


# Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Dear David,

 Ara Norwood

Thanks for continuing to check in with me in this forum. I have much food for thought awaiting you in this issue.

The **Self-Development** column touches on another aspect of time management, essentially warning you against a certain type of person who would rob you of your time.

The **Elephant in the Room** column postpones my ten-part reply to Dr. J because I have some other issues pertaining to the upcoming presidential election that I must address between now and early November. I will pick up where I left off with Dr. J in late November.


Finally, in the **Ara's Journal** column, you will read some thoughts about language.

OK, let's get started.

## **Self-Development**

### **Better Time Management: Avoid Provocateurs**

There are a lot of things that can disrupt you in your quest for achievement, and one of the most pernicious is the provocateur. A provocateur is a person who makes a lot of noise in a contentious way. They like to argue. They like to stir things up. They are sassy rabble-rousers. They are agitators.

Because of the phenomenon known as social media, they troll about, seeking to upset others with their barbs, hoping to draw you into an argument or a debate. But we shouldn't fall for such stuff. We  Provocateurs should just recognize that these are insignificant people with a lot of time on their hands, and we should ignore them.

Their language is easy to spot. They usually tell you that you have no interest in "the truth" (which means, the truth as they see it.) They often claim that you ignore certain statements because such statements don't support "the narrative" you are allegedly tied to. They will also tell you that you don't know anything (with the implication being that they know everything.) And they will usually swear at you, using every curse word in the book, or they will label you with some disparaging term, like "perv" or something equally incendiary and/or meaningless.

The best way to spare the precious time that you would otherwise waste on such people is to ignore them. Every second spent interacting with them are wasted seconds that you will never recover. And there is no upside. Provocateurs have no interest in an exchange of ideas. They are not there to learn anything. They play no other role than to waste your time and try and upset you.

Want to master your time? Then above all else, ignore the provocateurs.

## **The Elephant in the Room**

### **Assessing the Most Leftist President in History**



President Obama is, without a doubt, the most far left man we have ever had occupy the oval office. In fact, no one else even comes close. Not FDR. Not Jimmy Carter. Certainly not Bill Clinton.

When we elect a man (or woman) to be President of the United States, we affect the spirit of the times, the zeitgeist. New norms and standards tend to replace old ones. New assumptions take root and change the cultural landscape of the era in question. And surrogates rise up and further promulgate ideas that seem to be in harmony with the thinking of the leader.


As we are in an election year, I felt it might be good to review some of the things that President Obama has done and tried to do as President. Mr. Obama has been quite effective in establishing his agenda and has accomplished a great deal, some

of which may prove to be beneficial to the country over time. And there have been quite a few changes, many of them profound, that have taken place over the course of his term as president, that I find deeply troubling. This brief assessment will spell out the more troubling consequences resulting from the majority of the American people electing him -- twice. If you are happy with the developments I list here, you will probably want to sustain and support the status quo and vote for Mrs. Clinton. If you find these outcomes that follow abhorrent or distasteful, you will probably want to refrain from voting for Mrs. Clinton.

Here is a baker's dozen that represent how Mr. Obama has haped the zeitgeist of our times:

- Greater disrespect for the flag. With an ever growing number of NFL football players, under the sway of the Black Lives Matter agenda, disrespecting the flag of their own country by refusing to stand respectfully when the National Anthem is sung, we can expect more and more athletes from a widening array of sports taking part in this disgraceful act. President Obama, who refused to wear a flag pin on his lapel when he campaigned for the presidency in 2007, has created a series of subtle signals that clue the unpatriotic into the reality that their pet-causes trump American values.
- Greater disrespect for America by our enemies due to the apology tour. When Mr. Obama became president, he made the rounds, especially in the Middle East, by essentially telling some of the most criminal and villainous leaders on the planet that he was sorry  Obama for the way the U.S.A. has treated them in the past. He might as well as apologized to Osama bin Laden for having provoked him enough to cause 9/11. By Mr. Obama approaching foreign affairs in such a manner, he failed to attain the cooperation he was banking on, as he naively assumed that evil leaders would become cooperative once they saw Mr. Obama as conciliatory. Things haven't worked out that way, and much of the world today looks upon the United States as a weak nation. And in many respects, they are right because we have a weak leader.
- Because Mr. Obama believes that the reason there are far more blacks in prison is because we are a racist nation, rather than the reality that those blacks in prison committed crimes that got them there, the Justice Department under Mr. Obama passed laws that released tens of thousands of violent thugs back onto the streets, long before their time had been served. The country is a far less safe place today because of Mr. Obama. Because Mr. Obama is far more concerned with the criminal than the victims, we have more of both.
- On Mr. Obama's watch, Leftist lawmakers have begun to rethink what constitutes a "violent" crime. As a result of such confused thinking, many states have taken what a sane person  Shooting heroin would call a violent crime and have re-defined it as a non-violent crime. California has seen much greater drug use due to Prop 47, which redefines felonies into misdemeanors, no longer forces drug addicts to go into rehab, and the result is a rash of deaths of young people, rampant heroin use, and a pandemic of burglaries, home robberies, and vandalism. Families are ravaged by the scourge of illegal drug use, chaos is on the increase in these homes, and many a parent weeps in a state of hopelessness as they no

longer have a way of helping their drug-addicted children, all because of the Leftist mind that says, "We no longer consider illegal drug use a violent crime."

- Under Mr. Obama's watch, Colleges and Universities have become far more Leftist; in fact, almost all institutions of higher learning are, outside of the hard sciences, nothing more than temples of indoctrination, inculcating Leftist ideology (not the classics, not Shakespeare, not sound history) in today's students. Young, vulnerable, unformed minds go in to college as normal individuals and come out as radicals, believing some of the most inane drivel. Universities also turn their students into dainty little snowflakes incapable of handling views that conflict with their own, and put up "Free Speech Zones," "Save Spaces," and post "Trigger Warnings," as they fret over non-existent problems such as "Cultural Appropriation." The Political Correctness that virtually all students are forced to wheeze into their lungs has rendered them emotional basket cases, incapable of intelligent thought.
- Thanks to Mr. Obama's subtle influence, we now have anarchy spreading all over the country from a group of trouble-makers that call themselves Black Lives Matter. These groups openly talk about  Black Lives Matter murdering police officers. They also seem to encourage looting, disruption of other people's lives by storming into college libraries and calling white women "whores" and other unmentionables. These people are violent, vicious, and dangerous. But Mr. Obama seems to support both them and their methods.
- Legalizing of Same-Sex Marriage: Because Mr. Obama is a Leftist, he has appointed two Leftist judges to the Supreme Court (Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagen, the court is now Left-leaning. This enabled the historic case that changed the very definition of marriage in a way that allowed for two men to marry, or two women to marry. This redefinition of marriage is unprecedented in the annals of recorded history, and will very likely have some sobering outcomes over time.
- As a Leftist, Mr. Obama understands that illegal aliens, when they get the right to vote (or even if they vote illegally) tend to vote Democrat. Thus, upholding the law is less important to Mr. Obama than is retaining power for Democrats, however ill-gotten  Sanctuary Cities that power grab was. Cities that house illegal aliens (Sanctuary Cities) have sprung up all over the country under Mr. Obama's watch, and lawlessness reigns. Innocent Americans, such as Kate Steinle, are being murdered with impunity by illegal aliens who defy deportation and are aided and abetted by the American Left.
- ObamaCare. All I have to say about this is that Mr. Obama told a whopper of a lie when he faced the American people, over and over again, and said that with ObamaCare, if they want to keep their doctor or their plan, they can do so.
- Closing Gitmo: Guantanamo Bay has been a place to house dangerous Islamic terrorists who wish to harm us. For reasons that are not understood, Mr. Obama has had a soft spot in his heart for such crazed killers and wants them released  Gizmo Prisoners and the compound closed down. Thus, at every opportunity he has had, he has released dangerous killers and sent them back to places where they can re-enter their terrorist safe havens and plan their next attack on innocent Americans. This is unconscionable and treasonous.

- Visiting Cuba: Since 1928, no U.S. President had ever deigned to visit the communist dictatorship in Cuba, where human rights are non-existent. But by paying them a visit, Mr. Obama seemed to legitimize their atrocities.
- Perhaps the most egregious thing done by Mr. Obama to date involved the payment of over one billion dollars to the largest state-sponsor of terrorism. Leaving aside for the moment that the payment was clearly a ransom (which will put other American lives in danger), the notion of giving such a large windfall of cash to a terrorist state who will use the money to support terrorism against both Israel and the United States is mind-blowing. But this is what happens when "we the people" elect the most Leftist candidate in its history to its highest office.
- I think Mr. Obama's strangest flaw is his refusal to call Islamic terrorism Islamic terrorism. It's never been clear why he resolutely strips any trace of Islam to Islamic terrorism. I do not believe he is a closet-Muslim. But is he a Muslim sympathizer? Does he fear that Americans will randomly attack all Muslims living within their borders if they come to understand there is a connection between Islam and Islamic Terrorism? Is that why Mr. Obama calls it "violent extremism" without any mention of Islam? Does Mr. Obama truly imagine that Islam has nothing whatsoever to do with Islamic terrorism? Or is he simply fearful that the truth of that connection would reap consequences he assiduously wishes to avoid?

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

## **Shameless Plug**

### Never Put Your Audiences To Sleep

#### **Special Report**

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



How Not  
To Do It  
How Not To Do It

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.

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.

## Perplexing Talk

I had an interesting question thrown my way recently.



Journal  
Writing

During a conversation I was having with HN, he told me a story of a fellow he had gone to college with who had then gone on to law school and afterwards became a very successful and high-paid litigator. Acquiring all of the trappings of wealth, the designer clothes, the expensive sports car, the big house, the Rolex watch, the trophy wife, this fellow lived the high life. But it all came crashing down around him when he was arrested for having committed some crime and was locked up in Federal Prison for several years, during which time his wife divorced him, and he was disbarred so that he could never practice law again. He lost everything: his money, his reputation, his career, his family, his friends, his stuff. During his time in prison, he found religion, became an evangelical Christian, and spent much time reading the Bible. He was eventually released and now lives in a half-way house and spends most of his time talking about Jesus to anyone who will listen. HN tells me that this once wealthy, powerful lawyer now ends many of his sentences with the words, "Praise the Lord," or other similar slogans, and he tries very hard to convince HN to accept Christ as he has. HN knowing I am deeply committed to my faith, wanted to know if I had any insight as to why some people think that way.

Candidly, I'm no psychologist and have no illusions to understanding how the psyche of any given individual works -- especially someone I have never met. But I can offer a couple of theories.

First, given the fact that this man had everything stripped from him due to his crimes, he very likely came to the stark realization that he needs something solid to hold on to, and that the things he formerly held on to (power, wealth, family, etc.) are not reliable in every instance. So he probably sought something to hold on to that would always be there no matter what. The message of Christianity, that Jesus is always there, very likely gave this man the needed stability and reliability he was seeking.

Second, as to why he closes a lot of his sentences with the slogan, "Praise the Lord," may be attributed to simple conditioning. Every faith community (and every secular community, for that matter) has their own peculiar linguistic norms that adherents learn and follow in order to fit in. Once this former attorney was incarcerated, he had to forgo the lingo he used to spout off when speaking to other attorneys, or judges, or clients. He learned the lingo of the prison. And then when he decided to embrace Christianity, he learned the lingo of whatever strain of Christianity he had embraced, some form of modern-day evangelicalism, where saying the phrase "Praise the Lord" is seen as an act of piety. The phrase sounds peculiar to secular ears (and to other religious ears if those ears are not attuned to that particular form of Christianity.)

That is all I have to say at this time.

# Dank

### Building Your Power of Expression



Dictionary

**Dank**, adj.

**Pronunciation:** daNGk

**Meaning:** This word is used to describe any environment or place that is disagreeably damp, musty, and typically cold. The word is often used alongside the word *dark* to describe an undesirable place.

#### Usage:

- *The dark, dank dungeon carried with it a foreboding that sent chills down my spine.*
- *She had no flashlight, and the fear she had felt during her first trip into this deep and dank abyss was compounded by the absence of being able to see.*
- *David's words echoed back to him, reverberating down the corridors of dank stone -- then only silence.*

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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)

**Sincerely,**

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