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Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Issue: # 102

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Greetings!

I am not sure what part of the country (or world) you are in as you read this, but here in drought-stricken Southern California, it's rather hot.

Not only is the weather hot, but the issues of the day continue to burn in the minds and hearts of people who care about this country. And I address some of them with this issue of *Uncommon Sense*.

We all know how important it is to deliver first-rate service to our clientele. Well, at least we'd like to think so. I share an anecdotal story experienced by my wife in our Self-Development segment.

Abortion continues to remain a highly controversial topic, with both sides usually speaking past each other. Are you pro-life or pro-choice? If you meet a person on the opposite side of the aisle from your viewpoint, changes are high the convo could get heated. As for me: I'm both. I'm pro-life, and I'm pro-choice, and I hope people will use their God-given agency to choose life. . . See my latest comments in "The Elephant in the Room" segment.

I share a very personal reflection on a sad story which you can read about in the "From Ara's Journal" segment.

And of course, you won't want miss "The World of Words" segment if you want to continue to elevate your power of expression.



A hearty welcome to the more than 50 new subscribers to this issue, many of them my newest college students. Welcome aboard!

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood

Self-Development The Curse of Slipshod Service

My wife has, for years, gone to get her pedicures and manicures from a place called "C'est L'amour. The shop used to be run by a very service-oriented guy who made everyone feel welcomed, and business was booming. Almost every year, I went in there shortly before Christmas to buy my wife a gift certificate to the place.



Recently, the owner decided to go into a different line of work, so he sold the business to another group. The new owner won't be the owner for long. Why? Because he is going to run this business into the ground shortly. How do I know this?

My wife went in there the other day for a pedicure. She encountered the new owner who was up there at the front of the store, standing behind a kind of podium, or stand. Try to picture what you normally encounter when you walk into a restaurant and are greeted by a Hostess who is standing behind a booth-like structure with a computer monitor.

Trouble is, while my wife stood there, she noticed the owner's attention was glued to the computer monitor. He did not greet her or even acknowledge her. So she just stood there, wondering how much time would elapse before he looked up from his computer.

She estimates that almost a full minute went by before he looked up and said the following: "Yes?"

Not, "Thank you for coming in."

Not, "I'm sorry for being so preoccupied."

Not, "Hello, how can I help you today?"

Let me translate what he meant by the word "Yes?"

He meant: "What do you want? Can't you see I'm busy with an important matter? Make it snappy!"

So she told him she was interested in getting a pedicure. Under the previous owner, she never needed an appointment, but the new owner did not appear to be quite so accommodating. So he said he wasn't sure if he could help her. He turned and walked through the shop where the work was done, not speaking to any of the workers, but simply glancing at their work stations as he briskly walked by. He returned to my wife and said, "Sorry. No availability. Perhaps in another hour."

She said, "Forget it," and walked out.

She went to another shop that offered the same services that she had seen near our home, but had never patronized. She decided to give them a try.

She was dazzled. They greeted her like an old friend even though they had never seen her before. She was welcomed cordially and sincerely. They performed meticulous work. They even threw in a massage.

Guess which business has her loyalty now? (Rhetorical question.)

The first establishment does not believe in service.

The second establishment has it down.

My wife is now a loyal customer of the second, and will never return to the first.

I'm sure my wife is not alone.

The new owner of the first establishment will soon be facing the stark reality of a shrinking customer base. This will force him to change his approach drastically, or it will put him out of business.

If you want to keep your customers, and grow them, find ways to service them. Impress them with your kindness,

dazzle them with your graciousness, fulfill them with your attention to detail. It's easy. You just have to have the right mindset.

The Elephant in the Room Debating Abortion

Most online discussions or debates descend into anarchy.

Such was the case with a recent exchange I had on the Facebook page of my cousin, who, following the release of the horrifying videos detailing the debauchery taking place at Planned Parenthood, took to Facebook to announce to the world that she proudly places her allegiances with the baby-killing gulag. I sharply criticized her on her Facebook Wall for aligning herself with such a heinous organization. After all, it's one thing to look at Planned Parenthood prior to the release of the videos and, if you happen to be Pro-Choice on the abortion question, see them as an advocate for your views, and also as a source for contraceptives and other medical services. However, once the videos became public, and once it became apparent that the leaders of Planned Parenthood:

- alter procedures to favor abortion rather than other alternatives,
- set up relationships with organizations that offer incentives to Planned Parenthood to make abortion the default strategy so that money is funneled into Planned Parenthood's coffers, and
- see unborn babies - the most innocent and defenseless of the human species - as nothing more than "line items" on a balance sheet

then it is necessary to show your humanity and say, "Even though I am pro-choice on the abortion question [if you are] I can no longer countenance what Planned Parenthood stands for - the planned, deliberate promotion of abortion for the purpose of selling off the organs of the butchered babies to the highest bidder."

I may be the only conservative (i.e., the only person who holds American values) my



cousin knows. All of her friends and associates seem to be Leftists. So you can readily predict what happened on her Facebook page.

It took mere minutes before I was virtually surrounded by a half-dozen Leftists intent on beating me to a pulp - something I actually welcome, and find pleasantly amusing. It's conceptually not much different from a group of 2nd graders surrounding me in an attempt to mug me. It's hard to keep from smirking in such circumstances.

Of course, being on Facebook, we are dealing with a battle of wits, not brawn, but these assailants seemed to be unarmed.

One of them put forth the statement to me that the thing being aborted is not a person but a clump of cells. That's about as close to a coherent argument that was made. From any of them. (I wonder if she would call the image in the photo above a clump of cells.)

I asked this person if she could tell me at what point in the process during the 9-month cycle that a "clump of cells" becomes something other than a clump of cells. I also asked her if she were not, in some sense, a clump of cells. She did not provide any sort of response to those questions.

The rest of the respondents simply attacked me personally, calling me every name in the book, but not addressing the issue we were supposedly discussing - Planned Parenthood and abortion. I became the issue. Many of the Leftists contributing simply addressed my cousin and expressed their pity that she was even related to someone as loathsome as myself.

But my favorite attack came from a Leftist transplant from Iran. This Iranian young lady, now living here in America, tried to destroy my stand on Planned Parenthood by commenting on the size of my phallus - a topic she imagines she knows something about. And she went on to show her moral righteousness and religious piety by claiming she would be praying to God about its small size. This was the level of her argumentation, and no one on her side of the debate expressed outrage or surprise at her approach.

You may wonder: was I angered or shocked by her

comments? Not at all. I have come to expect nothing less from the Left. Indecency and lewdness and vulgarity are nothing new to the Left - as one can discover in mere seconds after listening to Bill Maher, Howard Stern, or Margaret Cho - and thus, seeing this Leftist speak in such crude terms and then claim - with a straight face - that she was going to include the topic in her prayers to God that evening, was not much different from Rosie O'Donnell [recently ranting](#) about her desire to smear her menstrual blood on the faces of people who are pro-life. Yes, it's disgusting. Yes, it is ghastly and destitute of decency, but it is right at home in the dank swill of Leftism.

Bottom line: here are 6 points that every serious-minded person needs to grapple with when considering such matters as Planned Parenthood and abortion:

- When we are talking about abortion, we are talking about unborn human life - something very consequential, and not something that is peripheral to what makes us civilized. Where we land on this question is of deep import.
- Allowances should possibly (and the operative word is "possibly") be made for abortion in cases involving rape, incest, a certainty for massive deformation of the baby, or especially if the life of the mother is in jeopardy should the baby be carried to full term. Abortion should not be an automatic decision; rather: careful, thoughtful, even prayerful consideration should be brought to bear on the decision.
- It should also be acknowledged that the above exceptions (i.e., rape or incest resulting in pregnancy) are just that - exceptions - and not the rule. In fact, cases in which rape or incest result in pregnancy are rare, about 5% to 6.4% for rape victims, and 1/2% for victims of incest.
- Sexual relations outside of marriage are a manifestation of immorality and an affront to God; even so, women (and men) who choose to be sexually intimate must be responsible. If an egg is fertilized, a life has begun, and that life has rights and must be considered highly salient.
- Most abortions are abortions of convenience and are simply a way of nullifying the consequences of either irresponsible behavior or unfortunate outcomes.

Note, I said "most," not all.

- While Planned Parenthood offers other services for women besides abortion, those same non-abortion services can be had elsewhere. Thus, since Planned Parenthood couples their otherwise legitimate services with the monstrous, inexcusable practice of favoring abortion so that they can sell the fetal tissue/organs in order to make a profit, they should be defunded by the U.S. Government immediately. Harsh, yes. But necessary.

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

Shameless Plug **Norwood To Speak on The Founding Fathers**

I will be delivering a keynote speech to a group of business professionals this coming Thursday in Glendale. My topic is titled "Six Great Men" and covers some of the key Founding Fathers of this great nation of ours.

Focusing on Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and Alexander Hamilton, I will discuss various aspects of their life, including an explanation of their education, their professional lives, their political philosophy, and additional detail. This speech, the first in a series of addresses on The Founders, gives people a sense of the greatness of these six brilliant geniuses who parlayed their skills and ideas to launch a nation that has become the envy of the world.



If your organization can benefit from a speech on our Founding Fathers, reach out to me.

I Do Not Want To Be Brian

She sat across me in the café.

I hadn't seen her for quite some time, this young protégé I had spent many hours mentoring, guiding, and encouraging. She had been a student of mine many years ago. One of the small handful who seek you out, form a professional and healthy bond with, and whom you try to help to make a difference in the world. I was invited to and attended, two of her college graduation ceremonies and was about as proud of her as I would be of my own daughters, she being the first from her own immigrant family to graduate.



Now in her early 30s, she has gone on to become a busy media figure, working in television as a beat reporter and then as an anchor. She had moved out of state for her first big break in this field, then she moved to an even bigger state for a better job. I felt she was on the right career path.

And suddenly, here she was, back in her home town, sitting across from me. I knew something must be up, because she requested a meeting with me, but I wanted to let her tell me her story in her own way, and in her own time. So I simply listened.

It's an old story: girl meets boy. Girl swept off her feet. Girl moves in with boy. They are a couple. Or so she thinks.

Then the clues start to mount. He fails to answer his phone when he should be available. He has lots of "girl friends" (i.e., friends who happen to be female.) And they are always there. Then there is the jarring clue, where she introduces a man she knows professionally to her new boyfriend at a big public even, and during the commotion and small talk, this colleague whispers to her, "Let me warn you: be very careful of this man." What does her colleague know about her new boyfriend that she doesn't know?

Her family comes to visit in this out of state town, and when all of them are to go on an outing, the boyfriend, whose name is Brian, claims he is not feeling well and

wants to stay home. So they go without him. When she calls him later to see how he is doing, he doesn't answer his phone. When she returns home with her family, Brian is nowhere to be found. Returning some time later, he claims he simply went out for a walk, and his cell phone battery had died. Convenient.

As suspicions mount, my protégé figures out the password to his cell phone (after all, she is a reporter) and she now comes face to face with what Brian really is: a dishonest, starved-for-attention narcissist. His pathologies include salacious text messages being exchanged with other women, claiming to these other women he is not really interested in his current girlfriend, being in utter denial when confronted, turning the tables on his accuser and fabricating imagined, shallow flaws in an attempt to redirect the spotlight on to her supposed flaws, and then pretending all is well. Finally, when cornered and sees he is about to lose her, he promises to change, to turn things around permanently to win her love. And in less than 24 hours he is back to sending salacious text messages to other women.

My friend eventually sees the writing on the wall, and thus, packs her bags at the opportune time and leaves. Everything. Her job. Her new home. Her new friends. Her "boyfriend." And that brings her to a seat across from me. With tears she is fighting very hard to not let flow freely.

I think about Brian, and ponder what it must be like to be him.

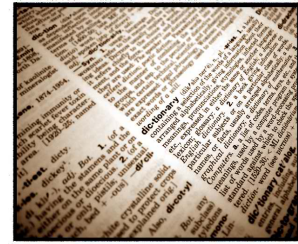
I recognize that he is a deeply troubled man. A deeply unfulfilled individual who needs to be surrounded by adoring women. He needs to *experience* women. He needs intimacy. And yet, real intimacy eludes him. Because his is a counterfeit sort of intimacy. He cannot, does not, will not really know the women his conquests lead him to. His emotional cupboards are barren. His life is a sham. And thus, he must lie and obfuscate and deny and deflect. What a sad, tiring existence.

I do not want to be Brian. I do not care for such emptiness. I desire to be authentic.

I commit to be true.

Arduous

Building Your Power of Expression



Arduous, adj.

Pronunciation: 'ärjööəs

Meaning: Anything that demands strenuous effort, or is difficult and taxing is arduous.

Usage:

- *The journey was both unpleasant due to the company I kept, and arduous in terms of the demands placed upon me.*
- *This particular climb will be more arduous than normal due in part to the inclement weather we are expecting.*
- *He's the easiest guy to work with; his meetings and work processes are simple and fun, and anything but arduous or boring.*

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