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Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Issue: # 066

December 30, 2013

Greetings!

The year is over in two more days. I hope the year was good for you, but even if it wasn't, just remember, there's always next year -- a subject I expand on below.

So have a fun but safe time on New Years Eve, count your blessings, reflect on your wins, and gear up to make 2014 your best year ever!

OK, let's get started.

Warm regards,

Ara Norwood



Self-Development

Planning. . . and Execution

"If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours."

Henry David Thoreau

As we come to the close of another year, it is smart to assess what kind of year it was for us. Years are kind of like football seasons; some seasons are better than others. The year 2013 may have been an arduous year for some of you. If so, I hope you also have *renewed optimism* as you sense the likelihood of new and promising possibilities in

2014. For others, 2013 may have been a stellar year, and if that was your outcome, I salute you.

But if the year wasn't all you had hoped for, if the disappointments outweighed the victories, I would urge you not to spend too much time wallowing in self-pity; there just isn't time for that. Instead, try to face up to why things were not as you had hoped, honestly assess what you did (or failed to do) to contribute to the results, and then make some firm commitments to perform better going forward.

I am a big believer in goal setting, especially at this time of year. I recommend you look at the major areas of your life and ask yourself what you would like to accomplish in 2014 relative to that area of your life. For instance, pay attention to, perhaps, the economic dimension of your

life. Ask yourself what you'd like to see happen in 2014 from an economic perspective. Perhaps something involving the reducing of debt.



Perhaps an income goal you may have. Perhaps something to do with investments such as real estate, or the stock market, or insurance, or mutual funds.

Then look at other dimensions of your life. You might consider setting **business** goals (which, to me, are distinct from economic goals.) These might have to do with whatever sort of career you are involved in and should be such that they take you to new heights of achievement.

What about your **health**? You may wish to set goals about fitness, or a sport you do or could participate in, or nutrition, or sleep, or even oral care.

Do you have any **intellectual** goals you wish to consider? Perhaps having to do with learning a foreign language? Perhaps furthering your education through college courses you may enroll in? Perhaps reading a certain number of books? Or writing and publishing essays on a topic of your choice? Or learning a certain number of new

vocabulary words that you will adopt to enhance your capacity for expression?

Another area of your life you should examine could be called your **aesthetic** dimension, or perhaps you could think of it as your social life. It's about the parts of your private life that bring you satisfaction. Did you once play a musical instrument? Perhaps you can set a goal pertaining to dusting off that old violin or flute or guitar and start playing again. What about your social relationships? You might want to set a goal that ensures you have a rich social life, or that you build and evolve a relationship with a specific person. And what about *you* and your *alone time*? Might it make sense to set a goal concerning ways in which you recharge your batteries by traveling, or by seeking solitude on a regular basis?

Don't forget to set goals about your role within the **family**. The family is the basic unit of society, and whether you are married or live alone, whether you live under your parent's roof or simply have a few distant cousins and uncles somewhere, it would be wise not to ignore those special relationships.

And finally, consider the **spiritual** dimension. The spiritual is an unusual dimension, but essentially it involves whatever deepens your sense of meaning or purpose. Some people engage with this dimension out in nature, at a beach, in a forest, or atop a mountain. Others find great solace by worshipping with a group of like-minded believers in a formal setting such as a church, a synagogue, a mosque, or some other forum that caters to a particular faith-community. Still others spend time immersing themselves in the sacred literature that appeals to them. There are many dimensions to the spiritual, and many ways to approach it, but it is one that should not be overlooked.

The key thing about goal setting to keep in mind is this: there are two dimensions to effective goal setting. The first is planning. The second is execution.

One of the great blessings of living in a republic like the United States of America is that we are free to govern our own lives and pursue our own happiness free from tyrannical governments. Thus, it is ours to map out our lives and set the direction of the path we wish to follow. This means we must plan for our success. We must conceive of the outcomes we wish to attain. And while we

must be realistic, we can certainly be bold. Planning is all about imagination of the possible; it's about owning the outcomes of our lives. It is the first creation.

The second creation is actually doing what we planned to do. This requires strong time management skills. What seems to work best for me (though I'm always seeking new approaches to achievement) is to commit my goals to paper, and review them at least weekly. Every Sunday evening, I immerse myself in my goals, reviewing what I have accomplished so far, then making firm plans to do the things that need to be done in the new week to move towards the accomplishment of my goals. Most goals require many smaller tasks to be completed before the main goal is realized. Thus, it is imperative that we review our goals with regularity and figure out what could be done next to move towards the attainment of that goal.

Do this with regularity and you will be a man or woman of accomplishment. And you'll find that life, in spite of its inevitable setbacks, is satisfying.

The Elephant In The Room The Leftist Effect on One State, and the Conservative Effect on Another

My thanks goes out to the always astute NM, who used to live in California and now lives in Texas, for sharing with me a snappy video clip of Bill Whittle, who lives in California but spent Thanksgiving in Texas and aired a witty but telling commentary on the compare-and-contrast of the two states. Enjoy!



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

A Rare Victory for Conservatives

In the previous issue of *Uncommon Sense* (#65) I discussed the indefinite suspension of Phil Robertson from the popular television show *Duck Dynasty*, following Mr. Robertson's comments in an interview with *GQ Magazine* to the effect that he considers homosexuality sinful.

This suspension was issued in large measure due to pressure on A&E, which broadcasts the show, by gay rights groups such as GLADD (The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation.)



Well, due to a strong counterpunch by conservative groups, A&E has reconsidered their position and has decided to reinstate Phil Robertson.

GLADD is not too glad about the matter.

From Ara's Journal

Throwing Caution to the Wind

Jack London had it right when he said:

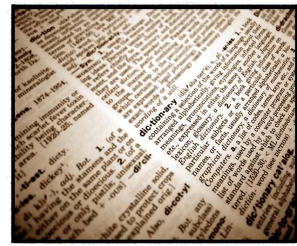
"I would rather be ashes than dust! I would rather that my spark should burn out in a brilliant blaze than it should be stifled by dry-rot. I would rather be a superb meteor, every atom of me in magnificent glow, than a sleepy and permanent planet.



The function of man is to live, not to exist. I shall not waste my days trying to prolong them. I shall use my time."

The World of Words

Cachet



Cachet, n.

Pronunciation: ka'SHā

Meaning: This is such a great word! *Cachet!* It even sounds cool! The basic meaning refers to a state of being respected or admired. Think of it as a state of prestige.

Usage:

- *No other information systems company has quite the cachet as IBM.*
- *This job has a certain cachet associated with it, so I'm taking it.*
- *I agree that performing in Hermosa Beach does not carry quite the same cachet as Milan or Paris.*

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