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Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Issue: # 101

August 10,
2015

Greetings!

Having passed the 100 issue milestone of this publication last month, I am back at it with energy and gusto!

I open with a short but incisive piece on the art of listening, a topic we all would do well to improve.

I addressed the issue of abortion in Issue #52. But as the topic has been in the news of late, I revisit the issue by focusing on the Planned Parenthood videos, but do so through a guest editorial of a former superior court judge from the state of New Jersey. I think his remarks to this sordid tragedy are about as well stated as is possible, certainly reaching a level of erudition I could never attain.

And finally, I share some personal musings about a the notion of starting over.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood



Self-Development

Becoming A Better Listener

Effective listening does not come easy to everyone.

Some individuals are endowed with a natural inclination to

listen effectively. They "get it" through their auditory senses. Others find listening to be a struggle. They may have the best of intentions. But they do a much better job of "getting it" in other ways - perhaps through seeing (i.e., reading) or through direct experience.



Interestingly, even if you are not a naturally-gifted listener, you don't have to be relegated to second-rate status in the art of listening.

Improving your abilities as a listener is no more complicated than *deciding* to be a good listener. I do not mean deciding in a broad, general sense. I mean deciding the moment an event, such as a radio program, or a meeting, or a conversation, is first taking place. When the conversation begins, if you do no more than to say to yourself, "I am going to really *focus* on listening to this person. I am not going to be prone to want to speak or interject or interrupt or be distracted. I am *deciding* to stay totally focused on what the other person is saying." When you do this, you will invariably find yourself speaking less, and focusing more.

Your listening will improve, you will be more informed, and you will possess an advantage that others who do not listen well lack.

The Elephant in the Room

Planned Parenthood Videos and the Killing of Innocents

by Judge Andrew P. Napolitano

The recent broadcast of videotapes taken of persons employed at Planned Parenthood -- the prolific and notorious abortion provider -- has brought the issue of abortion to the national consciousness again and front and

center to the Republican presidential primary campaign. The tapes were made secretly by a pro-life group determined to show to the world the dark side of Planned Parenthood's use of federal funds.

What the world saw was terrifying and damning. The tapes are difficult to watch, just as any discussion of human slaughter is difficult to watch. If you have seen these tapes, you witnessed physicians and others talking about the profits Planned Parenthood is making in the sale of baby body parts, even though such sales are criminal under federal law.

The cavalier demeanor of those who profit from this slaughter is chilling, and the moral punch in the nose to the Democratic Party is excruciating. That's because Planned Parenthood is virtually a branch of the Democratic Party. It has a lock on the federal treasury to the tune of \$500 million per year. It pays for or performs more than 325,000 abortions a year, which is about one-third of all abortions in America. It contributes heavily to the campaigns of Democratic office seekers. You can see the cycle.

Even though federal law has prohibited the use of federal funds for abortions for nearly 18 years, money is fungible. The Planned Parenthood folks may be baby killers, but they are not dumb.

They know how to dedicate federal funds for maternal health and free up maternal health funds for the slaughter of babies -- and make it all look legal.



The reason these tapes are so upsetting to the Democrats, and to some Republicans as well, is that they have convinced themselves that the fetus in the womb is not a person. Yet, watching their abortionists graphically discuss the monetary value of body parts and the physical manipulation of fully formed babies so as to maximize the harvesting of their organs ironically humanizes the body parts and the babies from which the parts came, and is thus so upsetting to those who deny fetal personhood.

But this is more than upsetting -- it seriously challenges the underlying commitment of today's Democratic Party that the fetus is not a person. This is, of course, the central holding of the Supreme Court's 1973 decision in *Roe v. Wade*. Just as in *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, wherein the court held in 1857 that African-Americans were not persons, so did *Roe v. Wade* make that holding for fetuses.

And the stated reason for the holding was the absence of consensus in 1973 among philosophers, physicians, theologians and scientists about when life begins. Yet, the duty of the court is to say what the Constitution means, not to count noses. *Roe* is the only Supreme Court decision in history grounded on the absence of discernible consensus among the populace.

Is the fetus in the womb a person? Before answering this, consider the depravity to which we have sunk due to its legal non-personhood. The slaughter of babies, some where it is legal in their ninth month of gestation, the sale of their body parts, and the taxpayer financing of this have become so morose that even their staunchest supporters cannot confront these realities publicly for fear of losing political support.

Is the fetus in the womb a person? Before answering this, consider the danger of a Supreme Court possessing the power to declare any human offspring to be a non-person. Two months ago, we witnessed the spectacle of the court finding four plain English words -- "established by the States" -- to be ambiguous and, 21 pages later, telling us that legally those words do not mean what they say. If the court can change the meaning of ordinary words, can it change the meaning of life?

It has.

Is the fetus in the womb a person? Of course it is. It has two fully human parents and the fully actualizable human genome to achieve post-natal existence. The single-cell zygote in the mother's womb came from her flesh and cannot be anything but a human person. For 600 years, the law has permitted the fetus in the womb to inherit property. How could that be if the fetus were not a human person? If you kill a pregnant woman and the fetus dies, you can be charged with the murder of two persons. If the reason for government in the first place is to protect rights, the government's prime obligation is to protect the rights

of persons to live.

The Democrats are not alone at fault here. In the first six years of the presidency of George W. Bush, when the Republicans controlled the White House and the Congress, numerous efforts were made to introduce a simple one-line statute: "The fetus in the womb shall be, for all constitutional and legal purposes, a person." Republican congressional leaders kept all such proposals from being voted upon.

But seeing is believing. The tapes are the abortionists' nightmare, because in their wanton slaughter they have let slip the utter humanity of their victims. And the souls of the Holy Innocents who have been slaughtered before drawing their first breaths are no doubt praying for the conversion of the hearts and the salvation of the souls of those who killed them.

Andrew P. Napolitano, a former judge of the Superior Court of New Jersey, is the senior judicial analyst at Fox News Channel.

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

Shameless Plug

Norwood To Deliver Coaching Workshop

It will be my distinct privilege to deliver a one-day workshop on the topic of effective coaching. This will be to a corporate client of mine and will take place this Wednesday. I am excited about the prospects of instructing the management of that organization on the fine art of coaching the members of their team.



Coaching is a critically important skill to develop, but those who master that skill set themselves up to enable their team to reach quantum increases of productivity.

If your organization could benefit from such a workshop, send me a note so we can discuss the logistics.

From Ara's Journal

A Clean Slate

Life affords us many opportunities for a clean slate.

While there are many circumstances where this principle does not apply, such as when a person commits a capital offense and is incarcerated, most of the time the typical citizen can count on a clean slate.



Many times it involves no more than a person making a decision to stop doing something that is detrimental to his/her well-being, or by starting a new habit that will bring benefits.

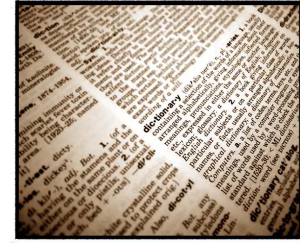
Sometimes I find that I have drifted away from correct habits or actions, and I am less effective as a result. This may occur in any realm - the physical, the social, the spiritual, the economic, or the intellectual. I may not exercise properly (or frequently enough), I may find myself in the company of persons who end up doing me more harm than good, I may find myself failing to do the things that bring about a sensitivity to spiritual realities, I may squander my financial resources or opportunities, or I may become a lazy thinker.

Fortunately, we can do something about all of that: we can put on our running shoes and log a good mile or so; we can terminate any and all relationships that are harming us; we can fall to our knees as we retire at night and pray to the Almighty; we can take that cash we were about to blow on something transitory and place it in a savings account; we can read a book that challenges us.

Life seems to provide endless opportunities for course correction. It is imperative that I (and you) take advantage of that, and do the right thing.

Proclivity

Building Your Power of Expression



Proclivity, n.

Pronunciation: prō'klivətē

Meaning: We all have certain tendencies to do things a certain way. These are called proclivities -- an inclination or predisposition to choose to do something with a measure of predictability or preference.

Usage:

- *Often times a strong leader has a proclivity for outspokenness.*
- *I don't think I can accept the cabinet position, as this particular president's views do not square with my own political proclivities.*
- *The restaurant served very spicy food, which may or may not be well suited to your personal proclivity.*

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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