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Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Greetings!

There is a clear path to leadership. And I share it with you in this issue of *Uncommon Sense*.

Also, an important look at Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, one of the truly courageous leaders alive today. How do I know that? I take my cue from the students at UC

Berkeley and then do the opposite. A fellow recently conducted an experiment on the campus there. He spent a few hours waving the ISIS flag and got absolutely no negative comments from any of the students. Then he began waving the Israeli flag and was immediately hounded, harassed, and vilified. See for yourself by [clicking here](#). The students at UC Berkeley consider Israel a loathsome country, but have no real problems with ISIS, an organization that literally crucifies little children, buries people alive, and burns prisoners alive in cages. So it's a safe bet that Israeli's PM is a pretty solid guy.

There's more in this issue of *Uncommon Sense* that should be of value to you.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood



[Self-Development](#)

Study Time

There are countless opportunities to better ourselves. As this column is dedicated to self-development I want to share a few basic thoughts about on-going development.

I make presentations for a living. Whether in a college classroom, a corporate boardroom, or a hotel ballroom, I find myself in front of people who have come before me to learn something, or be inspired, or be entertained. As such, I find that mastering the tools of the trade is essential to my success.

What tools? Oftentimes, it involves software, such as PowerPoint. It's one thing to figure out how to put together a reasonably good presentation on PowerPoint, but another thing to go deeper and learn new aspects of PowerPoint to further enhance the professionalism of your presentation.

For example, let's say you figure out the basics, such as not putting too much data on your slides, not putting the exact words you will be saying to the audience, proper use of animation, proper use of transitions, correct and consistent color schemes, and the like.

Great. That's progress. But notice I haven't said anything about putting video clips into the slides. There's a whole new set of competencies a person would have to master. And that would take time and practice to get that additional skill down.

Fine, once embedding video clips is mastered, you might think you've arrived. But no, you now might want to learn a whole new software, such as Keynote, which is the Mac equivalent of PowerPoint. Or you might want to learn Prezi, which is an entirely different kind of presentation software. Once you master Prezi, you might want to branch out into even more sophisticated areas of design and presentation, such as Canva. And the list goes on and on.

A person in my position who is trying to learn and master

such tools may think that once Canva is mastered, there is nothing left to tackle. Not so. New programs will come out and in order to not be obsolete, I will have to wade into those waters.

So learning never ends. I will always be a perennial student, delving into areas that are not comfortable to me, but which need to be mastered.

The same is true for you. If you want to remain relevant in the market place, you have to consistently tackle a new area of learning.

And once it's behind you, it's time to start again learning something new, bridging the gap between competence and irrelevance.



All great leaders do this. That's how they become omni-competent over time.

Build an awareness - now - of your next area of learning, and go for it. Carve out a portion of your daily calendar for Study Time.

Do it, and you will find that people will look to you for leadership and direction.

The Elephant in the Room

The Leftist Mind: Reflections on Netanyahu's Speech to Congress

The Prime Minister of Israel addressed the U.S. Congress recently. In fact, he is only the second non-citizen to have the honor of doing so three times (matching Winston Churchill's record.) I see much in common between Churchill, a man I deeply admire, and Netanyahu, a man I also deeply admire, and have for over 20 years.

But the occasion of this speech, which is about matters of enormous import, has been instructive in that it has



demonstrated very clearly some of the key differences between the American way of thinking (a paradigm supported by today's conservatives) and the American Left who possess a very different mindset.

But first, I wish to lay out a profile of Israel and also Iran, which was the subject of Mr. Netanyahu's speech to congress.

The nation of Israel was formally established shortly after the close of World War II and was partly done out of a sense of obligation that certain nations, led by the United States, felt toward the Jewish people who had just undergone the horrors of a holocaust at the hands of a lunatic by the name of Adolf Hitler. In establishing the nation of Israel in modern times, what actually happened was that Israel was being re-established to land it once occupied anciently.

Since that time, Israel has established itself as a responsible and virtuous nation, involved in productivity and innovation that is staggering to consider given its size. Voice mail technology, the cell phone, and the Pentium-4 Microprocessor are among its contributions to technology. They have the highest per capita standard of living in the Middle East and even surpass that of the United Kingdom. They have more museums per capita than any other country on earth. Israel leads the world in the number of scientists and technicians in the workforce - almost twice that of the United States. They were the first to develop an anti-virus software package for computers. They launched what became the world's largest generic pharmaceutical company. They launched a company that is now the global leader in VPN and firewall technologies. They launched a company that developed a technology designed to protect

civilian aircraft from a missile attack. I could go on, but it's safe to say that Israel is a decent country that produces good things for this world.

Iran, on the other hand, is the largest state sponsor of terrorism. Iran supports terrorist groups such as Al

Qaeda. Iran held American hostages for 444 days in the late 1970s. Iran refers to America as "The Great Satan." Iran has vowed to destroy the



nation of Israel, and Iran's leaders won't rest until every single Jew on the planet is extinct.

Oh, and one other minor thing that I should perhaps mention: Iran is actively working on obtaining nuclear weapons.

And we have a sitting United States President, a man of the Left, whose actions suggest he is not all that enthralled with Israel and certainly not with its Prime Minister. We have a president who is currently attempting to work out a "deal" with this rogue nation, Iran, that will supposedly end their quest for nuclear weapons and keep Israel safe.

Iran will say anything to prevent the United States from taking military action against them, but they will not do what they promise they will do. They will lie and deceive. And they believe they can "play" this president.

Iran's leaders have an overarching goal: the utter destruction of Israel, and they believe they can accomplish this goal through use of nuclear weapons.

There is no possibility that a peaceful and civil resolution that can take place between Israel and Iran - no sort of

arbitration, no meaningful mediation, no rational negotiation. This is because Israel's position could be stated as follows:

We just want to be able to live in peace and pursue our national interests as we have for over 50 years.

Conversely, Iran's position is:

We want to utterly destroy Israel from off the face of the earth and murder every single Jew on the planet.

These are not positions that can be reconciled.

But back to the way the American Left viewed Mr. Netanyahu's speech:

- Not a single member of the Obama Administration attended the speech.
- The United States Secretary of State was out of the country meeting with an Iranian official and was on a first-name basis with him. This was an unmistakable gesture as to which country is favored by the current occupant of the White House.
- A number of Democrats boycotted Mr. Netanyahu's speech. No Republican did.
- **Nancy Pelosi**, who is about as radically Left-wing as is possible to be, said after the speech that she was near tears several times during the speech because she sees the speech as an insult to the intelligence of the American people. She thinks Israel has nothing to worry about and that the speech was unnecessary. The woman is simply childlike in her naïveté.
- California Representative **Jared Huffman** whined that "This is a prime minister who's never seen a war he didn't want our country to fight." The man is a buffoon, oblivious to the fact that given the dynamics between Iran and Israel, it may actually require military action to prevent the destruction of Israel.

- Democrat **John Yarmuth** of Kentucky said, "This speech was straight out of the Dick Cheney playbook. It was fear-mongering at its ultimate." Let me get this straight: The largest state sponsor of terrorism is on the cusp of acquiring nuclear weapons, claims openly that they want to obliterate Israel, and you say Israel's reaction is "fear-mongering?" The man is a complete clod. If Israel were to be razed as a country, Yarmuth would probably say, "Well, how could we possibly have seen that coming? And besides, Israel may well have brought this on themselves."

Every age seems to have its monstrous evil. 85 years ago, it was Naziism. Today, it's Islamic Totalitarianism, Islamic Jihad, or whatever label you prefer. And it is the uniquely peculiar attribute of the Left to resolutely refuse to fight evil, but to uniformly opt instead to fight those who fight evil.

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

Shameless Plug

Koreatown Speech a Success

My recent speech to the Rotary Club of Koreatown was a resounding success. I met a great group of very professional men and women who were uniformly polite and

supportive. I really enjoyed this audience, and many asked for my business card.



The speech painted an overview of six of the Founding

Fathers of the United States (Franklin, Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, and Hamilton) and covered a variety of topics, including their education, their careers outside of politics, where they lived, their family life, their

physical appearance, their personalities, and several other aspects of their lives. I particularly enjoyed the Q&A session.

I now have put the finishing touches on my next installment of content about the Six Great Men and have an entirely new presentation which covers:

- their relationship with their parents
- how they felt about women
- their intellectual acumen, and
- their views and experiences with respect to slavery

If you belong to an organization that might benefit from a riveting program on the Founders, please reach out to me.

From Ara's Journal Spiritual, Not Religious?

I recently had a chance encounter with a colleague whom I used to work with a few short years ago. It was a pleasure to get reacquainted with her and see how she was doing. We got to talking about business, politics, and somehow the topic of religion came up. It turns out she used to be an active member of The Church of Jesus



Christ of Latter-day Saints, my own faith tradition. I asked her why she was no longer involved in the Church. She told me that she didn't believe in any "Church," per se. In fact, she went on to say that she did not consider herself religious, but spiritual.

I've heard that claim many times in the past. Although I didn't press the issue with my colleague, as I could tell she wanted to move on to other topics, I've always wondered if people who claim they are spiritual, not religious, believe that the two words represent opposing ideologies. In other words, do such people believe that if you are religious you are not spiritual? And what, exactly, does it mean to be spiritual but not religious?

While I cannot be certain, I have a hunch that the claim to

being spiritual but not religious is code language for an ideal that does not believe in commitment, accountability, or structure. I suspect that many people, perhaps not my colleague, use that construct as a means to shield themselves from the demands of real discipline - spiritual discipline - which is where we get our word *disciple*. Being spiritual but not religious (whatever that may mean) is very likely a mask to hide behind so one need not make the necessary sacrifices required of one truly devoted to things of the Spirit. I see many who claim to be spiritual but not religious coming off as cafeteria disciples - selecting only those aspects of piety that seem convenient or comfortable to them, but opting out of partaking of the entire smorgasbord. Their spirituality is susceptible of becoming a god made in their own image, a graven image that is made for their own liking, but void of the totality of holiness that comes from the Source.

My own experience in observing others within my own faith community is that there are some who seem to develop their own depth of spirituality to increasingly greater degrees as they remain "religious" (i.e., active participants within a faith community.) People like EB, TH, MH, and CT all strike me as men and women of enormous spiritual depth, deep faith, and charitable disposition. I maintain that choosing to be spiritual or religious is not an either/or, but a both/and.

The World of Words

Slovenly

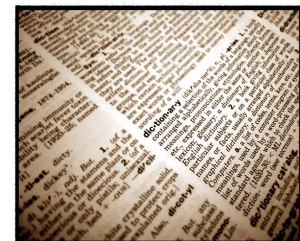
Building Your Power of Expression

Slovenly, adj.

Pronunciation: 'sləvənlē

Meaning: This descriptive word pertains to a person's appearance and means messy or unkempt or even dirty or unclean. It can also refer to characteristics or attributes of a person, such as their speech when it's careless or excessively casual, or the quality of their work when it's untidy or slipshod.

Usage:



- *I couldn't believe what he was wearing: blue jeans with holes in them; a sport coat that looked like it came from a dumpster; loafers with no socks; and to top it off, the lack of a belt brought together an ensemble that gave him a slovenly appearance.*
- *We have to break up: your lack of vocabulary, combined with your mannerisms, makes you far too slovenly to remain in my company.*
- *I was disappointed in the essay you turned in, as it was marred by pages not being numbered, inconsistent use of footnotes, margins all over the place, spelling mistakes everywhere, rendering your work slovenly, unprofessional, and ungradable.*

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