

In This Issue

[The Distinction Leaders Make](#)
[Demonizing Conservatives](#)
[Ara's Journal](#)
[World of Words](#)

Quick Links

[Ara's Web Site](#)
[Facebook Page](#)

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Issue: # 022

February 29, 2012

Greetings!

February 29th -- perhaps the rarest day of the year. This is the day that enables us to sync up our calendars with natural phenomenon, since a complete revolution around the sun takes approximately 365 days and 6 hours.

Although babies born on this date have to make some adjustments on when they celebrate their birthdays most years, the 24 extra hours that have accumulated every four years is resolved by adding this extra day in February so that we can keep our bearings coordinated with the sun's apparent position.

In this issue I aim to help you keep your bearings in a number of important areas of life.

OK, let's get started!

Warm regards,

Ara Norwood



The Distinction Leaders Make

One of my students asked me to explain the differences between having a Mission and having a Vision. I had been lecturing on the process of developing a Mission Statement, be it a Personal Mission Statement, or a Mission Statement for an organization. I think it is a fair question. In fact, it is one I once asked my first great mentor, Stephen R. Covey, when I worked for him right after college. I remember he responded that in his view there was no real difference.

I have come to believe otherwise, although I'll grant the differences are not radical.

The basic difference is one of scope. A mission could be thought of as the purpose of an enterprise, a team, or an individual. A mission is what an organization or person stands to accomplish.

A vision, by contrast, is a desired future state. A vision is more of a condition one hopes to bring about in the future.

If a mission is akin to a journey, a vision is more along the lines of a destination. If a mission is more of a process, a vision is a result - a desired result.

I should hasten to add that the two concepts are not mutually exclusive. On May 25, 1961, President John F. Kennedy expressed his desire of placing a man on the moon and returning him safely to earth before the end of the decade. That was his vision - a desired future state. Once he articulated this vision, NASA was saddled with a mission - how to accomplish such a vast and daunting challenge.



Final bit of food for thought: while this is all interesting to write about conceptually, it is perhaps wise to ask yourself, whether you run a company, a team, or just your own life, What is my mission? What is my vision?

If you can clearly articulate one or the other (or both) you will find yourself engaged in the game of life, will have reason to get up every morning, and will live your life with gusto. Not a bad way to be.

How the Left Demonizes Conservatives

It is a very interesting thing to observe civil discourse in America today.

There are instances where two parties will see things very differently, and will simply agree to disagree - agreeably. They go their separate ways. They continue to maintain their positions. No harm, no foul.

There are other instances, unfortunate ones, where two parties see things differently and those differences become

cause for contention, animosity, and heated exchanges. The two parties may argue their point vociferously, failing to listen to each other, talking past each other, allowing pride to take over and compromise their judgment. But even when this happens, usually the two parties call it quits at some point and go their separate ways - perhaps stubbornly clinging to their respective positions, perhaps no more enlightened and informed than they were when they began their exchange, but once it's over, it's over.

Then there's the strange and bizarre case when someone who maintains Leftist values disagrees with a conservative. Although the examples are legion, here are a couple of instances that are instructive.

New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez is a Republican. She maintains traditional values, among them that marriage should be defined as a union between a male and a female. Sometime after Governor Martinez made some public comments supporting the ideal of traditional marriage, she tried to schedule a hair appointment. The fellow who had been doing her hair, a gay man by the name of Antonio Darden, refused to agree to an appointment. In addition, Mr. Darden left a heated voice mail message with the Governor's office wherein he threatened to persuade other gay people who might otherwise be providing services to the Governor to withhold those services. You can hear the voice mail message in its entirety by [clicking here](#).

Here's another example: just a few years ago, the citizens of California voted on Proposition 8, which was a constitutional amendment that would limit the definition of marriage as being between a man and a woman as it has always been defined. People were free to vote in favor of the proposition, or vote against the proposition, as their conscience dictated. Gay activists (many of whom were not gay themselves - but virtually all of them Left-of-Center) decided that the only proper thing to do was to try to shut down any businesses that were in any way involved in supporting Prop 8 - even if only one random employee at a given business donated even a small amount of money to the Prop 8 campaign. [People on the Left](#) had no problem even going to the homes of their opponents to try to intimidate or terrorize them. Some supporters of Prop 8 reported being threatened with death, or receiving envelopes with a white powdery substance inside. To the Leftists, supporting Prop 8 was an unforgivable gaffe that must result in someone's business being ruined through boycotting, threats, and other forms of persecution and

intimidation.

Those on the Left believe that their views on same-sex marriage are so enlightened that they can no longer maintain a client, nor can they allow a business to remain open, when any contrary views are found out.



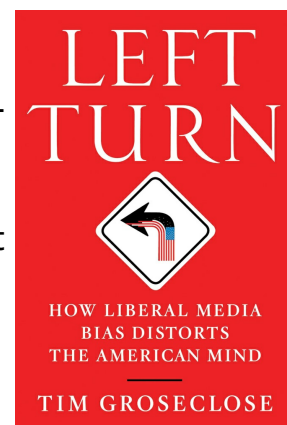
Further, in spite of the fact that no major world religion and no major philosophy in recorded history ever countenanced such an idea as same-sex marriage makes no difference to a Leftist and does not give them reason to pause and reconsider the dogmatism in their position. In other words, in the mind of the Leftist, Jesus and Socrates, Buddha and Locke, Tocqueville and Gandhi, Moses and Einstein, Freud and Darwin, Shakespeare and Muhammad, Picasso and Lenin, Newton and Confucius, Gutenberg and Columbus, Wittgenstein and Henry Ford, Abraham Lincoln and Thomas Aquinas all had it wrong, but hairdresser Antonio Darden and those of his ilk have it right - for the first time in history.

I wonder how today's mainstream media would react if a straight hairdresser refused to service a Governor who supports gay marriage (say, Andrew Cuomo, the Democratic Governor of New York) or if a Tea Party group were to attempt to shut down businesses that voted against Prop 8. But when a society supports a media that is almost entirely dominated by the Left, much is tolerated that otherwise would never be.

Shameless Plug: New Book Out

Lest any of my readers wonder whether the claim I made in the previous article that the mainstream media is almost entirely dominated by the Left, you may wish to check out a recent publication that demonstrates that claim quite decisively. *Left Turn* by Tim Groseclose, a professor of Political Science and Economics at UCLA, presents a fascinating and very readable examination of all mainstream media outlets, illustrating conclusively that they do have a liberal bias which does often affect how

viewers vote. Further, Professor Groseclose demonstrates that while some supposedly conservative outlets--such as the Washington Times or Fox News' Special Report--do lean Right, their conservative bias is of less impact than the liberal bias of most mainstream outlets. You can learn more about this new publication by [clicking here](#).



From Ara's Journal

For quite some time now, I have noticed a troubling trend. It seems that whenever we are in an election year - and often when we are not in an election year - people all over the country seem to be obsessed with the economy, as if it is the economy that is not only the most important issue that has our attention, but it is the only issue that has our attention.



There are so many other issues that seem to take a back seat to the issue of the state of the economy.

How about, for starters, the issue of good mental and physical health? Surely that is something that should demand our attention.

What about the issue of innovation - creating new ways of manufacturing, creating new products and services, creating new ways of managing? Would not that count for something?

Here's one: what about basic human goodness? What about moral excellence and public virtue? Surely if we put effort and attention and focus in such areas as these the economy would take care of itself.

Make no mistake about it: I am not advocating completely ignoring economic matters - far from it.

Yet I fear that a society that is obsessed with the economy at the expense of everything else is a society that is short-sighted, simple-minded, vacuous, and ultimately finds

itself fighting an uphill battle. It kind of reminds me of how I would feel were I at a party where everyone I spoke to could only bring themselves to talk about how much money they earned or lost and were incapable of talking about music, or politics, or sports, or history, or relationships, or food - or if they lacked a sense of humor. Such an environment would be so uni-dimensional as to be nauseatingly boring.

I never thought I would find myself saying this, but 1992 Clinton campaign manager James Carville was right, though not in the way he imagined, when he said: "It's the economy, stupid."

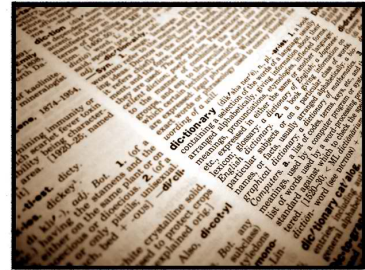
Indeed.

The World of Words

Building Your Power of Expression

Phalanx, noun

Pronunciation: 'fāla ng ks; 'fal-



Meaning: Refers to a group of people or things of a similar type forming a compact body or brought together for a common purpose.

Usage:

- *She strove past the phalanx of photographers and climbed into the back of the limo.*
- *Six hundred marchers set off headed by a phalanx of police officers in riot gear.*
- *The candidate from Vermont seems to be the front-runner, yet cracks have begun to appear in this seemingly solid phalanx of support.*

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,

