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Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Issue: # 017

December 16, 2011

Greetings!

Thought I forgot about you?

Not a chance. It's been a busy few weeks but the delay in getting this out was only temporary. I've got some important items to impart.

OK, let's get started!

Warm regards,

Ara Norwood



Decide to Decide

You want to know one of the reasons why you may not be attaining greatness?

Seriously. Think about this for just a moment. Why do you sometimes fall short of true greatness? If you presume it's based on a lack of luck, then you may be overlooking a key element.

Luck certainly does play into our fortunes - but that is the subject of another article.

More pronounced than luck is the issue of the decisions we make. Most of us find that greatness is elusive for the

simple reason that we have failed to make the decision for greatness. Sound naïve? Simplistic? False? Consider this:

John Wooden, who died last year at the age of 99, was the head basketball coach at UCLA from 1948 to 1975. When he first arrived at UCLA, he was not a great coach. He was a reasonably good coach.

It wasn't until 15 years had passed, during the 1963-64 season, that Coach Wooden began to attain true greatness. And he did so because he *decided* that "good" was no longer good enough. He demanded *greatness* of himself and his players. That season he coached UCLA to their first national



championship (going undefeated in the process.) By the time he retired in 1975, he had coached UCLA to ten national championships, pulled off four undefeated seasons, and ended with an overall winning record as a head coach of 664 wins against 162 losses, an astounding .804 average.

I suspect that if Wooden had not made the decision to attain greatness, history would have been different for UCLA Basketball.

Imagine what could happen to you in 2012 if you make the great internal decision to achieve certain things that you are passionate about? Imagine how your behaviors and your habits would shift if you truly decided - truly committed - to attaining something extraordinary? I'm not talking about hope, or aspirations, or wishes. I'm talking about making a decision.

It's up to you. I'd be interested in hearing of the greatness you are committed to attaining in 2012 and beyond. Send me an email. And then go for it - the clock is ticking.

Decide to decide.

A radical animal-loving group known as PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) has made the news recently. The people who run this curious group seem to love animals so much that they wish to bring about an equalization between human beings and the animals. While I grant that the distinction between some people and some wild animals is not all that great, I do believe there is a basic distinction between humans and animals (the former being created in God's image for starters.)

PETA [made the news](#) with the novel legal claim that Killer Whales performing at Sea World are actually being held against their will. Thus, reason the folks at PETA, the whales are slaves, which violates the 13th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.



I'm not making this up. PETA is serious in bringing such arguments to court - they want to have the Constitution's laws apply to animals! Do they think the founding fathers and subsequent constitutional scholars had this in mind when they authored them?

I think this is great, for it allows us to see inside the mind of one of the truly left-leaning political action groups in America today.

I have some questions for PETA:

- Why stop with the 13th Amendment? What about the 1st Amendment, which includes a provision that we have the right to petition the Government for a redress of grievances? Surely if the whales at Sea World are being held as slaves, those same whales should be allowed to petition the government for a redress of such conditions.
- What about the 2nd Amendment? I have never seen any whale bearing arms of any kind. Perhaps this is due to some left-wing distaste for this amendment; to be consistent, however, the folks at PETA should push through new legislation allowing for the whales to carry firearms.
- While I have not kept up with crime among the whale population, there certainly must be some level of crime; after all, they are called Killer Whales for a reason. If so, the 6th Amendment, which allows for a

speedy trial of the accused, should come into play. Of course, that will require a complete structural overhaul of our courthouses, as they will now have to be equipped with gigantic pools for the whales so they can attend their own trial.

- The 19th Amendment makes everyone a citizen regardless of gender; should not PETA now advocate for the citizenship of whales?
- Any people that have reached the age of 18 should be allowed to vote, so says our 26th Amendment. Why not extend the same right to whales once they reach their 18th birthday?

In fact, I have to wonder why PETA is singling out whales. Since they are not known as PETW, but PETA, why not extend all these rights to aardvarks, ocelots, porcupines, and pelicans?

Now, of course, I have not lost my mind, and I am not seriously entertaining such notions. However, I have a hard time seeing how PETA would be discounting the entertainment of such ideas and still be consistent.

From Ara's Journal

Death of an Atheist

I heard a few days ago that death was imminent for atheist Christopher Hitchens. He was suffering from cancer. Today I learned that he has died.



When someone of such fame has died, it is always interesting to read how admirers eulogize the deceased. Fellow atheist Richard Dawkins referred to Hitchens as "one of the greatest orators of all time."

Unable to resist a dig, Dawkins went on to say that Hitchens was "a valiant fighter against all tyrants including imaginary supernatural ones." Almost clever.

I hesitate to write the following as I do not wish to be mistaken for feeling smug (which I do not feel at all) yet I cannot help but ponder. . . if there is a God and an afterlife (which I am firmly convinced that there is) what happens to a Christopher Hitchens on the other side?

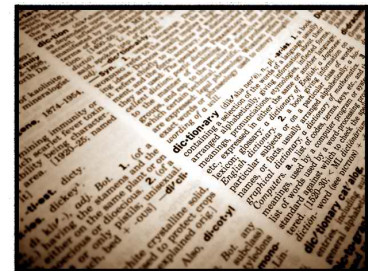
I am not asking what his fate will be, or whether he will be rewarded or punished. I am contemplating more along the lines of what does a person do who spent his entire adult life mocking the existence of a Supreme Being and an afterlife, gathering untold numbers of followers and admirers, only to discover, at death, that he was completely in error on the most fundamental question of life? Does a fellow like Hitchens, who wrote a book titled *god is Not Great* (the "g" in God is deliberately lower-case) become sheepish, embarrassed, mortified, or depressed upon learning that there *is* a divine God who is, in fact, great? Does he wish he could start his life all over, getting a *mulligan*? Is he possibly happy to discover that life does not end at death? Or is he aghast?

These are perhaps inappropriate questions as they pertain to specific persons, such as Hitchens. But I think the line of questioning is very important as it pertains to me. What area in my life am I *absolutely certain* about that I may, in fact, be utterly mistaken about?

Worth reflecting on.

The World of Words

Building Your Power of Expression



Imperative, adj., n.

Pronunciation: im'perətiv

Meaning: Of vital importance; crucial; urgent.

Usage, as an adjective:

- *I realized from the look on her face that immediate action was imperative.*
- *They confirmed that it is imperative our standards are reviewed.*

Usage, as a noun:

- *Closing this account and transferring the monies into a mutual fund is an economic imperative.*
- *We have a moral imperative for setting things right.*

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