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Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Issue: # 069

February 10, 2014

Greetings!

Great to have you back for another round of *Uncommon Sense*.

When I first launched this eZine in early 2011, I worried that I would run out of things to write about. A foolish and unnecessary concern. The world operates under a level of change and dynamism that I am never at a loss for some sort of commentary.

Even the World of Words column at the bottom of each issue is never hurting for new words to alert you to. My publishing plan has predetermined words selected for each upcoming issue into 2017. English is such a great language.

There is a lot of interesting content in this issue for you to sink your teeth into.

OK, let's get started.

Warm regards,

Ara Norwood



Self-Development

The Power of Vision

We continue our exploration on the important topic of leadership by exploring the concept of vision.

Very simply, a vision is a desired future state. It's a mental picture of what could be. It's what you see in your mind's eye that you wish to bring into reality. Leaders habitually both formulate a compelling vision and rally their followers in such a way as to galvanize them to pursue the realization of that vision.



The notion of *vision* is directly fused to the work of the leader. Former Apple CEO John Sculley put it this way: "As I see it, leadership revolves around vision, ideas, direction, and has more to do with inspiring people as to direction and goals than with day-to-day implementation."

Case in point: John F. Kennedy said that American would send a man to the moon and bring him back safely to earth before the end of the decade. And this clarion call to extraordinary achievement revolutionized the aerospace industry, culminating in the Apollo 11 mission which brought to fruition Kennedy's vision and gave the United States a prestigious and decisive edge in space exploration.

Some leadership practitioners often use the terms *mission* and *vision* synonymously. Admittedly, they are close, but there are some distinctions. A *mission* is about direction; a *vision* is more about a picture of a desired future. A *mission* is more about the journey; a *vision*, more about the destination. A *mission* suggests a large-scale project or undertaking; a *vision* suggests what you hope your world will look like in the new reality. More synonymous with the idea of vision would be the term *dream*. Martin Luther King's "I Have A Dream" speech effectively articulated his vision of a future based on racial equality.

We read in the Old Testament, "Where there is no vision, people perish." (Proverbs 29:18.) Viktor Frankl would agree. Placed in a concentration camp during World War II because he was a Jew, he watched people all around him suffer and die, including almost everyone in his family. (His learnings from this horrific experience are instructive and can be ascertained by reading his landmark book, [*Man's Search For Meaning*](#).) At the conclusion of a

speech he gave in the United States some years after the war, he said, "There is only one reason why I am alive today. What kept me alive was you. Others gave up hope. I dreamed. I dreamed that someday I would be standing before you all, telling you how I, Viktor Frankl, survived the Nazi concentration camps. I've never been here before. I've never seen any of you before. But in my dreams, . . .in my dreams, . . . I have stood before you and said these words a thousand times."

Powerful stuff!

Later we will explore how one creates a vision.

The Elephant In The Room O'Reilly vs. Obama

On the recent Super Bowl Sunday, President Obama gave two interviews with Bill O'Reilly from Fox News, one that was televised, and a second interview that was off-camera. Both interviews can be seen by [clicking here](#). It was an instructive exchange. O'Reilly is a hard-hitting, no-nonsense conservative who isn't afraid to ask the uncomfortable questions. While I think he does himself a disservice with his habit of interrupting his guests, he kept his interruptions somewhat in check, though the interview would have been more effective had he curtailed that habit entirely.

One of the interesting features of O'Reilly's interview with the President was that he invited viewers of his TV program, *The O'Reilly Factor*, to submit questions they would like him to ask. Of the many submissions, he selected 8 as final candidates. Here are those 8 questions:



1. "Mr. President, reducing income inequality appears to be a cornerstone of your administration. Is the poverty of a single mother related to the salary of the CEO?"
2. "Mr. President, if a balanced budget amendment is passed, what three areas would you recommend

- cutting the most?"
3. "With all the entitlements we have today, what ever happened to JFK's words: 'Ask not what your country can do for you.'"
 4. "Mr. President, why would you want to fundamentally transform a country that has afforded you so much opportunity and success?"
 5. "Mr. President, do you accept any responsibility for the current discord in Washington?"
 6. "Nature is not fair, all seeds do not sprout. There are always winners and losers. Why do you think it is possible to level all playing fields?"
 7. "Why do you focus so much, Mr. President, on income inequality when the real issue is intellect inequality?"
 8. "Mr. President, your signature legislation, national health care, is unpopular in the polls. You seem to be going against the will of the people. How do you reconcile that?"

Of those 8, he ultimately chose #4, which he reworded slightly as follows:

"Mr. President, why would you want to fundamentally transform the nation that has afforded you so much opportunity and success?"

Here is how President Obama answered that question to Mr. O'Reilly:

"I don't think we have to fundamentally transform the nation. I think that what we have to do is make sure that here in America if you work hard you can get ahead."

However, in a speech he gave at the University of Missouri in Columbia, MO, on October 30, 2008, then-candidate Obama [said these words](#):

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

Bill O'Reilly could have cornered him with that apparent contradiction, but he did not.

What I found instructive in retrospect was that while Mr. O'Reilly focused his questions on the IRS scandal of targeting conservatives, the Benghazi terrorist attack which the Obama Administration spent a full week denying it was

a terrorist attack, and the ObamaCare debacle, President Obama seemed mildly perturbed by the questions. In fact, the very topics O'Reilly brought up seemed to annoy the President. And it became clear as to why.

President Obama believes, bone deep, that his top priority is Social Equality (or, if you prefer, Social Justice.) Therefore, the topic of lost American lives in Benghazi is unfortunate at best, a scandal involving the IRS is nuisance material, and overhauling the healthcare industry in ways that harm more than it helps is secondary to his primary objective of Social Justice.

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

Shameless Plug **Norwood to Speak on The Founders**

It will be my pleasure to deliver a keynote speech tomorrow on The Founders of this great nation, focusing on Franklin, Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, and Hamilton. These Six Great Men, as I refer to them, made their mark in establishing this wonderful republic of ours.



If you know of a venue that would benefit from a riveting presentation on The Founding Fathers, please get in touch with me via email: ara@aranorwood.com.

From Ara's Journal **Friendship**

Today I brokered a meeting - a business meeting - with two individuals I am very close to. MS is a phenomenal guy whom I've known for some 32 years. He was best man at my wedding, we've done all sorts of business together, graduated from the same university, and enjoy the warmest of friendships. RE is a woman I've known for roughly a decade. She is a dear friend who's heart is pure. Both of my two friends are persons of the deepest



integrity. But RE needed some help with various matters and I felt MS might be the man for the job. It turns out he was.

All that aside, it occurs to me that while I have some of the choicest friends I could ever hope for, men and women of a wide span of ages, ethnicities, interests, and backgrounds, hardly any of my friends are acquainted with each other. It may be that my connecting MS to RE constitutes the first occurrence of one friend of mine meeting another.

There is something rather inviting about doing more of this - not for business purposes, per se, but for purely social interaction. I wonder how many of my friends would absolutely relish getting to know one another. It's an interesting question, and one I intend to explore in the weeks and months ahead.

The World of Words

Terse

Building Your Power of Expression



Terse, adj.

Pronunciation: tər̩s

Meaning: A terse response is either abrupt, or sparing in the use of words. That's all I have to say.

Usage:

- *Terse statements such as these are no way to encourage the wider dialog that is sorely needed.*
- *If he were a little less terse in his replies, I would be able to better gauge his temperament.*
- *Your last email was extremely terse, so much so that I thought it verge on being rude.*

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