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Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

In This Issue

[On Openings](#)
[LGBT Adds a Letter](#)
[On Pornography](#)
[Add Posit to your Vocabulary](#)

Quick Links

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

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Issue: # 079

August 24, 2014

Greetings!

Life is full of surprises. Just a few days ago I was involved in a collision with an 18-year-old man who was driving an expensive BMW. He was with 3 of his peers and probably in his father's car. Witnesses said he was driving at dangerously high speeds in a parking lot. He was coming at me from my right, at a 90-degree angle before pulling out in front of me,

attempting to make a left turn to go the opposite direction I was driving. The damage caused by our collision rendered my car a total loss, and probably his as well. Fortunately, no one was hurt. At least, not physically.

I am hurt financially from the incident, as all my cars were paid for. The amount the insurance company is awarding me is less than half of what I paid for the car when I bought it outright with no financing 3 years ago.

So, I now have a new car (the good news) and a car payment (the not-so-good news). That's life. You learn to roll with it.

And I hope you are ready to rock-and-roll with the content in this, my 79th issue of *Uncommon Sense*. There's some important messages here designed to rock your world, so put on your own seatbelt.

OK, let's get started.

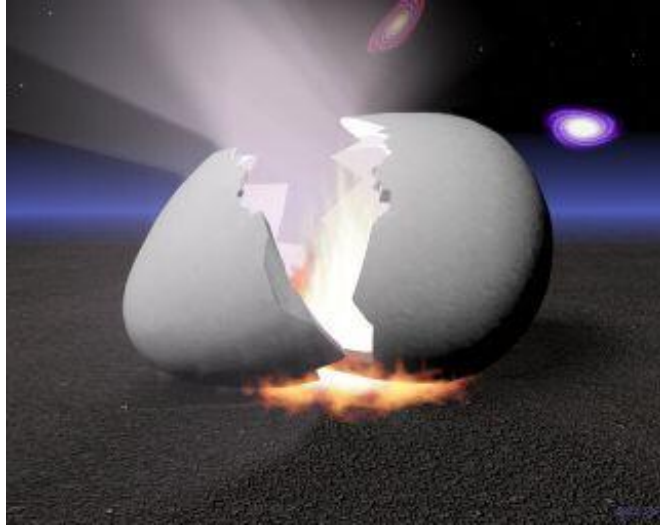
Warm regards,



Self-Development

On Openings

The next time you are prepping for a speech or similar presentation, make sure you give extra attention to how you open the event. Openings are, without a doubt, one of the most important aspects of a speech or other presentation (i.e., product demo, workshop, coaching session, etc.)



Openings are hooks that capture the attention of your audience and causes them to stay with you for the duration of your remarks. They represent the "In the beginning" statement of your remarks.

There are a myriad of approaches to delivering a compelling opening. Consider these three:

First, you could open with a quotation. The quote could be famous, or humorous, or profound. Famous examples abound:

- "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." (John F. Kennedy)
- "You miss 100% of the shots you don't take."
(Wayne Gretzkey)
- "An unexamined life is not worth living." (Socrates)
- "We didn't lose the game; we just ran out of time."
(Vince Lombardi)
- "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." (Anonymous)
- "Things which matter most must never be at the mercy of things which matter least." (Goethe)

And while the quotes selected usually express ideals the speaker believes in, the quotes don't necessarily have to. You could be provocative and open with a quote then proceed to deconstruct it and show why you don't agree with the ideas being espoused.

Second, you could open with a profound question. The question could be posed to the audience at large to get them thinking. In fact, you could open with a series of questions that are designed to get their involvement by raising their hands. Joel Weldon, a professional speaker out of Scottsdale, Arizona used this brilliantly in a speech he gave to the National Speakers Association. His speech was titled "Elephants don't Bite" and was about all the little things that professional speakers wrestle with when trying to pull off a great speech. He began as follows:

How many of you have ever been bitten by a mosquito? How many of you have ever been bitten by a spider? How many of you have been bitten by a 'no-see-'em' - meaning you feel the bite, but you don't see anything? [Members of the audience raised their hands after each question.] How many of you have ever been bitten by an elephant? [No one raised their hand.] That's my point: elephants don't bite. It's the little things that get you!

Utterly brilliant opening.

As a corollary to the above, you can even go so far as to begin a presentation by putting a question directly to a specific member of the audience. The question should be simple enough so that the person won't be incapable of answering it (so don't ask what the square root of 455 is.) This opening will involve the audience at large because they feel that what you do to one audience member you do to all. You could address a person and ask, "When you think of Michael Jordan, what is the one word that comes to mind?" Or, "Who is the first person you would call if you won the lotto?" Whatever their response is, you can find an intelligent way to segue into your opening remarks and make a key point.

Third, the first word out of your mouth could be a figure of some type - a number, a dollar figure, a percentage. It could represent a cold, stark statistic. For example, you could open your speech by saying: "17%!" (The 17%

refers to an issue that is the theme of your message).

There are many, many other ways to open a speech. I'll share some more ideas in future issues of *Uncommon Sense*.

The Elephant In The Room LGBT Adds a Letter

I find it fascinating to peer into the mindset of the American Left.

Their thinking is so foreign to my own, and so foreign to American ideals.

One of the most recent examples of clear-cut, unambiguous Leftism, was published last month in Slate, a general interest online publication. It was an assessment of Hillary Clinton and why the writer believes she is not pro-gay enough, authored by Mark Joseph Stern, who is. You can read it by [clicking here](#).

Reading this brief, 5-paragraph claptrap that masquerades as journalism, one gets treated to a tour of how the Left thinks about things and how the Left processes the world around them.

Almost every sentence is instructive, starting with the first: "Hillary Clinton's LGBTQ supporters desperately want her to be a gay rights icon -- or at least a staunch advocate for the community."

Notice right off the expansion of the traditional designation for the Left's favorite minority -- LGBT. That protected and revered class has grown from

four distinct entities to five. So it's now LGBTQ. I suspect the Q stands for "Queer" (an apt designation) though I must confess I am not up to speed on how a person who is "Queer" is distinct from a person who is "Gay" or "Transgender." One can presume, however, that this development now means that, along with the rainbow and the term "gay" -- the vast majority of normal Americans will likely have to distance themselves from the term, lest



they be mistaken for a member of this august club and receive a congratulatory call from the President of the United States.

The article goes on, dripping with chutzpah, about how Hillary Clinton needs to seek forgiveness from the LGBTQ crowd for not being pro-gay enough. The author actually imagines that Hillary has betrayed her trust -- after all, since she's not a conservative, she owes the LGBTQ much support. It just goes with the territory. If you're not a conservative, you are obligated to view:

- men kissing other men as a beautiful thing
- women marrying other women as something noble
- men who insist they are women and therefore need to use the same bathrooms as the ladies as progressive

and if you don't, there is something wrong with you.

In the mind of the author, Hillary Clinton owes the homosexuals of this country a huge apology.

The article reveals an unquestioned assumption, an innate paradigm of the Leftist activists which is that not only should all conservatives be vanquished, but all non-conservatives should be Leftists and therefore have a duty to give unreserved support for bi-sexuality, transgender confusion, gay behavior, and lesbian ideals. Oh, and "queer" proclivities, whatever those turn out to be. Given that Leftists have succeeded in brainwashing the current occupant of the White House into adopting their radicalized agenda (President Obama was opposed to same-sex marriage until recently) it will be fascinating to see if the forces of Leftism will succeed in bringing Hillary to her knees and cry "uncle", thus squeezing the required pandering out of her as she nears campaign season.

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

From Ara's Journal

On Pornography

I have often told my business students that, as a consultant, I would never accept a project from Playboy Enterprises, no matter what the fee consisted of. I explained that my agreeing to help an organization whose values are so at odds with my own would be the supreme act of incongruence on my part.



So why do I have it in for pornography? Here are several reasons:

First, pornography is intrusive. It takes something that was always meant to be extremely private and makes it public. When you take something meant to be, by its very nature, private, and blast it out there for all to see, you've done something very perverse; you've done violence to the social order. Thus, I consider pornography evil.

Second, pornography is a distraction. It fills the mind of the viewer with images that cause one to lose perspective on all of the other things going on around him (or her) and often leads to addiction. Other things that are needful take a back seat to its influence. It becomes an obsession, and its patrons often compromise their power to make rational decisions, reminiscent of one who is addicted to drugs.

Third, pornography is fraudulent. Those who view it are sold a bill of goods. They forget that the people in pornographic films are actors. This is not who they really are. As porn star Nina Hartley revealed in an interview: "Watching porn to learn how to have sex is like watching Vin Diesel movies to learn how to drive. I'm paid to give this performance. It's not [what I do] at home." Thus, people who watch this filth (men in particular) are treated to a charade that doesn't reflect normalcy. Then when they try to replicate such antics, they shock their partner who feels betrayed, confused, and often abused. No one comes out of this unscathed.

Fourth, pornography usually erodes a person's ability to have a meaningful connection to their partner. This is because the person is more fixated on fantasies brought about by pornography than they are on the realities associated with an actual relationship. According to psychiatrist Norman Doidge, author of *The Brain that Changes Itself*, pornography often causes the brain to literally rewire itself by altering the neural pathways that had previously allowed them to be attracted to their

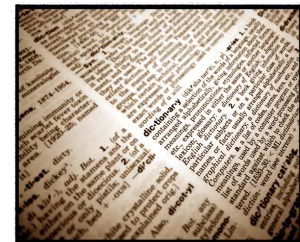
partners.

Finally, pornography is the sex "act" absent the intimacy that should be part and parcel with sexuality. When a man and a woman in a committed relationship (ideally marriage) experience sex, they are experiencing something that is deeply meaningful and inherently bonding. It's not a stretch to label such bonding as sacred. And it is during those sacred moments that two things are taking place. One of them is the biological sex act itself. But the other is that two souls are exposing themselves in every way possible - are being completely open, vulnerable, trusting, giving, and reaching levels of intimacy that are among the most sacred expressions a man and woman can experience with one another. Pornography robs people of that intimacy, of that specialness, leaving only the biological act. Pornography's stigma rests on the fact that it takes the crowning event of *oneness* and robs it of its singularity. Human intimacy thus becomes a mere shell of what it could be.

The World of Words

Posit

Building Your Power of Expression



Posit, v.

Pronunciation: 'pāzīt

Meaning: To posit something is to assume something as factual. When you posit something, you put it forward as a basis of argument, you make an assumption, you maintain a premise.

Usage:

- *The Confucian view posits a perfectible human nature.*
- *He posited that the world economy is a system with its own particular equilibrium.*
- *You are too complex and given to riddles; please posit your ideas in a way that we can comprehend them immediately.*

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
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