

Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Greetings!

It's been quite a few weeks!

We've had a presidential inauguration, there is talk of comprehensive immigration reform, most of us have seen our paychecks get a bit smaller due to new taxes, and all of us are busy living the life in a new year.

I write a bit about the inauguration below, sort of, looking at it from a different perspective than most. I think you'll get some value from the other columns as well.

I deeply appreciate the emails I've received of late. I think last issue's column titled "The Boiled Frog Syndrome Continues" struck quite a nerve with a lot of you. I've rarely received as much response from my readership as I did from that eye-opening article. Thanks for the comments and keep them coming!

The greatest favor you can do for me is to forward this issue of *Uncommon Sense* to those in your database whom you think might benefit from reading it.

OK, let's get started.

Warm regards,

Ara Norwood



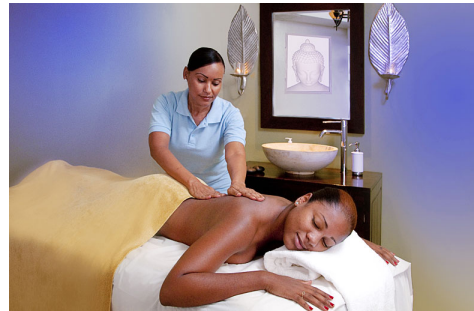
Self-Development
Finding Things You Love

One of the realities of life is that it is fraught with a mix of pain, agony, sorrow, and disappointment on the one hand, yet also with satisfaction, contentment, pleasure, and joy on the other hand. So it's a mixed bag.

You can enhance the overall quality of your life by getting clear on what brings you satisfaction, contentment, pleasure, and joy. And it's important that you know precisely what those things are, and that you recognize them and savor those moments when they come to you, counting your blessings and your good fortune. Doing so will make you a more positive person, and positive people tend to be winners and leaders. People tend to want to be around you when you are upbeat, and people who are upbeat tend to attract more of the same.

But it is also important that you not merely wait for the joys of life to fall into your lap. You need to proactively seek them out, and then, again, not take them for granted. Savor them. Relish those moments. Doing so can offset some or most of the unfortunate aspects of life we all are subject to.

Do you love hot showers? The next time you find yourself taking one, bask in the moment; realize your momentary good fortune. Acknowledge that you are fortunate to live in a land that has an infrastructure that is set up for such pleasures. Do you love ice cream? Massage? Going for a walk alone or with a friend? Watching Seinfeld reruns? Dining at the Cheesecake Factory? Listening to a string quartet by Ravel, or the latest jazz tune by The Rippingtons, or a piano sonata by Suzanne Ciani? Building a tree house? Floating on a raft at the lake? Dancing like there's no tomorrow?



Whatever your interests, seek them out with some regularity, make time for them, and revel in the indulgence that is taking place. You'll be mentally more balanced and emotionally more stable. Your productivity will improve and life will be, mostly, good.

The Elephant in the Room Presidential Scorecard

President Obama was inaugurated for his first term on

January 20th, 2009. His recent inauguration to launch his second term took place on January 21st, 2013.

When then-candidate Barack Obama was campaigning for the presidency back in 2007-08, he talked about transforming America. And those on the Left (many of whom hate America) cheered him wildly - the thought of transforming our republic beyond recognition was an appealing proposition for many of them. Many on the Left wish America would stop being America, and would instead take on the Socialist attributes of Europe.



President Obama has attempted to keep his word. He was serious when he said he intended to fundamentally transform America.

It is instructive to look at how things have changed in four years. For those of you who are interested, I have sought to ascertain certain data points of where things stood on January 20, 2009 - the day Barack Obama was first sworn in as president (i.e., what were the numbers Before Obama) - and where things stood as of January 22nd, 2013 after President Obama had been in office for four years. As you'll see, some things have stayed the same, some things have seen modest improvement, and some things have gotten worse.

Here is what I have discovered thus far, with "Then" meaning 4 years ago when George W. Bush was succeeded by Barack Obama, and "Now" meaning when Barack Obama began his second term last week:

National Debt

Then: \$10.7 Trillion

Now: \$16.3 Trillion

Federal Deficit

Then: \$1.3 Trillion

Now: \$1.1 Trillion

Highest Federal Income

Tax Rate

Then: 35%

Now: 35%

Interest Rates (Prime)

Then: 3.25%

Now: 3.25%

Unemployment Rate

Then: 7.8%

Now: 7.8%

Number of Food Stamp Recipients

Then: 32 million

Now: 47 million

Average Price for a Gallon of Regular Gasoline

Then: \$1.84

Now: \$3.44

Number of Home Foreclosures Previous 4 Years

Then: 7.2 million

Now: 13.5 million

Number of States to Legalize Same-Sex Marriage

Then: 0

Now: 9

Number of States to Legalize Recreational Marijuana

Then: 0

Now: 2

Number of Abortions Previous 4 Years

Then: 3,319,505

Now: 4,849,600*

Whoever is elected president next, their inauguration will likely take place on Friday January 20th, 2017. When that happens, I will be presenting much the same statistics, showing where things stood 8 years earlier, four years earlier, and on that date.

We may indeed see a fundamental transformation of our republic, which would make many Leftists happy, but would probably be heartbreaking to the Founders.

*The final numbers are not yet calculated. This figure is the estimate given by the Guttmacher Institute.

Shameless Plug

Personal Coaching

Sometimes you just need a mentor-like resource in your back pocket, someone who "doesn't have a dog in this fight" but who is there to help you make wiser choices. Sometimes you need a coach.

Of all the skills I bring to the table, keynote speaking, seminars and workshops, consulting, writing, etc., the feedback I have received from my clients who have hired me as a personal coach has been -- far and away -- the most positive. We all have something we do best, and coaching seems to be my niche.

Just as a "coach" originally referred to a wheeled vehicle that transported a person from Point A to Point B, a good coach today does the same thing, assisting you in finding the best path to meet your objectives. Everyone who makes the investment finds it more than pays for itself.



If you think you could

so benefit, visit my website by [clicking here](#), or just send me an email message. I'm always happy to provide references and testimonials of past clients.

From Ara's Journal

The Role of Luck

I am mindful of the fact that the ancient Greeks maintained a strong belief in fate. They engaged in a fair amount of superstitious silliness in an effort to bend fate to their benefit, or to avert the cruel hand of fate wherever possible.



While such ancient ideas are rather quaint, and while I deeply believe in personal responsibility, life-long learning, and skill development, I have to admit that good or bad luck (or, if you prefer, *fate*), has a role, be it large or small, in how things turn out for us. Some times people are greatly harmed by a horrific accident, or by a violent assault simply for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Some people win the lottery through no more skill than they happened to pick the right numbers that week.

In spite of our vigilance, in spite of our commitments, in spite of our best efforts, it's hard to escape the conclusion that quite often luck, be it welcomed or sinister, crosses our path and impacts our life.

It's a sobering thought, to be sure. While I still put the lion's share of my energies into preparation, practice, mindset, self-awareness, etc, I am humbled by the fact that good fortune or ill could materialize out of the murky future at any moment.

Food for thought. . .

The World of Words

Calcify

Building Your Power of Expression

Calcify, v

Pronunciation: 'kalsə,fi

Meaning: I like to use this word in the non-literal sense to suggest something abstract that is



hardening, or setting like cement. I usually have reference to something like an attitude, or a mindset, or an opinion.

Usage:

- *His proclamations and writings are filled with misleading or blatantly false statements that have calcified into orthodoxies.*
- *Her problem isn't calcification of the arteries; it's more like calcification of the opinions.*
- *I wish to keep an open mind and hear both sides, so as to avoid having my views calcify or become rigid.*

New subscribers, the Special Report "11 Ways to Beat the Odds" should have been sent out to you already. 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