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Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Issue: # 014

October 26, 2011

Greetings!

The results are in from the Forwarding Contest. And, interestingly, there were no results. According to the statistical tracker that is provided to me, no one forwarded issue #13 of *Uncommon Sense* to anyone.

I'm not sure why that turned out to be the case but perhaps the prizes simply weren't compelling enough.

Perhaps had I offered a trip to Hawaii, or a new car the outcome would have been different. I will keep that in mind for the future. In the meantime, we've got some important ground to cover in this issue.

OK, let's get started!

Warm regards,

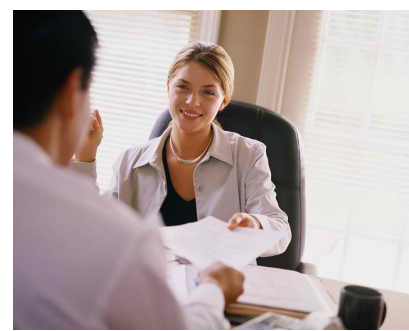
Ara Norwood



Job Interviews, Part 1

So you are going to your next interview. And you are nervous because you believe you are going to be in the hot-seat. Your perception is that this interview will be more

akin to an interrogation, where one or more employees at the company will grill you about your past. And so you brace yourself and hope you can survive this.



I am going to suggest what may be obvious to some of you, but may be lost on others of you.

And that is this: the job interview is meant to be a two-way street. It is a reciprocal encounter. They get to ask you questions, and you get to ask them questions.

It is true that they typically ask you more questions than you get to ask them. But that does not negate the fact that the specific questions you ask have got to count; they've got to be meaningful. And they need to not only make a good impression (i.e., the impression that you are an insightful, mature, thinking person) but they also need to provide you with the kind of information that will help you to make a wise decision about whether you really want to work there.

There are two phases in which you get to ask your questions: prior to the interview, and during the interview. This article concerns the questions you will ask (and seek to answer) prior to the interview. This is really important. It's important because you do not want to ask questions during the interview that could have easily been answered by going to their website prior to the interview.

In other words, don't ask them what business they are in. If you ask that, it means you're not even in the game, and you will have shot yourself in the foot right out of the gate. If they are a publicly traded company, don't ask about sales revenues or other common financial figures, as such figures could have been found in their Annual Report (which is almost always on their website.)

Here are some of the things you should try to find out about your target company prior to showing up for the interview:

- Is this organization a supplier, a distributor, a manufacturer, a service organization, a non-profit?
- What business are they in?
- When were they founded?

- Are they public or private?
- When does their fiscal year begin?
- Are they in multiple countries? Which?
- Where is their headquarters located?
- How many employees work there?
- What are the target markets they seek to provide products or services to (both geographically and in terms of target industries)?
- If they have products, how many products?
- Roughly how many customers do they have?
- Who are some of the more senior executives?
- Who was/is their founder?
- What are their core values?

If, during the course of the interview, you are able to demonstrate a familiarity of the company you are interviewing with, this will go a long way towards putting you on the inside track for a job offer.

In our next issue of *Uncommon Sense*, I will share some of the questions you may wish to ask during the interview itself.

The War Against Gender

Do you remember "Pat," the androgynous fictional character portrayed on many an episode of Saturday Night Live in the 1980s and 1990s?



Well, she/he/it is back. . .

There is a quiet war going on in America. This war, curiously, is about gender.

As an outgrowth of the LGBT movement (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender), and perhaps in order to cast a wider net and gain more members, a movement known as LGBTQQA has spawned. The initials cover the following: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, and Allies. I admit I am at a loss to grasp how "Queer" is different from, say, "Gay," but I've got to hand it to the folks that came up with such an all-inclusive club. I can't wait to see the future iterations of this group. Perhaps LGBTQQDCA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender,

Queer, Questioning, Deviant, Confused, and Allies). Or why stop with nine letters? They could go with LGBTQQDCIFSOBAA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Deviant, Confused, Irregular, Freakish, Strange, Odd, Bizarre, Abnormal, and Allies). Actually, I personally think they should go with AEEHRB (Anyone and Everyone Except Heterosexual Religious Believers.)

The basic premise of this group is that gender is fluid, and that if you are a male, but you wake up one morning imagining that you "feel" like a female, then you *are* a female. Likewise, a young lady who wakes up feeling like a boy, *is* a boy. Gender is, to such people, based on your mood and your inclinations, and not something that nature bestowed on you at birth. And whereas most of us strive to resolve our moments of confusion with clarity and resolution, the people that advocate for such movements actually revel in confusion and have no desires to escape from the psychological limbo that permeates their minds.

The New York Times, approvingly, wrote about this madness in an article published September 30th, 2011, titled "The Freedom To Choose Your Pronoun." You can read it by [clicking here](#).

It is disturbing to learn the age range such groups are targeting. Katy Butler of Ann Arbor, Michigan, first attended one of their meetings as a seventh grader - and that was four years ago. I wonder if there is any sense of restraint in such activists. Would they refrain from sharing their message with a 10-year old? A 7-year old? A 5-year old? Apparently not.

A fight for gender-neutrality is going on in America. Another contribution of the Left.

Shamless Plug: Norwood to Address CSUN Frat

The upcoming speech I'll be delivering to the Beta Alpha Psi Fraternity at Cal State Northridge on November 12th is shaping up nicely. And several of you have expressed an interest in attending. I have been given permission by the meeting planner to reserve two more seats -- no charge -- for any of my guests, so if you think you'd like to attend, contact me at ara@aranorwood.com.



From Ara's Journal

Detecting the Divine

The pop psychologists and motivational speakers among us claim success leaves clues. I agree.

I sometimes wonder whether "the divine" leaves clues. If there is such a thing as God (and I am quite convinced there is) would He leave clues?



And, more importantly, would we detect such clues? I recently read back-to-back biographies of George Washington. The first is titled *1776* and its author is the eminent historian David McCullough who has written important biographies on John Adams and Harry Truman. McCullough has been the recipient of many honors, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom, 40 honorary degrees, two National Book Awards, as well as two Pulitzer Prizes.

The second book is titled *His Excellency* and the author is Joseph J. Ellis, who, like McCullough, studied at Yale University where he earned his PhD in History. He is also a recipient of a Pulitzer Prize and a National Book Award.

An event in American history took place during the evening of August 29 and 30, 1776. Washington's beleaguered and seemingly defeated Continental Army faced a very tough decision: stay and fight against a much better-trained British Army and suffer certain annihilation, or find a way to retreat across a raging river that made retreat virtually impossible. However, the course of the winds and the river's current shifted suddenly, thus making the retreat possible, but still precarious, for had the British Army become aware of what the Continental Army was doing, they would have put a decisive stop to it. Hence the retreat had to be conducted with absolute secrecy and in absolute silence. If it wasn't complete before sunrise the next

morning, the British would have a clear view of Washington's operation, and utter mayhem would be the result.

Here is how David McCullough presents the story:

At the ferry landing all this time troops and supplies and artillery were being loaded aboard one boat after another as quickly as humanly possible and sent on their way.

Everyone worked furiously. A Connecticut soldier manning one of the boats would remember making eleven crossings in the course of the night.

But the exodus was not moving fast enough. Some of the heavy cannon, mired in mud, were impossible to move and had to be left behind. Time was running out. Though nearly morning, a large part of the army still waited to embark, and without the curtain of night to conceal them, their escape was doomed.

Incredibly, yet again, circumstances - fate, luck, Providence, the hand of God, as would be said so often - intervened.

Just at daybreak a heavy fog settled in over the whole of Brooklyn, concealing everything no less than had the night. It was a fog so thick, remembered a soldier, that one "could scarcely discern a man at six yards distance." Even with the sun up, the fog remained as dense as ever, while over on the New York side of the river there was no fog at all.

At long last Mifflin and the rear guard and the troops at Fort Stirling were summoned. "It may be supposed we did not linger," wrote Alexander Graydon.

Major Tallmadge, who with his regiment was among the last to depart on the boats, would write later that he thought he saw Washington on the ferry stairs staying to the very end.

Graydon estimated that it was seven in the morning, perhaps a little later, when he and his men landed in New York. "And in less than an hour after, the fog having dispersed, the enemy was visible on the shore we had left [behind]."

In a single night, 9,000 troops had escaped across the

river. Not a life was lost. The only men captured were three who had hung back to plunder.

In presenting the same amazing episode to his readers, Joseph J. Ellis provides a mere passing comment as follows:

Washington's only redeeming action was the rescue of surviving units from Brooklyn Heights under the cover of fog and rain on the night of August 29.

Somehow, I feel Professor Ellis has missed an opportunity to spell out something of the miraculous, as if such elements are simply not on his particular radar.

The World of Words

Building Your Power of Expression

Cacophony, n.

Pronunciation: kə'käfəneē

Meaning: A harsh, discordant mixture of sounds; dissonance; the use of unharmonious sounds in speech.

Usage:

- *When I blog on leadership, I am usually met with silence; but when I blog on political matters, the result is usually a cacophony of vituperation. Must be doing something right.*
- *At this upcoming press conference, you can expect a cacophony of bellicosity during the Q&A segment.*
- *The only type of "music" that isn't actually music is rap (which is more of a cacophony of mutilated jibberish and vile animosity attempting to appear clever.)*



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
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