

Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Greetings!

I hope everyone had a pleasant Memorial Day yesterday. It's one of those holidays that we often take for granted, and don't put the same amount of thought and reflection as we often do with other holidays such as Christmas, Easter, or Independence Day. This is unfortunate, because it is very important to remember the men and women who served in the Armed Forces of the United States, and gave their lives so that we might continue the quest for liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

OK, let's get started.

Warm regards,

Ara Norwood



Self-Development

Are We Having Fun Yet?

Consider the automobile. I own several of them and I have to keep up with regular oil changes lest I risk burning out the engine. In addition, I have to monitor the tread on the tires, take them in to the dealer periodically for a tune-up, and address any unexpected problems as they come up, such as a small crack in the windshield caused by a random, stray rock that went airborne. The automobile is a system, and systems need regular maintenance to keep them running smoothly.

Similarly, we human beings are a kind of system in that we need some semblance of regular attention and maintenance. This maintenance can come in many forms: physical fitness, nutrition, sleep, spiritual renewal, etc.

One dimension that I often overlook is the need to have fun.

Fun is part of the American culture (though it's certainly not unique to America.) We have the notion of fun woven into our psyche, with catch-phrases such as "Are we having fun yet?" But for many of us, life has a way of crowding out the opportunities to have fun.



Just the other day I met with a wonderful married couple in their home. Both are working professionals and both are wonderful people. I was there in the role as a sort of counselor or coach. Something inside me prompted me to ask the wife these questions: "What's fun for you? What do you do for fun?" She thought for a moment and then replied, "I really don't know." She seemed authentically stirred by the realization that she no longer knew what fun even meant. She went on, "Part of the problem is that I have an issue with work-life balance." Indeed, as I probed further, I discovered that she was very focused on her work, and that she doesn't have the outlet her husband has for having fun (he plays video games which bore her.)

I can relate to her quandary. I myself seem to forget what it's like to have fun if my work projects crowd out most everything else. And I bet many of you recognize the problem in your own life. It's not that I am advocating our lives revolve around having fun - we're not living in a frat house. Life is serious business, but if we don't allow for a periodic occasion for fun, life becomes more austere than is necessary.

May I coach you for just a moment?

Schedule some time, perhaps 15 minutes, to go deep into your memory and recall times in the past where you have had some of your funnest moments. Jot them down. Look for any common themes or patterns that may clue you in to the kinds of things you find fun. Are they indoors or outdoors? Are they things you do with others or in

solitude? Are you involved in a lot of movement and running around, or are you more sedentary? Do your fun times of the past involve food, cinema, building something, serving others, children, conversation, learning? Give it a try and you'll probably come up with some good ideas on how you have had fun in the past, and thus, how you might again have fun if you give it a try.

Then regularly schedule time to have fun the same way you'd schedule time to see the dentist, the tax planner, or any other meeting that was important to you. This should happen at least monthly if not weekly.

Now, go have fun!

The Elephant in the Room A Woman's Right to Choose *What?*

The subject of abortion has been in the news this month following the conviction of Dr. Kermit Gosnell, who was found guilty of three counts of first-degree murder after severing the spines of babies following a botched abortion. While I won't spend any time discussing this monster or his practices, other than to say that prosecutors will, rightfully, seek the death penalty in the case, I do want to make a few points about abortion that perhaps no one on either side of the divide may fully embrace.

First, I have always been troubled by the narrative spun by the pro-abortion side. I routinely hear them repeat the mantra, "A woman's right to choose. . ." but they never seem to finish that sentence. They never seem to state what it is that is being chosen. Were they honest and forthright, they

would say, candidly, the following: "A woman has the right to destroy the unborn child that is in her womb." If they started saying that, they would



have a bit more credibility and not appear to be engaging

in subterfuge.

Second, the pro-abortion side seems to put 100% of their weight behind the mother's rights (which I would concur are substantial) and 0% of their consideration towards the rights of the unborn (but living) fetus inside the mother. Is the living baby inside the mother a non-entity simply because it has not yet passed through the womb? Does the unborn truly have no rights to speak of? On what basis does one come to that conclusion?

Third, I find it disingenuous when pro-abortion advocates default to the exception as if that exception were the norm. For instance, we often hear those in the pro-choice camp ask the pro-lifers about allowing for abortion in the case of rape, incest, or instances in which the life of the mother is in danger - as if the vast majority of abortions are performed under such circumstances. The truth of the matter is that the vast majority of abortions are not performed under such circumstances. Instead, the vast majority of abortions are performed because the woman had unprotected sex, got pregnant, and does not wish to be burdened by the enormous responsibilities that will befall her. Most abortions are about convenience, not about rape, incest, or endangerment to the mother.

Fourth, I also find it disingenuous for the pro-abortion side to choose the term, *pro-choice*. I find that problematic for a couple of reasons - one being that it implies that those of us, myself included, who are pro-life are somehow anti-choice. We are not, which leads to the other concern: why is it assumed that if women have the right to choose to terminate a pregnancy, that they must automatically default to that position? Is it not possible that a woman could have the right to choose - one way or the other - and thus choose *not to* terminate the pregnancy? One gets the feeling in listening to the strident rhetoric of the pro-choice activists that they don't really believe in choice, for choice implies at least two viable alternatives, while the activists seem to see only one possible desired outcome - the destruction of the unborn.

I may surprise some of my readers in stating for the record that I am always pro-choice - not just in matters of abortion, but in all matters. Having said that, I must hasten to point out that I want women to make wise choices, to recognize that if they become pregnant through poor choices, or through chance, or through no fault of their own, that abortion is only one of several choices they

have, and that abortion may well be the most consequential and perhaps even the most detrimental, of all of them.

But it is difficult, if not impossible, to have a meaningful exchange with the pro-choice activists, who are outraged at the thought of curbing the availability of abortions, or of having government funding for Planned Parenthood stopped, for they tend to claim disgust that we are even having such a conversation when we should be talking about jobs, or lowering the federal deficit, or putting our attention on corporate greed by companies such as Haliburton. If you doubt me, take a look at [this video](#) from early 2011 by US Congresswoman Jackie Speier (D-CA), who goes after Congressman Chris Smith (R-NJ) on this issue.

It sounds compelling, as it's meant to, but it ignores virtually all of the points I have brought up in this column. Speier's unfortunate and legitimate need to have an abortion is presented as a blanket endorsement for the desires of all women who choose to have an abortion for any reason - or no reason.

I have a colleague who has counseled many dozens of women who have had abortions - some of the abortions were relatively recent, some were many decades earlier. He tells me that in 100% of the cases - with zero exceptions - the women who have had abortions harbor deep emotional anguish for having gone through what they have gone through. All of them have regretted having done so.

And that, my friends, is the latest elephant in the room.

Shameless Plug **Norwood Continues Speaking on Founders**

My calendar continues to get booked as more and more audiences have expressed an interest in my recent studies on the Founding Fathers. The program, entitled Six Great Men, has recently been delivered in Chatsworth, Westchester, Glendale, and Westwood. I am currently booked to deliver the program in Santa Clarita, Redlands, Manhattan Beach, Burbank, and Culver City.

If you know of an organization that may benefit from a

compelling presentation on who our Founding Fathers were, what they



accomplished, and what they stood for, please get in touch with me and we'll see if we can make it work.

From Ara's Journal

The Power of a Diary

I usually set goals that are fairly quantifiable in nature (ex. run a mile in 7 minutes.) But what about goals that are not so quantifiable?



Let's say one wants to be "more virtuous," or "more spiritual," or something like that. How does one know if he or she is moving in the right direction?

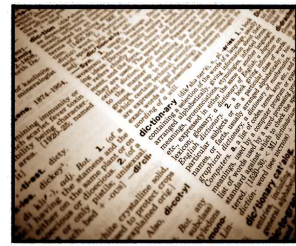
Admittedly, this is a difficult thing to discern.

One way that seems to make sense is to keep a journal, or a diary of some kind. By recording the actions and activities, the events of our daily lives, in a diary enables us to capture the key events we experience. Over time, as we go back and read through our own writings, we get a sense of who we are, of our characters, our maturity, and our conduct.

There is great value in doing this, and is something our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren will treasure, as they try to make sense of their world.

The World of Words

Causal



Causal, adj.

Pronunciation: 'kôzəl

Meaning:

If something has some sort of relational influence so as to have impact on bringing about a result, that thing could be said to be causal. Anything that implies or suggests a cause could be referred to as causal.

Usage:

- *Let's examine carefully the causal factors associated with this illness.*
- *We have yet to pinpoint the causal source of the problem.*
- *There is a causal relationship between the scarcity of goods and higher prices.*

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