

# Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Issue: # 023

March 10, 2012

## Greetings!

Daylight Savings Time kicks in at 2AM tomorrow.

This means we lose an hour of sleep, but we'll have gained more daylight on the back-end of our days. Of course, six months later we'll reverse the process and gain an hour of sleep while watching it get darker earlier.

Life is like that. Most situations are like a two-edge sword. There seems to be gains and losses in almost every situation we find ourselves in. I suppose the optimists among us tend to focus more on the gains, while the pessimists tend to do the opposite.

This issue of Uncommon Sense contains some items that I hope will bring out the optimist in you, difficult though that may be at times. So remember to look for the gains.

Oh, and remember to set your clocks 1 hour ahead tonight.

OK, let's get started!

Warm regards,

Ara Norwood



## Studying Greatness

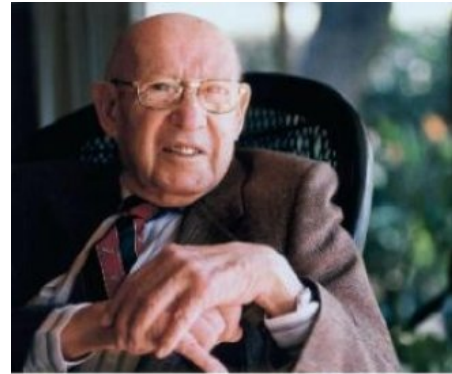
Kids are an interesting bunch. One of the things that makes them unique when they are rather young is their belief in Santa Claus, The Easter Bunny, Super Heroes, and the like. It's nice to have something to believe in.

As we mature, we drop our beliefs in such things that we come to learn are "make-believe." But do we replace such beliefs with real-life heroes that inspire us and give us

something to strive for? I pity the adult man or woman who has no one to look up to.

In every field there are giants - men or women who rise above the rest and who contribute to the "great conversation" of the field in question in ways that set them apart as true thought-leaders. It is important to know who these giants are, and to study their published writings, their speeches, their ideas.

For me, one such giant is Peter Drucker (1909-2005). He is considered by most anyone who knows the field of management to be the elder statesman, the grand marshal -- essentially the man who invented modern management as a formal discipline. He is to management what Einstein was to theoretical physics.



Since management (along with its cousin, leadership) is both my academic and applied field as a professional practitioner, it is very important I am familiar with its greatest savant. It is not enough that I studied with Drucker during my graduate school days, nor is it enough that I had some highly valued one-on-one time with him before he died, nor is it enough that I was one of a handful of individuals invited to write an article in his memory in *Leadership Excellence* magazine when it memorialized him in their January 2006 issue. I find that with someone like Drucker, you discover his wisdom not just once, but you re-discover him again and again.

So whether your field is education, law, music, botany, internet marketing, architecture, or automotive repair, find out who has attained true greatness in that field, and be inspired by them. Make studying their contributions a life-long endeavor.

You may never fill their shoes, but who knows? As a result of your own exposure to greatness you may well make valuable contributions that someone not yet born may some day look to, relish, and be inspired by.

One day while I was a college student, I recall walking into a bank to make a deposit. At the time, I was the president of the state chapter of the National Speakers Association and had a large number of checks as well as some cash to get into our account.

While I was chatting with my Bank Teller, a bright and pleasant young lady whom I took to be in her late 20s or early 30s, she began asking me what my plans were for the weekend. But before she finished her sentence, her eyes began to flutter rapidly, and she uttered a series of syllables in repeated, rapid-fire succession. This lasted for about five seconds, and I felt a combination of confusion and concern. I didn't really grasp what had just happened. I looked at her, and then said, "What?!"

While I didn't quite understand what had happened, she did. She came back to normal and said, in a tone hinting at embarrassment and shame, "I just now had a seizure."

It was an awkward moment for both of us. Apparently she had had them before and thus, understood what she had just gone through. I, on the other hand, was caught off-guard, and, never having seen such a thing before, particularly in a public and professional setting, didn't know quite what to say. I think I asked her if she was OK, and then left as soon as the transaction I had gone in there to conduct was concluded.

Seizures are an unusual phenomenon in that the victim is literally *taken over*, involuntarily, by outside forces over which they have no control. In the case of my bank teller, she surrendered her consciousness while her sensibilities took a nosedive before my very eyes.

Sometimes I sense that a seizure of a different sort is being foisted on America by those with a Leftist agenda. Here are two examples:

**Media Matters:** Media Matters is a political action group run by Leftists who claim to exist for the purpose of

countering what they believe is conservative misinformation in the media. It was founded in 2004 by a gay man named David Brock (seen to the right), whose work New York magazine referred to as "hyperpartianship." A little over a year ago, the group launched EqualityMatters.org in an effort to force new policies for gay equality. They also launched the DropFox.com website in an effort to persuade companies to cease advertising on the Fox News network. Recently it was discovered that part of their strategic planning involved harassing Fox News employees with yard signs in their neighborhoods, hiring private investigators to dig into the personal lives of Fox News employees to look for whatever dirt they might find, persuading Left-wing director Michael Moore to make an anti-Fox movie, placing a "mole" inside the Fox News organization, and retaining a major law firm to see if there was any legal action they might be able to take against the network. In the words of Karl Frisch who orchestrated the plan for Media Matters, the goal was to "discredit and embarrass the [Fox] network." You can read more about this by [clicking here](#).



**Leftist reaction after an opponent dies:** Conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart (seen to the right) died ten days ago, leaving behind a wife and four children. He was 43. Most people usually say something humane when someone prominent dies, even if they were political opponents. Such tributes, however forced, just seem like the right thing to do given the profound elements that accompany something as significant as death. So how does a man of the Left, such as Rolling Stone writer Matt Taibbi, respond to the death of Andrew Breitbart? In typical Leftist fashion, where nothing is sacred and nothing is off-limits:



*"So Andrew Breitbart is dead. Here's what I have to say to that, and I'm sure Breitbart himself would have respected this reaction: Good! F\_\_\_ him. I couldn't be happier that he's dead."*

Somehow I don't think Breitbart, or any decent human being, would respect such a tribute. But being from the Left, it is doubtful that Mr. Taibbi will be challenged for

such low conduct. One can just shake one's head and say, "But, of course. Taibbi is a Leftist. What did you expect?" You can read more about this by [clicking here](#).

Bottom line: the people of the Left seek to cause a seizure to any opposing voices of their Leftist ideology. In the case of Fox News, Media Matters seeks to silence any conservative voices found therein through whatever means necessary. In the case of an individual like Andrew Breitbart, at least some Leftists are actually gleeful that a final seizure has stopped the heart of one of their opponents.

## From Ara's Journal

This week I accepted an invitation by one of my college students to meet for breakfast. He had some work-related issues he wanted my perspective on, and I was happy to oblige. We met in a diner, sat in a comfortable booth, and enjoyed a nice breakfast. The conversation covered a lot of ground, not just about his business, but matters involving his family, and matters involving some of his experiences with an evangelical seminary where he had once been a student. It turned out I have an affiliate relationship with the institution he was referencing, having been a guest lecturer on the subject of Mormonism (the faith that I practice) at that same institution's liberal arts college for over 20 years now. I briefly shared some of my experiences there as an outsider. However, that part of the conversation was a relatively minor segment of the overall agenda we were covering.



The conversation concluded and it was clear we were ready to leave. I started to scoot to my right to get up from the booth, when an interesting thing happened.

The patron who was sitting in the next booth immediately behind me stood up just before I could, and, facing me, he blocked my path out of the booth.

This was a man who appeared to be in his late sixties, a rather large man with a lot of girth in his midsection, and a very defiant and angry look on his face. He told us that he had been listening to our conversation, and then he looked me square in the eye and said, "You are a false teacher from a false religion!" He then addressed my student and

said, pointing at me, "This man is a spiritual imposture who is trying to convert you into a false religion! You need to beware."

I looked at my student and saw that he was about to say something derogatory to the man, in an effort to defend me. But he caught himself and simply said, "Well, I appreciate your enthusiasm." We got up, and left the diner, leaving the man standing there. Not wanting to cause a scene in a public setting, I said nothing.

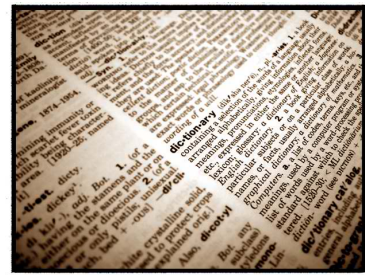
Reading this, you may think the man was psychotic or emotionally unbalanced, but I do not believe that was the case. I have other hunches about what drove him to do what he did.

I found the incident peculiar on the one hand, and yet predictable on the other. The predictable part is that I am well aware that religious bigotry exists in many places, and having been on the receiving end of it on a number of occasions, I was in no way rattled by it. The peculiar part is that it's not every day that a total stranger thrusts himself into my business uninvited and in a public setting.

I suppose I could have responded in kind, and mirrored back to him the venom he spewed. I could have taken a sarcastic posture, and had fun at his expense. I could have attempted to slice and dice the man with serious efforts at argumentation and debate. I could have physically forced him to move out of my way, given that he was invading my space and blocking my path.

But in the end, I believe silence was the best alternative. The man has his reasons for being so aggressive and confrontational, and his behavior at that moment was not the first, nor will it be the last, chapter of his life. I must remember that this man very likely has aspects of his nature that are noble and praiseworthy that I was simply not invited to witness at that time, and it is that nature -- that potential -- that I wish to remember and reflect on.

**The World of Words**



Pyrrhic, adj.

Pronunciation: 'pirik

**Meaning:** Refers to a victory that was won at too great a cost to have been worthwhile for the victor.

**Usage:**

- *True, we won, but the cost was so great that it can only be dubbed a pyrrhic victory.*
- *I won't follow that advice: I wish my victories to be decisive, not pyrrhic.*
- *Elliot won a pyrrhic victory against the tax authorities today when the courts awarded him a twenty dollar refund on his taxes for 2001, after ten years of litigation and more than \$100,000 in legal bills.*

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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](mailto: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](http://www.aranorwood.com)

**Sincerely,**

Ara Norwood  
Leadership Development Systems