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Issue: # 117

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Greetings!

Welcome back to yet another foray into the views and perspectives of yours truly.

We live in such an interesting time. I often find myself distressed by the direction I see our country going, and yet the crucible of the times actually motivates me to test my mettle. Truth be told, I am emboldened by the challenges that face us, and feel it an honor to defend that which is good and true.

This issue's **Ara's Journal** column will reveal some thoughts I have about *insecurity*, something that all of us probably experience at various times in our life.

In **The Elephant in the Room** column, I continue my historical profiles of our Founding Fathers, this time on Thomas Jefferson, a complex and gifted individual. Jefferson has been in the news recently, and I address that ruckus a bit with my portrayal of our third U.S. President.

I first launch into a continuation of my thoughts on leadership in the **Self-Development** column. I am confident that you will glean much food for thought with this subject.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood



Leadership's Deadly Sins, Part 4 of 7

The deadly sins of leadership I have addressed in recent issues of *Uncommon Sense* (A Failure to Think, A Failure To Question, A Failure to Craft a Compelling Vision) all lead us to this very important aspect of leadership.

The Fourth Deadly Sin of Leadership: *A failure to initiate change.*

Leadership is all about change. And leaders who fail do so because they fail to initiate change. Not change for the sake of change, but positive change that brings about the realization of their vision.

Leaders understand the reality that the nature of this life is such that we either can be on the receiving end of change, or we can initiate change. It's not an either/or, however. We all are subject to forces outside ourselves, whether we like it or not, that impose changes on us. Changes in our health; changes in our finances; changes in our relationships; changes in our surroundings. The list goes on. We are all acted upon by circumstances beyond our control.

That verity does not have to be the whole story. Leaders understand this instinctively. They understand that we can both act and be acted upon. Since we are all going to be acted upon anyway, leaders make sure they put in effort to act -- to initiate change.



The nature of change is an interesting phenomenon to consider. There are times when a change might more resemble a sudden event. We might get blindsided by the change. It comes upon us with a swiftness that we could not have foreseen. The horrors of 9/11 where Islamic Terrorists flew commercial planes into buildings in New York and Washington DC with another plane crashing in a field short of its intended target was a tragic example of a sudden event. A sudden crash in the stock market would be another example. An earthquake could also be an example. Not all sudden events, however, are so ominous or foreboding. Love at first sight, receiving an unexpected dividend check in the mail, or suddenly conceiving of a bold new idea that seemingly came to you out of nowhere would all be examples of the more welcome variety.

Change, however, does not always involve a sudden event. Many times the nature of change is such that we could see it more as a gradual process. If an athlete consistently trains for a period of months, whether the training involves lifting weights, or flexibility exercises, or cardiovascular work like running or jumping rope or swimming, positive changes in that person's physicality will be taking place

Students are typically enrolled in a college for the purpose of erasing their ignorance, not perpetuating it. But at the University of Missouri, things haven't worked out that way and the institution itself will [pay a heavy price](#) for tolerating the intolerance that festers on its campus. Many of the college students there are about as foolish as the Administrators. Even so, were I to have the opportunity of educating these renegade students about Thomas Jefferson, here is what I would tell them:

Jefferson was born into a world steeped in the slave trade; indeed, his earliest memory, at about age 2 or 3, involved a slave placing Jefferson on a pillow on horseback. His father was Peter Jefferson, his mother was Jane Jefferson. Peter Jefferson died when Thomas was only 14. When he turned 28, Thomas married a beautiful young woman named Martha Wayles, but she died, tragically, due to complications with child birth, about ten years after they were married. He never remarried, thus, keeping a promise Martha requested of him while she was on her deathbed. He thus became a single parent to five daughters (only two of whom lived to reach adulthood; an unnamed infant son also died 17 days after birth.)

Kennedy's comments extolling the supreme intellect of Thomas Jefferson are not off the mark in the slightest. Jefferson, a graduate of The College of William and Mary, was a brilliant

prodigy of enormous intellectual stamina, often studying upwards of 15 hours each day while a student. This lanky, yet graceful, red-headed man stood just over 6' 2" and was rather agile and athletic, as well as a superb horseman. He wasn't what one would call outspoken. Instead, he was quietly tenacious. A charming, yet



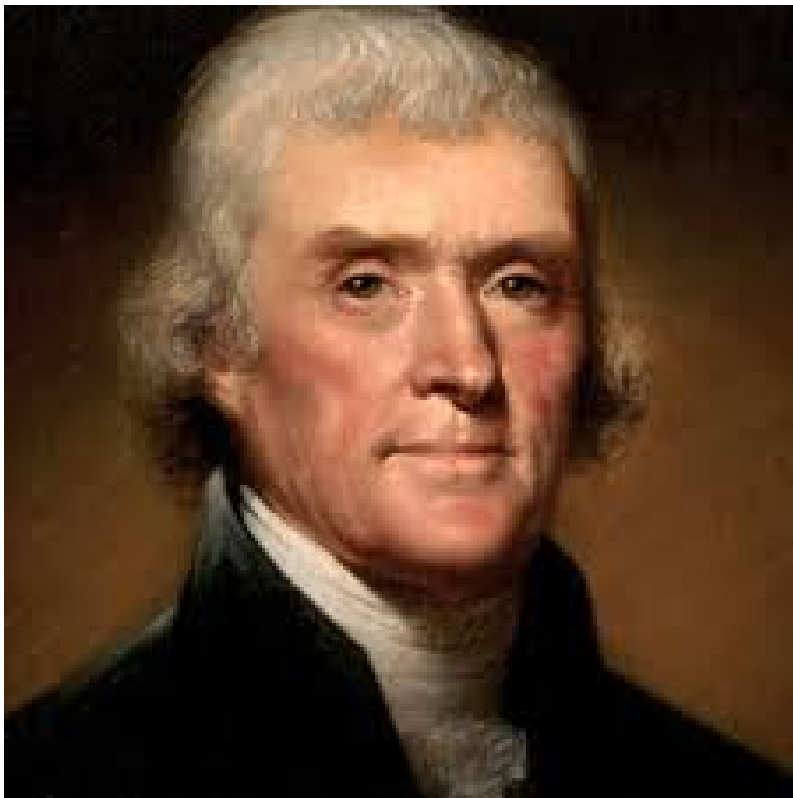
serene, man, Jefferson was polite, diplomatic, gracious, soft-spoken, and somewhat subtle. There was nearly always a slight air of ambiguity with Jefferson, a man who kept his feelings to himself, and he kept no diary in which to record such feelings (though he kept very neat account books which recorded everything he purchased from meals, wines, books, violin strings, clothing, etc.) Jefferson was blessed to have very good mentors who shaped his intellectual life early on -- Dr. William Small, George Wythe, Francis Fauquier, Peyton Randolph, and, to a degree, even John Adams. Equally well educated in the classics as was Adams, but in addition, was also deeply educated in mathematics, horticulture, and architecture, and when it came to both his interest in science and his grasp of science, he ran circles around Adams. Jefferson enjoyed designing and redesigning things of all kinds. Still, he could be hopelessly wrong about scientific matters from time to time. Even so, he was the quintessential Renaissance Man who developed a level of expertise that usually a dozen men could not develop cumulatively: he was a lawyer, linguist, diplomat, astronomer, naturalist, political

philosopher, educator, statesman, president, farmer, musician, scientist, inventor, agriculturalist, horseman, geographer, theologian, and paleontologist. With respect to languages, he was fluent in Greek, Latin, French, Spanish, Italian, and German. And it should be noted that Jefferson was one of the preeminent architects in the history of the country.

Jefferson was not what one would call a "people person." By that, I mean that while he was devoted to the ideal of improving mankind, he had comparatively little interest in people, at least in a personal sense. Still, he treated others with respect. He was also a generous man: after a fire had devastated much of Norfolk, Virginia, Jefferson, while President, sent \$200 of his own money "for the relief of the poor sufferers" but he insisted on the anonymity of the donation. That's about \$3,773 in today's money.

Jefferson was seen as likeable by those who knew him. Supreme Court Justice William Paterson, a staunch Federalist, said "No one can know Mr. Jefferson and be his personal enemy.

Few, if any, are more opposed to him as a politician than I am, and until recently I utterly disliked him as a man as well as a politician. [But after having traveled together, and talked] I was highly pleased with his remarks, for though we differed on many points, he displayed an impartiality, a freedom from prejudice."



As to his politics, he once said, "If I could not go to heaven but with a party, I would not go there at

all," a statement I find in conflict with the fact that he was thoroughly partisan, preferring what was then known as the Democratic-Republican party, a party which believed they alone could save the Constitution from monarchical encroachments. Thus, he believed in limited federal power, a dominant Congress, states' rights, and an agrarian nation free of what he considered to be the corrupting influence of banks, federal debt, and manufacturing. This was a political philosophy that credited the wisdom of the common people, and that feared concentrated power. The two things he most cared about in terms of politics were American Liberty and American Strength.

With respect to slavery, he owned a total of about 600 slaves in his lifetime (inheriting about 150, purchasing outright about 20, while most of the others were born into slavery.) At any one time he tended to have between 165 and 225

slaves, some of whom he paid, though the wages were paltry by even the standards of the day. Jefferson knew very well that slavery was a moral wrong. And he believed it would ultimately be abolished. Early in his career, he was prone to work to reform or abolish slavery, but every effort he made in his early years met with fierce opposition and resulted in one defeat after another. I have documented five such attempts. And his disdain for slavery as an institution was no secret. Of his many statements opposing slavery, here, in a 1786 letter to a friend in France, is one of my favorites:

"What a stupendous, what an incomprehensible machine is man, who can endure toil, famine, stripes, imprisonment, and death itself, in vindication of his own liberty, and the next moment be deaf to all those motives whose power supported him through his trial, and inflict on his fellow-men a bondage, one hour of which is fraught with more misery than ages of that which he rose in rebellion to oppose. But we must await, with patience, the workings of an overruling Providence, and hope that that is preparing the deliverance of those our suffering brethren. When the measure of their tears shall be full, when their groans shall have involved heaven itself in darkness, doubtless a God of Justice will awaken to their distress, and, by diffusing light and liberality among their oppressors, or at length by his exterminating thunder, manifest his attention to the things of this world, and that they are not left to the guidance of a blind fatality."

Another telling statement from Jefferson: *"Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate, than that these people are to be free; nor is it less certain that the two races, equally free, cannot live in the same government. Nature, habit, opinion have drawn indelible lines of distinction between them."* A multiracial society was simply beyond his imagination.

On religious matters, Jefferson was often accused of being an atheist. Was he?

When the results of the 1796 election came in, and he narrowly lost to John Adams (and thus became our nation's second Vice President) he wrote: "On principles of public respect I should not have refused [the presidency, had he won it]: but I protest before my God that I shall, from the bottom of my heart, rejoice at escaping." Hardly the words of a man who doesn't believe in the existence of a Supreme Being.

Likewise, when he learned of the death of Abigail Adams in late 1818, he wrote to John Adams movingly: "Mingling sincerely my tears with yours, it is of some comfort to us both that the term is not very distant, at which we are to deposit in the same cerement [a waxed cloth for wrapping a corpse] our sorrows and suffering bodies, and to ascend in essence to an ecstatic meeting with the friends we have loved and lost, and whom we shall still love and never lose again." Does an atheist entertain such views?

Judging from an 1803 letter he wrote to Benjamin Rush, he was a Christian: "To the corruptions of Christianity I am, indeed, opposed; but not to the genuine precepts of Jesus himself. I am a Christian, in the only sense in which he wished

any one to be; sincerely attached to his doctrines, in preference to all others; ascribing to himself every human excellence..." However, it must be acknowledged that Jefferson didn't believe that Jesus was divine. The essence of his own religious belief was that there is only one God, and He is All-Perfect, that there is a future state of rewards and punishments, and that to love God with all thy heart and thy neighbor as thyself is the sum and substance of true religion.

Much confusion exists in the world today about the phrase, "Separation of Church and State." Most people use this phrase as a club to beat religion over the head, running it out of the public square, and showing the supposed superiority of the secular "state" or government over religion. But most people who so hold religion in contempt with this phrase have no clue where it originates from, assuming it comes from the Constitution or the Declaration of Independence, or one of our other founding documents. But it actually comes from a letter penned by Jefferson when President. The backstory involves a religious sect from Colebrook, Connecticut, the Danbury Baptist Association, who had assembled in October 1801 to applaud Jefferson's views on religious liberty. In his warm and supportive reply, President Jefferson offered a testament to freedom of conscience in his return letter to them, while referencing the First Amendment in language favorable to religion: "Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man and his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, and not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus building a wall of separation between Church and State." To Jefferson, the limitations were with the power of government, not with religion. Jefferson's views in this quoted passage demonstrate unequivocally that he believed "State" (i.e., government) was powerless either to establish and favor a denominational church or to establish law to infringe on the rights of a church. Churches were thus to be protected, not silenced or banished.

Jefferson was far from perfect: he was sluggish during the Revolutionary War as Virginia's governor by waiting too long to call the militia together to hold off the British; he mismanaged his relationship with George Washington, causing an irreparable rift; he failed to perceive the destructive nature of the French Revolution; he was guilty of all sorts of behind-the-scenes political shenanigans; he was an incurable spender. Some would say Jefferson's greatest failure would involve his relationship with Sally Hemings, a slave with whom he is alleged to have fathered several children. Whatever his exact relationship with Sally Hemings, and through whatever moral lens one may view their dynamic, rape would not -- could not -- be validated as an accurate portrayal. Sally Hemings is known to have stood up to Jefferson from early on in their relationship, holding him accountable and forcing him to make concessions where she felt they would serve her interests. The opaque historical record portrays their relationship as consensual. If the student-radicals of the University of Missouri can produce even a shred of evidence beyond their own jaundiced conjecture that Jefferson was guilty of rape, they will be the first to succeed in doing so. As it stands, their shrill, gaping, contorted mouths do no more than clutter the airways with

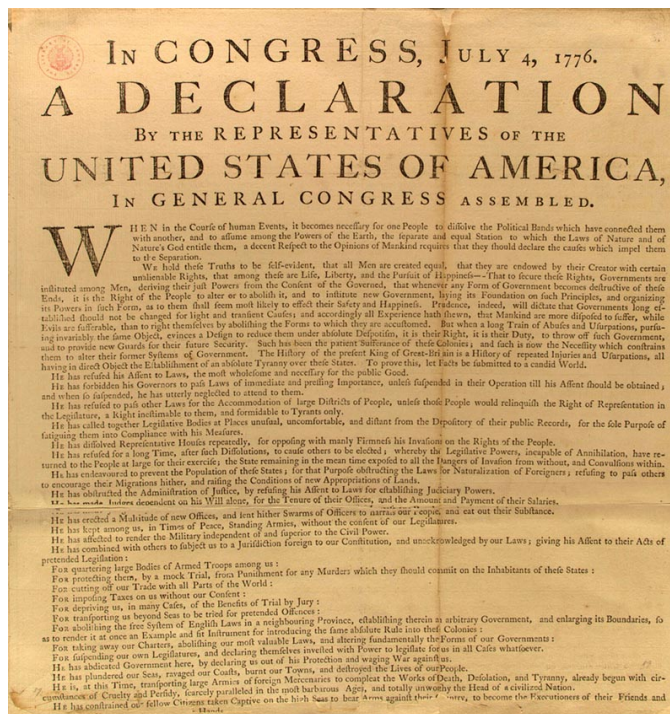
propagandistic pabulum.

Jefferson was the author of the Declaration of Independence, and also the Virginia Statute for Religious Liberty. He was the Founder of the University of Virginia. He served as Governor of Virginia. He was the first Secretary of State, the second Vice President, and the third President of the United States, serving two terms. He was responsible for the Louisiana Purchase, which doubled the size of the United States. He sponsored the Lewis and Clark expedition. In his 8 years as President, he brought the national debt down from \$83,000,000 to \$57,000,000, and he cut taxes and spending.

Of the many elegant and wise sayings of this Founding Father, I close with this gem, written after he left office:

"A strict observance of the written laws is doubtless one of the high duties of a good citizen, but it is not the highest. The laws of necessity, of self-preservation, of saving our country when in danger, are of higher obligation. To lose our country by a scrupulous adherence to written law, would be to lose the law itself, with life, liberty, property and all those who are enjoying them with us; thus absurdly sacrificing the end to the means."

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



Never Put Your Audiences To Sleep

Special Report

Some time ago I attended a seminar. It was awful.

The seminar leader, though quite accomplished in running several businesses, seemed to break every rule imaginable when it comes to making presentations. I wanted to get up and walk out, but then an idea struck me: Why not capture all the things he is doing wrong and write a paper spelling them out -- as well as what to do differently.

Shameless Plug

I wrote the paper. It's a Special Report and it's available [on my website](#).

If you give presentations and you'd like to make sure you don't make some of the same mistakes as the presenter I endured, you can download solid information and advice for less than \$30. [Click Here](#) and add "How Not To Do It" to your Shopping Cart. It's easy and fast.



From Ara's Journal

On Insecurity

In reading a very well-written biography of John Adams, a colossus of whom I wrote about in the previous issue of *Uncommon Sense*, I am struck by the depth of the man's insecurities when he was in his early 20s. A recent graduate of Harvard College, he wrestled with so many things: whether he should go into the ministry or into the profession of law; what his motives were for doing either; whether his choice might upset his parents, particularly his father; whether he would amount to anything of significance in life.



Insecurity. It's a common phenomenon. Young children are, understandably, often insecure of being left alone, or if a stranger says hello to them, or if they are tucked into bed in a room with no lights on, etc. But many adults continue on throughout their lives deeply insecure, and this insecurity manifests itself in so many ways.

Take the braggart. This person feels a need to express how great he is, how accomplished he is, how much money he makes, how expensive the suit he is wearing is, etc. There are many such people out there, and they often are truly accomplishing great things, yet their incessant need to bring up their achievements suggests to me that such achievements do not bring satisfaction; they continually hunger for additional approval. Such persons are insecure.

I used to work with a man who was gay. He was a great guy to work with in so many respects, and I thoroughly enjoyed our working relationship. However, he brought up his sexual orientation almost every single day we worked together. It's as if he would strain to find a way to mention it or draw attention to it, no matter how out of context or irrelevant to the business at hand -- and it was *always* irrelevant. I wondered what it was that caused him (and so many people of his persuasion) to be obsessed with his own proclivities in that direction so as to have to shine a light on it, as if his sexual orientation was the entire sum and substance of who he was as a person. I came to see him as a deeply insecure man who was not comfortable in his own skin. His very unnaturalness was unnatural to him, and so he sought to compensate for it by seeking to legitimize it and normalize it through constant repetition.

I see insecurity manifest itself in other ways as well. Whenever I hear a person

shining a spot-light on their own victimization, I sense some very deep insecurities. For instance, I know a woman who used to hold a fairly senior executive role in an institution dominated by men. She was, for whatever reason, fired from her job a couple of years ago. Yet she still to this day brings up how terribly unfair the firing was. I have no opinion whatsoever as to whether her dismissal was fair or unfair. But two years later, she still brings it up, whether it's during a conversation wherein she is giving career advice to others, or whether she is talking about her own career trajectory, or whether she is involved in a discussion about male-female relationships, or whether she is discussing the very industry she was once employed in. It's obviously still on her mind. And her preoccupation with the incident is slowing her down and preventing her from seizing new opportunities, because she comes across as insecure.

Male-female relationships are another area where insecurities often surface. I know many people of various age-groups who are dating. Some times these relationships appear to be healthy. But other times, I learn that either the man or the woman is obsessive and demanding. Even when these couples end up getting married, the insecurities do not subside. I know a woman, a colleague of mine, who got married a year or so ago. All through her courtship, her boyfriend would call her incessantly on the phone, upwards of 13 to 14 times a day to demand to know of her exact whereabouts, who she has spoken to, what she has been doing, what she is going to do next, when she will be heading home, when she will be eating dinner, what she will have for dinner, when she will be going to sleep and when she plans to get up in the morning. I find this a little insane. But I would have thought that once the wedding was behind them, the man would develop some security and call his wife less often. I am told this is not the case. He is obsessed, to this day, with multiple phone calls a day, and if his wife does not pick up (which she often does not) it just gets worse, with non-stop redials until she does pick up. I don't know what line of work this man is in to be given the latitude to make so many phone calls, but somehow he pulls it off. His behavior, however, tells me he is deeply insecure. Unfulfilled. Dissatisfied. Anxious.

I think we all could do well to trust a bit more, breath a bit deeper, and just be. . .

The World of Words

Consequential

Building Your Power of Expression

Consequential, adj.

Pronunciation: ,kænsə'kwen(t)ʃəl



Meaning: Anything that is significant or important could be said to be consequential (i.e., something of *consequence*.) If a thing is weighty, momentous, or far-reaching, it is consequential.

Usage:

- *This may well be one of the most consequential presidential elections in my lifetime.*
- *I don't know what she will decide, but whatever she does decide will be consequential on several levels.*
- *I asked him what happened at the meeting, and he looked at me ashen-faced. It was then that I knew something consequential had occurred.*

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