

Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Greetings!

I just got off the train in San Diego and it's almost 11PM as I write this. I'm in my hotel and I'm waiting for room service which will be here in 12 minutes, about the time I hit the SEND button to launch yet another issue of *Uncommon Sense*.

Tomorrow I will be in Tijuana, Mexico for two days of business, followed by a quick, 2-day mini-vacation in Toluca, about an hour south of Mexico City. Then it's back to celebrate my lovely bride's birthday mid-next week.

I really appreciate the influx of so many new subscribers to this publication! My subscription numbers are continually growing, and I always love hearing from you who send me a note commenting on this or that article you read in *Uncommon Sense*. Please keep the comments coming. And please continue to repost this on your favorite social media site, or forward to a friend or colleague whom you believe might find something in this issue to be of interest.

OK, let's get started.

Warm regards,

Ara Norwood



Self-Development

Reinventing Self

One of my students, a middle-aged professional woman, informed me today that she was part of a layoff of a major employer in our city. She has three major choices: she can

choose to remain unemployed; she can try to find a job roughly similar to the one she had; or she can reinvent herself. I suspect she will do the latter.

Reinventing oneself is risky. It takes courage. It takes faith. It takes imagination. But reinventing oneself is also exciting. Even more importantly, reinventing oneself is often necessary and many of you reading this would do well to consider such a path by choice rather than being forced to by circumstances beyond your control.

Let me introduce you to another professional woman named Wendy Aguilar (seen with me to the right.) I've been a quasi-mentor to her for some years. When I met her she



was treading water in her career, working various low-level jobs in small tax preparation and insurance offices. These were dead-end jobs, and she knew it. She felt trapped. She found the work pedestrian. Her skills weren't being utilized. And she knew she would not be going anywhere if she stayed in those jobs.

While her interest in business seemed to be drying up, she gave some thought about what did excite her. And she realized that storytelling was number 1. As she considered the world of storytelling, she eventually came to realize that broadcast journalism could give her an arena in which to be a storyteller. So she went back to school and is now about to graduate, at age 29, with a degree in that field. She has the know-how, she has the skills, and she has her passion back. She has developed some talent for newspaper writing, anchoring, and reporting for both television and radio. And that talent will be developed and refined as she lands that first job, which she is sure to do.

Wendy is thrilled with the direction her life has taken, and she is driven by a sense of purpose and a mission: to be a storyteller through the medium of broadcast journalism. Whether you are a potential casualty of an impending layoff, or are comfortably perched in a cozy career, you would do well to think about the possibility of switching gears, and of reinventing your professional life. The

possibilities are endless, your skill set will expand, and you may find the timing brings you greater fulfillment.

The Elephant in the Room Leftism as a Secular Religion

This world has no shortage of religions. If one thinks of a religion as a body of knowledge, belief, and practice centered on the divine, there are an abundance of organizations that are religious in nature. Churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples bring formal organization and identity to specific tenets that are espoused by various faith communities. There are less formal religious bodies as well.

One of the most dynamic and pervasive of such groups has all the characteristics of the others except one: it is not centered on the divine. This group is known as Leftism. Its members are known as Leftists. And its effects as a secular-religious movement are deep and far-reaching.

What is fascinating to consider here is that Leftism is a religion and a faith-community every bit as much as what you'd find with Southern Baptists, Jews, Catholics, or Buddhists, yet Leftism is a secular religion. Leftists put their faith in human ingenuity. Their dream is to create a utopian society here on earth bereft of God. Leftists have faith, not in God, but in humanity. (Note: I would have said they have faith in man, except that Leftists would consider "man" a sexist term, and besides, there is a growing movement among Leftists to obliterate the idea of gender.)

Leftists generally believe that this life is the only life there is, and thus, they believe in taking responsibility for what happens here, which, at first glance, sounds noble.

Leftism has its Articles of Faith and although such articles have not been formally canonized, they have been acted upon consistently: faith in Big Government; faith in Socialism; faith in Equality; faith in the Welfare State; faith in Affirmative Action, faith in redefining marriage, faith in tolerance of anything except Conservative ideals or traditional Christianity.

A word about their faith in equality: while this sounds fair and reasonable, upon deeper reflection one finds it troubling. A Leftist would like to take, by law if not by

force, a sizable portion of the money earned by the wealthy, even though the wealthy paid an enormous price to earn that wealth through hard work, ingenuity, and industry. The Leftist



would then like to give that money to people, many of whom made the choice to not work at all, to spent their time in front of the TV, or to guzzle large quantities of liquor. The Leftist would like to do this with the end result being that the hard worker and the lazy would each possess the same amount of wealth. That is their idea of equality. While this is an oversimplification, it essentially captures the essence of Leftism.

Leftists live their religion more consistently and more faithfully than many other believers in traditional religion.

Leftists have their seminaries, just like other religious organizations. For Leftists, the seminary is the modern university, which spends more time teaching Leftist ideology than teaching what universities were supposedly created to teach - the arts and sciences.

Leftists have their scriptures as well. For many, their equivalent of holy writ is the New York Times Opinion Page.

Leftists have their camp meetings. MSNBC comes to mind.

Leftists also have their missionaries. The ALCU, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), School Districts, Labor Unions, Trial Lawyers, and (believe it or not) the American Library Association are all examples of this.

Perhaps one of the more fascinating aspects of Leftism is the near universal denial of its members that they are Leftists. Many, perhaps even most, Leftists are sincere when they deny they are Leftists. That, truthfully, is how many Leftists perceive Leftism - in that they often don't perceive it.

To many Leftists, Leftism isn't an "ism" - it just is. . . It is normal life. It is as natural as breathing, something we don't generally pay attention to. These adherents to Leftist

dogma are often simply unaware that the mental models they carry around with them represent a world-view that would be completely contrary to the paradigm espoused by our Founding Fathers (i.e., Jefferson, Madison, Washington, Adams, etc.) Yet, even when that is pointed out definitively, the Leftist rarely ever changes direction. Instead, the Leftist sees the Founders in a new but negative light - another group of unenlightened dead white men.

Leftism is the most dynamic, pervasive, and all-encompassing religion in the west today, and it's only major opponent is, not a religion, but an American political ideology known as Conservatism.

Shameless Plug

Recent Speaking Engagement

It was my pleasure to be the featured speaker at the Calabasas Rotary Club this past Tuesday. My topic was "Six Great Men" which is an overview of the Founding Fathers of this great republic known as the United States of America.

I spent time profiling Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison,

and Alexander Hamilton. It is important that people be reminded what these six titans stood for, what they



believed, and what they accomplished. A Q&A was part of the program, and some insightful questions were asked which has given me more research to conduct.

If you know of an organization that would benefit from this presentation, please let me know. You can reach me via email at ara@aranorwood.com.

From Ara's Journal

The Finer Things of Life

It's a given that life brings disappointment and regret, some of it brought about by our own poor choices and short-sightedness, but oft-times brought about by sheer chance. In order to offset some of those less-than-happy phases we all pass through, I have found that indulging in the finer things of life is a nice diversion. The finer things of life, like beauty, are in the eyes of the beholder.

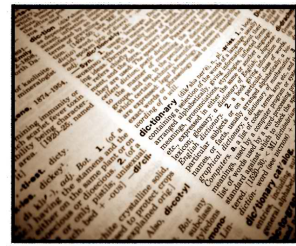


For some, a fine meal in a high-brow dining establishment does the trick. For others, enjoying an elegant writing instrument, a stylish wristwatch, or a chic new pair of shoes represent the finer things of life. Perhaps some enjoy going out to dance, or to watch professionals dance, while others enjoy being in charming or aesthetic environments such as museums, or boardwalks, or people-watching hangouts. Others simply crave the company of cultured, suave, or refined people with whom they can converse, and that interaction represents the finer things of life. Some believe that fresh flowers, or an exotic fruit basket can bring immense joy, while still others simply find that the finer things in life involve the uplifting and edifying of others by serving them in some way - often anonymously.

Whatever one's proclivities, the finer things of life ought to be pursued and enjoyed at periodic times to balance out the less fortunate moments. We all would do well to take some time to get reacquainted with what the finer things are for us as individuals, and then to indulge in them from time to time.

The World of Words

Perforated



Perforated, adj.

Pronunciation: 'pərfə,rāt-əd

Meaning:

A perforation is an indentation or piercing, usually in paper. We see them on mail-in postcards that are torn from, say, magazines. The micro-holes forming a straight line make it easier to tear the postcard from the larger sheet it is a part of. I like to use the term in the past tense in an allegorical manner to describe an opening or a tear in something, like an argument.

Usage:

- *Your position is iron clad in all but one respect; your analysis of the timing is perforated with illogic.*
- *His alibis were perforated with holes large enough to drive a truck through.*
- *The spoon was rendered useless due to the perforated surface in the center.*

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