

Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Issue: # 033

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Greetings!

I have been watching the Olympics. Have you?

It's an exciting thing to be able to witness the very best in athletic prowess. I look forward to this festive display of excellence every four years.



While most of us won't ever actually compete in the Olympics, all of us can experience a "personal best" in whatever it is that is important to us, be it athletic, academic, relational, spiritual, or vocational.

So I salute all of the athletes who compete in the Olympics for showing us what commitment, drive, talent, and focus can bring about.

I intend to fan such flames of excellence for myself, and I urge you to do the same.

Okay, let's get started.

Warm regards,

Ara Norwood

The Ideal of Giving

There is a phenomenon I want to tell you about that is counter-intuitive and somewhat unexplainable.

Giving. When you give, you seemingly have less than you did before you parted with . . . whatever. I'll turn my attention towards financial giving. If I have \$100 and I

give away \$10, I now have \$90 - I'm 10% poorer than I was prior to giving the \$10.

That's intuitive and logical. But somehow, it's not the whole story.

Somehow, when I give willingly for the betterment of society, I find that something in the cosmos sends good things my way.

But it's very important that I realize this: the purpose for my giving is not so I can receive - yet when I give willingly with no expectation of a return, I free myself of the burden of selfishness, I forget about what I no longer have, and thus, I am able to enjoy what remains, knowing that some good has been done. I have contributed to someone else's growth and happiness.



And every time I do this, I seem to always come out ahead, even if that wasn't my motivation or intent.

I suggest you make it a regular habit of "giving back." Whether you belong to a formal institution such as a church or charitable association, or whether you just make a mental note to consistently redirect a portion of your means (be it money, time, expertise, or other material goods) I urge you to give away a portion of what you have. My own method: I pay 10% of my income to my Church in the form of tithing, which I consider a small sacrifice, but a sacrifice nonetheless. I also give away a portion of my clothing on a regular basis to groups such as Deseret Industries, Good Will, or The Salvation Army, who can then redistribute them to the less fortunate, or sell them at very low prices. And I occasionally volunteer my time and expertise to assist an individual with some business matter, dispensing advice and counsel where appropriate, as pro bono work. For some reason, I always seem to come away the better for such activities.

Set up a system where you can give back. Doing so will not only impact the lives of others, but will enrich your own life as well.

Politicizing A Tragedy

We were all horrified at the tragedy that took place in Aurora, Colorado on July 20th last month, when a deranged killer by the name of Jim Holmes went on a shooting rampage in a theater and shot 71 people, murdering 12 of them. When I first heard the of the shooting, I reacted the same way I'm sure all decent people reacted - I felt sick to my stomach, and my heart when out to the victims and their families. That was my first and primary reaction.

My second reaction? I began wondering how long it would take someone to politicize the tragedy.

I didn't have to wait long. Not one day went by before a liberal television news personality by the name of Brian Ross, Chief Investigative Reporter for ABC News, said the following in an interview with George Stephanopoulos:



"There's a Jim Holmes of Aurora, Colorado page on the Colorado Tea Party site." Brian Ross went on to claim that this Jim Holmes had been "talking about joining the Tea Party last year." Since Mr. Ross had not done the proper research, he openly admitted, "We don't know if this is the same Jim Holmes, but it is Jim Holmes of Aurora, Colorado."

It is patently obvious what was going on there. Brian Ross, a man of the Left, hates the Tea Party movement, and he would very much like to link the Tea Party with the monstrous act of evil done by the psychopath shooter, Jim Holmes. Ross saw an opportunity and he went for it, as he knows full well that many fellow Tea Party-haters will have seen that report and will not see the inevitable [retractions](#) that would be forthcoming by Mr. Ross, thus cementing the rage that liberals feel toward conservative movements such as the Tea Party.

I have to give credit to liberal comedian Jon Stewart, who, although no friend of the Tea Party, courageously [skewed](#) Brian Ross for his biased, sloppy, irresponsible reporting.

ABC News apologized for Brian Ross with this statement: "An earlier ABC News broadcast report suggested that a Jim Holmes of a Colorado Tea Party organization might be the suspect, but that report was incorrect. ABC News and Brian Ross apologize for the mistake, and for disseminating that information before it was properly vetted." Ross himself gave a terse apology on his Twitter page.

But the damage was done and this man of the Left acted in perfect harmony with Leftist ideology: use any means to smear Conservatives, no matter how ludicrous, no matter how dishonest, no matter how inappropriate.

Why?

Because when you're on the Left, your ideology trumps everything else -- truth, decency, fairness, and even simply reporting the news accurately and objectively as you were hired to do.

Shameless Plug

"Ara Norwood is, far and away, the most perceptive career coach I have ever had the privilege of working with - and I've worked with quite a few. He's a master of the craft of creating résumés that land interviews, and he's a consummate professional! I consider him to have been an invaluable resource in my own career development."

-- LF, Century City, California

This is how one client responded after contracting with me to help her with her résumé. She paid a pretty penny for my time. But you don't have to, due to my putting my strategies into a publication that you can obtain for a fraction of the cost of hiring me directly.

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From Ara's Journal

Many atheists imagine that they have the religious believer trapped in a corner when they ask this question: *If there really is a God, why does this God allow unjust suffering to take place?* After all, they continue, if God is supposedly good, and yet still allows unjust suffering, then He must not be all-powerful to prevent it from happening. Conversely, if God is all-powerful, and yet still allows unjust suffering, then He must not be good.



And I admit, this line of questioning does seem potent and problematic for the believer in divine things. And philosophers have even come up with a term to describe the grappling with these seemingly intractable elements: *theodicy*. While I will not be so bold as to offer a definitive solution to the problem of evil - a problem that has never been resolved to the satisfaction of all - I will offer up a few tentative thoughts.

Why *is* there unjust suffering?

I suspect it has to do with several factors, not one.

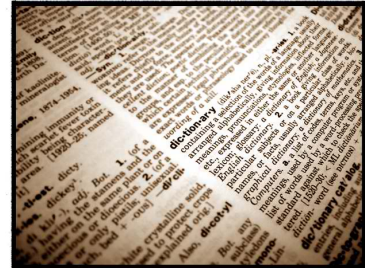
First, people can be quite disappointing at times, ranging from careless, crass, or cantankerous, to narcissistic, mean-spirited, and downright sadistic. Some people are just plain evil, or at least, evil on occasion. It is those occasions that can cause unjust suffering and pain for other people through no fault of their own. So unjust suffering can come to us from bad people who make unwise or wicked choices.

Second, it is entirely possible that we signed on to come to this earth for the purpose of experiencing all that mortal

life has to offer us - the good and the bad. Thus, suffering may actually have some deeper purpose in molding us into persons of substance, depth, and understanding. Perhaps through our own suffering, we are better able to assume an empathic posture towards others who also suffer, thus showing them they are not alone.

The World of Words

Building Your Power of Expression



Opaque, adj.

Pronunciation: ō'pāk

Meaning: This term is often used to describe paper and how "see-through" a given sheet of paper is. The more opaque the paper, the less you can see through it. When you use this word in other contexts (as I often do), you are generally referring to something that is not transparent. An opaque presentation would be one that is not easily understood, as it is mired in confusion, double-talk, camouflage, or a lack of focus. An opaque joke would not be one easily understood; its meaning would be unclear or uncertain. Another variation of this word is **opacity**, which, being a noun, is the amount of opaque-ness involved.

Usage:

- *The meaning and musicianship of rap music remains elusive and opaque to conservatory-trained musicians.*
- *His double-talk and mixed-metaphors are laced with opacity and are often misunderstood.*
- *His usual mode of argumentation starts out precise and then becomes increasingly opaque.*

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,

