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# Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Issue: # 096

May 26, 2015

## Greetings!

I hope you had a meaningful Memorial Day yesterday. It is one of the truly underrated and under appreciated holiday we celebrate as Americans, and I believe it should rank right up there with Independence Day and Christmas.

We continue with the Leftist-Conservative debate, providing Part 2 of 4. I hope you find it instructive.

Also, some important content in a personal note on the balance between Standards and Compassion. You will want to read that in the **From Ara's Journal** column.

But we lead off with some useful content around the need to manage oneself effectively. Sink your teeth into that one, as I am sure it will add some value to your life.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood



## Self-Development

### Managing Oneself

Many years ago I read a fascinating article by my graduate school mentor, Peter Drucker, the elder statesman of management as a formal discipline.

The article was titled "Managing Oneself" and it made an

impact on me. This column is not a rehash of what Drucker had to say on the subject. But it does represent a strain of my own thinking.



I had a lengthy telephone call yesterday with a dear friend who wanted to find out if success was something that could be taught. I found that a curious query. In speaking with her, I discovered that she feels a bit painted in a corner. Now in her mid-50s, she feels that so much of her life has been disappointing and has fallen far short of what it could have been. And admittedly, she has experienced a long train of setbacks which were largely beyond her control.

In this article I will share a synopsis of what I shared with her.

First, in order to manage oneself, one must get clear about what you value most. I discussed the idea of values in issue #10 of *Uncommon Sense*, back on August 31, 2011. The basic idea is that one must be clear on the two or three or four values that one wishes to adopt, live by, and actualize. For me, those values include **truth**, **virtue**, and **integrity**. I recommend you not go beyond 5 values or you dilute the process. (If you'd like me to email you a free copy of my Values Worksheet, containing a large alphabetical list of values to consider, drop me a line: [ara@aranorwood.com](mailto:ara@aranorwood.com).)

Second, in order to manage oneself, it helps if you have some written statement of purpose for your life, a mission statement or a vision statement. Such a statement spells out exactly what you stand for, what your *raison d'être* consists of (i.e., your "reason for being.") Both your values and your mission/vision statement should be reviewed regularly, at least weekly.

Third, you need to be clear on your roles. Roles are broad categories of your life that you wish to focus on. Some of these roles are professional in nature. Some are personal. Some may be very private, perhaps even spiritual in nature. Like your values, I recommend you try to limit the key roles in your life to no more than 5 to 7 on the high end. (In the interest of full-disclosure, I violate my own rule. I have 9 roles, as my life is very . . . involved.) For

the record, my roles include the following:  
Teacher/Scholar; Manager; Life-Long Learner; Writer;  
Consultant; Family Man; Friend; Musician; Disciple.

Notice the wide variety in my roles.

Finally, in order to manage oneself, one must review one's values, mission, and roles on a weekly basis in a sit-down meeting with oneself. Doing so enables one to connect with the self, and get galvanized by their deeper purpose. While in that unique frame of mind, one can then begin to set goals and tasks, both simple and profound, with each role in mind. In other words, I would ask myself, "What can I, what should I, accomplish this week, if anything, for my role as a Teacher/Scholar? What about in my role as a Manager?"

And I would go down the list and do this for all of my roles.

I may choose to not set any tasks or goals for the week for a specific role. This might be due to the fact that I may have massive amounts of focus on some of the other roles and this will require a suspension of activity in one or more other roles. There is nothing wrong with that, provided I eventually give appropriate amounts of attention and energy to the roles that were put on the back burner. Balance is key.

Do this, and you will be a well-managed individual. And you will be in a stronger position to manage others.

## The Elephant in the Room

### The Great Debate, Part 2 of 4

#### Dr. J's Second Statement:

Bill O'Reilly is unlikely to be considered a "newsman," unless the claim emanates from Fox. I recall him lecturing Wes Clark about US atrocities in Malmedy, where, in fact, the Nazis machine-gunned US prisoners of war from the Battle of the Bulge. It was hilarious, really: Gen. Clark just stared at O'Reilly incredulously. It was typical bullying and crass distortion of facts for which the blowhard never apologized. Why, because his audience doesn't possess the sophistication to require it of him. People who care about such things as veracity and careful reporting simply don't watch Fox. Low expectations permit the kind of sloppy screen time characteristic of Fox.

**My response:**

Your claims, Dr. J, invite scrutiny. The allegation that Bill O'Reilly is unlikely to be considered a newsman is a curious one, and immediately raises some questions. What does it mean to be a newsman? Does it matter if Bill O'Reilly meets such qualifications? Does O'Reilly even present himself as a newsman?

Further, you give as a specific example of evidence of his non-newsman

status a report O'Reilly did involving an obscure incident from World War II, with the implication



being that if O'Reilly misreported or misstated something - in other words, if he made a mistake - that somehow disqualifies him from being a newsman. You then go on to insult the audience of O'Reilly's show with a very broad brush, essentially viewing them as a bunch of inept clods who possess neither the sophistication nor the desire to understand the news or expect accurate news.

So what is a "newsman"? It's a person who gathers, reports, or comments on the news, while working for a newspaper, magazine, radio, or television news bureau. The term is broad. And the term certainly applies to O'Reilly. He is primarily a commentator on the news, giving opinion and analysis. He is not trying to be anything like the typical news reporter. He is trying to educate and shape public opinion, and he is very open about this. As such, he is quite unlike any of the evening anchors at ABC, CBS, or NBC. O'Reilly approaches his craft differently. Does this difference somehow disqualify him as a newsman? Hardly.

Dr. J, your comment that O'Reilly is not a newsman simply betrays your deeper paradigm: you don't like conservative newsmen, and the only people who qualify as newsmen in your view are liberals, who, admittedly, dominate today's news media. So I will grant you that

O'Reilly is not a *liberal* newsman, but we already knew that.

As for the Malmedy issue, did you know O'Reilly brought it up on two separate occasions with General Wesley Clark, once on October 3, 2005, and a second time on May 30, 2006? O'Reilly was trying to give examples of American atrocities in World War II (something one would think the Left would applaud him for since they tend to despise the U.S. Armed Forces as being imperialistic.) I've read the transcripts for both shows and it's not entirely clear what Bill O'Reilly was saying, as the two men were talking over each other. However, I am going to, at least for the purposes of this debate, side with you, Dr. J, and agree that O'Reilly was citing the incident at Malmedy as a case of U.S. servicemen shooting unarmed German soldiers. If that turns out to be what he said, then you are correct that O'Reilly was stating an historical error. So we'll say you've scored a point.

But before you uncork the champagne bottles, consider the following:

All news media personalities misstate things, especially when they are not glued to a teleprompter. It doesn't necessarily make them liars. It may not even make them misinformed. After all, how many times have you inadvertently misstated something? Certainly I have had my fair share of stating things incorrectly - things I knew better about, but simply had a brain freeze and said the wrong thing. In fact, one time, in this very publication, I defined our U.S. motto, *e pluribus unum*, as meaning "from the one, many" when in fact, it means precisely the opposite ("from the many, one.") Was I lying? No. Was I uninformed? Not at all. I knew full well what *e pluribus unum* meant. I simply had a brain freeze. And this occurred in the calm of my study while writing without interruption or distraction. I think we should be a bit more charitable to Bill O'Reilly who was speaking off the cuff, in the heat of the moment, during a vigorous back-and-forth with General Wesley Clark. It is easy for me to believe he simply misspoke. He almost certainly meant Chenogne, where U.S. servicemen did shoot unarmed German soldiers - and, in fact, this massacre was in retaliation for what the Germans did to the Americans [at none other than Malmedy](#)! It is an understandable misstatement since Chenogne and Malmedy are closely connected in World War II lore.

You might still insist that O'Reilly is an uninformed buffoon on matters involving World War II, and that he was simply too ignorant to know who shot whom at Malmedy. If so, yours is not a sustainable position. Some time before he had his first exchange with General Clark on this issue, while writing in the quietude of his office, O'Reilly demonstrated he clearly understood that it was Germans, not Americans, who were responsible for the Malmedy massacre, for he [published an article](#) in the *Jewish World Review* on June 27, 2005 wherein he wrote: "After German SS troops massacred 86 American soldiers at Malmedy in Belgium on Dec., 17, 1944, some units like the U.S. 11th Armored Division took revenge on captured German soldiers." Do you care to comment on this crucial and revealing bit of evidence, Dr. J?

Finally, as to your claim that viewers of Fox News in general (and The O'Reilly Factor in particular) are people who are both stupefyingly inept and uninterested in news, even though they spend time watching a news program, I find your mental model a curious oddity to say the least. First, you need to face reality and understand that Fox News is the [highest rated cable news program](#). Clicking on that link demonstrates that Fox News scores 1089, vs. CNN at 346 and MSNBC at 283. Specifically for the O'Reilly Factor show, its ratings came in at 2,322, vs. the rival show at CNN (Anderson Cooper 360) which came in at 492, and the rival show at MSNBC (All In with Chris Hayes) came in slightly higher than CNN at 495. Bottom line: O'Reilly trounces his competition. O'Reilly is not slightly better-rated than his closest competitor (MSNBC); he simply destroys them. If this were a football game, the score would be Fox News 69, MSNBC 12. Losing a football game 69 to 12 is a slaughter. The losing team is not even in the same league with the winner. And yet you denigrate the clear winners as morons, and in doing so, you come off as a sore loser of sorts. If the folks at MSNBC are so trustworthy and so honest and so smart, why is it they can't hold a large audience?

The people who watch Fox News are older, by and large, than those who get their news elsewhere. [Click here](#) to learn about the age demographics of the audiences of various news outlets. Whereas roughly one-third of the readers of the *New York Times* are under 30, 64% of The O'Reilly Factor are over 50. Only 12% of NY Times readers are 65+ whereas 40% of that age group tune in to The O'Reilly Factor. I would argue that the average, say, 52-year-old generally has a more seasoned view of the

world than does the average, say, 28-year-old. So who attracts an audience of more seasoned judgment: Fox News or *The New York Times*?

Furthermore, both Fox News and also The O'Reilly Factor command a more balanced audience, politically-speaking, when compared to the *New York Times*. Fox News attracts an audience that includes 22% Democrat viewers. But the *New York Times*? It has only 13% Republican readers.

To summarize: your view that Bill O'Reilly is not really a newsman is absurd, and is simply a way of stating that you don't like Bill O'Reilly. Your attack of Bill O'Reilly on the Malmedy issue is overblown. O'Reilly may have misstated the name of the city where German soldiers were shot by Americans following a similar war crime committed by German soldiers, but in all likelihood O'Reilly's error was due to an inadvertent slip of the tongue. And the notion that the audience of Fox News is comprised of dumb, ignorant dolts is both unsubstantiated, unfair, and untrue. More experienced people tend to watch Fox News.

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

## **Shameless Plug**

### **New Publication on the Horizon**

Tom Peters, co-author of the landmark *In Search of Excellence* and many other books, once said that "Perception is all there is."

I heartily agree. If people have a positive perception of you, it can open doors.

With that in mind, I am on the cusp of offering for sale a series of tools that can help you strengthen the perception people have of you. These publications will be on my website in just a few weeks for a very low price. Essentially

what they are is a practical system for boosting your vocabulary using words that are a cut above your typical forms of expression.

People will notice. And people will start to perceive you as intelligent, sophisticated, and elegant in your ability to express yourself. And yes, that will very likely open doors for you.

More details on these tools will be forthcoming, so stay tuned.



## From Ara's Journal Balancing Standards and Compassion

I recently had a very interesting experience on my personal Facebook page.

After reposting a news story about the Boy Scouts senior leadership coming to the conclusion that they are going to have to allow homosexuals in as scout leaders, something they have historically claimed would never happen, I found myself in a bit of a debate with a few individuals whom I consider friends.



I began with the statement accompanying the posting of the article, "Another one bites the dust" by which I meant that the Boy Scouts was the latest in a long string of examples of institutions that have compromised their standards to placate gay rights activists.

I had also sarcastically posited the comment, "And having a gay scout leader share a tent with a young, vulnerable, impressionable 11-year-old boy during a campout would be a good idea, right? I mean, what could possibly go wrong?"

EC, a woman I've known for more than ten years, was outraged at some of my commentary. Being a woman of the Left, her outrage in no way surprised me. But she had quite a bit of emoting to do, including the statement



"Shame on you!" She also publicly declared that she was in tears. Further, I was called "condescending." (I've been called much worse.)

What drove EC to such strident rhetoric was the fact that her mother is a lesbian, something I've known for years, and something she freely acknowledged for all to see on my Facebook wall. Our public exchanges were a bit testy. In her mind, the idea that a gay scout leader alone in a tent with a young boy scout would never even conceive of being sexually aroused any more than a heterosexual male would be. She quickly made the leap of abstraction from homosexual adult male to pedophilia.

EC sent me a private message afterwards pointing out that she does not feel homosexuality is a sin. She then, in the next sentence, reiterated that her mother is a lesbian and that this is a very sensitive subject to her. She again stated that she was in tears, that she loves her mother very much, and that she was sensing hatred from me towards gay people (which would include her mother.)

How was I to respond? This is where a tricky balancing act comes into play. It was clear that her feelings on the matter stem from her love for her mother, and that this is a "hot-button" topic for her. She obviously misunderstands my own outlook in that I do not hate gay people as a general rule, though I do hate the gay activists who actively destroy the lives of those who oppose their lifestyle (ex. Brandon Eich, who was fired as CEO of Mozilla more than a year ago for making a private donation to the Prop 8 campaign - and who is still unemployed.)

So I pointed out in my reply that I was sensitive to her feelings. That was a statement of compassion to the individual.

But I had to also make a statement about standards that must not be compromised. I gently asked her to consider the fact that her viewpoint clashes with thousands of years of revealed religion, going back to the time of Abraham, and also clashes with what is written in scripture, and what has been consistently taught by modern prophets in our own day. She, and many like her, needs to face that reality. I further pointed out to her the possibility that, at least in her case, her love and devotion to her mother, which is appropriate, may have colored her views on this very subject, and may have blinded to the validity of views such as mine.

I closed by returning to compassion. So as not to be misunderstood, I pointed out that she cannot "hear the sound of my voice" as I write this. And then I clarified that I was writing in the spirit of tenderness, with love and gentleness, and with the hand of friendship on her shoulder, as it were.

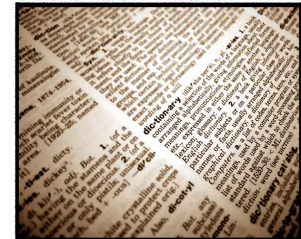
That seemed to bring about a healing of sorts.

EC and I may never see eye-to-eye on this sensitive subject. But two things seem to be in order: compassion on the micro-level (i.e., towards the individual) and standards on the macro-level. Standards should not negate compassion. And compassion must never be allowed to compromise standards.

## The World of Words

### Brazen

#### Building Your Power of Expression



**Brazen**, adj.

**Pronunciation:** 'brāzən

**Meaning:** Brazen means bold and without shame.

**Usage:**

- *He conducted his illegal business with a brazen arrogance.*
- *Her in-your-face persona was brazen for its tendency to boast about circumventing the rules of decorum.*
- *This is a brazen act of open cruelty, and will be dealt with swiftly.*

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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,**

