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Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Issue: # 095

May 15, 2015

Greetings!

On April 30th of this year, a mere two weeks ago, I published *Uncommon Sense* #94. In "The Elephant in the Room" column of that issue, I discussed an incident involving a friend of my wife who challenged me with the line, "Fox News lies" - implying I am a shill of Fox News and I don't get my news from any other source.



In my column, I pointed out that my wife's friend, when asked, was unable to provide even one example of a lie told by Fox News. In my column, I went on to lament the fact that seemingly informed, articulate individuals, even those who have historically been conservative, are, one by one, falling under the hypnotic trance of Leftist drivel.

My column struck a nerve with a long-time reader of *Uncommon Sense*, whom I will refer to as Dr. J.

Dr. J is a bright, educated, professional man - and yes, is a doctor. He is also a man of the Left. Over the years, he has thrown various jabs my way after reading *Uncommon Sense*, and I have always respected his intellect and his vigor. I actually met him at a party on one occasion, and we hit it off in person, finding we had much in common. I like Dr. J. He is a decent fellow, and I say that in spite of the fact that he and I see things quite differently.

Dr. J could not resist throwing a few more jabs at me based on my piece, "Leftism As A Plague," of two weeks

ago. So I am going to now position our email dialogue, such as it was, as a sort of debate, in this issue of *Uncommon Sense*. In this issue, I will state portions of Dr. J's response to my article along with my analysis and commentary. While I won't edit Dr. J's words (other than minor corrections in punctuation and spelling) I will, perhaps, combine some of his later comments with some of his earlier comments if I feel they belong together, so the sequence may not be exactly how he rendered it. I will continue this practice, reprinting other unedited portions of his comments, in several more subsequent issues of *Uncommon Sense*.

I trust the readers who gravitate towards the "Elephant in the Room" column will find the exchange most educational.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood

Self-Development

Losing Customers: It's The Little Things

Here's a lesson for you: Pay attention to the little things or it may cost you.

I recently spent quite a bit of money on some new suits with a retail shop here in southern California. I picked up 4 suits and 3 dress shirts. The quality is rather high. I was pleased with my purchase.

But I probably won't continue doing business with this particular shop. I am losing confidence in them.

While I had two of the four suits tailored by them at the time of purchase, I kept the other two, untailored, in my closet for a bit. I had considered doing the tailoring elsewhere, but upon reflection, decided to return to the original shop for the tailoring.

When I walked in with my two untailed suits this past week, here is how the conversation began with the salesman:

Salesman: May I help you?

Me: Is the tailor in today?

Salesman: What can I do for you?

Me: I'm here to see the tailor. Is he in today?

Salesman: Let's walk back here by the mirror.

Me: OK, but I still would like an answer to my question:
Is the tailor on the premises today?

Salesman: Yes, let me go find him.

Notice that when I asked, the first time, if the tailor was in, the sales rep answered my question with a question, which is to say he did not answer my question. Next, notice when I asked, for the second time, if the tailor was in, the salesman gave a new directive, but did not answer my direct question. Only after I asked, emphatically, the third time, did I get an answer to my question. This did not do much to foster confidence from me, but it did do much to annoy me.

Then, while the tailor was taking my measurements and that same salesman was writing down the details of the work to be done on an order form, I noticed the salesman asked the tailor for confirmation of a certain tailoring procedure, and the tailor was non-responsive. He ignored the salesman. That left me wondering if a pattern of poor communication was rampant in this store.

Finally, when I was at the cash register with the salesman who was ringing me up, I noticed that this salesman, who is representing a fine men's clothing store, was dressed deplorably. Not only did his own clothing look a bit helter-

skelter (as nothing seemed to match) but his shirt didn't even fit him. While I am not belittling the salesman for having a bit too much girth around the mid-section, his shirt was stretched almost to the breaking point, as if the buttons were about



to burst, and the openings in his shirt between the buttons exposed his undergarment. It was a shoddy appearance. And evidently this is tolerated by store management.

Admittedly, these are seemingly little things. But they add up. They do not engender confidence. They strike me as unbecoming and thus, with trust starting to evaporate, I will be looking for greater professionalism with other companies in future purchases of this kind.

My advice to you: Pay attention to detail. If you see shoddy, slip-shod performance in any area of your operations, address it with rapidity and finality. Being lax can cost you customers.

The Elephant in the Room

The Great Debate, Part 1 of 4

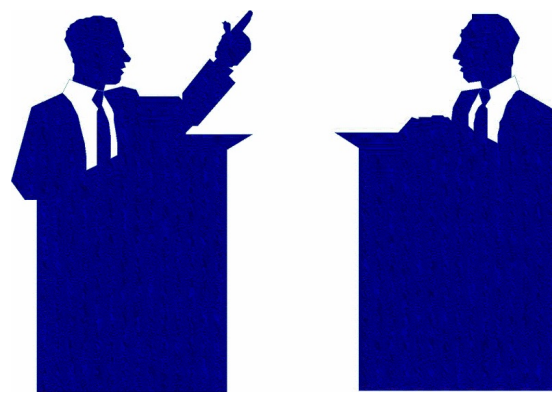
Dr. J's Opening Statement:

Politifact gives Fox "news" a whopping 18% factual rating. Wow, would that mean its newscasters lie? Of course not, only if they knew better would it be lying, and one is free to question whether the people at Fox care very much about factual reporting. The problem comes from the top down. . . . Are other outlets perfect? No, of course not, I think the New York Times comes in around 65%, so there's room for improvement. But I would ask you: which of the two is more likely to get a story right? If you prefer Fox, you choose to be misinformed. It's really no more complicated than that.

My response:

Right off the bat, in your first sentence, I find myself smiling at the quotation marks you placed around the word *news*, which demonstrates your bias that Fox doesn't actually produce news. Of course, your quotation marks

were unnecessary as you go on to state as much. I wonder if Fox is the only media outlet that would warrant such quotation marks in your view. What about CNN? What about



MSNBC? What about NBC's Nightly News, which recently had to suspend their Anchor Brian Williams for substituting lies for news? What about the Leftist hippy rag known as Rolling Stone magazine, which only recently had to eat humble pie and admit that they presented as news a completely fabricated lie about a gang rape at a University of Virginia fraternity that was spun from whole cloth?

You cited an entity known as Politifact as claiming that Fox News rates only at 18% in terms of providing factual, accurate news. Let's explore this claim just a bit.

Is Politifact an entity that should be trusted as unbiased? Certainly they wish to be seen as neutral. But are they? If you think they are, consider this: For one specific window of time (which ended in 2011) Politifact gave their lowest "truth rating" to conservative claims 119 times but only 13 times for liberal claims. Really? Are we to believe, Dr. J, that conservatives lie more than 9 times as often as liberals? Do you personally buy that narrative? Do you accept that uncritically? Is Politifact itself guilty of their own "Pants On Fire" designation? Hmm?

Further, Dr. J, you present your Politifact rating of 18% for Fox News as a black and white issue, as if Fox is telling the "truth" only 18% of the time. In actuality, Politifact doesn't present their ratings as you describe them. It's not just "truth" vs. "untruth"; rather, Politifact follows a continuum that runs from "True," "Mostly True," "Half True," "Mostly False," "False," and "Pants on Fire." In the [most recent](#) polling data from Politifact, they rank Fox News as either "True" or "Mostly True" at 22%, not 18%. (Perhaps your numbers come from a different timespan.)

I understand this is nothing to write home about. (For the record, they rank MSNBC at 34%, and CNN at 56% for those same metrics.) But given the evidence of bias in favor of liberals as cited in the previous paragraph, I am not too concerned about the so-called "fact checking" of Politifact as it pertains to Fox News.

It should also be pointed out that Politifact does not even suggest they evaluate all claims. They admit, candidly, that they pick and choose which claims to evaluate. Could not that also lead to bias?

Still further, I am not always convinced that Politifact has offered the truth in their analysis. Let me give you an example. They give their carefully selected "Recent Statements at Fox News" a "Half Truth" rating 19% of the time. Let's dig a little deeper. One of their examples of a half-truth which contributed to that 19% included an isolated statement attributed to Bill O'Reilly. The statement O'Reilly made was, "I never said I was on the Falkland Islands." Now that is either a true or a false statement. Having followed this particular story rather carefully, I can attest that Bill O'Reilly is correct: he never did claim he was actually on the Falkland Islands as far as published accounts are concerned. (I have no way of knowing whether he said it to someone privately, or said it under his breath - and neither does Politifact.) However, Politifact rated this statement from Mr. O'Reilly a half-truth. Politifact's justification: they simply write "A careful choice of words." And there you have it.

Is that careful analysis? Is that hard-hitting truth detection? Or does it suggest a liberal, left-leaning bias from an outfit that tries to portray itself as objective?

So to claim that if I prefer Fox, I am deliberately preferring to be misinformed is just Left-wing silliness. I don't think I would make such a claim that if you prefer MSNBC that means you deliberately wish to be misinformed. We all get our news sources from the outlets we believe meet two primary objectives: we believe they satisfy our needs to cover the stories we hope will be covered, and/or we turn to sources we believe resonate with our own value system. We don't turn to news sources for the purposes of being deceived. We might, indeed, be deceived, but that is another matter.

I like Fox News because I believe they cover stories in a way that other media do not cover them. In fact, they cover stories that other media outlets avoid covering altogether. That does not mean I am beholden to everyone who has a spot on the Fox News channel. (I'm no fan of Sean Hannity, and while I like Bill O'Reilly's show a great deal, I do find some of his mannerisms a bit off-putting at times.)

The bottom line: the fact that Fox News receives a low-rating of truth-telling from a Left-Wing entity that tries to disguise itself as an objective fact-checker is somewhat akin to allowing the proverbial fox to mind the henhouse (no pun intended.) But to say "If you prefer Fox, you choose to be misinformed" and "It's really no more complicated than that" suggests to me a simplistic and careless thought process that could use some refining. You are better than that, Dr. J, and I expect better of you. Let's see if we get the rigor I am looking for in the next round which will appear in the next issue of *Uncommon Sense*.

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

Shameless Plug

Norwood to offer Management Course

For the second year in a row, College of the Canyons has asked me to offer a course in Management during their short summer session. This course will begin on June 8th and will be held Monday through Thursday on from 6:30 to 8:55 PM, ending on July 9th.

Being a former student of the late Peter Drucker, the elder statesman of management as a formal discipline (shown with me to the right), I have a lot in my arsenal to share with the students, along with a great group of guest speakers who will share their secrets of effective management.



If you are interested in enrolling and want more information, drop me a line (ara@aranorwood.com) or go to the College of the Canyons website (www.canyons.edu).

From Ara's Journal

Leftism as a Deadly Contagion

The word I would use to describe my inner state as I write this very personal entry is *sadness*.



I am sad because I lost a friend - one of the dearest friends I have ever had.

I met SA back in 1997 when I was managing the delivery of an all-day workshop at a conference center on the campus of USC. SA worked for USC and was impeccable in her service acumen. In fact, she was so attentive, so likeable, and so impressive, that I hired her to be my personal assistant. We had a wonderful working relationship and a deep friendship to boot. When SA had left my employ, I continued to assist her with career development issues, sprucing up her resume, offering her advice on effective interviewing, and the like. When she had challenges in her love life, I was there for her, a shoulder to cry on, someone to be there to listen and empathize. When she earned her degree at a major university, I was invited to be there, and in fact, her family called upon me to lead her guests in a toast at a private reception.

But SA is no longer a part of my life, as of two days ago.

No, she didn't die. But I am dead to her, as the saying goes.

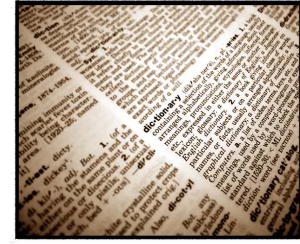
She is a victim of the so-called "tolerant" mindset of the Left, which is actually the steepest of intolerance.

Having read some of my writings in this publication, SA simply cannot fathom how she could remain friends with a conservative. Her newly discovered Leftist bent simply does not allow for a person into her orbit who is a conservative, or who espouses American or Judeo-Christian values. Only Leftist values will do for my friend, SA. Our wonderfully warm past notwithstanding, Leftism is a friendship-killer for the Leftist.

Leftism destroys.

Swill

Building Your Power of Expression



Swill, n.

Pronunciation: swil

Meaning: This word has reference to the movement of liquid, often in the context of a drink that someone is consuming, but it can also be in reference to refuse and liquified garbage, such as that which comes out of industrial kitchens; the latter is how I often use it.

Usage:

- *The news was so gut wrenching to the man that he quickly threw back a swill of whiskey to try to deaden his sensibilities.*
- *I think the grossest thing that ever happened to me was when I slipped off the plank and fell straight into a vat of swill.*
- *The addict was lying in his own waste the way a pig basks in his swill.*

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