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Issue: # 113

February 12, 2016

Greetings!

If you are one of my many brand new subscribers, I extend a special welcome to you! And for those of you who have been loyal readers for some time, I thank you.

In this issue, I reflect a bit on the craft and the skill various musicians possess, and I liken that to orators. You can read about my thoughts in the **Ara's Journal** column.

And in the **Elephant in the Room** column, I conclude my observations on why I believe the Democratic Party is not really anything like the traditional Democratic Party of the Kennedy era. This is the third of three parts on this important topic.

But I begin with a concise analysis of a troubling trend I see involving our fixation on technology, particularly on our own mobile devices, something I myself am guilty of at times.

I invite you to read what I have to say and ponder its relevance in your own life.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood



Self-Development

Resigned to Inconsequence

I am becoming more and more aware of the outright obsession most of us have with our mobile devices. (In an earlier era, I might have referred to them as mobile phones, but the telephonic feature is but one of many components of such devices.) Most of the obsessions I observe do not involve talking on the phone. They involve texting, gaming, reading email, and many other things.

The level of attention that people put into their mobile devices is odd. Everywhere I go, I see people fixated in their own little world, staring into the screen of their mobile device. They are not interacting much with other human beings around them.

And I suspect that much of what they are focused on is utterly trivial.

I can't prove this, of course, but if I am correct, then vast swaths of society are fixated on irrelevancy. And thus, this large segment of the populace is engrossed in non-productive irrelevancies that do not bring growth or value, only temporary comfort. It's almost like a drug addiction.



In looking at my own mobile device, an iPhone 6S Plus, I see that I sport a grand total of 79 different apps. Some of these apps reside in a single folder. For instance, in a folder I have labeled "Productivity" I have 4 apps: Reminders, Wallet, Voice Memos, and Translate (an app that allows me to instantly translate English words and phrases into virtually any other language I wish, and vice versa.) I never have used the Wallet app yet. I use the Reminders app as a To-Do List and turn to it very frequently, either to add a task I need to complete that day, or to view any previously entered tasks I still need to complete.

I also have a folder I've labeled "Utilities" which contains 7 apps: Calculator, Compass, Maps, QR Reader, Shop Savvy (a bar code reader), Weather, and a Password Safe. I often use the calculator, and I probably open my Password Safe about a dozen times a day, as it has over 60 different login credentials I use in various online spaces. I rarely use the other apps. Perhaps I should get rid of them.

Some of the apps I have I use with regularity, such as Waze, which is a GPS app, or the clock app which allows me to use a count-down timer, a stop watch, an alarm clock to wake up to music in the morning, and a World Clock to tell me what time it is, not only locally, but in London, Tel Aviv, and Paris. I consider these

apps rather useful. But some of my apps are time wasters -- Solitaire, for example.

I think we as a people are becoming too enamored with the technology. I think it would do us a world of good to be very selective in how much time we spend staring at the devices. I think we would be healthier individuals if we were not too tethered to the things. I think if we developed the will power to keep our devices put away a bit more than we do at present, and not be so preoccupied with them, that our relationships would be better, we'd be more alert, and we'd find more productive ways -- truly productive ways -- to spend our time.

The Elephant in the Room

There is no Democratic Party, Part 3 of 3

Truly, there is no Democratic Party. It is actually the Leftist-Socialist Party.

But what is the main difference between a Democrat and a Socialist?

On July 30th, 2015, that precise question was put to Debbie Wasserman Schultz, the head of the Democratic Party. And it was not put to her by an enemy, but by a fellow Leftist in the news media, [MSNBC's Chris Matthews](#). This simple question, asked 3 times by Mr. Matthews, completely flummoxed Ms. Wasserman Schultz. Either she did not wish to address that question, or, more likely, she simply didn't know the answer and did not answer the question because she could not answer the question. Rather than admit on national television she had no idea, she retreated into a familiar bromide, claiming the relevant question was "What is the difference between a Democrat and a Republican?" And her answer was the predictable paublum: "The difference between a Democrat and Republican is that Democrats fight to make sure everybody has an opportunity to succeed and the Republicans are strangled by their right-wing extremists." Impressive.



Three days later, on Sunday August 2nd, 2015, Ms. Wasserman Schultz appeared on [NBC's Meet The Press](#). She was asked the same exact question by moderator Chuck Todd. One would think that with the passage of three days, she would have boned up on the differences, but once again, Wasserman Schultz fell on her sword. Three days had elapsed, and she simply couldn't answer the question. So she went to her familiar tactic of answering a different question that had never been asked in the first place -- the difference between these noble Democrats and these villainous Republicans.

The following month, on Thursday September 10th, 2015, Wasserman Schultz was

given a third opportunity to answer the question. This time she was at a [Christian Science Monitor breakfast](#) and once again, she retreated into her irrelevant and patently false comparison between Democrats and Republicans. Once she got to the end of her memorized talking points, she was asked if her non-answer means that she does not see a distinction between Democrats and socialists. She replied, "Like I said, the distinction that's important to talk about in a presidential campaign is one that is drawn between the Democrats and Republicans." This was said with a straight face in spite of the fact that one of the presidential candidates in her party claims he is a socialist. Somehow that fact is not relevant to her.

She simply could not answer the question -- even though she'd been given six full weeks to sort out those differences from the time Chris Matthews first raised the question to the CSM breakfast.

But since Ms. Wasserman Schultz won't answer the question, I will.

And there are two answers to this question: **the traditional answer and the current answer.**

Traditionally speaking, here are the differences between a socialist and a Democrat:

- A socialist believes in an economic system that is favorable to centralized government control over the distribution of goods and services, and is hostile towards capitalism and free markets. Socialism is an attempt to bring about equalization of assets so that there is no wealth and no poverty.
- A Democrat believes in a political system that is favorable to centralized government exerting some degree of control over the distribution of goods and services, but is not innately hostile towards capitalism and free markets. Democracy is a form of government in which people choose leaders by voting, and favors the ideals of social equality, broad social reform, and internationalism.

Currently, however, since the Democratic Party has moved so radically Left of center, here are the differences between a socialist and a Democrat:

- A socialist believes in an economic system that is favorable to centralized government control over the distribution of goods and services, and is hostile towards capitalism and free markets. Socialism is an attempt to bring about equalization of assets so that there is no wealth and no poverty.
- A Democrat believes in an economic system known as socialism that is favorable to centralized government control over the distribution of goods and services, and is hostile towards capitalism and free markets. Socialism is an attempt to bring about equalization of assets so that there is no wealth and no poverty.

There actually is no real distinction between the two ideologies. Today's Democratic Party is Socialist. Franklin Roosevelt, were he alive, would no longer

recognize his own party. Neither would John F. Kennedy. Neither would Harry Truman. I seriously doubt Bill Clinton recognizes it.

They wouldn't recognize it due to the radical, un-American positions the Leftist-Socialist movement has advocated. Here are some additional examples (see *Uncommon Sense*, Issue 111 and 112 for earlier examples) the Leftists promoted in 2015:

The Left and Global Warming:

Note: Since vitually all of you reading this are not professional Climatologists and find Global Warming a complex and unintelligible topic, I will simplify the matter.

Scientists who study climate change have three sources from which to conduct their analysis:

- A network of weather stations by the NOAA's Global Historical Climate Network.
- Remote Sensing Systems.
- The University of Alabama's Climate Research Center, the largest such center in the country.

The weather stations provided data that suggested global warming *may be* a real concern. But the other two sources indicated no such thing. Which of the three sources do you guess that Leftists turned to for their analysis? You got it: the weather stations, while ignoring the data provided by the other two sources. And yet even in the case of the weather stations, the data derived from them has been "adjusted" by Leftist scientists to exaggerate the degree to which the planet has actually been warming, showing these scientists to be agenda-driven and not science-driven.

Here is an important fact: scientific experts on climate change (who have no agenda other than conducting good science) have always maintained that while the temperature of the planet has warmed over the last century, that warming slowed dramatically and even stopped at various points over the last 17 years, but the global warming advocates published studies that *readjusted the data* in a way to make the reduction in warming disappear, falsely indicating a steady increase in temperature instead.

Leftists continued to claim the sky is falling with respect to what they imagine are impending, cataclysmic disasters that are upon us due to man-made global warming, even though:

- It is a fact that natural resources are more abundant and more affordable today than ever before in history.
- It is a fact that energy -- the master resource -- is super-abundant.

- It is a fact that our air and water are cleaner than at any time since the late 1970s.
- It is a fact that we are not in any danger of overpopulation since birth rates have fallen by about one-half around the world over the last 50 years, and that average incomes, especially in poor countries, have surged over the last forty years.
- It is a fact that global per capita food production is 40% higher today than as recently as 1950.
- It is a fact that the rate of death and physical destruction from natural disasters and severe weather changes have plummeted over the last 75 years or so.

And yet, some so-called scientists, all believers in the religion known as Leftism, wrote a letter to the White House asking the government to investigate those who deny, or even so much as dare question, global warming.

This totalitarian instinct seeped into the political arena when Eric T. Schneiderman, the Attorney General of the State of New York, recently subpoenaed financial records, emails, and other documents from institutions that don't share his unquestioned loyalty to the Global Warming scare tactics of the Left.

Leftist Political Correctness:

- It got nuttier and nuttier as the year progressed, with MSNBC host Melissa Harris-Perry admonishing people against using the term "hard worker" on the grounds that such terminology implies a favorable outlook towards slavery.
- Schools like Loyola University, the University of California, and Columbia University believe that simply asking someone "Where are you from?" or calling America "the land of opportunity" could be seen as "micro-aggression" and should therefore be banned from public discourse.
- Donna Braquet of the University of Tennessee's Pride Center (as in "gay pride" center) advocates for the idea that new pronouns be used rather than the traditional "his" or "her". She has in mind such pronouns as "ze", "hir", "zir", "xe", "xem", and "xyr." This is Leftist thinking (if you can call it thinking) at its finest. (This is the same university that banned Christmas parties on campus.)
- At a Canadian university, a yoga class was dropped because the Leftist staff there felt that when it comes to yoga, there are "cultural issues of implication involved in the practice." What the heck does that mean? The Leftists who dropped the program claimed that yoga has been under "a lot of controversy lately" as a result of how it is being practiced and which cultures those practices are "being taken from." I still don't get it. These same paranoid Leftists went on to offer this: "We need to be mindful of this and how we

express ourselves when practicing yoga." Huh? Romeo Ahimakin, acting student federation president, said he wants to make the yoga program "more inclusive to certain groups of people that feel left out in yoga-like spaces." The drivel he is peddling is called Cultural Appropriation, and it's a Left-wing mish-mash of utter nonsense. Result: yoga is now banned at this university.

The Left and the Rule of Law:

- Kate Steinle was murdered in cold blood, randomly, by an illegal alien felon who had been deported five times. The liberal Left won't pass Kate's Law which would give such criminals a mandatory five year sentence if they return to the U.S. after being deported. The Left is sympathetic to the illegal alien felons who murder our citizens and are not sympathetic to our own citizens who are victims of rape or murder by such monsters.
- Planned Parenthood executives openly admitted that they participate in promoting abortions for the purpose of illegally selling the body parts of the unborn babies they dismember for a profit. They see the unborn babies as nothing more than line items on a balance sheet.
- In response to the backlash heaped upon Planned Parenthood, Rosie O'Donnell said she would like to "take my period blood and smear it all over" the faces of pro-life advocates. Classy.
- And at least one Planned Parenthood abortion doctor, Amma Dermish, admitted she performs "partial-birth" abortions -- a horror story in its own right.
- A Leftist college professor at Capital Community College in Hartford, Minati Roychoudhuri, insisted she was a victim of racial profiling by a Connecticut state trooper who had pulled her over for not driving in her lane. The dash cam audio proved she was lying.
- The U.S. Sentencing Commission, run almost entirely by Leftists, decided to release over 50,000 dangerous criminals from prison, just because of overcrowding or the assumption that too many blacks are incarcerated -- never mind the fact that they committed crimes.

* * * * *

Although I am not a member of any political party, as I said in Issue #111 and #112, if you are happy with developments such as those articulated above, you want to vote Socialist, not Republican.

For the rest of you who embrace American values, your only option is to vote for a Conservative.

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

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* * * * *

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Music and oratory have some things in common.

When I see a scholar or business person deliver a speech, I often see such a person reading verbatim a written text. Such speeches are usually less impactful. On other occasions I will see that a speaker has an outline of some sort -- not a written text, but some bullet-points that guide the speaker or provide some short-hand reminders. Those speeches are often better than the ones where the speaker basically reads his or her message. Then there are those occasions where the speaker spoke without notes of any kind. Sometimes I can tell this speaker memorized the entire speech, because it sounds rehearsed. While memorization is an impressive feat, it still seems somewhat contrived and unnatural. But there are other times where a speaker is speaking without notes, and the speech is wholly extemporaneous. Not every speech delivered this way is impressive, but the most inspiring speeches almost always are.



Music is similar. When I watch a jazz musician play his instrument, whether it is the saxophone, or the piano, or the guitar, I might see that musician reading the sheet music that spells out every note they are to play. On some level, it's impressive that the musician can read music at all, as outside of the classical music genre, reading music is not the norm for many musicians. Even more impressive is when that same musician is reading the sheet music for the first time; we call this sight reading -- a very specialized skill. Other times, a musician will have a chord chart in front of her, which is somewhat akin to the bullet points a speaker might use to guide her in her presentation. A guitarist who is eyeing a chord chart is still at liberty to play a chord in any number of positions on the guitar, as there are many "fingerings" or "voicings" to choose from on any given chord. Finally, some of the most captivating and impressive music I have ever heard has come from a musician who is truly improvising. The musician may not be involved in improvisation during the entire song he is performing. There usually is some standard, memorized structure to the tune, but once the improvisation begins, I am getting to know that musician and his or her musicianship, as the artist is playing from the soul. Just as the speaker who speaks extemporaneously is speaking from the heart.

Performing music in an improvised manner is a display of the highest form of musicianship.

The World of Words

Unseemly

Building Your Power of Expression

Unseemly, adj.

Pronunciations: ,ən'sēmlē



Meaning: Anything that is improper or inappropriate is unseemly. Instead of using the terms *unbecoming*, *undignified*, *indelicate*, or *indecorous*, one could use *unseemly*. St. Paul used it to describe homosexual behavior (see Romans 1:27 in the King James Version.) In a sense, things that are unseemly could be thought of as gross.

Usage:

- *His penchant for endless blather was bad enough, but the content of the things he discussed was both lurid and unseemly.*
- *Every face bore almost the same smile, expressing unseemly thoughts about the women.*
- *For the controversies of the Protestant Reformation were conducted on both sides, from kings and prelates down to gutter pamphleteers, in language of the most unseemly violence.*

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Sincerely,

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