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Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Issue: # 055

July 10, 2013

Greetings!

It's great to be getting to you the latest issue of *Uncommon Sense*, and I am delighted you are one of my readers.

We live in a world where anything can happen -- from the very good to the very unfortunate.

My aim is to provide you with a wide array of thoughts that may help you bend the odds in your favor, whether it involves some aspect of self-development, an awareness of the absurdities that surround us in public life and politics, some deep, fundamental concept, or simply in expressing ourselves more elegantly.



This issue does all of that, and I hope it brings value to you.

OK, let's get started.

Warm regards,

Ara Norwood

Self-Development

On Job Interviews, Part 2

Last issue of *Uncommon Sense* I discussed the critical skill of job interviewing from the perspective of the job seeker. This time around, I want to make a few points to those

who conduct job interviews.

Folks, bringing on board the right people with the right skills and attributes is critical for the long-term success of your organization. Therefore, it is imperative that those who conduct interviews do it well. Here are a handful of points that may assist you. (And if you are a job seeker, study this information carefully, as I'm giving you the M.O of effective interviewers!



Prepare accordingly.)

It's better if you are not the only one who interviews a given candidate. Having more than one coworker experience the candidate enables you both to compare notes afterwards and see if you have a consensus about the relative strengths and liabilities of the candidate pool. And you should take notes, and tell the candidate right up front you are going to be taking notes. Don't depend on your memory, especially if you are going to be interviewing several candidates.

Take the time to carefully think through the behaviors the idea candidate should possess for a specific job. Then craft a series of questions about those various behaviors, allowing the candidate to tell you of concrete examples where he or she has done the very thing(s) you are asking about.

- "Can you tell me about a time in your past when you had to do X?"
- "Walk me through a time when you had to do Y."
- "I'm interested in hearing of as many examples as you can recall of times that you were involved in Z."

Then listen carefully. See if the stories flow off their tongue effortlessly. Try to detect if there is enough detail being given that is coherent and cohesive as to suggest the candidate is not making it up. (And many will make it up, so be careful.)

Likewise, ask the candidate about actual achievements they have accomplished in the past. Examples might be along the lines of:

- "How did you increase quality in your department at your last job?"
- "Tell me some ways you decreased waste in your job at HP?"

Sometimes it's wise to disarm a candidate who may be prone to making up stories by prefacing a given question with something like this:

- "This is not a deal-breaker, so don't worry if you don't have specific experience in this next area I am going to ask you about, as I'm merely curious. Can you tell me about a time when you did [fill in the blank]?"

Oftentimes a candidate will let his or her guard down and frankly admit that they don't really know Excel, or they've never really been involved in formal project management, or don't really know logistics. Aren't you glad you have the truth on that?

Another style of interviewing involves you laying out before the candidate, in a quasi-case study fashion, several scenarios that they are very likely to face on the job they are applying for, then asking them how they believe they would handle such situations. Their answers can tell you a lot about how they think and how much real-world experience they actually have. Some interviewers go even farther and actually have the candidate perform, live, a task that they would have to perform on the job in question. These are called "In-Box" interviews. You can read about them (along with other types of interviewing techniques) by [clicking here](#).

Another category of questions might be dubbed Holistic Questions. These are philosophically broad questions that can tell you much about the candidate you would not discover any other way. For examples:

- "What would you say are the broad responsibilities of

- a [name the job title]?"
- "What aspects of this job would you say are most crucial?"
 - "We all agree that everyone has room for improvement. As you look at your past performance at your most recent job, in hindsight, what are some ways you may have improved your own performance?"
 - "What areas of your own skill set do you want to improve upon in the next 12 months?"

Sometimes it's very helpful and revealing to ask a very wide open question such as, "Bottom line: why should we hire you?"

Many years ago, a sales manager was interviewing me and he asked a similar question but did it very differently. The interview was technically over and we had shaken hands and I was heading out the door of his office, when he stopped me dead in my tracks with this beauty: "Hey, before you go, I have one more question. If we end up *not* hiring you, what will we have missed out on?"

I'm certain his timing was staged. And I admit I was caught off-guard and gave him some sort of lame answer laced with clichés (and no, I didn't get the job.) I'm not advocating a stunt like that to my readers, but if that's your style, what's to stop you?

Be sure to allow time for the candidate to ask you any questions he or she may have. If they have none, that's probably a bad sign.

Finally, when the interview is winding down, inform the candidate how and when you will be following up (i.e., by telephone, email, letter, etc.) And do what you say. If you tell a candidate you will be following up with them within two weeks via email, keep your word. There are few things less professional than a manager or recruiter who leaves a candidate hanging.

The Elephant in the Room Meeting An Activist Judge Half Way

So you have a guy who, as a 21 year old, begins a string of violent sexual crime, entering the homes of defenseless women, trying them up, and raping them. He does this to at least 20 women, and does it in their own homes, where

they would normally feel most safe, thus destroying their sense of security and adding a dimension of perpetual fear and paranoia to his victims, who may never again experience peace of mind.

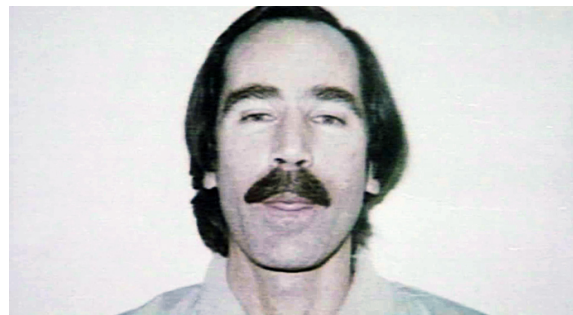
After being caught, the rapist is locked up for a period of time. How much time? 20 years? 15 years? Surely he would get 10 years in prison -- or would he? Well, not in liberal California. He was given about 5 to 7 years, then released from prison on the presumption that 5 to 7 years was enough punishment for raping 20 or more women. The leniency he was given taught him that rape is really not a big deal. It also taught the women he defiled that their having been violated in the worst way was, frankly, not really something to fret about.

Personally, I would have had him castrated, and then sent to prison for life without the possibility of parole. But California is a liberal state whose lawmakers and judges often believe that people with such a history of violent sexual crime can and should be given another chance - in fact, many chances.

So after being released from prison, he moves to another part of the state where he won't be supervised and begins the raping spree all over again, this time raping at least 23 more women over a 24-month period - about one victim per month that we know of. He is arrested again and sentenced to 16 years of incarceration, but released after only 8 years, so that he can go out and rape again - which he does.

Within two months, at least two more women were traumatized by this monster, and their lives will never be the same again.

That is what we have with a twisted, monstrous degenerate by the name of Christopher Evans Hubbart, now age 62, seen to the right.



Do we see a pattern in this man's behavior? Are such persons redeemable? Is it worth the risk?

According to a Santa Clara County Superior Court Judge by

the name of [Gilbert T. Brown](#), it is. Judge Brown wants to release Christopher Hubbart into Los Angeles County. Judge Brown, who earned his law degree at Loyola Marymount, is a liberal judge who truly (and naively) believes there is no evidence that Christopher Hubbart will ever rape again. Judge Brown is convinced that Hubbart has been rehabilitated.

Judge Brown should be recalled for lacking any sort of judgment, common sense, or basic discernment. But I am willing to meet the judge half-way with this proposition: it's perfectly fine to release this supposedly rehabilitated rapist into the streets of California, but not in Los Angeles. Allow Christopher Hubbart to be released into Judge Brown's own neighborhood. If Judge Brown is that confident that Mr. Hubbart is not a threat to society, then let him put some skin in the game and demonstrate his confidence that way.

But of course he won't.

Judge Brown is a liberal. He feels things; he doesn't think deeply about things. He feels sorry for the rapist, not for the almost 50 women whose lives were devastated by this sack of human excrement. He wants this monster free - just not near his own loved ones.

And mark my words: before the year 2015 ends, Christopher Hubbart, if released as planned, will rape again, it will be in the news, and Judge Brown will not be held accountable one iota for his colossal lapse of judgment. If I am wrong, I go on record right now that I will make a \$500 donation to Judge Brown's favorite charity.

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

Shameless Plug: Norwood Continues with Speeches on Founding Fathers

Today I had the distinct pleasure of addressing the Rotary Club of Culver City, California. It was the inaugural meeting of incoming president Christopher King, and was a singular honor for me to share my observations on the Founders. (I am also grateful to the many members in the audience who became subscribers to *Uncommon Sense*! I hope they are enjoying this -- their first issue.)

I have also been invited to travel quite a ways in

September to present my thoughts and findings on The Founders to a group out in Boston, a city with significant historical



ties to the founding of this great republic. I am looking forward to that event.

If your organization would benefit from a rousing and patriotic message focusing on the leadership and the accomplishments of men like Franklin, Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, and Hamilton, please get in touch with me.

From Ara's Journal

On Integrity

Integrity is a buzzword these days. All sorts of people and organizations talk about it. Many institutions adopt it as one of their core values - and we are supposed to believe that such institutions are loaded with integrity simply because it's mentioned on the front page of an annual report, or etched on a plaque hung on the wall in the lobby.



I've rarely encountered a word that is bandied about so much that is also in such short supply.

It's not easy to exercise integrity consistently. But those who do set themselves apart as persons of unusual quality.

Defining integrity isn't common. People throw the term around, but rarely do they clarify what they mean when they use that term.

There seems to be an underlying assumption that a person with integrity is a "good" person. But deeper reflection reveals that this is not necessarily true.

Integrity comes from the same root that gives us words

such as integration, integral, and integer. On that last item, think "whole" as in "whole number."

The best way to think of integrity is to think of congruence. A person who has deep integrity is deeply consistent. His or her actions and conduct (both public and private) square very neatly with his or her stated values. When there is alignment between what we say and what we do - or better yet, between what we say and *what we are* - we are men and women of integrity. Thus, (at least in theory) a person could advocate for mediocrity or slothfulness, and be a person of integrity if they pattern their lives after such low values. However, most of us, thankfully, advocate for lofty principles. The problem is that few of us actually personify such principles, at least not consistently.

I have to face the hard truth that I am a long ways off from being a person of absolute integrity. I aspire to the highest of principles, yet my conduct rarely catches up with my ideals. Perhaps it takes years of learning by trial and error, years of picking oneself up off the floor and trying again, years of course correction, before one can emerge a man or woman of profound integrity.

That is something I believe is worth striving for.

The World of Words

Malaise

Building Your Power of Expression

Malaise, noun

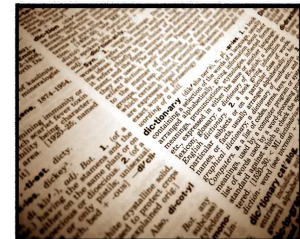
Pronunciation: mə'lāz

Meaning:

Sometimes you just sort of feel like you're in a funk, a rut, a bad place. A malaise is a feeling of uneasiness or discomfort, especially in cases where the root cause is difficult to pin-point. President Jimmy Carter once talked about the fact that the entire country was in a sort of malaise, a characterization that stood in stark contrast to Ronald Reagan's sunny disposition based on optimism.

Usage:

- *In visiting this country, I was surprised at the widespread pessimism and lack of resolve of its people; it was as if there was a general sense of*



malaise in the air.

- *Heavy drug use may be a symptom of a deeper malaise.*
- *The art produced by a given society can often reveal a vibrancy or can often expose an underlying malaise.*

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