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Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

In This Issue

[Impress Your Boss](#)
[Krauthammer on
Zimmerman Verdict](#)
[Sunday](#)
[Add Idyllic to your
Vocabulary](#)

Quick Links

[Ara's Web Site](#)
[Facebook Page](#)

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Issue: # 056

July 25, 2013

Greetings!

Welcome back to another issue of *Uncommon Sense*. Life continues to be interesting with the current occupant of the White House giving a major speech the other day on the economy, and referring to the IRS misconduct and the Bengazi tragedy that killed four Americans "phony scandals"; a major Democratic candidate for the mayor's office in New York City has disgraced himself for a second time with perverse images and words on Twitter -- and remarkably, as of this writing, plans to stay in the race; and a major American city has filed for bankruptcy following years of liberal political and economic policies. It's really quite disturbing and eye-opening what Leftism continues to do to this nation.

This issue is loaded with some content you'll undoubtedly find useful. I share a very insightful column on the Zimmerman verdict by the always brilliant Charles Krauthammer, reprinted from the July 18th issue of the Washington Post. Krauthammer seems to consistently hit the bulls-eye on most of the things he writes about, and I often find him articulating my own views better than I can. I hope you enjoy this guest column.



I'll be on the road in a few days, heading to Atlanta for a series of workshops, then back to prepare another issue of *Uncommon Sense*. I hope you are having a productive summer.

OK, let's get started.

Warm regards,

Ara Norwood

Self-Development How to Impress Your Boss

It's not difficult to impress your boss. Here are some quick tips on how to do this:

1. Show up to work earlier than most everyone else.
2. Don't be difficult to get along with; if your co-workers think you're a jerk, you're probably doing something wrong that needs to be fixed - and you can rest assured they have told your boss of their perceptions.



3. Take some time each week - preferably each day - to develop your capacity to produce results. This may come through regular skill acquisition, or through taking regular time out to think deeply about issues, or through staying informed by reading trade publications. Whatever your method, your knowledge and your capability should be evolving regularly.
4. Listen carefully during meetings (i.e., don't tune out for even a second or you might miss something important) and be prepared to offer something of substance at each meeting.
5. When your boss points out a problem that is occurring and which needs attention by someone in the organization, you be the first to volunteer to tackle that problem - provided you are not getting in over your head.
6. When you come to your boss with a problem, also come with a solution or two. Few things annoy a manager as much as having endless complaints or problems thrown their way. And few things impress managers as much as when a direct report

accompanies their description of a problem with one or two potential solutions. The manager may not adopt your proposed solutions, but they will be grateful for the effort.

7. Be very thoughtful about deadlines. Do not make commitments to meet a deadline until you have carefully thought it through, considering all of the likely scenarios that might derail your momentum. When you make a commitment to meet a deadline, you should consider that sacred and immutable. If you get in the habit of failing to meet deadlines, you will lose credibility with your boss. Your boss needs to know you can be counted on to do what you commit to doing.

The Elephant in the Room **The Zimmerman Case: A Touch of Sanity** by Charles Krauthammer

"No justice, no peace," chants the telegenic mob. In a civilized society, however, where the mob doesn't rule, justice is defined by the verdict that follows a fair trial. It's the best that humans can do.

And in the case of George Zimmerman, we have a verdict. It followed a trial every minute of which was seen by the world. Nothing secret, nothing hidden. Where in the trial was there racial bias? What evidence of the case being tilted toward the defendant because the victim was black? What sign of any racial animus in the jury?



Those undeniable realities have not prevented Benjamin Crump, attorney to the victim's family, from placing Trayvon Martin in the tradition of Emmett Till and Medgar Evers.

This is a disgrace. Those were race crimes of the most savage and undeniable kind. To compare those to a shooting deemed by an impartial jury after a fair and fully

open trial as a case of self-defense is to desecrate their memory and to trivialize centuries of real, brutal, bloody race hatred.

The injection of race into the story by the media, by irresponsible politicians and by the usual racial entrepreneurs has been poisonous. President Obama didn't help when his first reaction to the death of Trayvon Martin was, "If I had a son, he'd look like Trayvon," thereby immediately making skin color a central issue.

Imprudent as was that remark, it is nonetheless understandable given the history of this country and the initial appearance of the incident. At that point, a racial motive was not an implausible assumption, although certainly an unhelpful one coming from the president of the United States - a president who had consistently reacted to other killings, such as the Fort Hood massacre of 13 soldiers by a Muslim gunman shouting "Allahu Akbar," by immediately urging us not to jump to ethnic/religious conclusions.

But that remark about Martin came before the Zimmerman trial. Afterward, the president acted responsibly. "A jury has spoken," he said, and then used the moment to reflect on other things, such as care for one's neighbors and concern for one's community, thus helping de-racialize the case.

In doing so, Obama was following the overwhelming evidence. A concurrent FBI investigation, which involved interviewing more than 30 of Zimmerman's acquaintances, found zero evidence of Zimmerman harboring racial animus. Nor did he even mention race when first describing Martin to the police dispatcher. Race was elicited only by a subsequent direct question from the dispatcher.

Now, however, there is major pressure on the Justice Department to pursue Zimmerman with some kind of federal prosecution. On what possible evidence for what possible crime? A hate crime? Who calls 911 before setting out on a hate crime? "This case has never been about race," said Angela Corey, one of Zimmerman's prosecutors. The jury concurred. Regarding the killing, said one juror, "all of us thought race did not play a role."

While Attorney General Eric Holder told the NAACP he would continue to investigate a federal role, that could simply be his way of punting the question to a time when

temperatures are lower. Moreover, he made a point of turning his NAACP address into an attack on stand-your-ground laws, thereby deflecting attention to legislation, which is the proper role of government, and away from continued persecution of a defendant already acquitted, which is not the proper role of government.

Further federal prosecution of Zimmerman would fail, humiliatingly. Assuming Holder knows that, his focusing on stand-your-ground would be a deft way to finesse the current frenzy and drain the issue of the race element.

If my favorable reading of Holder is correct, then the Zimmerman case will take its historical place as not crime but tragedy. Its unfolding was nearly theatrical: an encounter in the dark of two men, confused, agitated and fearful. This should never have happened, and surely Zimmerman's misjudgments contributed mightily, most grievously his ignoring the dispatcher's advice not to follow Martin.

Tragedy - but without catharsis. No crime, no punishment. Under law, there's a difference between misjudgment and murder (or manslaughter), which the prosecution never came close to proving. Zimmerman will nonetheless carry the taint, the mark, the notoriety of that misjudgment - of reckless zeal that led to the needless death of a young man - for the rest of his life.

Divine punishment? It's not for us to judge. All we have is the human kind whose only standard in a civilized society is this: A jury has spoken.

From Ara's Journal

Sunday

Sundays are very important to me, not the least because my Sundays are very different from every other day of the week. Mondays through Fridays are dominated by whatever work I am involved with, and between running a sales training operation for a major corporation, running my own speaking and consulting endeavors, and teaching college courses in the evenings, I have a pretty daunting and busy schedule during the work week - and I love it!



Saturdays are a bit different as well, for while I usually

don't allow much of the regular work tasks to spill over into my Saturdays, I am still doing some kind of work around the house. I also seem to have plenty of errands to run on Saturday. And I often have some social component involving my family or my friends. Saturdays seem as busy to me as my week days.

But Sunday is different.

For one thing, I consider Sunday my Sabbath day, my day of rest. While Muslims have their holy day on Friday, and Jews have their Sabbath day on Saturday (actually, from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday), Christians have made Sunday their day of rest. And it's important to understand that the "rest" isn't just about taking a nap, but about turning away from the normal activities of life that are done on the other six days of the week and focusing on things of deep import - God, meaning, redemption, repentance, recalibrating, renewal.

I spend a portion of my Sundays in Church - about 3 hours. While I enjoy going to Church, I do not consider it a social event, although I notice that much socializing seems to take place among my fellow parishioners. I see it as a place to congregate with fellow believers of a particular faith-community to worship deity and be tutored about spiritual things.

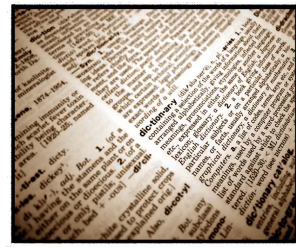
But even apart from that three-hour window that constitutes Church services, I see the entire day as one conducive to deep reflection and contemplation. And thus my normal habits and practices are different on that day. For example, I love jazz music. I listen to it a great deal. But I do not listen to it on Sunday - not because there is anything wrong with jazz. Jazz is not evil. But jazz is also not holy. And it's holiness - a preoccupation with transcendence - that occupies my focus on Sunday.

I have found that by making one day a week a singular type of day, different from any other day, that I am recharged and happier and better equipped to function effectively on those other six days.

Sundays are transformative.

The World of Words

Idyllic



Idyllic, adj.

Pronunciation: ī'dilik

Meaning:

This word is used to refer to a time or a place that is either happy, peaceful, tranquil, or even picturesque. Any time or place that is charming could be said to be idyllic. It almost always carries the connotation of a pleasant innocence.

Usage:

- *My four weeks in Tahiti was filled with an idyllic laziness.*
- *While living a rustic life at Walden pond, Thoreau enjoyed idyllic surroundings, highly conducive to reflection and contemplation.*
- *His "little patch of England" sounds simply idyllic.*

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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
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