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# Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Issue: # 073

April 10, 2014

## Greetings!

Allow me to confess something up front.

I am actually a bit angry, something I don't normally express or experience. You will read about the source of my anger in The Elephant in the Room column below.

But I have learned to compartmentalize my anger, because I am well aware that there is more going on in life apart from those unfortunate issues. The weather is warming up, opportunities to produce good work are manifest, and relationships new and old are as vibrant as ever.



Thus, I wish you good health and continued growth as you continue to demand much from yourself.

And thanks for being a faithful reader and supporter of *Uncommon Sense*.

OK, let's get started.

Warm regards,

Ara Norwood

[Self-Development](#)

## Leadership's Central Ingredient

One of the key attributes possessed by leaders is integrity - which explains why there are so few leaders anymore. A dearth of integrity seems to be pandemic these days. But this also explains why it is not difficult to stand out as a real leader to be reckoned with. Live a life of integrity, and you will be seen as a leader - especially if you possess other qualities of leadership.

Integrity needs to be defined and understood. Most people assume it is synonymous with honesty, but this is not necessarily the case, as I'll demonstrate in the next paragraph. We can understand integrity by considering other words in the English language that share the same etymological roots - words like *integer*, or *integral*, or *integration*. Think *wholes*, as in whole numbers. Think *congruence*, as in a congruence between what you espouse and what you do. Think *alignment*, as in having your words and deeds match not only *who you are* but *what you are*.



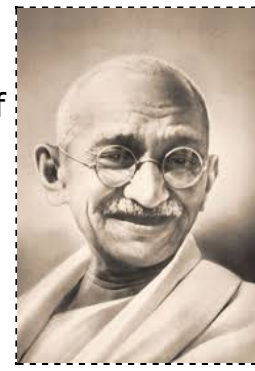
Thus, a person who has decided to be a thief and who preaches the so-called benefits of stealing from others, and who actually lives according to such practices, in a perverse sort of way could be said to be a person of "integrity" [I use the quotation marks very deliberately] in that there is alignment between what he says and what he does. This is an unfortunate but instructive example.

More to our standards, a person who espouses hard work, marital fidelity, frugality, life-long learning, and physical exercise - and who actually lives according to that which he espouses, is truly a person of integrity.

Integrity breeds trust. That is why it is so central to leadership. People who trust you due to your integrity will follow you, and follow you through daunting challenges.

That is why Gandhi is viewed as a leader of enormous integrity. He preached non-violent resistance. When he was shot by an assassin, Gandhi uttered the words "He-

ram! He-ram!" which, roughly translated, would mean "Oh, Lord!" not in the sense of shock and fear, but of bequeathing a blessing on the person - in this case, his murderer. That's a level of integrity that few humans have attained, but it speaks to Gandhi's greatness.



Although the examples are few, it is important that all of us seek out men and women of integrity and then emulate the lofty ideals and practices they demonstrate.

We need more leadership.

Integrity is a necessary and uncompromising element of leadership.

## **The Elephant In The Room** **Time to Boycott Leftist Totalitarianism**

It's official: the party that used to plead for tolerance is now forcing the rest of us to plead for mercy. But there appears to be no mercy in our future.

The party to which I refer is, ostensibly, the Democratic Party, a party which today would be unrecognizable to John F. Kennedy. The reason for this is simple: the Democratic Party has been taken over by the Secular Left, a phenomenon that led Dennis Prager to proclaim Leftism the most dynamic religion on the face of the earth today. What is peculiar and noteworthy about Leftism as a movement (and Leftists as individuals) is the totalitarian reflexes it possesses, a litany of examples which I will provide in the next issue of *Uncommon Sense*.

In political life, people with opposing views have a history of attempting to resolve such views through various forms of communication. Allow me to identify three of them, what I will call the "Three Ds":

**Dialogue:** This is a form of discourse in which the participants suspend judgment, but draw upon each others' collective insights to try to form a coherent whole. In dialogue, the participants attempt to become open to the larger flow of collective intelligence among themselves. Such conversations tend to take on a life of their own and produce understandings and breakthroughs that would not

have been possible otherwise. In a productive dialogue, the participants attempt to tap into the larger pool of common meaning as they try to make sense of their world - something that cannot likely be done on an individual basis.

**Discussion:** The word discussion shares the same root with words like *percussion* and *concussion*. In a discussion, there is a back and forth jousting, a jockeying for position, much like a verbal ping-pong match where both sides are dissecting a topic of interest but attempting to have their views prevail. Listening may take place but mostly for the purpose of trying to detect flaws in the verbal offerings of one's partner. Winning is on the mind more than understanding. (I have benefitted greatly from the writings of Peter Senge for my comments on dialogue and discussion.)

**Debate:** This form of discourse is unabashed and open competition, a contest of wit and argumentation, usually while playing to a crowd and attempting to come off as both informed and witty. The unfortunate thing about debates is that too often they involve theater, pandering to an audience, and displays of wanton cleverness, but not necessarily wisdom. Still, debates have their place, even if they usually do no more than reveal who among two opponents is a more skilled debater, and not who has the more sound position.

The Left subscribes to none of these; instead, they have added a fourth D.

**Destroy:** The Left will not usually debate their conservative counterparts, let alone engage in discussion or dialogue. So certain is the typical Leftist of the "rightness" and the "righteousness" of their position, that there is nothing to debate. Their "truths" are self-evident, at least, to them. And thus, if you dare hold to a different viewpoint on a matter such as the definition of marriage, you are not simply wrong, you are evil and must be destroyed.

How else to explain [the recent demise](#) of Brendan Eich, the newly appointed CEO of Mozilla Corporation, makers of the popular Firefox web browser?

Eich was given the top job at Mozilla because he was, correctly, deemed the most suitable candidate for the position. He was the former Chief Technology Officer, the

brains behind both the Firefox web browser and the indispensable Java Script language. The man is an icon in Silicon Valley circles. And he finally earned the coveted top job at Mozilla, a company he helped launch.



But because Eich holds to the traditional ideal of marriage as being between a male and a female, (and he gave \$1000 to the Proposition 8 Campaign back in 2008 which was intended to amend California's constitution to reflect that ideal) Eich is now deemed, by the secular Left, unworthy to hold such a job. The firestorm that ensued made it impossible for Eich to lead, and he was ousted within about ten days.

Now, let's reflect on this just a moment. Eich believes in traditional marriage. And therefore, he must be destroyed. His career must come to an end. He must not earn a paycheck. He must go hungry. He must become homeless. He must be ostracized. He must have no friends.

All hyperbole aside, I must restate the essence of the conflict: from the birth of our nation in 1776 until the end of 2003, there was no such thing as Same-Sex Marriage; it's a very recent development. So for the first 227 years of our nation's history -- and for *all* of recorded history of this planet -- marriage has always been a union between opposite genders.

There are two opposing views today, and contrary to what Leftist activists claim, the conflict is about marriage, not about gays:

- Leftists want to take an aberration and make it normal.
- Conservatives insist *on maintaining the ideal that has been the standard definition of marriage from time immemorial.*

For that, and that alone, Leftists seek not to dialogue, discuss, or debate, but destroy the careers and livelihood of those who wish to maintain a standard.

That is Left-Wing thinking in action.

Even though Eich made it clear that in the workplace, he has no intentions of bringing any harm to homosexuals - in fact, he has made a [very precise commitment](#) to that effect, it doesn't matter to the gay rights activists (not all of whom are gay themselves.) In the minds of such activists, Eich should be targeted, even though he has made it clear he won't target homosexuals.

The comments of various pundits who weighed in on this outrage are equally outrageous. John Thompson, Chairman of the Board at Microsoft, [essentially opines](#) that in today's world, if you are going to be Pro Gay-Marriage, you can be a CEO; if you are not going to be Pro Gay-Marriage, you cannot be a CEO, as if potential CEOs somehow lose their capability to run companies if they want to maintain the traditional definition of marriage. I can only scratch my head and wonder why people like John Thompson would want to cede such power over to Leftist activists. . .

Of course, some gay activists who are gleeful over the career assassination of Mr. Eich do not even have the courage to accept responsibility for this travesty. Instead they point the finger at Mozilla itself, as if Mozilla Board members who promoted Eich suddenly awoke from their stupor and realized their error, without any influence from the activists whose noise had been deafening. In fact, one activist made the [absurd claim](#) that this was a case of "a company deciding who best represents them and their values. There is no monolithic gay rights movement that called for this."

What a pile of horse manure.

[Other pundits](#) insist that what got Eich fired was not political correctness and the intolerance of Leftist totalitarianism, but Eich himself and his failure to explain what he really believes. Come again? *Eich's firing was not based on political correctness and intolerance?* We live in an alternate universe if this is the case.

Mozilla Chairwoman Mitchell Baker, in a pathetic case of trying to distance herself from responsibility, claims *the*

*company* (not her, mind you) blew it by promoting Eich in the first place: "We pride ourselves on being held to a DIFFERENT STANDARD and didn't live up to it. People are hurt and angry and THEY ARE RIGHT." Wait: a different standard? You mean, a Leftist standard? And the Leftists who are hurt and angry are "right" but conservatives who are *now* angry at this display of intolerance are simply wrong? Ms. Baker has bats in her belfry.



What should be done? I will tell you. I almost never advocate a boycott of a product, but I do so now. Unless Mozilla is drastically harmed by this cowardly and foolish conduct of destroying the career of their own CEO due to the screeching and caterwauling of the Left -- unless a clear and unmistakable message is sent -- Leftists in general and gay rights activists in particular will become more emboldened than they already are, and any who do not hold their views will be subject to being destroyed.

This has got to stop immediately, and that is why *I am urging a boycott of the Firefox browser*. I myself will not use the product again in my lifetime unless and until Mozilla does an about-face (something I'm not holding my breath on.)

America has just become a more inhumane, intolerant, and weaker republic, and we have the Left to thank.

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

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

It will be my distinct privilege to be the featured speaker at the Rotary Club of Santa Monica tomorrow.

The luncheon event will take place in Pacific Palisades and will feature lively and informative content around the personalities, politics, family life, and accomplishments of Six Great Men who stand as towering figures in the founding of our republic.

Executives and other leaders who have attended previous events where I have spoken have been uniform in their praise.



F. Fernández wrote:

*Your presentation was well received by our members. The extensive research you have done to discover the individual characteristics as well as the idiosyncrasies of each of these important leaders brought about a better understanding of the dynamics of that era that led to the establishment of our government. At the conclusion of your presentation, I can say that our members were very enthusiastic of your remarks. Moreover, numerous members came to me after our meeting to expressly request that I ask you to return as a speaker.*

And C. Freeman had this to say:

*Your presentation generated many questions. Your knowledge and personal insight into history and specifically our early Presidents and leaders is evident. Your easy conversational and interactive style kept our members engaged. Thank you for humanizing our founding leaders.*

If your organization could benefit from an engaging look at our Founding Fathers such as Jefferson, Washington, Franklin, and Hamilton, drop me a line.

## From Ara's Journal

### Eyes Wide Shut

Our eyes reveal to us a great deal. These marvelous organs enable us to perceive so much - color, distance, shapes, people, beauty, danger. So many of us claim to be "visual" learners.



Our eyes also have some very unique properties in terms of our own consciousness and our connectivity to others. If you doubt



that, try to notice the unusual sensation that often takes place when looking deeply into another person's eyes while they are simultaneously looking deeply into yours. The phenomenon is palpable and unusual, and even uncomfortable to some. Eyes looking at most things does not produce the same sensations as eyes gazing into other eyes tends to produce.

Here is a curious observation: what about times when we deliberately close our eyes?

We close our eyes (or squint) when our retinas are flooded with too much light or glare, usually from the sun (hopefully not from the spotlight used by investigators during a police interrogation.) There are times when we close our eyes in an effort to concentrate - as when we are trying to recall something that has momentarily slipped from our memory. Sometimes we close our eyes out of sheer frustration, as when we are annoyed by being badgered or nagged by someone, presumably because closing our eyes gives us a momentary escape hatch, and repose from the onslaught of whatever stress it is we are seeking relief from.

When two lovers are kissing passionately, their eyes tend to be closed. In fact, one would consider it peculiar if, in such moments of raw passion, one or both people involved had their eyes wide open.

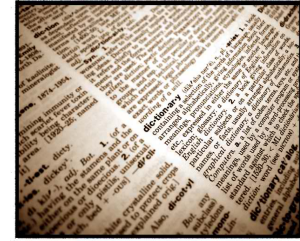
When a person is deep in prayer, the tendency is to close one's eyes. Why? Why do we deliberately shut our eyes during prayer?

I suspect that while kissing and prayer do not seem to have much in common, they both call forth a desire to shut out all other distractions in the attempt at attaining oneness and deep intimacy - with our lover, or with God. It is a seeming paradox that our eyes, which enable us to perceive so much, actually seem to hinder focused perception in our quest for the deepest levels of intimacy with the soul of another being or Being.

When we close our eyes for the final time as we depart this sphere of existence, hopefully those very organs will have taught us wisdom, experience, perspective, and have enabled us to see and understand our life's purpose. . . .

# Flummoxed

## Building Your Power of Expression



**Flummoxed**, adj., v.

**Pronunciation:** 'fləməkst

**Meaning:** Any time you find yourself flummoxed, you are essentially tongue-tied, or bewildered, or perplexed.

### Usage:

- *He had no response; he was completely flummoxed by the question.*
- *Let them perform and they do just fine, but ask them how they do it and they're suddenly flummoxed.*
- *The professor's surprise went beyond being dazzled; he was literally flummoxed at this student's abilities.*

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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](mailto: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](http://www.aranorwood.com)

**Sincerely,**

Ara Norwood  
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