

Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Issue: # 050

April 25, 2013

Greetings!

Well, we've reached a milestone! I am thrilled to be putting out the 50th issue of *Uncommon Sense*.

On a less happy note, we all stood together in sorrow as our fine city, Boston, was the victim of a recent terrorist attack by Muslim radicals. Yet I have no doubt that such monsters will never inflict enough damage to destroy America. Of course, if we're not careful, we may do that ourselves from within. With that in mind, I feel compelled, yet again, to raise the warning voice in my Elephant in the Room column.

Also, I want to give a hearty welcome to all the new subscribers that have come on board in the last couple of weeks. Our numbers are growing and that is always exciting.

OK, let's get started.

Warm regards,

Ara Norwood



Self-Development

Portion Control

A number of years ago I found myself in San Diego attending the annual convention for the National Speakers Association. While I was there, I dined with a friend I had gone to high school with, BZ. She looked great at age 48 and I asked her what her secret was. Aside from going to the gym regularly, she said, "Portion Control." I hadn't

heard the term before, but I understood what she meant. She went on, "We all eat way more than is necessary. And restaurants, such as the one we are in right now, perpetuate the tendency for us to overeat by serving up portions that are unnecessarily large."

BZ was right. In America, most restaurants do serve larger-than-necessary portions. And because I love food so much, I find that I am usually up for the challenge of putting all that food away in one sitting. But in doing so, I pay a price.



How many of you reading this have left a restaurant and felt uncomfortably full? I sure have. In fact, I was visiting another

friend in Mexico just last week. She and her husband treated me to a wonderful restaurant in their lovely town of Toluca, about an hour south of Mexico City. While there I forgot all about the wise counsel I had received from BZ and I overdid it on the food intake. And, frankly, I didn't feel all that good afterwards. And then it hit me: there are several reasons to manage your portion control.

First, it's healthier to avoid overeating. Walking out of a restaurant feeling bloated and lethargic is not a good thing.

Second, it's unnecessary to eat everything served to you in a restaurant in one sitting to enjoy the taste of the food. The tongue doesn't gain more pleasure from more food; instead it reaches its gustative peak the moment it experiences any delicious food and satisfaction isn't robbed simply because the quantity is less.

Third, it demonstrates self-control, mastery over self, control of one's passions, etc. We could all use a bit more self-discipline in our lives.

Fourth, it makes economic sense. Imagine if I told you that the next restaurant you visited was offering a two-for-one deal: you pay for a meal, but you actually receive two

meals. That's essentially what can happen virtually every time you go out for dinner at a restaurant. I now go into the restaurant experience with the predetermined expectation that I am going to take about half of it home. I leave the restaurant having enjoyed a wonderful meal, I don't overeat, I don't feel lousy or sluggish, and I have a second wonderful meal to enjoy for lunch the next day. If my bill was, say, \$34, it's like I paid for two \$17 meals.

Just a few days ago I took my lovely bride out for her birthday. We went to the finest restaurant in our community. The menu offered several entrees in both their standard (i.e., humongous) portions, as well as what they termed a "partial plate." I was intrigued so I ordered their Flat Iron Steak in the partial plate size. There was plenty of food, I didn't go hungry at all, and I left the restaurant satisfied, yet alert. And the tab ended up being far less than I was expecting. We had a great time.

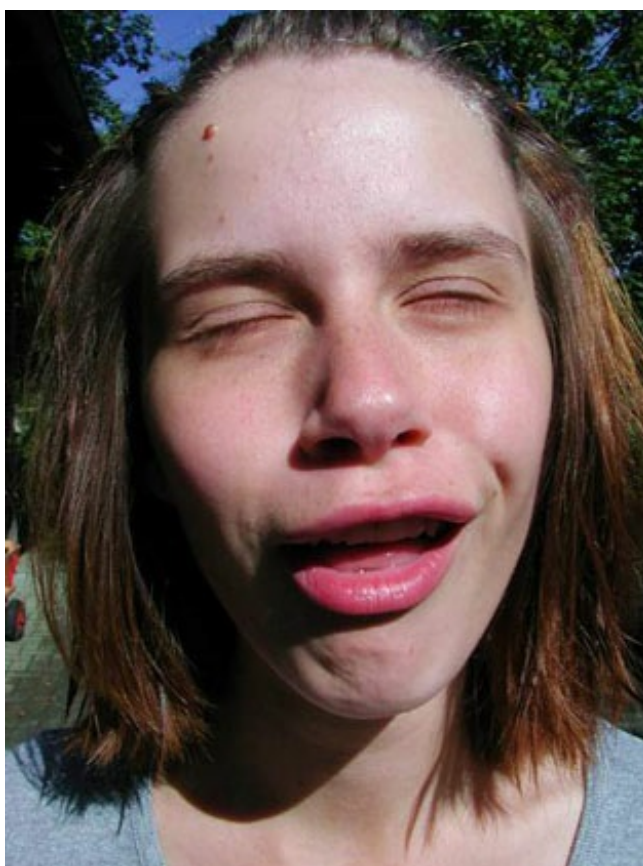
My advice: get into the habit of committing to manage how much food you consume - especially when out at restaurants. Go into the restaurant experience planning to take food home to enjoy the next day. Doing so will keep you healthy, will enable to you walk at a brisk pace, and is probably an economically sound move.

The Elephant in the Room **Surrendering to the Madness: Legalizing Drugs**

What would you think if once a year college students got together and celebrated an event by voluntarily placing their hand on an anvil and allowing a fellow student to smash their hand with a sledge hammer? Imagine you witness their hand being crushed, you see them writhe in pain, yet one after another student joyfully lines up to receive the devastating blow. You'd probably find such behavior both morbid and odd. Yet something about as bizarre happens every April 20th.

Five days ago was a day that some college students - in this case, those who attend the University of California, Santa Cruz - got together to celebrate what it means to be a loser. They do this in the form of smoking an illegal substance which fills their brains with THC, the active ingredient in marijuana that essentially fries their gray

matter (as the person in the photo to the right seems to have experienced in great abundance.)



It's difficult to fathom what it is about breaking the law as well as deliberately and willfully doing harm to their

cognitive capacity that is such a draw for so many individuals who, being in an institution of higher learning, would normally be inclined to expand their minds, not diminish them.

Wearing T-Shirts that read "Keep Santa Cruz Stoned," these people actually celebrate weakness and impotence. They may as well have worn T-Shirts that read "I am a moron and I'm proud of it!"

One enterprising student actually created a joint that weighed over 2 pounds. The thing looked like it was 3 or 4 feet in length. That's quite a joint. Police officers, who had, up to that point, merely stood by and watched the crowd of several hundred break the law, arrested 25-year-old Gennady Tsarinsky and [escorted him](#) away for his jumbo joint. And the crowd of pot smokers actually had the temerity to jeer the police and to threaten legal action to get their joint back. Imagine that: taking legal action to reclaim that which is actually illegal.

Of course, the day may come that California, and perhaps the rest of the country, will follow in the footsteps of Colorado and Washington, who passed laws last November to allow recreational pot smoking. A recent [Pew Research poll](#) suggests that for the first time, a majority of Americans actually support the legalizing of the drug. I suspect that with the prevalence of Leftist policies foisted

on the United States by the Obama Administration, there is a very high likelihood when Mr. Obama leaves office in January 2017, there will be far more states that have changed the current laws to allow, even encourage, recreational marijuana use.

When that happens, we will see the beginning of the end of American exceptionalism. And that is the latest elephant in the room.

Shameless Plug

The Most Remarkable Coach I Know

It was June 1985 and I was in London trying to catch a train. I was running a bit behind schedule so I made a mad dash and got on what I believed was the correct train just as it was leaving Victoria Station. Fortunately, I had guessed correctly and was on the right train.

I was lucky in another sense as well. I was sitting across from a remarkable young lady named Christina with whom I would form a friendship that has lasted now some 28 years.

I actually lost track of Christina. She got married and had 3 lovely daughters, she moved, and she lost her address book. But thanks to Facebook we reconnected a year ago and I had the privilege of introducing my twin daughters to her when we were vacationing in Europe last summer.



Christina has evolved into a Life Coach of enormous capacity. Her gifts at helping people regain perspective and make better, wiser decisions are breathtaking in scope. I've truly never encountered anyone with the ability to work with someone, adult or child, who is suffering from depression, anxiety, fears, phobias, self-doubt, marital difficulty (or any relationship issues) and help them come out of the tailspin with such decisiveness and healing. In speaking with a number of her clients, I have found the same story: Christina is extraordinarily gifted at helping people in pain become whole again.

Although she resides in England, she is set up to work with clients anywhere in the world via Skype or telephone.

She even offers a free session to anyone who wishes to test-drive her services. I encourage anyone and everyone to [check out her website](#) and contact her if they have children or teenagers who are struggling or if they themselves need a psychological shot-in-the-arm. Christina's skills are way, way beyond the typical counselor, therapist, or psychologist. Trust me on that.

From Ara's Journal

Sacred Literature

One of the joys I receive in life comes from reading. I try to read widely rather than limit myself to one type of reading. Newspapers (be they hard copy or online versions) provide some interest. Some blogs and newsletters lend value. The occasional magazine has its place. But books seem to draw me in the most.



Books tend to represent the best an author has, reflecting deep thought, careful language, sound editing. Some books, particularly fiction, can be quite entertaining, even riveting at times. *The Cobra Event* by Richard Preston, to cite one example, while quite gruesome in places, was a real page turner.

Other books that deal with big issues such as *Thinking Fast and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman, or *The Great Reckoning* by James Dale Davidson and Lord William Rees-Mogg, can give much food for thought and help us better understand ourselves and the world around us.

Great biographies, such as *Dutch* by Edmond Morris or *The Last Lion* by William Manchester or *1776* by David McCollough can deepen our sense of history and open our eyes to the contributions of such notables as Reagan, Churchill, and Washington.

Perhaps the most noteworthy type of literature out there is what is known as sacred literature. Sacred literature concerns things of deep import. Sacred literature touches on life's most profound questions:

- Is this life all there is, or is there an afterlife?
- Is there a God? If so, who is he? What is he? Is he a "he"?

- How should we conduct our lives?
- Is there a deeper meaning or a higher purpose to life?

Various faith communities have amassed a body of sacred literature that is unique to them, and members of those faith communities would do well to avail themselves to, and become conversant with, the ideas conveyed therein. Judaism gives us the Torah, which are the first five books of Moses. Those books convey some of the most profound writings about the mighty works of God ever assembled. The creation of the earth and the cosmos, the origins of the human family, the dynamics of good and evil, the Flood, the formation of the House of Israel, and numerous stories and lessons about the nature of humanity are all found within its pages. In addition, Judaism has a body of writing known as the Talmud, containing thousands of pages of rabbinic interpretation of a whole host of subjects.

To this, Christians, be they Catholic, Protestant, or Orthodox, have added the writings of the New Testament. The New Testament consists of four books containing the life of Jesus Christ as seen through the eyes of four evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.) In addition, the New Testament contains an early history of the Christian Church (Acts), an apocalyptic vision (Revelation) and a series of letters written by various early Christian apostles, most notably Paul, Peter, John, and James. Throughout the New Testament one encounters profound teachings and sermons centering on Jesus and the Christian message of redemption. The impact of its influence upon western society has been incalculable.

Within the larger Christian world we find the Latter-day Saints. Some would refer to them as Mormons because of a book they hold sacred called The Book of Mormon. (I am from this faith tradition, therefore I know something of this book.) Essentially, the Book of Mormon contains a lineage history of a small group of transplanted Israelites whose 1000-year saga took place in the Western Hemisphere - on American soil, probably in what we call Mesoamerica. While I have trouble deciding which is more profound, the teachings found within its pages, or the manner in which it came forth and was translated, I will say its teachings on Christ and his atoning sacrifice are without parallel.

Another faith community that is somewhat related, yet

quite distinct, from the Judeo-Christian tradition, is Islam. Their sacred book, the Quran, is the binding and culminating revelation for Muslims the world over, and is considered by Muslims to be a work of direct revelation from on high, in that the Quran is believed by Muslims to be a revelation from God to Muhammad given via the instrumentality of the angel Gabriel. Muslims consider this book to be extremely sacred.

Whatever one makes of these individual books, they are clearly valuable in that they are an attempt to bring about some measure of transcendence. I plan to continue to read from their pages and to become better acquainted with their message. To whatever degree they bring a sense of awe, they will have done their part.

The World of Words

Cacophony

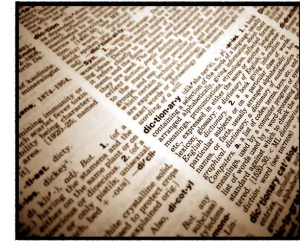
Building Your Power of Expression

Cacophony, n.

Pronunciation: kə'käfəneē

Meaning:

A cacophony is a harsh, discordant mixture of sounds. Usually peculiar at best and hard-to-listen-to at worst, cacophonies bring about mental unrest and are generally unpleasant.



Usage:

- *The peaceful sound of the stream was momentarily disrupted by a cacophony of deafening alarm bells.*
- *Some of this band's songs are marred by an unrelenting cacophony of random sounds, crudely overdubbed on top of yet still more random sounds.*
- *The noise at that party reminded me of what an 18th century camp meeting must have sounded like, with a cacophony of hoots, cackles, and wails.*

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