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# Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Issue: # 087

January 12, 2015

## Greetings!

Truthfully, it was a tough, gritty year for me last year. With the loss of my mother-in-law, and being taxed with some profoundly important projects that were deadline driven, I was simply unable to produce this publication in December.

But I am pleased to have survived the year.

While a number of unfortunate things took place, many wonderful things happened as well, and I do feel richly blessed. What's more, I do foresee (and hope for) a more pleasant year in 2015.

And I can wish for you nothing but success and happiness in 2015 as well.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood



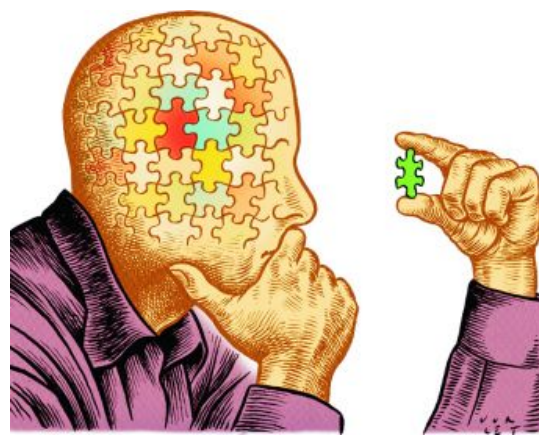
## Self-Development

### Critical Thinking

When I was a freshman in college, while sitting in a basic Communications course, I read a clever-sounding line in the textbook that went like this: "One cannot not communicate." I was struck by the comment and, naively believing it to be a profound truth, repeated it to others a few times to show how learned I was.

I was not alone.

Many college students have read the line, which came out of an academic study from the late 1960s, and have gullibly assumed it was true.



Only it's not.

Mind you, I don't really care one way or another about the minutiae of the arguments for or against this academic question, as it simply doesn't interest me as other questions do.

But I am struck by the notion that so many people read something, like the claim that one cannot not communicate, and walk away having accepted it uncritically, without further reflection. After all, it was in a textbook. So it must be true.

People need to understand that textbooks are an author's attempt to explain something. Certainly there are some statements in textbooks that are iron-clad truth and indisputable. But there are other "truths" found therein that are actually quite disputable. Further, some statements found in textbooks are based on shaky premises, while other statements are flat out erroneous.

I came across a colleague recently who I have heard state during seminars he was delivering the offending line, that one cannot not communicate. He has swallowed the Kool-Aid, likely having read the same trite phrase in his own Freshman Communications course a decade ago. But as R. Wayne Pace (and others) [has demonstrated](#), communication consists of two components, one of them being **message displays** (which consists of any and all behavior we display, including our words and actions, extending even to the clothing we wear). And it is true that a person cannot avoid displaying messages, or behaving. But communication has another element to it: **interpretation**. And that is something that is either done (accurately or inaccurately) - or not done - by another person. When it is not done at all, there is no communication.

My bottom line advice to you: Don't just blindly believe things you read, and then run around spouting off various clever-sounding slogans as though you are an evangelist of truth. Sometimes you'll be right, but other times you'll come off looking amateurish. Instead, when you come across a theoretical statement such as "one cannot not communicate," dig a little deeper to see if other voices in the great conversation on such topics have weighed in. If they have, get to know what they have to say on the matter. See what light can be shed. Develop a fuller, more complete profile, the pros and cons, of a given issue.

Doing so will make you much more informed, and much more valuable.

## The Elephant in the Room The Left and Islamic Terror

The world witnessed real evil this past week - as well as abject foolishness.

The evil involved Islamic Terrorists committing cold-blooded murder in the streets of Paris in the name of their religion. The foolishness involved the useful idiots known as Leftists claiming that Islam has nothing whatsoever to do with the carnage.



Howard Dean was at one time a Democratic candidate for President of the United States, running in the 2004 election. He was forced to bow out of the race when, at a campaign speech in January 2004, Dean let loose with a primal scream that many considered un-presidential, and downright peculiar. But how did the Leftists who now run the Democratic party reward such aberrant behavior? They made him the Chair of the Democratic Party a year later.

Dean had [this to say](#) about the Muslim murder spree in Paris this past week: "I stopped calling these people Muslim terrorists. They're about as Muslim as I am."

Likewise, French President Francois Hollande, in the aftermath of the shootings, inexplicably tried to put distance between the terrorists and their Muslim religious beliefs, [claiming](#) the terrorists "have nothing to do with the Muslim religion."

Nothing? Zero? Nada? Ziltch?

Let's see: when they attend religious services, they do so in an Islamic

Mosque. If asked what their religion is, they would say, without hesitation, Muslim. If asked for the name of the religious



leader they feel devoted to, they would answer, The Prophet Mohammed. If asked what holy book they revere, they would answer, The Quran. When they fired their weapons at their victims, they shouted "Allahu akbar," something only uttered in Islamic circles.

Here's a question: What is it about the Leftist mind that instinctively causes them to try to mask the religious convictions of those who commit mass murder? It's the most curious phenomenon I think I have encountered to date. Leftists are not innately pro-Islam. In fact, Leftists generally have antipathy towards religion in general, preferring godless secularism. So why the need to lie about Islam? Why the collusion? Why the need to obfuscate? Is there something about Islam that draws upon their allegiances? Or do they think in terms of "The enemy of my enemy is my friend?" (Of course, the problem with that latter question is that all of the victims were themselves Leftists.) I'm left scratching my head. . .

One of the motives seems to be a concern that if we acknowledge the fact - and it is a fact - that the terrorists are Muslim then that will unfairly characterize all Muslims as terrorists. But are Leftists really that inept? Are they truly incapable of understanding that the Paris tragedy shows that all terrorists involved are Muslim but not all Muslims are terrorists? They really are unable to process something so rudimentary?

I've noticed the news media (including conservative news media) has recently picked up on this question and have begun asking their pundits if it really matters whether one accurately identifies ones enemies. In other words, Does it really matter if one accurately identifies a Muslim terrorist as Muslim? The answers that have been bandied about are somewhat incoherent, but I have an answer. I will offer that answer in the next issue of *Uncommon Sense*.

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

## **Shameless Plug**

### **Coaching Content Fresh off the Press**

I have just completed the first drafts of two ground-breaking programs on the topic of business coaching, one focusing on Sales Managers and the other focusing on non-customer-facing personnel.

I deeply enjoy creating new content. And I must say that both of these courses represent my very best work to date. I am excited about the prospects of marketing these programs soon. Both are full-day seminars and both are guaranteed to empower your people to attain quantum leaps in producing results.

If your organization has a need for developing internal coaches to boost productivity, reach out to me. You will be very pleased at the outcomes.



## **From Ara's Journal**

### **The World of the Truly Weird**



A 48-year-old woman in England ended a 7-year relationship with her boyfriend recently.



Nothing noteworthy about that. But what she did instead was tie the knot, with not one, but two, males. She is practicing polyandry.

Oh wait. Not technically. Polyandry is a form of polygyny (plural marriage) where one woman has more than one male spouse. But given that we live in the age of . . . the weird, strange, bizarre, and just plain nutty, this woman's male husbands are both felines. (Is that too feminine a word?)

I'm actually quite surprised this woman didn't take up female cats, given her antipathy towards men. And what did her ex- do to cause her to go off the deep end? I wonder how he feels, knowing she is now deep into a relationship with a couple of cats. I can only hope he was the one who ended things - and I'll bet the house he did. People do not become this bizarre overnight.

And she is committed. She had their names tattooed on her thigh. And even the names reveal something about her mind: Lugosi and Spider. That pretty much tells it all.

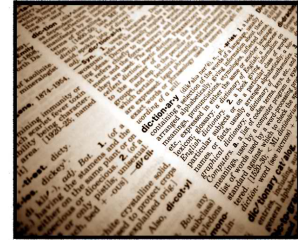
Oh, and she has a marriage certificate she got from an online group that provides them to people who choose to marry their pets. So it appears her sick and depraved idea is not unique to her.

I wonder if she's open to marrying other pets that are not cats. Might she be attracted to Tasmanian Devils? How about Wolverines? Kimono Dragons?

[The story](#) claims all three went off to a honeymoon in Lanzarote (look it up), so . . . did she in some way, . . . never mind. I'll stop.

## Garner

### Building Your Power of Expression



### Garner

v.

**Pronunciation:** 'gärnər

**Meaning:** To garner something is to collect it or gather it. It often has usage with respect to intangibles such as information, or approval, or esteem.

### Usage:

- *The police struggled to garner sufficient evidence to issue an arrest warrant.*
- *Go back and re-read the treatise, garnering more information this time around.*
- *I believe I have garnered enough approval from my constituency to justify another round of fund raising letters.*

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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  
Leadership Development Systems