

You're receiving this email because of your relationship with Ara Norwood of Leadership Development Systems. Please [confirm](#) your continued interest in receiving email from us. To ensure that you continue to receive emails from us, add ara@aranorwood.com to your address book today.

You may [unsubscribe](#) if you no longer wish to receive our emails.

Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

In This Issue

[Our Most Powerful Intellectual Tool](#)
[The Party of Tolerance](#)
[Musings on the Arts & Sciences](#)
[Add Penultimate to your Vocabulary](#)

Quick Links

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

Join Our List

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

Issue: # 068

January 27, 2014

Greetings!

Welcome to yet another issue of Uncommon Sense.

In this issue you will deepen your understanding of leadership as a formal discipline, and you will get my take on a recent outburst from New York's governor, who said some things that should trouble you. And I threw in a few random thoughts I have about the arts and sciences, not to mention you can add a new word to your growing vocabulary.



I hope you get some value out of this issue, and I would love to hear from you via email to tell me which segments bring you the most value.

OK, let's get started.

Warm regards,

Ara Norwood

Self-Development

Our Most Powerful Intellectual Tool

As I described in the last issue of *Uncommon Sense* (#67) thinking is the foundation of all great leadership.

But it doesn't stop there. Building on that foundation, great leaders understand the power that comes from formulating questions. Indeed, there is a direct link between the process we call thinking and the conceiving of deep and profound questions. They really are two peas in a pod: *thinking* is the antecedent; *questions* are the consequent.

Great leaders recognize that a failure to ask the right questions will hamper their leadership effectiveness. Thus, a common thread that permeates all of their leadership acumen is to ask themselves, "Are we asking the right questions?" They worry about that, and well they should. If they don't ask the right questions, they could be climbing the proverbial ladder of success, only to find upon reaching the top rung that the ladder was leaning against the wrong wall.

Questions are our most potent intellectual tool. In fact, all of the innovations we take for granted, from the microprocessor, to electricity, to the stirrup, to the stethoscope, to management, to the practice of research and development, to democracy itself came about because someone at some point was asking the right question.

So get in the practice of embracing the reality that you must ponder, imagine, and formulate questions - the right questions - in order to achieve leadership breakthroughs. One good place to start is to ask "What if. . ." questions.

Asking "What if. . ." questions opens your mind to endless possibilities and enables you to consider approaches and avenues of direction you may have otherwise missed. But there



are many types of questions, and not all questions are framed in ways that allow for a breakthrough idea. So it is very important that leaders formulate the structure of their questions carefully.

This need to frame questions properly brings to mind the story of the two Catholic Priests who were debating the issue of whether it is permissible, as priests, to both smoke cigarettes and pray at the same time. Father Gentry saw nothing wrong with it, while Father Kelly believed it was inappropriate. But after much debate they

finally decided to settle their argument by an appeal to the Pope himself, whom they trusted would provide the definitive answer. They both wrote independent letters to the Pope containing their question - and they were flabbergasted to receive individual answers mailed back to them by the Pope in which both were told his position was the correct one.

Finally, Father Gentry asked, "Father Kelly, how did you frame your question?" Father Kelly answered, "I asked his holiness if it was permissible to smoke while praying and he answered in the negative. But how did you frame your question, Father Gentry?" Came the response, "I asked his holiness if it was permissible to pray while smoking, and he assured me that it is always appropriate to pray."

Thus, how the question is framed may determine the answer you get.

The Elephant In The Room **The Party of Tolerance**

The Democratic Party and the Liberals and Leftists who have taken it over consider themselves to be members of the Party of Tolerance.

Come again?

We recently got a glimpse of the great divide that rankles this wonderful Republic of ours. In a most instructive outburst (instructive because I will be dissecting it here in this column) New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat with a Liberal Left world-view, had this to say about his political opponents:

"Their problem is not me and the Democrats. Their problem is themselves."

He wasn't finished: "Who are they? Are they the extreme conservatives who are right-to-life, pro-assault weapon, anti-gay?"

He still wasn't finished. For his grand finale, he said this: "Is that who they are? Because if that's who they are and they're extreme conservatives, they have no place in the state of New York, because that's not who New Yorkers are."

Remarkable.

Actually, I take that back. There is really nothing remarkable about it. It's actually typical.



Shortly after Governor Cuomo made these remarks, the New York State GOP Chairman Ed Cox [demanded an apology](#) from Governor Cuomo. While I very likely share a number of things in common with the conservative stance of Mr. Cox, I have to dismiss his call for an apology as misplaced for reasons I will elaborate on momentarily. However, before I get to that, I wish to deconstruct this amazing bit of rhetoric from this Leftist Governor.

First, I should point out that in Governor Cuomo's mind, there is no such thing as a conservative. There are only "extreme conservatives." I say that because the three examples he gave, although he worded two of the three inaccurately, are all conservative positions. Therefore, in the Governor's mind, there are only two kinds of political animals: reasonable, normal people (also known as liberal Democrats,) and extreme conservatives. In other words, "extreme conservative" is a redundancy, for in the Governor's mind, all conservatives are extremist, or said another way: to be a conservative is to be an extremist. Thus, his asking the question, "Who are they?" was dishonest. He knows who they are. Consequently, his framing it as a question was actually camouflage for a statement: "This is who they are."

Second, note that Governor Cuomo has no conception of an "extreme liberal." Such doesn't exist in his lexicon. This is partly due to the fact that Governor Cuomo is, himself, extreme in the extreme. The old adage that "a fish discovers water last" is very apt here. The governor is oblivious to the fact that he himself is an extremist, and this in spite of the fact that his very rhetoric being dissected here is Exhibit A of his extremist world-view. The governor was thus condemning allegations of extremism while he himself was demonstrating true extremism.

Third, it is very important that we understand something about the three examples he attributes to conservatives:

- His first example, that extreme conservatives are "right-to-life," on the question of abortion, is problematic for him, in that he is a member of the Roman Catholic Church which is staunchly pro-life. But Governor Cuomo's actual religion is Leftism, not Catholicism. Leftism, which is very much in favor of a woman having the right to terminate a pregnancy (i.e., destroy a living, yet unborn, baby) at any time in any trimester for any reason or no reason has more sway over the



conscience of the Governor than does his Catholic roots. Given a choice between the tenets of Catholicism and the tenets of Leftism, the Governor will align himself with the secular Left every time. But again, the important thing to remember here, and a point that is lost on the Governor, is that being pro-life is not "extremist" for conservatives; it's a position embraced by virtually all conservatives. Extremist, on the other hand, is the position of those who do not value human life, albeit unborn human life.

- His second example is that extreme conservatives are "pro-assault weapon." In using this kind of language, Governor Cuomo reveals that he is either colossally inept about matters involving the Second Amendment and gun laws in general, or he is being wholly dishonest. There is no such thing as an "assault weapon." There are assault rifles, but those are fully automatic (i.e., machine guns) which are not legally sold to civilians, only to military personnel. The best and clearest explanation of this issue can be found by [clicking here](#), but the bottom line is this: the term "assault weapon" is a political term of recent coinage used by the Liberal Left in an attempt to nullify an important Constitutional Amendment wisely authored by our Founding Fathers. In other words, the Liberal Left in this country truly believe they are

wiser than George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and the like. Again, it is an extremist position that would nullify a segment of the U.S. Constitution that one is uncomfortable with, and this is the case with Liberals like Governor Cuomo.

- His third example is that extreme conservatives are "anti-gay." Again, the Governor is never at a loss for employing emotionally-charged rhetoric in an effort to poison the well and ban civil discourse. If a group is "anti-gay," so the thinking goes, there is no need to explore, consider, or discuss. The group in question is a menacing swarm of bigotry and must be either dismissed, shouted down, or run out of town (Governor Cuomo's preference.) Yet once again, as he did with the earlier instance of abortion, the Governor is at odds with his own Catholic faith. In fact, anyone who has taken the time to digest what the Holy Bible has to say cannot escape the fact that Judeo-Christian scripture soundly condemns homosexuality, as it does other manifestations of sexual impurity (i.e., adultery, rape, bestiality, etc.) So it's not just Catholics, but any faith community that embraces the Old Testament and/or the New Testament would be in a position of recognizing that homosexuality is condemned by the Almighty, be they practicing Jews, Mormons, Baptists, Lutherans, or Catholics. At least one apostle who wrote an inspired letter in the New Testament said something very similar to what Governor Cuomo has said, although the apostle had in mind heaven rather than New York state. Using the phrase "abusers of themselves with mankind" as a translation from the Greek term for homosexual, the apostle Paul describes the kinds of people who are unfit for heaven:

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

(1 Corinthians 6:9-10.)

Anyone who embraces this biblical precept as true, irrespective of their politics, would have to be considered by the Left in general and by Governor Cuomo in particular as "anti-Gay." Is the Governor prepared to expel the Bible from New York State as well?

But it is important to realize that the demands for tolerance are stridently one-way: the typical conservative who also may be a strict believer in the Bible simply "maintains" an outlook that homosexuality is sinful, and it usually stops there (the old "hate the sin but love the sinner" ideal.) But the activist homosexual strives to destroy the very livelihood of such believers in the Bible, as two lesbian activists did in [their recent lawsuit](#) against Aaron and Melissa Klein, owners of a Portland, Oregon-based bakery, whose Christian beliefs caused them to decline to provide their services to the lesbian couple's wedding. Rather than simply find another bakery, the lesbians unleashed a level of fury and vitriol that included loud and obnoxious picketing outside the bakery, threats to any vendors who dared do business with the bakery, and eventually forced the small business owners to close their retail shop. The goal now by these Leftist activists is to legally force the Christian couple to recant their religious beliefs, something referred to by the term "reconciliation." If they refuse to do so, they will be hit with hundreds of thousands of dollars in fines, which will bankrupt them.

Oh, and the real kicker: not to be content with all of this destruction and misery the gay rights activists have caused the owners of this bakery, they have even gone so far as to create a situation where the children of the bakery couple have received death threats for the religious beliefs of their parents.

All this comes from the Party of Tolerance.

As for the demand by New York State GOP Chairman Ed Cox that Mr. Cuomo apologize for such mean-spirited, extremist rhetoric - what can only be called "hate speech," - I have to disagree. Apologies should only be offered when there is a sincere belief that one has said something that one now regrets. But Governor Cuomo was merely stating his own bone-deep beliefs, and those of the Liberal Left in general - beliefs which he (and they) both adamantly stand by and deeply treasure. An apology from this man would be phony and insincere.

The Party of Tolerance is a sham; they are the least tolerant, the most prone to destroy others, and the least in harmony with the very principles upon which our great nation was founded. I have no doubt that if Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson and George Washington could somehow be transported to our day, they would be unwelcome in the state of New York by Governor Cuomo and the Liberal Left.

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

Shameless Plug **Norwood to Deliver Management Courses**

This coming February it will be my privilege to deliver two separate 16-week courses on the discipline of Management at College of the Canyons. These courses will be presented on Monday evenings at the Valencia Campus and on Thursday evenings at the Canyon Country Campus. Both classes are expected to reach their capacity of available seating.

Having had the good fortune of studying management in graduate school with Peter Drucker, the elder statesman of management as a formal discipline, I have much of value to bequeath to these students.



If you're not familiar with the name of Peter Drucker (shown to the right, shaking hands with me just a few months prior to his passing in 2005), I can put it in perspective this way: studying management with Drucker would be akin to studying theoretical physics with Einstein.

If you are interested in registering for either class, visit the COC website by [clicking here](#).

From Ara's Journal **Musing on the Arts & Sciences**

When I graduated from high school, I felt that I had learned a great deal about life, people, relationships, etc. I hadn't, of course, but certainly I knew more upon graduation from high school than I did when I entered high school as a freshman four years earlier. I fantasized what it would be like to be able to somehow go



back in time and redo my entire high school experience all over again as a young freshman, with the same body I had as a freshman, but with the mind I now possessed as a graduate. I pondered all of the mistakes I would have avoided this second time around with the advantage of having already gone through it, almost a Ground-Hog-Day-like experience. So intrigued was I with this fantasy that I actually wrote an entire rock opera my freshman year in college about that very fantasy. That rock opera, *A Voice From The Dust*, was performed on stage on five separate occasions the year following my high school graduation.

It's often interesting to ponder the notion of going back and starting over. It's interesting to think about what we would do differently, and whether we actually would do what we imagine we would do. If we had pursued a life in the arts, would we repeat that path, or would we try our hand in the sciences? And would those who had studied the sciences changed course and followed the path of the artist?

It is interesting to apply such pondering to our Western system of learning and acquiring knowledge, where most of us who go to a college or university do so to earn a degree in a field of study that falls under the rubric of the arts or the sciences.

I find it both instructive and interesting to reflect on the variant approaches the artist and the scientist apply to their craft.

Although I do not instinctively favor one over the other, I do believe there is much to learn from either a pursuit of the arts or a pursuit of the sciences. Both can bring deep satisfaction.

Yet I do perceive some differences in their innate nature.

In spite of all their vastness, the sciences strike me as established and finite; the arts as infinite. The sciences as fixed, the arts as . . . fluid.

Although the discoveries and breakthroughs seem infinite, and the surprises many, the sciences seem to have a quality I almost want to call predictable, even though that is surely the wrong term; the arts strike me as wholly unpredictable.

While the sciences seem to operate under somewhat narrow strictures, the arts seem quite open by comparison.

Take the Pythagorean theorem for one example. This theorem, which largely deals with the three sides of a right triangle, states that the square of the hypotenuse (i.e., the long side) is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides. It is usually written as an equation as follows: A squared plus B squared equals C squared.

This is a scientific law. It is observable and verifiable. But if Pythagoras himself, who lived roughly from 570 BC to 495 BC, had not made the discovery, someone else eventually would have. That is the nature of science -- it is there, waiting to be discovered.

But with the arts, things are different. If Beethoven had never composed his Ninth Symphony, I feel it safe to say that no one would have composed that work of magnificence. Other great symphonies would have (and did) come about by various composers. But the dynamics of music, or painting, or sculpting, or writing novels and plays are such that the variations are so infinitely limitless, and so unique to the artist, that there is no way to duplicate subjective genius.

The arts deal with the subjective. The sciences with the objective.

And both provide a lifetime of discovery and fascination and understanding.

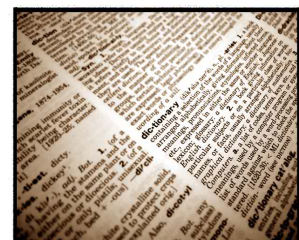
The World of Words

Penultimate

Building Your Power of Expression

Penultimate, adj.

Pronunciation: pe'nəltəmit



Meaning: Very simply, something that is penultimate is the second-to-last of that thing.

Usage:

- *I am almost finished with the book, as I am in the penultimate chapter.*
- *We have only one more class after this one, making this the penultimate class session of the semester.*
- *The penultimate movement of this particular symphony displays, arguably, the finest musicianship to come out of this composer.*

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