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Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Issue: # 020

January 26, 2012

Greetings!

The Super Bowl is coming soon. This annual event draws millions of football fans to television screens everywhere to watch the game, (and others to watch the commercials.)

The two teams will have an offensive unit on the field, or a defensive unit.

Offense and defense. Either one can be instrumental in coming out victorious. Much like in real life.

While I normally focus my energies on writing and advising from a proactive position (i.e., offense), I don't want to give short-shrift to defense and will open this issue with an article written from a defensive posture.

OK, let's get started!

Warm regards,

Ara Norwood



How to Thrive When Disaster Strikes - Part 1

I've got to admit it: for most of us living in the United States, myself included, we've got it pretty good. Those of us who think we don't need only widen our view of the world and see what daily life must be like in North Korea, or Syria, or Venezuela. And in fact, when one looks through

the even wider lens of history, one begins to realize that for the vast majority of us here in the U.S., even those who struggle with very real problems (i.e., pretty much all of us) we really do enjoy more of the bounties of life than most other people on earth. I guess you could say that we are lucky.

My parents went through the Great Depression. But I did not. While I have seen some recessions come and go, and while I've seen my own personal fortunes vacillate, I've not really known serious hardship - yet.

Reread my previous paragraph. You'll notice that the implication of uncertainty is percolating under the surface of those words. We all face an uncertain future. The future could be fabulous, splendid, and record-setting. And the future could be harsh, austere, and grim. We just don't know for certain.

But certainly, none should be surprised if the coming years are difficult. Most people in the world's history have experienced what we in 21st Century America would consider extremely bleak conditions. Very few people have had an easy road. Luxury and ease are an historical anomaly.

Just as intelligent homeowners living near fault lines in California buy earthquake insurance in order to hedge their bets in the off-chance that disaster strikes, so, too, do intelligent individuals take precautions against calamities that could

potentially upset their world. As this subject is on my mind, I am going to spend a few issues of *Uncommon Sense* advising you on what I think you should do to shield yourself against life's arrows. And I really hope you will not merely read my advice, but that you will



organize your schedule to implement and execute according

to the instructions I provide. I think it may prove to be imperative that you do so.

First bit of advice: do you buy soda in cans? If so, for the next several months, stop it. Instead, buy your soda in the two-liter plastic bottles. If you do not buy soda, perhaps you should for the next little while - again, in the two-liter plastic bottles.

Once the soda has been consumed, clean out the bottles. (You can run them through your dishwasher if you want.) Then fill the bottles with water. Make certain the caps are tight. Then store them in different places in your home (closets, under bathroom and kitchen sinks, in the garage, anywhere.)

If disaster strikes you'll have water which you could use for drinking, or for cleaning (ex. utensils, your body, etc.) Start buying the 2 liter sodas now and you'll find in just a few months you'll have a reasonable amount of water stored.

Remember: you must implement this and not merely read about it. Failing to act is fine if nothing goes wrong in our future, but it's naïve and foolhardy to presume that the idyllic past will be the idyllic future.

Being Duped by Science

There was a time in the past, although I do not recall when it was, that the news media was supposed to be objective and simply report the news as it happened. Most of us who have paid any attention realize that almost all newspapers - especially the New York Times - have become an organ for those with Leftist values and a liberal agenda, all the while denying they have any such agenda. There is little question that Barack Obama is our president in large part because the news media decided they wanted him to be our president. That doesn't address the question of whether President Obama is a good or bad president, only that the media is no longer the objective entity they were charged to be and it's a farce to pretend otherwise. The news media has almost entirely been taken over by the Left.

In considering that reality, it causes me to think that the only remaining field not beholden to Leftist ideology is science. I have always believed that science was the last bastion of objectivity and that a true scientist approached her craft with an intent to understand the truths of the

natural world.

Sadly, this is no longer the case.

After hearing for some time the idea that science has proven that drinking red wine is actually good for you, we are [now learning](#) that such notions are based on a sham, a fraud, a hoax.

Dr. Dipak Das, who for some years has been publishing "scientific" studies to bolster such claims, is in trouble now with the scientific community. An internal review of his findings has shown

more than 140 instances of data that has been shown to be corrupt. The myth-making was so extensive, and had encompassed so



many years, that review board members could "only conclude that they were the result of intentional acts of data falsification and fabrication, designed to deceive."

It's hard to comprehend the significance of this revelation. In fact, it's so difficult to imagine a scientist doing this that many scientists, blinded by the cognitive dissonance involved, are claiming the 140 instances of falsified, fabricated, and deceptive claims really don't change the good doctor's essential claim that red wine is still good for you.

Come again? That would be like saying the Harvard student who cheated 140 different times is still worthy of graduating with a degree; the person who wrote 140 bad checks should still be trusted to write an honorable check *this time*; or the co-worker who lied to you 140 times is surely telling the truth on *this occasion*. If the scientist has a credible point to make about the virtues of drinking red wine, why the need for even one fabrication, let alone 140?

So for those of you who had taken up red wine on the grounds that it was scientifically proven to have health benefits, just be aware that you were lied to by a pseudo-scientist with an agenda.

ER from White Plaines, NY wrote:

Happy New Year. I just got around to reading this issue (#19) and wanted to say I very much enjoyed the contents. The advice to observe successful people is very insightful! I also enjoyed your journal entry and the story about Freidman - I usually like his articles, but didn't realize he has said that about the Israeli PM....I wonder if its Leftism though and not just extreme/over-paranoid views?

LA from Los Angeles, CA wrote:

Hello Ara,
That information about observing, verifying, etc., is such obvious simple advice, yet I had forgotten to think about it. It makes so much sense. This is timely information. Thanks.

CD from Austin, TX wrote:

Now that's takin' it to 'em. Good work!

MH from Northridge, CA wrote:

Been reading your newsletters and they are very empowering. The goal setting one helped me a lot.

From Ara's Journal

I am curious about music.

So curious that I decided, back in 1977, to earn an undergraduate degree in the field for my university studies, even though I was utterly unlike every other music student I met. I actually had three major strikes against me while in the music program at Brigham Young University: a) I wasn't



classically-trained; b) I did not have any piano background; and c) I had not started my music studies at age 4. I honestly think my professors graduated me just to get rid of me. (After my including a piece by Jimi Hendrix as part of my repertoire during my senior recital on guitar, can you blame them?!)

But I digress. . . What is it about this art form known as music that has such a profound impact on people? And the impact can be very, very negative, or very, very positive.

At age 53, I am still not mature enough to fully embrace what is generically called "classical" music (which encompasses a wide array of time periods and genres, from medieval, to baroque, to classical, to romantic, to even some of the relatively "modern" music of people like Arnold Schoenberg, George Crumb, Aaron Copland, and Alban Berg.) But it is starting to grow on me over time. Let's face it, some of this music simply had to be inspired from on High. Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* may well be the most transformative piece of music ever composed, with the possible exception of Bach's *B Minor Mass*.

Then there are some of the jazz artists that have done some pretty amazing things: John Coltrane, Miles Davis, John McLaughlin, Pat Metheny and others seem to bend or even break the limits of what seems possible. On the softer side, modern-day Mozarts such as Suzanne Ciani, crank out a steady stream of art that is both sublime and riveting.

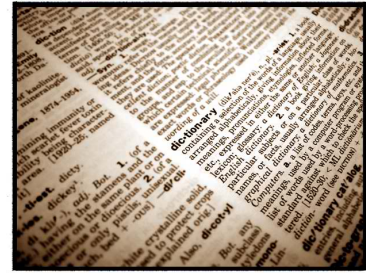
Music has the power to raise - and unfortunately the power to raze. I once heard Dennis Prager, a man whose love of music rivals my own, once ask sardonically, "What must hell be like? Are the people who go there forced to listen to rap music?" Certainly rap music - if it can really be called music - doesn't represent the art's strongest showing. The same could be said of much of that form of rock and roll music known as heavy metal. While rap and heavy metal may be among the most destructive manifestations of this amazing art form, there are plenty of other samples out there in all genres that are, shall we say, less than impressive.

But my main point of focus here is the fact that there is so much in the universal language known as music that can heal, elevate, inspire, enliven, and bring about transcendence. Whether it comes from Fleetwood Mac, The Manhattan Transfer, or Chopin, I am profoundly grateful I

live in a world where music is easily encountered, absorbed, felt, and experienced.

The World of Words

Building Your Power of Expression



Ominous, adj.

Pronunciation: 'ämənəs

Meaning: Giving the impression that something bad is going to happen. An imminent threat.

Usage:

- *There were ominous dark clouds gathering overhead.*
- *The crowd continued to grow in both size and rage which caused the monarch to fear the ominous signs of his overthrow.*
- *I asked my question and was answered with an ominous silence and a stare that sent shivers.*

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