing, forgiving, anonymous service, sacrificing, these seem to be helpful antidotes to the Boiled Frog Syndrome in the spiritual realm.

## The World of Words

### Building Your Power of Expression

**Normative**, adj.

**Pronunciation:** 'nôrmətiv

**Meaning:** Relating to a standard. Implying, creating, or establishing a norm.



**Usage:**

- *The sanctions were intended to produce normative behavior.*
- *His mannerisms were highly uncharacteristic; they were anything but normative.*
- *The normative response of such a move would be excommunication.*

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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](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)

**Sincerely,**

Ara Norwood  
Leadership Development Systems