


Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Dear David,

 Ara Norwood

I'm getting this second edition for the month of September out just under the wire.

The **Self-Development** column give you some things to consider when providing feedback in an effort to alleviate poor service.

Recognizing that this presidential election is truly different, the **Elephant in the Room** column takes a look at one of the two contenders for the presidency.

Finally, in the **Ara's Journal** column, I share some musings on life's imbalances.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood


Self-Development

Providing Feedback for Poor Performance

I was standing in the teller line at Wells Fargo Bank the other day holding a check I had just received from a client. When I got up to the actual teller, I swiped my ATM card in the terminal so she could pull up my account, and then I told her that my first request was to receive a photocopy of the check. She took the check and a minute later returned with the requested photocopy. So far, so good.

Then I said, "I'd like to first deposit a portion of this check into my business account, but I would also like to receive some cash, and then. . ." She cut me off with an abrupt wave of the hand, saying, curtly, "Just tell me one thing at a time. Let's just handle this one step at a time."

I was taken aback by her tone, her mannerisms, and also by the seeming inability for her to process three very routine requests.

But to continue. . . I accommodated her by saying, "Let's just start out by putting \$1400 of this check into my business account." To which she replied, "I've already deposited the check." I replied, "I didn't want the entire check deposited." She replied, with the charm of a perturbed school marm  "Bad Service from the 19th century, "Well in the future, you need to tell me up front what it is you need." Amazing.

At that point, I realized that I was dealing a person who, at best, was having a bad day.

She asked, "What else did you need? Did you want some money in another account or something?"

"No," I replied. "I think I can take care of the rest of my needs on my own."

"Are you sure?" she asked.

The damage had been done. "Yes, I'm quite sure."

With that, I walked outside to the ATM and withdrew the cash I needed, and then did the transfer myself.

I noted that the branch manager was not working that day so I called her the next day. I wasn't calling for the purpose of raising some dust and hopefully getting some sort of perk out of it, the way you might get a free meal in a restaurant if you complain about the poor service loud enough. I made it clear I was not angry. And I made it clear that my motive in placing the call was less about complaining, and more about trying to raise the awareness of the branch manager as to how one of her employees failed to provide a good experience for a customer. I made it clear that the issue might be one of training. Or, it may have just been an unfortunate showing for the teller that one time.

The branch manager expressed some surprise and skepticism, claiming that the teller is actually a supervisor with 8 years of experience and an impeccable record

of first-rate service. What can one say to that? All one can do is reiterate reality, and emphasize that while the terrible service experience may have been an outlier, it was still what actually happened. The standard of great customer service should be that it occurs every time with every customer. A good teller may be batting .999, but to the one customer who experienced the one bad encounter, that teller is batting zero.


Bottom line: when you get poor service, notify the person's manager. Do it in a way that doesn't display any anger. Make it clear that you are trying to help, not harass. It won't always work out the way you hoped. But now and then, you will make an impact and cause the situation to be better.

In this case, I received a phone call the next day from that very teller. The branch manager had discussed my call with her, and the teller called and apologized profusely, and, I sensed, sincerely.

The Elephant in the Room

Assessing Hillary

When one attempts to assess Hillary Clinton and her suitability as a candidate for President of the United States, you find very little in the way of neutrality. Those who either admire her or hate Donald Trump are quite strident in their words of praise of the former Secretary of State, seeing only virtue. The current occupant of the White House recently claimed that Mrs. Clinton was the most qualified person to ever run for office in the entire history of the United States. Some of her many admirers see her as a victim of the media. I'm not kidding. A left-of-center woman I work with made that claim to me just minutes ago, and did it with a straight face. Many of her female admirers feel a loyalty towards her simply because of her gender. And many of her supporters are in her corner for no other reason than they are possessed with an irrational hatred and phobia of Donald Trump.

Hillary Clinton is not well-liked by the masses. Even so, she leads in most of the polls, though certainly not all. Most people who are asked consider her dishonest and shifty. The Left has tried to turn the integrity tide in her favor by claiming that while she may have told a few lies,  Hillary Clinton perhaps 3 or 4 in her entire life, Donald Trump has told several hundred lies within the last 7 days. Of course, the hundreds of alleged lies by Trump are not cataloged or documented. The Left knows that if they repeat the allegation enough times, many people will uncritically assume it's true.

But Mrs. Clinton's reputation for not being a truth-teller is not new. William Safire was a highly regarded and long time syndicated columnist with the *New York Times*, not exactly a conservative publication. Although deceased, he wrote an essay in the *New York Times* in 1996 with the following opening paragraph: "Americans of all political persuasions are coming to the sad realization that our First Lady -- a woman of undoubted talents who was a role model for many in her generation -- is a congenital liar." Ouch!

Allow me to weigh in on this candidate.

What are her assets? She has been in politics a very long time and understands how things work in Washington. Not only was she a governor's wife, she was First Lady, she was a state senator, she was a presidential candidate in 2008, and she was Secretary of State. She has a familiarity with certain issues that could be valuable.

But her accomplishments seem a bit sparse. She herself claims her great accomplishments include negotiating a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, fighting for women and children (whatever that might mean), helping get 9/11 first responders needed healthcare, and offering trendy-sounding slogans that appeal to special interest groups -- slogans as catching as "Women's rights are human rights," and "Gay rights are human rights!" But substantive, landmark accomplishments of consequence appear to be missing from her resume.

All of the scandals that have followed her around give thinking people great cause for concern. Does anyone really feel that the colossal lack of judgment she demonstrated with having her private email server or in using her Blackberry device in restricted areas warrants her to receive the most classified security briefs that the President is privy to? Does anybody believe that the still-missing 35,000 emails she deleted had to do with, as she claims, her yoga lessons and her daughter's wedding plans? Does anyone really think that the needless deaths of three American citizens in Benghazi, who repeatedly appealed to her for greater security which was denied them, leaves Mrs. Clinton without blood on her hands? Especially when she defiantly asks, "What difference does it make?!"

And does it matter that her Foundation appears to be a pay-for-play scheme that basically enabled her to use her country to enrich herself by granting access to many foreign leaders? To committed Americans it does.

Are these sins forgivable? We shall find out the evening of November 8th.

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

From Ara's Journal

Musical Chairs: The Inequality of the Human Condition

This world is unfair and uneven. While much of our outcomes are the result of hard work, ingenuity, and focus, this world has much in it that can only be attributed to chance and luck and timing.



Journal
Writing

While I do not possess the same idealistic notions towards equality that the Left cherishes, I must admit that there are people in my broader community that are homeless and lacking in resources, and there are also a few people, senior executives of major corporations, that make an obscene amount of money, far more money than they know what to do with. I do think it would be nice to have some lower levels of disparity than we currently have. Does a CEO really need a \$27,000,000 annual salary while struggling families with 5 kids are trying to make do with \$27,000? It's hard to see the justification for such disparity.

I take great pleasure in surprising people and catching them off guard. Recently I was heading home but stopped into a favorite pizza restaurant. In this particular establishment, the customers get in line and place their orders in a cafeteria-style line, and the workers make the pizza as ordered, then someone slides the uncooked pizza into a brick oven, and a few minutes later out comes a positively delicious pizza! So I got in line behind a woman who appeared to be in her late 30s. She looked harried and tired, having work an extra-long day as an accountant at an internet start-up. As we chatted, she realized I was in a hurry as I had at least an hour drive ahead of me, so she insisted I get in line in front of her. As she was finalizing her order for her own pizza, I whispered to the cashier to put the woman's pizza on my tab. Paying for another person's check in a restaurant is always a favorite ploy of mine, and every time I do it, it takes a person who is overworked or worried or preoccupied with problems and transforms them into a person who feels touched and who is experiencing a small act of kindness that restores their faith in humanity.

It's important that we give whenever we can. Doing so can make the unfortunate slightly less unfortunate.

The World of Words

Bristled

Building Your Power of Expression



Dictionary

Bristled, v, past tense.

Pronunciation: brisəl-ed

Meaning: To react defensively, typically by drawing oneself up.

Usage:

- *She bristled when she heard about the new policies.*
- *He no longer bristled at the mere mention of her name, as he had moved on to bigger and better things.*
- *She stared at him for several seconds, and then bristled and asked, "But there's more, isn't there?"*

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

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Leadership Development Systems, P. O. Box 801681, Santa Clarita, CA 91380-1681

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