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# Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Issue: # 126

August 29, 2016

**Dear David,**

Great to have you back. And a hearty welcome to the many new subscribers.

The **Self-Development** column provides some observations about telephone sales reps. But don't disregard it if you don't do telephone sales. The content applies to all human interaction.

The **Elephant in the Room** column continues my ten-part reply to Dr. J on one of his challenges to me. It's short, but necessarily so. You'll see why when you read it.

Finally, in the **Ara's Journal** column I get away from the serious and the profound and look at some trends, trends involving our language. I hope it gives you some mild food-for-thought.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood



## **Self-Development**

### **The Problem With Phone Sales**

There are many people employed in this country in some sort of a sales capacity. A sizeable number of them work in what are called Call Centers (or Contact Centers.) Still others, while not working in a Call Center, do their sales work over the telephone.

Early in my career, I held a key sales position with a media giant based out of Germany. My title was *Inside Sales Representative*, and I was the only person in the organization with that title. Thus, while not part of a Call Center, the vast majority of my contacts with prospects and customers was done via the telephone. And I learned to do it well, surpassing my first-year quota of \$600,000 by a considerable amount, ending somewhere over \$1.2 million in sales revenues for the year.

Here is some advice for those of you involved in telephone sales:

First, when a telephone sales rep picks up the phone and calls a stranger, the rep almost always adopts a communication style that is, to put it mildly, awkward. The entire tone, the tenor, the "vibe" they give off, suggests that they are nervous, unconfident, and almost embarrassed by the fact that they are making the call in the first place. The unspoken message that is heard loud and clear by the customer is, "I know I shouldn't be bothering you with this, but my boss wants me to at least attempt to get you on the phone, even though you are probably far too busy to be interested in anything I have to say to you." No confidence, no conviction, no earnestness, no certitude. The customer senses this and immediately starts thinking in terms of how they can get rid of you. So speak with

confidence and conviction. If nothing else, pretend you believe in the legitimacy of your call. Know that have value to offer the customer. If you want a model on how to come across, go to your TV set and watch an episode of **The Profit**, which features turnaround artist Marcus Lemonis. It's on CNBC and is highly instructive in how a man of great confidence, know-how, and substance, conducts himself in his interactions with others. Replicate his communication style, and you should do quite well in your telephone sales.



Second, speak clearly. Be articulate. Enunciate. This one is an extension of the previous topic, because when we are unsure of ourselves, we tend to speak less clearly. We slur sentences. Our words run together in an unintelligible mélange of blurred rhetoric. This confuses the people we call on and makes a poor impression, greatly reducing the chances of a successful outcome.

Third, be clear and unambiguous in the purpose of the call. For some reason that not even psychologists can understand, a great many telephone sales reps fall on their swords simply because they do not have a crisp, tight, clear message on what it is they are offering. Theoretically, they are calling with some sort of offer that is meant to bring value to the prospect. So why don't they just get to the point and lay it out there in precise terms, such as, "Mr. Prospect: you are currently paying X% on your loan. If you allow us the opportunity to run the numbers, there is a very solid chance we can refinance your loan at Y%, which would enable you to save \$110 each month. Would you be interested in saving \$110 each month?" That's what I like to call a Bottom-Line Statement, and the telephone sales reps who can express such a statement quickly and clearly tend to produce better results.

What I have described above is not limited to those who sell over the phone. It has application in all forms of communication, and is the key to being more persuasive in our daily affairs. So in all of your communication with others, written or verbal, remember these three keys: **be confident**, **be articulate**, and **clearly state the value of your idea in bottom-line terms**. Do those three things consistently, and you will be a persuasive and successful professional.

## **The Elephant in the Room**

### Responding to the Leftist Paradigm, Part 6 of 10

Continuing my response to the challenge thrown my way by Dr. J after he read Issue #120 of *Uncommon Sense*, wherein he retorted:

*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.*

The Left is antagonistic to Insider Trading? Since when? The Left is antagonistic to a lot of things: religion, patriotism, inequality, the normalcy of traditional marriage, the normalcy of separate bathrooms for males and females, the normalcy of *male* and *female* as gender identifiers, secure borders, fracking, American values, the Founding Fathers, standards, and limited government. But I have never yet heard of a Leftist cause or platform that included hostilities towards insider trading.

When one thinks of the various culprits of the past (R. Foster Winans, Ivan Boesky, James McDermott, Jeff Skilling, Scott London, Martha Stewart, and George Soros) who were involved in some level of insider trading, all of them were convicted of the crime. Is Dr. J trying to say that the perps named above were all members of the Republican Party? Is George Soros a conservative?



The argument is a weak one, perhaps the weakest in the catalog offered by Dr. J. Insider Trading is an out-and-out crime. Unlike the other items in the litany of counter-arguments catalogued by Dr. J., it is unambiguously illegal. Is Dr. J serious when he implies that Leftists are against the crime of insider trading and conservatives are in favor of it? The fact is, individuals on both sides of the political spectrum break the law from time to time in spite of their politics, and when their lawless behavior is discovered, they are prosecuted.

If Dr. J desired to cite an example of lawlessness being openly embraced by adherents of a political movement, he might want to exam those who favor Sanctuary Cities, but then, he would no longer be aiming a spotlight at conservatives.

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

## **Shameless Plug**

### **Need Help Preparing For That Next Big Interview?**

So you have trouble with job interviews? You get nervous? You feel unprepared? You get psyched out? I understand. And that is why I am pleased to alert you to my new eBook: ***Your Interview Roadmap***. At over 12,000 words and with six appendices, this guide book will open your eyes to what really goes on in the world of interviewing from both sides of the desk, and will prepare job seekers to hit it out of the park 80% of the time. (OK, more like 90%, but I prefer to be understated.)

If you are interested in purchasing the product, you can [click here](#) to make your purchase. The advice you will glean from this eBook is golden! I would charge you six times the price of the eBook to give you the same advice in person.



If you've done poorly in job interviews in the past, you can turn it around. The answers are there. Take action!

## From Ara's Journal

### Trendy Talk

Language is often trendy. We all see periods of time where certain words or phrases are in vogue, and their usage catches on with the masses like wildfire.



I remember some years ago the word "**Not!**" was a hot item. It was used as a one-word sentence to negate the previously uttered sentence, a sentence laced with irony or sarcasm. And it was always said in a tone of voice that suggested it would be followed by an exclamation point. Thankfully, I don't hear this one currently.

**"My bad"** is getting old but still in currency. This phrase is used to suggest the person uttering it is accepting responsibility for a mistake he or she made. It is also used as a shield: once uttered, it gives the person uttering it immunity from further criticism or scrutiny.

**"Thanks for asking."** This is said, usually by order-takers at In-and-Out Burger, when they ask you how you are doing, and then you instinctively ask them how they are doing, and they reply, on cue, "I'm fine. Thanks for asking." It is robotic and meaningless, but at least has the appearance of common courtesy, something lacking in the language of most members of Black Lives Matter or most lyrics in rap "music."

**"You go, girl!"** I presume this one excludes half the population (although in this post-Bruce Jenner World, it may not matter.) This three-word phrase is code language for "I am really quite impressed with you."

The most recent trendy talk I hear involves the phrase, **"Just sayin'."** I'm not even sure I fully understand the point of this one, unless it is being used as short-hand for a reiteration of and justification for what was just said a moment ago.

Personally, I find such trendy language mostly harmless, except that it short-circuits one's ability to express oneself with precision, grace, and elegance. But if such trends were the worst of our problems, we, as a society, would be doing rather well.

# Pernicious

## Building Your Power of Expression

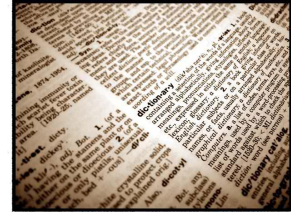
**Pernicious**, adj.

**Pronunciation:** pərnĭSHəs

**Meaning:** This word describes a situation or phenomenon that has a harmful effect, especially in a gradual or subtle way. Anything that is harmful, damaging, injurious, or detrimental could be said to be pernicious.

### Usage:

- *The pernicious influence of the mass media is something we have to take into account when we try to make sense of what is going on around us.*
- *She has acquired the unfortunate and pernicious habit of consuming large quantities of illegal drugs in order to get through the day.*
- *They better knock it off, because I am not going to tolerate this pernicious nonsense another day.*



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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](mailto: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](http://www.aranorwood.com)

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