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Issue: # 121

June 10, 2016

Greetings!

What do I have in common with lawyer F. Lee Bailey, model Kate Upton, the late Judy Garland who played Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, and Sasha Obama, the younger daughter of our current President? All five of us celebrate our birthdays today. (Well, I'm not sure if Judy Garland is celebrating, but that's another story.)

And I don't know how the others are celebrating, but I am in Hawaii. I'm actually here for another celebration - the graduation of my daughter from her university studies. I am extremely proud of my daughter, as I was proud of another daughter when she graduated from her college studies 7 years ago. There is something very gratifying to a parent when that parent's children accomplish something notable, such as graduating from an institution of higher learning. Getting an education is a wonderful thing.

And I hope to bring you a small dose of education in this issue of *Uncommon Sense*.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood



Self-Development

Balance in Conversation

My first job out of college involved my working for Stephen R. Covey. It was a lucky break to me to be able to work for Covey because at that time, he had not yet written his runaway bestseller, [*7 Habits of Highly Effective People*](#), and thus, wasn't famous yet. But he went on to be one of the truly great thought-leaders in the field of leadership. My last boss there was a young guy named [*Joseph Grenny*](#). At the time, he was a playful, rambunctious rascal, but he had a serious, thoughtful side. He was also very generous. He entrusted me with responsibilities that stretched me in ways I had never been stretched before. Grenny went on to form his own consulting practice, Vital Smarts, and in 2012 he coauthored an important book, [*Crucial Conversations*](#). It's subtitle is Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High. I confess I've never read the book, but it's one I know I need to read. From what I understand, it's an important contribution to an important but oft overlooked topic.

As I reflect on the topic of conversations, I have often noticed a trend I will now draw attention to. It has to do with the balance of air time during conversations between men and women. I am particularly thinking of social settings, but I notice it in other settings that would not fall in the realm of the social. What I notice is this: men tend to dominate the conversation, relegating women to silent partners.



Are there exceptions to this? Yes, such as when I happen to encounter a very talkative female paired up with a very reclusive male. But in the main, my observations have spotted many a conversation where the male did 88% of the talking, and probably less than 12% of the listening.

I think this is a mistake. I think it betrays a thoughtlessness on the part of some men. I think men who do this (along with the rare woman who does it) misses out on a delightful world of discovery. Women are fascinating creatures, distinctly different from men in very fundamental ways. We men would do well to try to move the air time as close to a 50-50 split as possible. Women (or whatever gender our conversation partner happens to be) have much to contribute to most conversations.

My advice: Be cognizant of how much air time you consume during your conversations. Be sensitive to whether you are stealing too much of the conversation. And, to my male readers in particular, try very hard to maintain a sense of balance in your conversations, especially those involving members of the opposite sex.

Responding to the Leftist Paradigm, Part 1 of 10

As a response to my comments on the Founding Fathers in the previous issue of *Uncommon Sense* (Issue #120), my friend and fellow thought-leader, Dr. J, had some things to say. Dr. J is a well-read and thoughtful professional. He is gracious and spirited and has a keen sense of humor. He holds strong views that are often in contradistinction to my own. Why? Because he is a man of the Left. (Some readers may remember a 4-part debate I had with Dr. J a year ago -- see issues 95, 96, 97, and 98 -- where we discussed a wide variety of differences, among them Global Warming, Fox News, Bill O'Reilly, etc.)

After reading the most recent issue of *Uncommon Sense*, Dr. J responded to my summary of the Six Great Men and how I believe Leftism is a far greater threat to our national security than any threat posed by outside foes such as Russia or Islamic Terrorism. Here is Dr. J's brief retort:

It would be helpful to your argument to give examples of how the "Left," antagonistic as it appears to racism, income inequality, intervention into foreign wars, poverty, environmental destruction, Global Warming, insider trading, sexism, Creationism, pollution, disenfranchisement of voters, etc, poses an existential threat to the US. If anything, the progressives in this country appear host to its better angels.

As Dr. J has given ten examples (I am combining his "environmental destruction" example with his "Global Warming" example) of where he believes the Left has demonstrated public virtue, and, when compared with those who hold to traditional American values (i.e., Conservatives) are the "better angels," and has challenged me to produce examples of my misgivings of the Left, I will be devoting one of his examples of Leftist piety to scrutiny in each of the next ten issues of *Uncommon Sense*. I hope you find it instructive. We begin with racism.

Leftists call Conservatives racists with stunning regularity, and this alleged racism is usually aimed at Blacks if you are to believe the Leftist broken-record.

This claim on the part of the Left is not only false, it is an example of what psychologists call *projection* -- the idea of projecting onto your opponents an alleged flaw that you yourself are guilty of.

Yes, the Left claims to be antagonist towards racism, but in fact, it is the Left that is deeply racist -- and racist against Blacks. I will prove it with 3 examples.

First, take the issue of Affirmative Action. This idea came into existence about 50 years ago and was designed to enable Blacks to get into colleges when measured against lower standards than everyone else. While an argument could be made that it was an



appropriate way of leveling the playing field 50 years ago, that's not the case today. Blacks are every bit as capable as any other race at excelling in school, in the arts, the sciences, the professions, politics, etc. There is nothing inherently defective among Blacks that prevents them from performing well in any profession. Yet it is Leftists today who still believe that Blacks need the benefit of the lower standards provided by Affirmative Action. This view of Blacks is abjectly racist.

Second, we look at Conservative vs. Leftist views of voter ID. Conservatives believe that voter ID is necessary to ensure a lower level of corruption during elections. Leftists call this racist and they do so because Leftists believe that it puts Blacks at a disadvantage on the assumption that many Blacks are not capable of producing ID. Given that ID is used as a means of driving a car, of buying alcohol, of flying on a plane, of obtaining medical services, and in many other instances, for Leftists to believe that Blacks are incapable of obtaining ID is to hold a very low view of the most basic abilities of Blacks. This makes Leftists who oppose voter ID for blacks racist, all the while accusing Conservatives of being racists.

Third, let's close with a brief look at school vouchers. School vouchers allow parents to choose which school they send their children to. Conservatives support the idea of school vouchers. Leftists oppose the idea of school vouchers. Why do they oppose it? Because they do not believe that Black parents are capable of making sound decisions about where their own children should go to school. In so doing, they often force black children to remain in substandard schools where the teaching is abysmal and the discipline and control are non-existent, thus preventing Black children from getting a first-rate education. This makes Leftists, not Conservatives, who oppose school vouchers, racists.

Leftists host this countries better angels? Really?

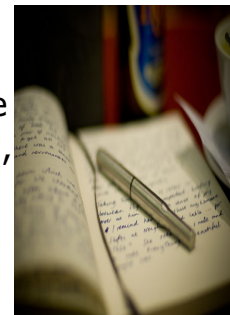
And that, my friends, is the latest elephant in the room.

From Ara's Journal

Fate and Fortune Changes Like the Weather

I have good news and bad news.

First the good news: I recognize that if I am experiencing ill-fortune at any given time (be it financial, social, spiritual, mental, my mood, or what have you) I know from direct experience that I am very likely going to come out of the downward trend in short order and see a brighter future.



Now for the bad news: after I have enjoyed good fortune for a bit, I am almost certainly going to see a reversal and have to face illness, the loss of a friend, sadness, grief, anxiety, or some other misfortune.

But more good news: all of that bad stuff will soon be replaced by good stuff.

And more bad news: all of that good stuff will soon be replaced by bad stuff.

Are you seeing a pattern?

The optimist in me has made a decision: I have decided to always remember that the likelihood is high that no matter how much bad stuff comes my way, good things are around the next corner. Were I a pessimist, I would focus on the always impending adversities that are coming soon. But because I am an optimist, I do the opposite. I allow the impending good fortune to occupy my thoughts and my expectations.

And when that happens, I fall to my knees, and give thanks.

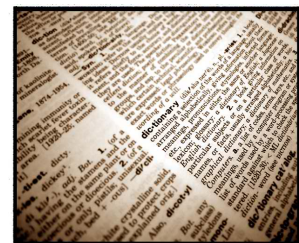
The World of Words

Lacuna

Building Your Power of Expression

Lacuna, n.

Pronunciation: lə'k(y)ooənə



Meaning: An unfilled space or interval; a gap in the narrative; a missing portion of a literary work.

Usage:

- *In reviewing the emails that have been turned over to the FBI by the Justice Department, it was readily apparent that a very significant lacuna was present, preventing a review of some of 3000 pages of emails.*
- *Unfortunately the journal suffers from a lacuna covering the years 1971 through 1984.*
- *Due to age, I seem to have a bit of a lacuna in my recollection of what happened after that.*

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