

# Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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## Greetings!

If you are a new subscriber to *Uncommon Sense*, I hope you enjoy your first issue as much as I have enjoyed putting it together.

And if you are a regular subscriber, I want to say Thank You for continuing to read my views on a whole host of issues that I think are very important.

It's been a busy time for me of late, with trips to Atlanta, speeches all across the Los Angeles region, and a new addition to my family (more on that below.) But encapsulating my thoughts on some of the key issues of the day in this publication brings great meaning to me personally, and I hope it brings some value to you. I'm always pleased to hear from my readers on their take after reading an item in *Uncommon Sense*, so keep those communications coming!



OK, let's get started.

Warm regards,

Ara Norwood

## Self-Development

### On Job Interviews, Part 1

Some of you are now - or in the not too distant future going to be - involved in a job interview. You might be the job seeker, or you might be the one conducting the interview for your company. Either way, I need to point out that the

job interview is one of the most important undertakings you can participate in - whether it's to further your own career in landing a decent job, or whether it involves bringing on board the right candidate to join your team.

Allow me to elaborate on that last point for just a moment: from the job seeker's perspective, two things can go wrong. First, the job seeker could blow the interview, and thus fail to have an offer of employment extended to him.

Alternatively, the job seeker could accept an offer for employment with a company he would be better off avoiding at all costs, and thus waste time - perhaps a few years -



linguishing in a company that did much to hamper his career momentum.

Likewise, the organization that is trying to fill an important vacancy can make the same two boondoggles, but in reverse: they could bypass an otherwise fine candidate, or allow her to get away through mismanagement of the recruitment process, or worse, they could bring on board a person who is completely miscast for that particular role.

I will focus this article on some tips for the job seeker. In the next issue of *Uncommon Sense*, I will turn the tables and offer some advice for those tasked with interviewing candidates. Both sets of advice offer useful perspectives to both parties - the job seeker and those tasked with hiring good people.

If you are a job seeker who is going in for an interview, the first thing you have to come to terms with is this: ***the interview is a two-way street***. They are assessing you, and you should be assessing them - and not just them, per se, but how you think you might fit within their unique culture. You have to have the courage to ask them questions, and not merely be on the receiving end of their questions.

Your questions must be thoughtful and appropriate. You don't want to ask basic questions about the company if the information was readily available on their website, or you'll

look foolish and ill-prepared. Further, you don't want to ask questions that sound too self-serving (ex. *How much time off do I get? How quickly can I advance in the corporate hierarchy? What are the perks you are offering me?*) All of that sounds both immature and amateurish. Instead, ask intelligent questions that are meant to give you a sense of the expectations of the hiring manager, the attributes of an ideal candidate, the nature of the work, and what constitutes a good "fit" from their perspective. Here are a handful of questions you might find useful, but only use them if it makes sense to do so based on the unique circumstances you find yourself in:

- *How would you describe the culture here?*
- *Based on that culture, what kind of people fit in and tend to be successful?*
- *Say you hired me to start tomorrow: what would be the top 2 or 3 priorities you would want me to focus on?*
- *Talk to me about your boss. How do you like working for him/her and what is he/she like as a manager?*
- [Ask this near the end of the interview]: *Although this is only preliminary as you may have other candidates you still need to meet with, based on what you've learned about me in this interview, how close do I come to meeting your expectations for the kind of candidate you are seeking for this position? Are there any skills or attributes you fear I may lack for this role?*

That last question is a very useful one, for it lets you know if the interviewer has a misconception about you, which you are then able to clear up, if possible.

Finally, always wrap up the interview by asking the interviewer what the next steps are for them, what the timeline is, and when the two of you should check in with each other again. Try to allow for the ball to be in your court, so that you can initiate contact with them after the right amount of time has elapsed.

And one last thing: if at all possible, obtain the business card of the individual(s) who interviewed you. Then write a Thank You card to that person, spelling their name correctly, addressing the envelope correctly, and then get it in the mail.

Don't use email, even though it's faster and more

convenient. Use the U.S. Mail, as so few people do, and you will stand out. So have a Thank You Card, postage, and a return address label ready, then write the card, thanking them for their time, expressing your interest in the job, and mailing it from the nearest post office that day before you even go home.

Follow my advice and you will greatly increase the odds that you will be successful.

## The Elephant in the Room The Latest From The Left

*"From whence shall we expect the approach of danger? Shall some trans-Atlantic military giant step the earth and crush us at a blow? Never. All the armies of Europe and Asia...could not by force take a drink from the Ohio River or make a track on the Blue Ridge in the trial of a thousand years. No, if destruction be our lot we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of free men we will live forever or die by suicide." Abraham Lincoln*

*"We are five days away from fundamentally transforming the United States of America." Barack Obama*

Those two quotes were uttered by two men who served as President of the United States of America - the first, a conservative Republican, the second, a liberal Democrat. Lincoln, the great unifier, was deeply committed to American values in general and to public virtue in particular, and sought to maintain what the Founders had established. Obama, a man of the Left, seems to have little interest in the Founders or their ideals - he embraces Leftist ideals.

This short article is not so much "anti-Obama" as it is "anti-Leftist" for Leftism is much larger than Obama or any

one man. And it is Leftism that is actively eroding America's strength and vitality.



People need to wake up to the reality that America is literally under attack from the inside. The acids of Leftism seem to gnaw away at every fiber and sinew that constitutes American Exceptionalism. Here are some of the latest tidbits from the news media (which itself is largely plagued by Leftism, making it all the more remarkable that such items are even reported in any degree) which would cause our Founders to marvel at how far we have fallen:

[Making Transgender Normal:](#) Transgender is a term that essentially refers to people who are born one way (male or female) but who choose to self-identify another way (i.e., a person born a male insists he is a female, even though he has male genitalia, a male face, a male voice, etc. He "knows" better; he "knows" he's a woman.) So Leftist activists, emboldened by their string of victories with making homosexuality normative, and making gay marriage widespread, have now upped the ante, focusing on making transgender as normal as possible. Enter Democratic Assemblyman Tom Ammiano, the openly gay, radically angry lawmaker from (where else?) San Francisco. He has authored a bill, AB1266, which recently passed as legislation in the San Francisco Assembly, which allows students who believe themselves to be transgendered to use whatever public bathrooms they wish to use, and join whichever sports teams they wish to join. In other words, a young man attending a public high school who claims he is transgendered (or who has been brainwashed into believing he is a female) can now sit in the stalls of the girls bathroom at school, can join the girls soccer team, and can shower in the girls locker room right next to your daughter (if you happen to have a daughter attending high school in San Francisco.) I wonder what John Adams would think of Tom Ammiano's idea.

[Corporate America Jumps on the Leftist Bandwagon:](#) Giant companies such as United Parcel Service and Intel Corporation had, some time ago, decided to discontinue financial support of the Boy Scouts of America. Joining them this month was the heavy equipment manufacturer

Caterpillar. The reason: The Boy Scouts of America won't allow openly gay men (or women for that matter) to serve as scout leaders. Let me translate this: If the Boy Scouts of America would allow openly homosexual men to serve as role models, mentors, and even share a tent with young, vulnerable, impressionable 11-year-old boys, then the corporations in question would deem the Boy Scouts worthy of financial support; if not, then no. I wonder how George Washington would view such a position.

[Endorsing promiscuity among children:](#) The Obama Administration's goal to send a clear message to young girls to have unprotected sex got a big boost from an activist, liberal judge. Edward Korman (a Reagan appointee, if you can believe it) recently gave the needed approval sought by Obama to allow girls of any age to obtain the "morning after" pill (also known as Plan B) - and to receive it without a prescription and without any sort of parental notification. Now girls of any age can have unprotected sex and obtain the pill over the counter. While this sends a message endorsing immorality to young girls, I wonder what James Madison would think of this Leftist policy.

Leftism is seeping into every part of American life and is, indeed, fundamentally transforming the United States. We may be the first generation to bequeath to our children a worse country than the one we inherited.

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

## Shameless Plug: Don't Put Your Audiences to Sleep

### Special Report

A number of months ago I attended a seminar. It was awful.

The seminar leader, though quite accomplished in running several businesses, seemed to break every rule imaginable when it comes to making presentations. I

wanted to get up and walk out, but then an idea struck me: Why not capture all the things he is doing wrong and write a paper spelling them out -- as well as what to do differently.



I wrote the paper. It's a Special Report and it's available

on my website.

If you give presentations and you'd like to make sure you don't make some of the same mistakes as the presenter I endured, you can download solid information and advice for less than \$30. [Click Here](#) and add "How Not To Do It" to your Shopping Cart. It's easy and fast.

## From Ara's Journal

### Playing Favorites

I became a grandfather this month. This is not something I was expecting, nor was I looking forward to it. At the same time, I can't say I was cold to the idea either. It just happened and I accept it.



But in welcoming this little peanut into the world, I have reflected again on my own children and my relationship to them. It's a bit of a different dynamic in each instance, but I am still the same father to all of them. Which brings me to the subject of having a favorite child.

I am aware that in many families, the children come to believe that one or more parent plays favorites. Usually the kids imagine that the "favorite" is someone other than themselves. And they may or may not be correct in their perceptions. My own children used to voice the opinion that my youngest was my favorite, yet my youngest claims she never felt that way.

Perhaps that is because I consistently voiced the view that I do not have a favorite and that when it comes to the parent-child relationship, I do not play favorites at all.

It is not hard to imagine the pain, the jealousy, and the sense of angst that children must experience when they reflect on the notion that their father or mother "prefers" one child over all the others. That is why I openly declared my neutrality to my children. Growing up is difficult enough as it is without having a feeling that your father favors your sister or brother more than you.

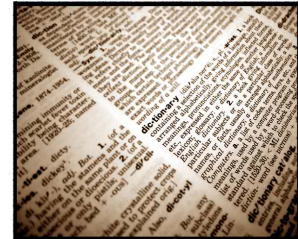
Parenthood is one of the few undertakings in life where I adopt the posture of Switzerland.

### Circuitous

#### Building Your Power of Expression

**Circuitous**, adj.

**Pronunciation:** səɹ'kyooətəs



#### Meaning:

A path that is not the most direct path could be said to be circuitous. However, I like using this word, not only when discussing geographic matters, but also when discussing verbal or written communication that fails to be succinct.

#### Usage:

- *Much like the ancient Israelites under Moses, we seemed destined to wander for 40 years in a circuitous route before we ever entered our own Promised Land.*
- *Truthfully, I'm not all that concerned about getting there first. The journey itself rewards those who take a meandering, circuitous approach to the excursion.*
- *He speaks in riddles much of the time. His speech is long and drawn out and downright circuitous.*

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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](mailto: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](http://www.aranorwood.com)

**Sincerely,**

Ara Norwood  
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