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Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Issue: # 078

July 31, 2014

Greetings!

I'm well aware you just received your previous issue of Uncommon Sense a mere four days ago. But you know what they say: *"Out of sight, out of mind."*

Truthfully, I am sending this issue out to keep up with my commitment to get out two issues each month, and the previous issue was quite late.

But there is value in every issue and for you and others who actually take the time to read what I have to say, I suspect it doesn't harm you and very likely does provide perspective.

OK, let's get started.

Warm regards,

Ara Norwood



Self-Development

Smart vs. Wise

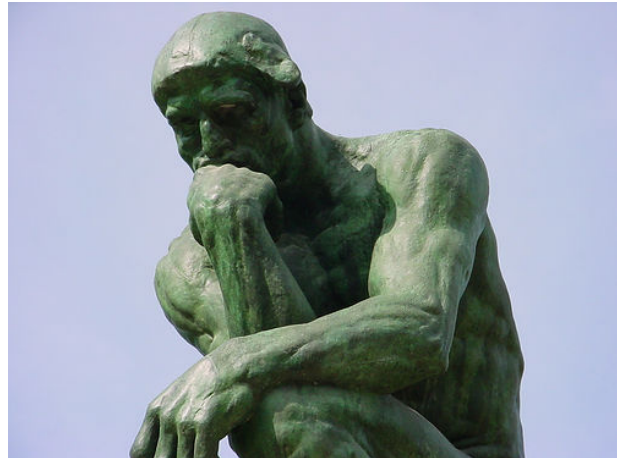
I was recently attending a senior leadership meeting for an organization I work with. As a part of the agenda for that meeting, a VP was assigned to discuss a leadership principle. He brought up a book he was reading that dealt with the issue of how to move from being a smart leader to being a wise leader.

Although there were about a dozen of us in the board room at the time, I was surprised when, after he made his opening comments, he said, "I'd like to turn to Ara and get his thoughts on these ideas. . ."

Here are my thoughts:

What does it mean, fundamentally, to be *smart*? And what does it mean to be *wise*? I'm not sure I know for certain, and I have yet to meet someone who can deliver a cogent answer to such questions.

Is being smart the same as *knowing* things? Or knowing a great many things? If so, does that mean a person who consistently wins at game shows like *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?*, or *Jeopardy* is smart? Or is being smart knowing certain kinds of things -- higher level things?



The same questions concern wisdom. What is it at its essence? I am familiar with the textbook definitions which opine that wisdom is the proper application of knowledge. And I do not have a problem with that. But is that it? Nothing more?

Of course, the deeper questions concern how leaders acquire becoming smart and wise.

Finally, I offer this: I find the notion of a leader being wise to be potentially misleading. I suspect most leaders (and most of the rest of us for that matter) have performed with wisdom at specific moments in time. But does that fact render us wise in a general sense?

So the real question is: How do we truly *become* smart or wise so that such attributes are a permanent part of us?

I would be very interested in hearing the thoughts of my readership on that one.

The Elephant In The Room **"I'm Offended"**

Pardon the rant, but. . .

I recently delivered a full-day seminar to a group of professionals who work for the same organization. The topic was Effective Management and Coaching. Early on in the seminar I had everyone introduce themselves by stating their name, their job, their tenure, and, for an ice-breaker, I asked them to share something about themselves that most people do not know about them. To keep it light-hearted, and as a point of humor, I rambunctiously said, "Now folks, keep it clean. Nothing R-Rated. In other words, if you are a closet cross-dresser at night, perhaps you ought not to lead with that just yet!" It was said totally humorously, and most everyone got a good chuckle. It lightened up the room.

Afterwards, a colleague approached me and chided me for having made the "cross-dressing" comment. Although this colleague wasn't personally offended by it, she felt that others could be, and warned me not to say it again. To do a reality check, I visited the Human Resources Manager (who is a big fan of mine), told her everything, and asked her if she

concurred with my colleague who had chided me. She did concur. She explained:

"Even though you were being humorous, and even though the audience found



your comment funny, if even one person were to be offended because they themselves are cross-dressers, or

they themselves are sympathetic to other cross-dressers, if they told me they were offended, I would have to call you in and have a discussion with you, absurd as that sounds."

It *is* absurd.

She went on to say, "Cross-dressers are now a protected class. No one is legally allowed to say anything that might possibly offend a cross-dresser for being a cross-dresser. It's the law."

So in other words, we must either be absolute in our silence and non-reaction to the notion of cross-dressing, or we must say supportive things about it. Saying anything derogatory about cross-dressers is simply forbidden by law in the workplace.

How did we come to such a point in life?

And will it end there? Or will the day come that we will have to be silent (or supportive) of pedophilia, bestiality, necrophilia, objectophilia, or other weird, sordid fetishes? ***Is avoiding offending anyone and everyone regardless of how perverted they become really the thing that should govern how we conduct ourselves?***

OK, let's move to a seemingly unrelated topic.

I recently read in [the news](#) that the state of Washington is in the midst of a controversy, brought about by the secular Left (who else?) as to whether the state's Pierce County Council chambers should have our national motto "In God We Trust" on a plaque. Why is this even a question? Because a Leftwing Democrat named Connie Ladenberg, who sits on that council, believes we should not be "talking about religion in government." (Is the plaque containing our national motto somehow causing people to talk about religion? And is religion in general really a forbidden topic?)

Equally moronic is Rick Talbert, another Leftwing Democrat council member, who claims that he felt the statement "wasn't inclusive." Well what *is* inclusive? Atheist slogans?

Joining in the rabble-rousing was Sam Mulvey, who chairs a secular (anti-Christian) movement called Humanists of Washington. Mulvey uttered this drivel: "It's not inclusive. It would be a clear sign to me that Pierce County does not care about me and does not care about the people who think as I do." Is Mr. Mulvey really in possession of a value system that has him waking up each morning wondering whether a *county* cares about him?

He's offended.

And because he is offended, Pierce County should relinquish their desires to have our national motto "In God We Trust" on a plaque.

Well, now I'm offended. I'm offended at secular stupidity and Leftist lunacy.

Do these people not know that every coin they carry and every single sheet of currency they have in their wallets has the motto "In God We Trust" on it? Are they prepared to be consistent and no longer possess any coins and currency because it offends their Leftist sensibilities? Or, if they try to be clever and counter with "Well, we just don't want the motto on government property" (even though the motto found its birth in our government) are they prepared to bar any and all money -- coin and currency -- from being on the premises of their sacred, er, secular government property? Are they prepared to take their position to the logical (actually, illogical) conclusion?

Does Mulvey (and others like him) not stop to consider that if the council decides to acquiesce to his wishes and banish our national motto to the nether regions, that others who actually believe in patriotism will be offended? Does Mulvey (and others like him) truly have the shallowness of mind to presume that because a member of that County's Council trusts in God, that that same member has desires

to ostracize Mulvey because he does not trust in God? Is Mulvey (and others like him) merely a simpleton, or truly a narcissist?

I will say this: if the plaque comes down and the National Motto goes the way of the dinosaur, it won't be the fault of the Left. It will be the fault of normative, conservative Americans who simply did not have the courage, the strength, or the will to decisively confront the Leftist madness they face.

We get what we deserve.

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

Shameless Plug

Norwood to Speak in Newport Beach, Chicago

I am looking forward to delivering a two-day workshop to a group of straight-commission sales professionals on August 4th and 5th in Newport Beach.

Newport Beach is one of my favorite communities and so I'll feel right at home there.

Plus, straight-commission sales reps are a tough, hardened, no-



nonsense crowd, and I enjoy the challenge they represent. They don't accept fluff and platitudes, so I have to bring my A-Game (not that I ever opt for my B-Game.)

I'll be delivering the same program to a different audience in Chicago a few weeks later, so I'm gearing up for that as well. Chicago remains a wonderful town (in spite of its

reputation as the murder capital of the world.) Great food and great sites mark two of the many reasons I enjoy America's third largest city.

Wish me luck!

From Ara's Journal

On Loneliness

I will be speaking to a group of men and women soon, all of whom will be over the age of 30, and all of whom will be single. Many of them were probably married at some time in their past and either their spouse died or they divorced. Some of them have probably never been married. Along with a trusted and valued colleague, I'll be discussing the theme "Navigating the Storms of Life."



I suspect one of those storms for this audience is loneliness.

Loneliness is a peculiar thorn. It's a curiosity because anyone can suffer from it, even while surrounded by, and interacting with, all sorts of people.

Many of our associations are superficial. Many are based on expediency. Many are obligatory. One can feel very alone even if there are frequent interactions. Why is that?

I suspect it has something to do with the very human need we have for intimacy.

My hunch is that all normal people have a desire for some form of intimacy. The intimacy can be physical, as the intimacy involved with a hug. Hugs can be very comforting under the right circumstances. When a person physically embraces and wraps his/her arms around another person and holds them so that the two bodies are close together, that act says "It's OK. I care about you. I revere your humanness. You belong." There need not be any sort of sexual connotation in a hug.

The intimacy can also be non-physical. When you build a great deal of trust with another person, and that person likes you and respects you and enjoys your company and honors your confidences, . . . there can be enormous intimacy exchanged in such situations. Just knowing that

someone is there who authentically likes you and is interested in you as a person (and the feelings are mutual) is a gift that thwarts the pangs of loneliness. It's hard to be lonely when you can be open and can share without fear of reprisal.

I happen to know a lot of married women who are lonely. Their husbands don't seem to treasure them. It hurts. Deeply. I know some men (men are less likely to share such feelings) who are also married, but are lonely, as they do not believe their wives are interested in them apart from the money they bring home. That hurts also.

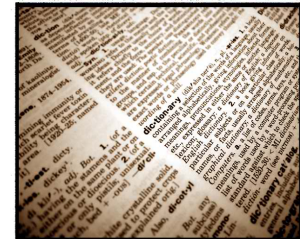
With so many people all around us experiencing the sensation we call loneliness, it's a wonder we somehow fail to perceive the very real loneliness in those around us. Thus, it would not be all that difficult to be a person who is open, and inviting, and caring, and welcoming. If we started projecting that persona - and not merely projecting it, but actually becoming it - we could cause much loneliness in this world to evaporate.

Intimacy is the anecdote to loneliness.

The World of Words

Circumspect

Building Your Power of Expression



Circumspect, adj.

Pronunciation: 'sərkəm,spɛkt

Meaning: To be circumspect is to be careful, thoughtful, risk-averse, and to err on the side of caution. A person who is cautiously mindful and deliberate in his words, measuring them very carefully, could be said to be circumspect.

Usage:

- *Although he made an appearance at the press conference, and even took the mic, his answers suggested he was being very circumspect.*
- *Instead of being so erratic and explosive, like a bull in a china shop, I would urge you try to be a bit more circumspect in your demeanor going forward.*

- *Could there be a better illustration of why real scientists are so circumspect about such claims?*

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