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Issue: # 024

March 20, 2012

Greetings!

Today is the first day of Spring.

I want you to reflect on that for a moment -- *the first day of Spring*.

Undoubtedly that phrase brings to mind certain images.

Perhaps Spring is evocative of renewal, rebirth, new beginnings, or another chance to grow in new directions.

All of these things are signs of optimism, of hope, and of the expectation of a brighter future. It is this ideal that causes Americans and bright, forward-thinking individuals everywhere to get out there and take on the day.

This issue of *Uncommon Sense* is meant to help you do just that.

OK, let's get started!

Warm regards,

Ara Norwood



Borrowed Light

I want to introduce you to a principle that if you pay close attention to, and live by it, you will have a much happier and more fulfilled life than if you ignored it.

The world is filled with a wide variety of people - people of all stripes. The personalities we come across seem to be of an endless variety. No two people seem to be carbon copies of each other in terms of their unique idiosyncrasies, styles, moods, intelligence, or persona. If I had to use labels, however, I might, for the sake of simplicity turn to words such as optimists and pessimists, or perhaps I'd go with terms like positive and negative.

The world is a tough place and many people turn sour over time. Thus, pessimists and negative people are not in short supply. Often we are repelled by such persons. But if we allow it, they can drain us of our energy and bring us down.

On the other hand, there are people out there that are positive, strong, chipper, high-spirited, and of a sunny disposition. Something about them draws us to them. We seek to stand in their light as a plant seeks water and sunshine.

May I give you some unsolicited advice? It is important that you keep your radar on high alert for both types of people, so you can steer clear of the former, and gravitate toward the latter whenever possible.

Here's an additional thought: you do not necessarily need to have a direct relationship with every person whom you find nurturing or empowering. Sometimes it is enough just to be exposed to their influence from afar. I'll give you a great example of what I am talking about.

Allow me to introduce you to a woman by the name of Keri Tombazian. Keri is a radio personality whose voice has been heard at [KTWV](#) in Southern California for over 25 years. (If you ever wish to listen, they are found at 94.7 on the FM dial.) I first discovered her back in the late 1980s when I first moved to the Los Angeles area. KTWV was the only game in town offering what was known as a smooth jazz format. Many of my favorite artists, including Basia, Mark Sloniker, Checkfield, Keiko Matsui, Liz Story, Suzanne Ciani, and Shakatak, came to my attention due to the KTWV playlist. The station has, unfortunately in my opinion, moved away from their smooth jazz roots, but one thing that has been consistent for most of those years was the singular voice of Keri



Tombazian.

It's not just her unique sound that makes her special. It's the way she carries herself while on the air. Listen to Keri for any length of time and you quickly realize she epitomizes several things: class, verve, an upbeat attitude, a positivity that is contagious, and an authentic goodness that leaves you feeling positive and hopeful. Keri seems to combine a blend of compassion, virtue, and cheerfulness that make her a very potent mood enhancer. I still tune in to KTWV, but for me the music truly takes a back seat to the positive vibe I get from listening to Keri Tombazian whenever she chimes in during station breaks.

I should add that I've never actually met Keri, though we have communicated sporadically over the years through cards, emails, and via [Facebook](#). But even had I never had any sort of personal contact with her, I still would be the beneficiary of her warmth and wisdom simply by listening to her on the radio. She is truly one of my secret weapons in my ongoing battle against negativity and bleakness.

What about you? Are there people out there you know - or even don't know personally - who recharge your batteries? Who are they? Can you name them? How often do you take the time to bask in their light and draw upon their unique gifts?

Interestingly, as you draw upon such people, over time you become one of them, standing as a source of strength and light for others making their journey in this thing called life.

The Big Scam

There is a hoax going on right under our noses. This scam to which I refer doesn't involve a Ponzi Scheme, nor does it involve the latest multi-level marketing company, nor does it involve the latest rash of emails from people you don't know in Africa promising to send you millions of dollars of someone else's inheritance (provided, of course, that you first send them a mere few thousand dollars in processing fees.)

Instead, the hoax to which I refer involves a principle - a noble principle, in fact - which has been so misused, abused, and bastardized as to have been deprived of most of its meaning. The principle to which I refer is tolerance.

Tolerance is a wonderful ideal. It suggests maturity. It allows for harmony. It bequeaths self-confidence (i.e., I do not have to be surrounded by clones of myself in order to feel comfortable.)

Tolerance is certainly espoused by all parties in the body politic of whatever political persuasion. However, tolerance - unconditional, unbridled tolerance - is loudly proclaimed as the supreme value from one particular corner of the political spectrum: the Liberal Left.

I see two potential problems with such vociferous cries for tolerance from the Left:

1) It's phony, in that it's selective. The Left preaches tolerance, and yet the Left is the least tolerant of any positions, ideologies, or political philosophies that are out of step with the Leftist party line. Whether the issue involves same-sex marriage, collective bargaining rights for union

workers, government funding for birth control, abolishing the death penalty, raising taxes on the wealthy, favoring illegal immigration, prohibiting school prayer, or legalizing drugs, the Left has

consistently shown a penchant for loud pleadings of tolerance for their positions, yet loud cries of denunciation and intolerance for any position that runs counter to theirs.



2) It's ultimately unworkable. It's unworkable for the simple reason that tolerance, unchecked, would lead to anarchy, an untenable situation. Taken to extremes, tolerance across the board would mean that the intolerable would now become tolerable. The principle of toleration must have limits, lest a society become more and more permissive, allowing into its culture elements that would prove its destruction.

Let's explore this second point in more detail.

There is a nifty metaphor out there that gets a lot of mileage called The Boiled Frog Syndrome. Many of you reading this may be familiar with it, but it bears repeating. The idea is that a frog dropped in a pot of boiling water will

take immediate action and jump out. That same frog, dropped in a pot of tepid water will stay put. But if that pot of room temperature water were to be placed on a stove, the water temperature would, predictably, rise - but it would rise slowly, almost imperceptibly. The frog would stay put, as it adapts to the ever-rising temperature, until it perishes in the boiling cauldron.

Applying the Boiled Frog Syndrome to this Leftist insistence on tolerance, it becomes clear that the Left seeks to impose ideas into American culture that will erode and weaken that culture.

Suggestion: the next time you encounter a person who's professions of tolerance amounts to a kind of religiosity, consider asking them questions along these lines:

- Do you really expect mere tolerance, or are you actually seeking an endorsement?
- What will you do if you find your proposals fail to receive the tolerance you claim to seek?
- Are you prepared to tolerate opposing views and dissenting voices?
- How will you respond when your proposals are voted down? Will you accept the voice of the people, or will you engage in acts of retaliation, and if the latter, how does such behavior square with your claims of valuing tolerance?
- At what point do you believe that tolerance is unwarranted? On any given position, where would you draw the line and decide that tolerance is no longer appropriate - and what method or principle would you employ to make that determination? Or are there no boundaries?

Hopefully such questions will serve to educate, or at least give the preachers of tolerance reason to pause and reflect.

From Ara's Journal

It's difficult to escape the conclusion that all of us have an innate sense that there is a higher power out there somewhere. I think there beats within each heart not only the hope, but the awareness that we are not alone, that we are not here by accident, and that our time on this earth is, perhaps, some sort of test, the details of which we can't quite sort out, but the reality of which lurks deep



within our souls.

I think this awareness that there is a divine Being out there is really so innate that even die-hard atheists sometimes, in unguarded moments, have an instinctive desire to call out to this divine Guardian. It is said by some that there are no atheists in fox holes, which is to assert that soldiers in battle who had forsaken the notion of God tend to confess a hope or belief in Him as they face what could be their final act of combat. Even if that statement is not literally true 100% of the time, I suspect that it is largely true.

Richard Dawkins is one of a small handful of outspoken, militant atheists who has made quite a name for himself.

In a [recent debate](#) with Giles Fraser, a priest from The Church of England, Dawkins got caught bragging about possessing a competency he did not quite possess. It was about a rather silly thing really. Dawkins had been gloating about the fact that in recent surveys many self-professed Christians are unable to name the first book in the New Testament, and therefore, concluded Dawkins, they are not really Christians at all. Fraser, seeing the colossal fallacy in such thinking, swiftly turned the tables on Dawkins as follows:

Fraser: Richard, if I said to you: "What is the full title of *The Origin Of Species*?" I'm sure you could tell me that.

Dawkins: Yes I could

Fraser: Go on then.

Dawkins: On The Origin Of Species. . . Uh. . . with, . . . Oh God! . . .uh. . . On The Origin Of Species. . . Uhm, . . . There is. . . there is a sub-title . . . uh, uh, . . .uhm, . . . with respect to the pre- . . . preservation of favoured races in fight . . . in the struggle for life.

Fraser: You're the high pope of Darwinism... If you asked people who believed in evolution that question and you came back and said 2% got it right, it would be terribly easy for me to go 'they don't believe it after all.' It's just not fair to ask people these questions. They self-identify as Christians and I think you should respect that.

[Note: if you are wondering, the full title of the book by Charles Darwin is *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life.*]

What I find telling in that exchange is not that Dawkins confidently claimed he could recite something he clearly

had trouble reciting. What is telling is that Dawkins, a man who detests the very idea of God, and who claims not to hold any beliefs supporting the notion of God, had a knee-jerk reaction wherein he called upon God in his moment of need. Some may think I am reading too much into this episode, and I certainly do not intend to. But I think the episode with Dawkins suggests that even the most ardent atheist has, tucked away somewhere deep in their soul, a basic sense that there really is a divine Father out there.

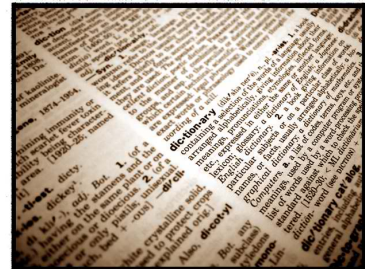
I think they're right.

The World of Words

Building Your Power of Expression

Burnish, vb.

Pronunciation: 'bərni sh



Meaning: Used as a verb, it means to polish something, such as metal, by rubbing. I like drawing upon this word in a figurative sense to refer to enhancing something, or perfecting something, (i.e., a reputation, a skill, a legacy, etc.)

Usage:

- *Her remarks did little to burnish her alleged reputation as a bridge-builder or an accommodator.*
- *Many wonder whether his approach is intended to burnish his legacy as a cost-cutter.*
- *As he is serving his final term in office, it is a prime time to look outside his immediate circle to burnish his credentials as a deal-maker.*

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

