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Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Issue: # 018

December 26, 2011

Greetings!

Christmas is one day behind us. But I hope that spirit of giving has not left us. It's a special feeling that makes the world a better place.

I hope your Christmas was splendid. But equally, I hope your future is replete with anticipation, verve, excitement, and all of the usual kinds of emotions that give you something to look forward to -- just as a kid anticipates the festivities of Christmas. I try to give you some important food-for-thought with an important opening article on Goal Setting. Applying the content found therein should give you much to look forward to.

OK, let's get started!

Warm regards,

Ara Norwood



Some Thoughts on Goal Setting

Goal setting is an exercise that occurs for many driven, enterprising individuals at about this time of year. Christmas is behind us. A new year looms on the horizon.

And people like those who read *Uncommon Sense* tend to formulate aspirations - also known as goals.



Goal setting is the method self-starters use to augment their lives. This cannot be overstated. Virtually all progress, with the exception of those rare "happy accidents," occur because someone set a goal. For examples of a grand magnitude, the putting a man on the moon was the result of a goal, as was the building of the great pyramids of Egypt, as was the erection of the Great Wall of China. Most people elected to high office (exceptions would include Gerald Ford, Harry Truman, and Theodore Roosevelt who attained the presidency through circumstances beyond their control) do so as the result of a goal. And most of our accomplishments in life, be they mundane or stellar, are also the result of a goal.

Goal setting can occur in any dimension of our life, be it physical, mental, social, emotional, economic, aesthetic, or spiritual. And while some people set goals in all dimensions of their life, other people opt to concentrate on only one area, or perhaps on a few (though not all) areas of their life.

Goal setting is often focused on strict, quantifiable objectives that are easily measured. Success or failure in such settings is unambiguous. If you set a goal to run a 7-minute mile, you know whether you achieved that goal. Anything over 7 minutes means failure to reach that goal - even if it was merely one second over. Anything at 7 minutes exactly or faster spells success. It's black and white.

Some goal setting may involve objectives that are not easily quantifiable. I once met a colleague who confided to me that he had set a goal to be happier. Admittedly, he may simply have to rely on his internal sense of what constitutes happiness in order to determine whether he has achieved his goal at some future point in time. Unlike the objective measurements of running a 7-minute mile, my colleague will have to turn to subjective impressions to ascertain his success or failure in the attainment of this goal, and his assessments will necessarily lack the precision of the more quantifiable goals.

Goals can be thought of as an attempt at achievement in the form of a project. And the achievements are almost always something that takes extra effort and focus. Thus, a student of the martial arts, for example, can set a goal to advance to the next belt (or rank) in her particular discipline. To do so, she will have to practice the various self-defense techniques with regularity, she will have to attend her lessons prepared to demonstrate competency, she may have to master some *katas* (i.e., choreographed self-defense forms that can go on for several minutes and can be quite intricate.) It may take dedicated focus over several months to advance to the next belt. The same could be said for a guitarist who wishes to be skilled enough to perform in a recital. The student of the guitar will have to practice scales, chords, strumming, picking, and other techniques. In addition, the guitarist will have to build up a repertoire of songs that he can, over time, master to a "concert-ready" proficiency. Then a date and a venue will have to be secured.

Notice that in both examples above, the overarching goal is comprised of many tasks that must be accomplished. Indeed, attaining one's goals can keep one busy.

There is no particular rule that says your goals must be set with a one-year time-frame in mind. The time-frame is important to consider, as setting a deadline can spur effort. But the exact duration of such time-frames should be dictated by a variety of factors, including the difficulty of the goal, and with a consideration of what else is going on in one's life at the time. Deadlines should challenge, but should be realistic.

Likewise, the number of goals set should be given careful thought. Consideration of how much one person can handle for a given window of time is paramount in the successful accomplishment of goals.

Your goals should be written, and stated in language that is elegant and commanding. You should review your written goals regularly and determine what needs to be done next, on a micro-level, to bring you closer to the attainment of your goal.

Finally, you should set goals that galvanize you. The goals should stir something within you, call it motivation, yearning, drive, determination, or passion. Whatever the goal, it should fan the flame of ambition and cause you to

relish life.

And always remember: while the attainment of your goals is strongly preferred, and one should never be satisfied with failure, I should hasten to point out that even missing the mark by a bit can still mean progress in your life has been accomplished. In other words, it is far better to set a goal, miss the mark a bit, but reap the benefits of the effort involved, than it is to never set any goals on the grounds that you will have never actually failed. Such a mindset betrays a deep-seated failure, for as Stephen Covey once said to me personally, "The greatest risk in life is not *risk*, per se; the greatest risk in life is never to have taken any risks."

How To Lower College Tuition

Once upon a time the American college campus was a place for higher learning of the arts and sciences. Then the radical Left took over. Now, instead of focusing on the teaching of English, Biology, Philosophy, Math, or History, colleges appear to be obsessed with diversity, a Leftist staple.

Case in point, as Heather MacDonald has [pointed out](#), at one University of California campus (UC Davis) we find the following administrative positions and institutions adding to an already burgeoning and bloated bureaucracy:



- Associate Executive Vice Chancellor for Campus Community Relations
- Diversity Trainers Institute
- Administrator of Diversity Education
- Director of Faculty Relations and Development in Academic Personnel
- Director of the Cross-Cultural Center
- Director of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Resource Center
- Education Specialist of the Sexual Harassment Education Program
- Academic Enrichment Coordinator, Dept of Academic Preparation Programs
- Diversity Program Coordinator, Office of Campus

At another UC campus (UC San Francisco), we find the following:

- Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Outreach
- Office of Affirmative Action, EEO, and Diversity
- The Diversity Learning Center
- The Center for LGBT Health & Equity
- The Office of Sexual Harassment Prevention and Resolution
- The Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Diversity
- The Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Disability Issues
- The Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Issues
- The Chancellor's Advisory Committee on the Status of Women

Given that some of these bureaucrats earn almost quadruple the starting salaries of most first-year professors, and given that tuition costs are continually skyrocketing - largely to pay for the social programs described above, perhaps the solution is an abandonment of Leftist obsession with feel-good social issues such as diversity, and a return to teaching and learning.

From Ara's Journal

I admit I'm feeling a bit pessimistic at this moment.

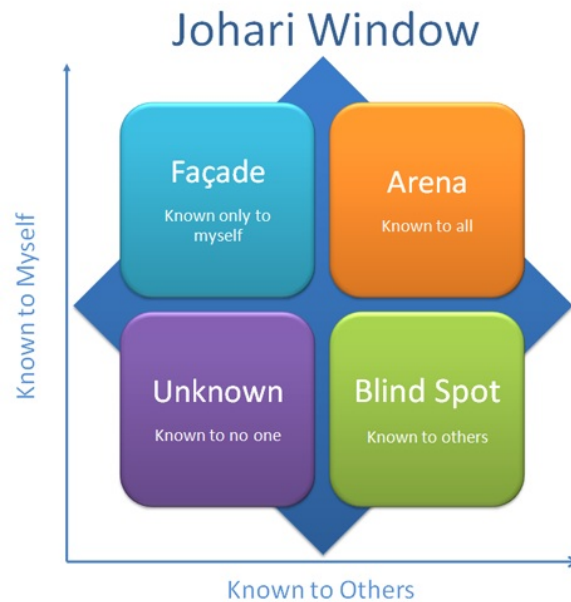
It seems as if there is not a lot of love of truth in this world. People tend to fudge the truth when they aren't outright lying. Many people seem to lie to themselves to the point that they come to believe their own lies. When people clash with others, they seem to be unable to own up to their portion of the problem. Their focus instead is solely on the faults of the other party. And thus they remain blind to their own contributions.



It's kind of like the model known by the exotic and mysterious name "Johari Window" (which, truth be told, is merely the conflation of the names of its two creators, Joe Luft and Harry Ingham). In this quadrant model, which is used in the social sciences to help others in mapping their own personality awareness, one of the quadrants suggest that there are times we are blind to our own persona

which stands as a beacon to others, as depicted in the lower-right quadrant in the model seen to the right.

We can't see our own shortcomings yet others can see them loud and clear.



Wise is he/she who reflects on which aspects of their characters fall in this quadrant.

The World of Words

Building Your Power of Expression

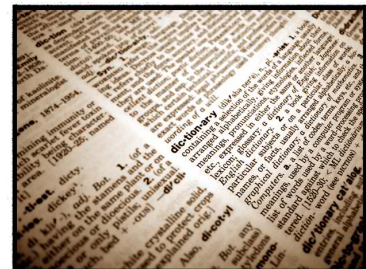
Purge, verb

Pronunciation: pərj

Meaning: The act of removing something; to rid of an undesirable element.

Usage:

- *Allow me to purge the overwhelming guilt that plagues you with some long-overdue good news.*
- *Someone with real backbone will have to purge our universities of all the unnecessary and tuition-squandering diversity programs.*



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