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Greetings!

We are now well into the season known as spring. Daylight Savings Time (a phenomenon that bugs some of you) has kicked in most parts of the country, and the weather is becoming more temperate. Things are starting to grow, and life, in all its forms, seems to have a *renewing* hue to it. It gives many people hope.

My hope is that you will sink your teeth into this edition of Uncommon Sense. I have put a lot of thought into it and hope to give you some real value.

When you get down to the **Ara's Journal** column, you will read some thoughts I have about Easter and its true meaning, but even more importantly is the bonus of a link I have included at the very end of the article, which will take you to a very heart-warming piece written by Joseph Grenny, a fellow I used to work for and have known for some 30 years now.

In **The Elephant in the Room** segment, I continue my foray into the Founding Fathers with a humble attempt to summarize our second President, John Adams. Read it. Adams is rather glossed over among our Founding Fathers, and this should not be the case.

But I open with a continuation of my thoughts on leadership in the **Self-Development** column. Very important stuff on leadership. Read it. Ponder it. And apply it.



OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood

Self-Development

Leadership's Deadly Sins, Part 3 of 7

The deadly sin of leadership I wish to focus on in this column is born of the two deadly sins I mentioned in the previous two issues of *Uncommon Sense* (A Failure to Think, and A Failure To Question).

The Third Deadly Sin of Leadership: *A failure to articulate a compelling vision.*

In a *Time* magazine article published in early 1987, journalist Robert Ajemian wrote that George H. W. Bush, while campaigning for President of the United States, was urged by a colleague to spend some time at Camp David formulating his thoughts in a succinct way that would express the direction and distinctions of his presidency should he win. Bush is reputed to have made the off-hand reply, "Oh, the vision thing." That phrase became short-hand for the idea that leaders must have a cogent and compelling expression of where they plan to take their followers. They must articulate a *vision statement*. They, and



you, need to be able to express a meaningful and powerful sense of what is possible. And it has to be both believable, and yet also something that is not mundane or ordinary. It must be something that motivates people to be willing to pay the price to attain it.

All great leaders of the past, from Lincoln to Reagan, from Alexander the Great to Churchill, have, in the course of their leadership legacy, spoken or written words that caused people to have a sense of what was possible, and to rise to the events of the times to bring it about. A fine example of an expression of a vision was given by an earlier U.S. President, John F. Kennedy, who in the spring of 1961 said the following:

"I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to the Earth. No single space project in this period will be more impressive to mankind, or more important for the long-range

exploration of space; and none will be so difficult or expensive to accomplish."

Kennedy would not live to see the attainment of this vision, yet his words galvanized an entire industry to attain feats previously unheard of. Thus, on July 20th, 1969, Apollo 11 touched down on the surface of the Moon, and about six hours later (now July 21st), astronaut Neil Armstrong became the first human being to step onto lunar soil, uttering those immortal words, "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."



All of that serves as a backdrop to explain a very important - perhaps the most jugular - aspect of leadership: *articulating a clear vision.*

What is a vision? It is a *desired future state*. It is a mental picture of what could be. And it is compelling and galvanizing and causes people to take action to bring about the vision and make it a reality. Thus, a persuasive and powerful



vision compels people to willingly follow the leader who articulates such a vision.

No leader can sustain followers without a credible vision. And no person will divert time and energy and resources without being gripped by the captivating nature of a compelling vision. Thus, former CEO of Apple Computer John Sculley (who both succeeded and preceded Steve Jobs) said it well: "As I see it, leadership revolves around vision, ideas, direction, and has more to do with inspiring people as to direction and goals than with day-to-day implementation." In saying that, he was contrasting leadership (ideas and direction) with management (day-to-day implementation.)

Developing a vision infuses new life into people. It is *that* important. If you don't believe me, consider this wisdom from the Old Testament: "Where there is no vision, people perish." (Proverbs 29:18.) To illustrate this further, consider this story from the life of Viktor Frankl, author of the life-changing book, [*Man's Search For Meaning*](#) (which all of you should read.) Frankl was an Austrian doctor

specializing in neurology and psychology. He was incarcerated in the Nazi concentration camps during World War II because he was a Jew. While there, he suffered inhumane treatment which is too gruesome to write about. But he eventually came to see the horrors of his time there as something that he should try to find meaning in and to see if he could place his

suffering in some larger context.

He did survive the ordeal of the concentration camps, and while giving a speech in the United States following the ending of the war, Frankl articulated, at the close of his speech, just how life-saving a vision (he uses the word *dream*) can be:



"There is only one reason why I am alive today. What kept me alive was you. Others gave up hope. I dreamed. I dreamed that I would someday be standing before you all, telling you how I, Viktor Frankl, survived the Nazi concentration camps. I've never been here before. I've never seen any of you before. I've never given this speech before. But in my dreams - in my dreams - I have stood before you and have said these words a thousand times."

The Elephant in the Room

Summarizing Adams

I had an interesting and recent exchange with JG, a hugely successful business executive and brilliant entrepreneur, about leadership. JG mentioned that he considers Patrick Henry (of "Give me liberty or give me death" fame) to be one of the most underrated and underappreciated Founding Fathers. I agree. When Thomas Jefferson first heard Patrick Henry giving an oration, Jefferson afterwards wrote, "He speaks like Homer writes." That's quite a compliment.

I have in mind another Founding Father whom I consider to also be underrated and underappreciated: John Adams, our second president. I will attempt to raise your level of appreciation for him in this brief sketch.

John Adams was born in 1735 (3 years after than George Washington) and died in 1826. He was from Massachusetts, and was married to Abigail Smith, whom I consider to be one of the finest First Ladies America has ever been graced with. He had six children, one (John Quincy Adams) who would go on to follow in his father's footsteps to become a President of the United States.

Adams had a rather tough life. After all, George Washington would be a very tough act to follow, and Adams often felt as though he was perpetually in the shadow of the great Washington. It didn't help that Adams could be vain, thin-skinned, and defensive at times. These were flaws of which he was well aware, claiming

on one occasion that vanity "is my cardinal vice and cardinal folly." He was also somewhat unbending, outspoken, and argumentative. He was rather rigid in his personal morality and felt comfortable confronting people. Yet he was extraordinarily honest and forthright. You knew where you stood with John Adams, for he was a clear communicator who said precisely what he thought.



In matters of the intellect, John Adams was a genius. Both a deeply devoted Christian, and an independent thinker, Adams was trained at Harvard in the classics, was fluent in Latin and Greek, and had a very broad and deep grasp of the ancient world. As a speaker, he preferred to speak extemporaneously rather than write out his speeches, and he spoke brilliantly. When he would read a book, he would invariably write notes in the margins, and this he did copiously. (One book he read contained marginal comments that ran some 12,000 words!)

A true believer in American values including rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, Adams understood that "equality" (a high holy value of today's American Left) would be an impossible ideal. Hence, he wrote: "Was there, or will there ever be a nation whose individuals were all equal, in natural and acquired qualities, in virtues, talents, and riches? The answer in all mankind must be in the negative."

As a northerner, he never owned a slave, and felt that slavery was "a foul contagion in the human character." A deeply religious man, Adams was reluctant to travel on the Sabbath. His religious piety was on display on November 22, 1800 when he met with Congress who had just convened for the first time in joint-session in the unfinished Capital. Delivering what would be his last speech as President, he included this benediction: "It would be unbecoming the representatives of this nation to assemble for the first time in this solemn temple without looking up to the Supreme Ruler of the universe, and imploring His blessing. May this territory be the residence of virtue and happiness! In this city may that piety and virtue, that wisdom and magnanimity, that constancy and self-government, which adorned the great character whose name it bears, be forever held in veneration! Here, and throughout our country, may simple manners, pure morals, and true religion flourish forever!" (So much for the Leftist misconception of separation of Church and State.)

The man was a mix of grit and determination, producing many successes but also some notable failures. Of the latter, it is fair to say that when he served as minister to London he accomplished virtually nothing. That was not due to lack of

effort on his part, as the British were unwilling to be accommodating. Another miscue: when he became our nation's first Vice President, he spent an inordinate amount of time and energy fretting over how the President was to be addressed, and what the formal and proper title of the President should be. In doing so, he alienated the President, and Washington had little to do with him during his entire two terms in office. Another blunder, of a strategic nature, involved John Adams' decision, in 1796 when he became President, to retain most of George Washington's cabinet, a cabinet that proved to be disloyal to him. And finally, most historians would agree that his major political failing was his signing of the Alien and Sedition Acts in 1798, bills which invested the President with extraordinary powers at the expense of liberty.

Yet his legacy is vast: first Vice President, second President, was very defense-minded and built up a strong and formidable navy. In 1779, after he had returned from his first trip to France, he was tasked to draft the Massachusetts state constitution. The result of his work was to be one of the most admirable, long-lasting achievements of his life, and is the oldest functioning written constitution in the world. He came up with the idea for the American Academy of Arts & Sciences. And he salvaged the young nation's finances from peril, obtaining a loan of \$2,000,000 from the Dutch in June of 1782. This loan was of immense consequence to the frail finances of the new republic (even though Congress was expecting a loan of \$10,000,000.) Adams himself thought it significant enough to say, "If this had been the only action of my life, it would have been well spent." Further, the raising and grooming of his son, John Quincy Adams, could be said to be a part of his legacy. Finally, it should be noted that during the Revolutionary War, while he was in Paris, he pushed, relentlessly, for greater involvement of the French Navy to help with the war effort, which eventually did pay off (especially given the outcome at Yorktown with the surrender of British Commanding General Cornwallis.)

John Adams died at age 90. He died on July 4th, on the 50th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. The principle author of that founding document, his friend and occasional rival, Thomas Jefferson, died on the same day. They had often been in competition with one another (running against each other for President in 1796, which election Adams won, and then running against each other four years later, which Adams lost.) I suspect Adams, on this particular July 4th, who was aware that both he and Jefferson were both about to expire, was wondering whether he would outlive Jefferson, or would Jefferson outlive him. Mere hours before he breathed his last breath, Adams is said to have blurted out something along the lines of "Jefferson lives!" In so making that pronouncement, while his own life was slowly ebbing out of him, he was probably, in his mind, conceding that he had lost this last contest of longevity, and would not outlive Jefferson.

But Adams was wrong. Unbeknownst to him, Jefferson had died mere hours earlier at Monticello, his palatial estate in Virginia. Word simply hadn't reached Massachusetts yet.

Adams won that contest after all.

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

Shameless Plug

Norwood to deliver program on Leadership

I am excited. Tomorrow it will be my honor to deliver a full-day program on leadership to a group of corporate executives. The program, *Leader As Coach*, will walk the dozen or so participants through a process of effective coaching, which I consider to be one of the most important and empowering endeavors any leader can engage in.

If your organization could benefit from such a program, reach out to me and let's talk about it.



From Ara's Journal

Easter and its Aftermath

We often hear complaints during the Christmas season about we the people losing sight of the true meaning of Christmas (the birth of the Christ Child) and replacing it with an obsession on getting the best deals for the latest video games or big screen TVs, along with the violent melees that break out at various commercial outlets when two selfish, short-sighted clods are grabbing for the same item at the same time.



I think our blindness is not limited to Christmas.

Christians just celebrated Easter Sunday yesterday. Regardless of the level of religiosity, as people who are only nominally Christian as well as people who are deeply committed Christians, and everything in between, usually celebrate Easter, at least for any small children they have in their families, with the focus being on the Easter Bunny, Easter Eggs, etc.

While I have no problem with Easter Eggs, that's not the true meaning of Easter.

Here is that true meaning.

Jesus of Nazareth, who is the Son of the Highest, was crucified, died, and was buried in a borrowed tomb. Because He was the promised Messiah, He had power over death, and He thus rose from the dead three days later. Not only that, He was the first person who ever walked the Earth who experienced something called a

resurrection, which is the reuniting of a corporeal, flesh and bone body, with his spirit. He visited Mary, and He visited his 11 remaining Apostles, as well as others. Easter is a commemoration that He rose from the dead, was a resurrected Being, and, because He was resurrected, all of us -- every single one of us -- from the most villainous to the most saintly, will one day be a recipient of this unusual and supernal gift -- that of the resurrection.

Yet there is another element of Easter that is often overlooked.

Just as Jesus of Nazareth had a forgiving heart, forgiving those who spit upon Him who slapped Him, who beat Him, who mocked Him, and who crucified Him, He encouraged us to also embrace a forgiving heart.

This high ideal of forgiveness is hard doctrine. Hard to understand, and, when we've been wronged, hard to implement.

My first job out of college found me employed by Stephen R. Covey, a leadership guru and author of the enormously successful *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, *The 8th Habit*, *First Things First*, *The Divine Center*, and a number of other important books. While employed there, I was eventually managed by a young guy named Joseph Grenny. Joseph was a rising star at the Covey organization and a fun guy to work for. He went on to form his own company in 1990 with a few Covey alums: Vital Smarts. And he co-authored a very successful book titled [Crucial Conversations](#).

Joseph recently posted a stirring essay online about the spirit of Easter in an online source whose normal focus involve matters relating to the Mormon intellectual community. But Joseph's contribution is of a manifestly different flavor from what is usually found in this source. His writing is of a more universal appeal, and is both far-reaching and soul-stirring, as he tells a story as seen through the eyes of a prosecutor who has put many hardened criminals behind bars. The setting includes a speech this prosecutor gave to those very criminals. I was moved after reading it, as it articulated very clearly the meaning of forgiveness and hope, which, I think, is the true meaning of Easter. I hope you take the time to read it.

You can do so by [clicking here](#).

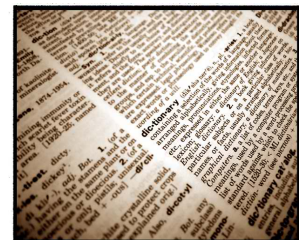
The World of Words

Elucidate

Building Your Power of Expression

Elucidate, v.

Pronunciation: ē'lōōsə,dāt



Meaning: Allow me to elucidate the word *elucidate*. The word means to explain or

to make something clear. To clarify. To sort out, clarify, or unravel. When you elucidate something, you are shedding light on it and illuminating it. There: I have just finished elucidating the word *elucidate*.

Usage:

- *Sherwood's diaries may help elucidate his motives.*
- *In what follows I will attempt to elucidate what I believe the problems to be.*
- *I asked her for clarification, but she would not elucidate further.*

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