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Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Issue: # 016

November 24, 2011

Greetings!

Gratitude is such a helpful and healthy attribute. When we sense too many problems are piling up on our shoulders, we need only pause, assume a reflective posture, and count our blessings to experience a change in perspective.

It's true: although I might sometimes feel buffeted by many pressing problems -- finances, family issues, health, challenges in my social spheres, seeing others suffer, etc., I need only remember that I really have a lot going for me: a wonderful wife, great kids, work that I love, the fact that I am a citizen of an amazing and exceptional country, I belong to an incredible Church, I live the American Dream, I've been given a superb education, I have some of the finest people on the planet I count as my friends, I am in relatively fine health, etc.

Thus, I am glad we celebrate a holiday like Thanksgiving, to remind us of this important principle of gratitude. I wish each of you a memorable Thanksgiving holiday!

And thanks for being a subscriber to Uncommon Sense.

OK, let's get started!

Warm regards,

Ara Norwood



Job Stability

I have come to believe that unemployment is often (though never entirely) avoidable.

If you are employed at the present time, you probably work for an At-Will employer. This means that your employer can sever ties with you with or without cause. They can fire you for having blue eyes (even if your eyes are green!) Now if you are providing value to your company, your chances of being terminated are small. However, sometimes forces such as politics or personality issues can trump contributions and results.



There is a fairly simple way to avoid the anguish that comes with sudden unemployment: You adopt the mindset that you could lose your job at any time. And therefore you make seeking your next job an ongoing pursuit -- even if you love your current job.

A smart approach would be to scour the web on a weekly basis for jobs that you are qualified for. Chances are reasonably good that new job openings in your field will be posted on the internet every week. So submit your resume and cover letter. Then follow up by phone if possible.

If you do this, you stand a very good chance of being contacted periodically for an interview. And the result is that you will build up a reservoir of potential companies that have an interest in you.

This is a much better position to be in than finding yourself terminated and having to start from scratch to locate a new place of employment.

So will you make it a weekly practice of searching for employment even while gainfully employed?

You have to face up to the fact that you probably won't. The reason you probably won't is because you've been conditioned to take action only after a crisis rears its ugly head.

But wise self-leadership plans for a rainy day - and it does

so by anticipating a potential crisis long before the crisis occurs. So I urge you to be the sort of wise leader who makes it a practice of preparing a contingency plan as I have outlined here.

If you do, you increase the likelihood that you will avoid an unnecessary crisis.

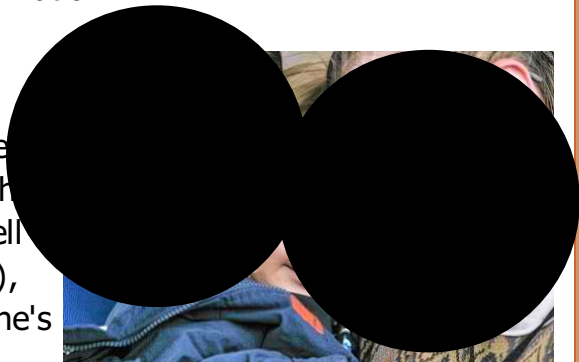
Defending Stupidity

I have come to expect isolated cases of sheer stupidity to surface periodically. While we do, thankfully, have periodic brushes with brilliance from time to time (think Winston Churchill, Peter Drucker, Neil Postman, Steve Jobs, Miles Davis, Michael Jordan), such brilliant performance is, unfortunately, balanced out by acts of sheer recklessness and utter, incomprehensible stupidity (think Tiger Woods, Anthony Weiner, and virtually any stunt performed on the MTV reality show *Jackass*.)

One of the more recent manifestations of stupidity is the decision by a relatively young married couple living in New Jersey to name their three children as follows:

- Adolph Hitler
- Honszlynn Hinler (after Nazi leader Heinrich Himmler - the father got the spelling wrong)
- JoceLynn Aryan Nation

To read some of the excerpts from interviews with the couple, Heath and Deborah Campbell (pictured to the right), one can only shake one's head at the sheer, unbridled stupidity the renegade parents display. The [original story](#) broke in early 2009 but has resurfaced this week.



What is most troubling to me is not the parents bequeathing to their babies names that will only lead to trouble for the kids (and, by the way, the father wanted to name one of his children "Satan" but was talked out of it.)

What I find maddening is when certain corners of the online media question what the fuss is all about. After all,

assures Jezebel.com, Heath Campbell may be a white supremacist, but that does not make him a bad parent. And the [Huffington Post](#), which reopened the story this month, writes in a tone that seems sympathetic to the parents, but not to the children.

We should not be surprised when individual stupidity surfaces. But when onlookers attempt to paint it as acceptable and normal and justifiable, we should be outraged.

Shameless Plug: Speech on Great Men Slated for Sunday

There are many great lights who have performed brilliantly over the centuries. I have spent many years studying them and what made them great. Da Vinci, Churchill, Luther, Gandhi, Mother Teresa, Reagan, Alexander the Great, etc., have all captured my imagination and I have lectured on all of them a number of times.

This Sunday November 27th I will be speaking in a church - my Church - on one of the most misunderstood and fascinating "great men" I have ever encountered - Joseph Smith. If any of you would like to sit in on my talk, I will be speaking during the 11:00 AM hour.



The location is 24443 McBean Parkway, Santa Clarita, CA 91355.

From Ara's Journal

Ignorance is bliss

"Ignorance is bliss" is an old saying. We often say it tongue-in-cheek, for very few of us deliberately opt to be ignorant. We want to know. And this drive is a good thing.



However, there is one area of the human condition that I, thankfully, remain ignorant of.

I remember attending San Jose State University for a time. I was majoring in music and played guitar in a jazz

ensemble. One of my fellow guitarists was a guy named Chad. I recall on one occasion I went to Chad's apartment to drop off some sheet music to him. When I knocked on the door, I heard a gravelly voice inside summon me to enter. I did, and found Chad on the floor looking wasted, a bong within arms reach. The stench of marijuana was in the air. His eyes looked glazed. He was quite out of it. I asked him how long he had been consuming the drug. He replied that he thought it was for several days straight. He claimed that was all he had been doing for 2 or 3 days - smoking pot and getting high. It turned out that marijuana was not the only drug he took.

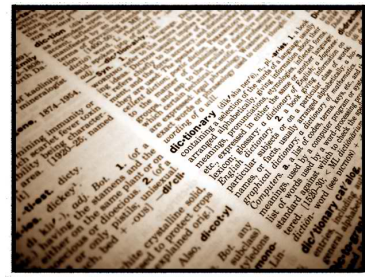
Eventually, he came to admit to me that he had a problem with drugs, an addiction. But then in a rare moment of double-talk, he said something I'll never forget: "You have no idea what it's like, so you can't comment on the issue!" And the way he said it, it was as if he was in possession of some special knowledge, some prized esoteric mystery that only he could grasp but people not "in the know" such as myself, were saddled with a serious deficiency due to our ignorance.

He was proud of his "knowledge" of drug addiction. He was contemptuous of my ignorance of the same. I admit I am ignorant of what it's like to be under the influence of illegal drugs. I've never taken one, not even once. I am wholly ignorant - blissfully so. There are some things in life - not many - but some, in which ignorance is to be preferred over direct experience.

Drugs remain one of the few things in life that I am content to never learn to avoid due to bad first-hand experience with it. I've seen enough - second-hand - of what it consistently does to others to know not to go anywhere near it.

Ignorance in this case is indeed bliss.

The World of Words



Clarity, n.

Pronunciation: 'klaritē

Meaning: The quality of being clear, certain, or definite. Also, the quality of coherence and intelligibility.

Usage:

- *I am far more interested in attaining clarity over agreement.*
- *The way it was written was confusing to me; it lacked clarity.*
- *Any time an issue is presented with crystal-clarity, we have a much better chance of responding effectively.*

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