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Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Issue: # 094

April 30, 2015

Greetings!

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Do you know the best way to bend the odds in your favor when it comes to building a life of achievement and significance? I do, and I write about it below. Please read it, and then do it.

Further, while I once again address the problems I see in Leftism, this time I share a first-hand, personal story and reveal an observation I have about the permeating qualities of Leftism.

Finally, I offer a few thoughts on the importance of judgment and mercy.

Our readership continues to crest! The last issue that went out set another record. Thanks to all for your continued support.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood



Self-Development

The Potent Power of Decisions

When it comes to success and accomplishment, there are many factors that come into play, but I cannot overstate one of the most essential: the power of the decision.

It's the one factor that seems to trump all others when it comes to the impact it has on human achievement. It has more impact than other elements such as luck, or skill, or money.

Making a decision - a firm decision - to accomplish a certain task, is an incredibly powerful undertaking. Think about it. When you make a decision, you are engaging in an act of leadership of immense proportion. If you are being real, if you are being true to yourself, the act of making a decision is an act of finality in terms of your resolve. You will now marshal forth the resources of time,

money, materials, and people needed to bring about the objective. This is because we all want congruence. Thus, if we say we have made the firm and final decision to quit smoking cigarettes, or if we made the decision to work for a



certain organization, or if we made the decision to get married, or read a book, or install a dish washer, or lose 15 pounds, or learn to play the trumpet, invariably, we will set in motion those things that need to be done to bring our goal to fruition.

I learned this principle very early. When I was in 7th grade, I made a decision that I would obtain a radio license in about 5 years and become a disc jockey at a radio station in my community, KFJC-FM, which operated on the campus of Foothill College in Los Altos Hills, a community located about 32 miles south of San Francisco. The decision was made. And I did all of the things I had to do to bring that decision to reality. I had even decided my radio personality name and persona in the 7th grade, and launched that very name and persona just over 5 years later.

Likewise, near the end of my 8th grade year, I made a

decision to go to Sweden - alone. Once the decision was made, I knew I would need cash - lots of it - in order to pay for the round trip plane fare and all of my other expenses. So I got a job delivering newspapers. In fact, I knew I wouldn't make enough money with just one paper route, so I got a second route with a competitive newspaper. I delivered the San Jose News first, then I came back and started a second route, delivering the Palo Alto Times. And that summer, I was on a plane - alone - to Sweden where I spent several weeks. It was a breath-taking experience.

When I was a Junior in high school, on my last day of school, while standing among several thousand people at the graduation ceremonies, I heard a senior named Dave Cook give a speech which was so inspiring, it electrified me and probably most everyone who heard him. Dave was an amazing young man: he graduated with a perfect 4.0 Grade Point Average, he was a standout on the football and wrestling teams, he was the Boys State Representative, he was the Student Body President, he had earned a full-ride scholarship to Harvard, and yet his speech was modestly titled "Nothing Much." I made a decision then and there. I decided that one year from that moment, when my own class had its graduation ceremonies, I would be up there, as was Dave Cook, delivering what I had decided would be an equally inspiring speech. While I didn't possess anything like the credentials or accomplishments of Dave Cook, the decision had been made. So I worked on that speech all year, received some help and advice from a terribly brilliant and insightful student at Stanford University (who to this day remains one of my closest friends) and sure enough, it was deemed good enough by the committee that selects graduation speakers that I found myself up there one year later - as decided. One faculty member who had been at that school for over 20 years said, following my speech, that my address was one of the two or three most memorable and captivating messages she had ever heard from a student speaker. (She confided that one of the others was, predictably, Dave Cook's speech from a year earlier.)

I could magnify the examples for quite some time (e.g., being in a rock band and getting paid gigs, writing and performing a rock opera, serving as a missionary for my Church, being employed by leadership guru Stephen R.

Covey, paying off my mortgage, studying with Peter Drucker in graduate school, having essays published in scholarly journals, etc.) The point is clear: making a firm and unyielding decision, if it's thought through carefully, will bring almost certain outcomes.

So my advice to you: decide to decide.

The Elephant in the Room Leftism as a Plague

I fully understand why some of you will think I'm going a bit too far with this one. After all, in the past I've referred to Leftism as a religion, and I agree wholeheartedly with Dennis Prager that it's the most dynamic religion on the face of the earth today. I have also spent much airtime in this column shining a spotlight on specific things the Left has done and tends to do - things which I consider unseemly, unconscionable, and destructive to American values.

This time, however, I am going to speak personally about an insight I have on Leftism, rather than merely highlight some of its more recent antics.

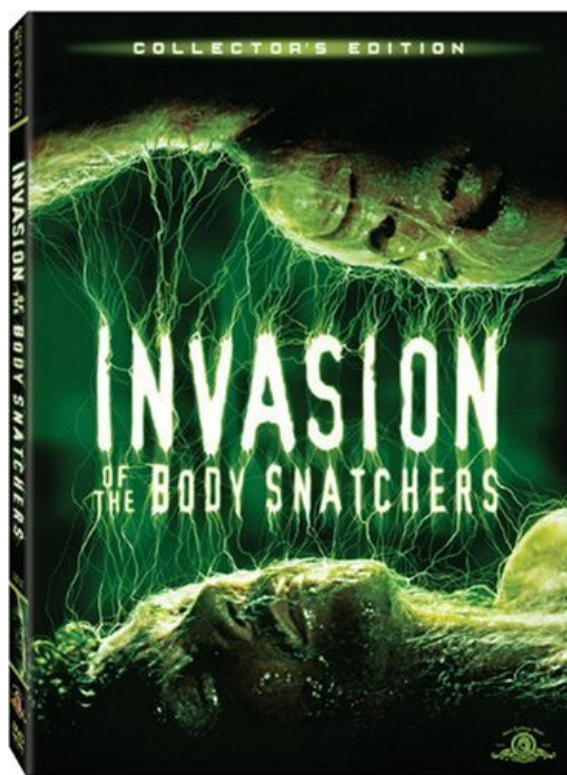
I set the stage by recollecting a book I read many years ago: *The Body Snatchers*, authored by Jack Finney in 1954. It was later made into a movie in 1956 called *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, and remade again in 1994. It's a work of science fiction whose plot centers around some alien plants, large seed pods, that mysteriously cause the population to be replaced, one person at a time, by clones of themselves who are now devoid of all human emotion (think "Stepford Wives.")

This change takes place while the victim sleeps. The original "normal" person somehow vanishes while the android-like clone takes their place. The story is presented through the eyes of the protagonist, Dr. Miles Bennell, who ends up being surrounded by these "pod people" - he being the one sole survivor. The thrilling, chilling part of the story is watching how one person at a time is reduced to this automaton-like entity.

In some ways, I feel like the fictitious Dr. Miles Bennell.

Let me explain.

A few short weeks ago, a woman I know professionally (as well as personally) came to my home to visit my wife. While we were chatting, the subject of this newsletter came up, and she was curious as to what topics I was going to be addressing. After I gave her a



rundown, she made the comment that, "Fox News lies."

Now, mind you, this is coming from a rather intelligent, highly well-read, woman. Thus, I pointed out, in case she had forgotten, that I actually do watch/read Fox News (along with other news sources - CNN, MSNBC, network television, newspapers, etc.) Further, while I'm no apologist for them, I pointed out to her that I have not noticed lying being par for the course at Fox News. So I asked her: "Can you recall an instance where Fox News has lied?" She parried the question and was unable to provide one single, solitary example.

What this tells me is that she has fallen under the spell of the Leftist Seed Pod. She is now drinking from the same Kool-Aid as Leftists. This otherwise bright, thoughtful, formerly conservative woman has been turned into a clone. She can no longer sort out fact from fiction. The Leftists have said to her: "Fox News lies!" and she, with a vacant stare, and an eerily monotone belch, has repeated the mantra, "Fox News lies," as if some sort of Jedi mind-trick has been foisted upon her.

Here's the issue: claiming someone or some entity has lied is a very serious charge. And one should not make that charge without having a specific, verifiable example to put forth. If I were to say "*Rolling Stone* magazine lies," I

might get challenged by someone to back up my claim with an example. But I would be able to do so quite easily by pointing to the fabricated story they printed about the alleged gang rape done at a University of Virginia fraternity - a story that was bogus in every respect. The rape never took place at all, yet *Rolling Stone* put it out there that it did. It was a lie. (I covered this in Issue #93 of *Uncommon Sense*.)

So there we have it. Seemingly intelligent, thoughtful, learned individuals are losing their critical thinking faculties almost overnight, embracing the never-ending drone of Leftism:

- Fox News lies.
- Bush lied, people died.
- Conservatives are beholden to big business.
- Conservatives want children and old people to starve.
- Conservatives are anti-science.
- Conservatives are religious fanatics.
- Conservatives are racist, homophobic, bigoted, and stupid.

And the list goes on and on and on.

The science fiction of Jack Finney's *The Body Snatchers* is not all that far removed from today's reality.

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

Shameless Plug

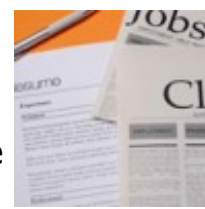
Résumé Guide

You may be gainfully employed, you may be unemployed, or you may (knowingly or unknowingly) be heading for a layoff. Having an impressive résumé can set you apart from the competition and position you for your next job.

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* * * * *

"I could not have gotten my first job without your expertise. Thank you so much! I learned that I had to reword and improve my resume in order to be taken seriously in the workforce. I had been given tips from my professors in Health Science and other professionals but your advice was just what I needed. It took weeks of frustration waiting for interview calls when I happened to stumble across your website and discovered that I needed help. Your publication enlightened me with your knowledge on the wording and format needed to attract an employer. Furthermore, your booklet helped me recognize certain skills and work experience that I would have never considered important until you got me thinking about it. Thanks for a great product!" R. Johnson, Valencia, California

From Ara's Journal

The Weightier Matters of the Law

There is a passage in the New Testament that I have on my mind right now. It comes from the mouth of Jesus, as he was condemning some of the religious leaders of his day who had become petty and small-minded. He pointed out that they had performed certain routine religious acts, but had "omitted the weightier matters of the law."



It is interesting to contemplate what Jesus considered to be such weightier matters. Check out the Gospel according to St. Matthew, chapter 23, verse 23, and you find they are three-fold:

- Judgment
- Mercy
- Faith

It seems to me that judgment and mercy serve as a counterbalance to each other (perhaps with faith as the axis.) Far too many of us judge harshly, prematurely, and recklessly, myself included. Yet Jesus calls us to judge righteously, wisely.

Likewise, while some deeds do not warrant mercy, far too many of us are coarsened, mean-spirited, or unduly harsh. We often lack mercy, kindness, or even meekness. Many people would be so grateful if their missteps were met with mercy.

I recently learned of a woman in my community (I'll call her Woman A) whom I do not know at all, but who went on social media and bragged about an encounter she claims to have had in the grocery store. She wrote that she saw a woman in the checkout line behind her (I'll call her Woman B) about to pay for her groceries using food stamps. This incensed Woman A. As Woman A was about to leave, having paid for her groceries, she heard the cashier ask Woman B, "How are you today?" Woman A claims she answered the cashier for Woman B, stating the following, her voice dripping with sarcasm: "Oh, she's just fine! She has her groceries paid for with food stamps that I, and other responsible people, pay for with our tax dollars! She's doing just great!"

Predictably, her posting of this encounter drew much commentary, with some people congratulating her for her courage, and others condemning her for her cruelty and holier-than-thou attitude.

While it is true that there are people out there abusing the welfare system and being lazy ingrates, we cannot know with certainty the circumstances of Woman B. And therefore, it is not for anyone to judge her - certainly not Woman A, who could benefit from a dose of humility. Woman B probably could have benefitted from more mercy, not more condemnation. I don't know if the story as told by Woman A is true and accurate in every respect. But I do know something about the way she sees things, and it

troubles me.

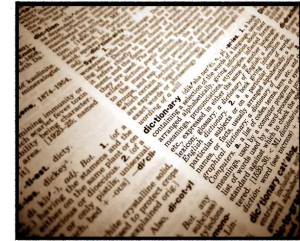
Judgment has its place. Mercy has its place.

We must not "displace" either.

The World of Words

Dwarfed

Building Your Power of Expression



Dwarfed, v., past tense

Pronunciation: dwôrfd

Meaning: When used as a verb, as opposed to a noun, this word is used in a comparative way, when one thing is much larger in size or scope than another thing.

Usage:

- *Our campaign was simply dwarfed by theirs, mostly due to the vastness of their budget.*
- *I used to believe that K9 was the most difficult mountain for a climber to master, but that mountain was dwarfed by the sheer size and scope of Everest.*
- *The fighter in the white trunks was strong and rugged, but at 5'6" he was simply dwarfed by the colossus size and reach of the fighter in the dark trunks, who stood at 6'7".*

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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