


# Uncommon Sense

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**Issue: # 135**

**January 23, 2017**

**Dear David,**

 Ara Norwood

The rain has been pouring down on my community in southern California the last several weeks, with a significant downpour this weekend. I am glad you are with me for this, my 135th issue of Uncommon Sense, as I give you a downpour of my own.

I'll share some tips dealing with difficult people, of which there seems to be no shortage in these dog-eat-dog times.

We have a new president and a polarized country. The Left has done its thing for the last 8 years, and now a new cycle begins, with many unknowns before us. It is often wise to review what the last 8 years have represented. We take a quick look at that from a statistical perspective.

And I share some musings about understanding others, and misunderstanding others.

OK, let's get started.

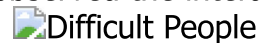
Ara Norwood

## **Self-Development**

### 4 Keys to Dealing with Difficult People

I stood in the airport terminal looking for assistance. In my car out in the parking lot was a very sick individual who would need assistance getting from my car to the terminal, as she was so sick she couldn't even walk.

The first airport professional I saw was a middle-aged woman named Paulette. As I approached her to ask for assistance, another couple got to her first. They had some sort of problem themselves, and as I observed the interaction unfold before my very eyes, I came



to see that Paulette was in possession of what I would call a "hard" personality. She was firm, unyielding, by-the-book, and not overly interested in being accommodating. The couple that approached her first walked away empty-handed.

Now it was my turn. Although I approached Paulette with some trepidation that things may not go well for me, Paulette changed her tone fairly quickly, was accommodating, gave me a wheel chair to transport my sick colleague to the terminal, booked her on a new flight (as we missed the original flight she was supposed to be on), and had security escort me through security and all the way to the plane as I pushed my friend in the wheelchair, something that is normally not done.

I think it is instructive to ponder the reasons why I was successful with Paulette when others were not. Here is what I suspect we can learn:

First, I used her name when I addressed her.

Second, I was deferential and empathetic, letting her know right at the outset that I could see how busy she was.

Third, I explained the nature of the problem (a very sick but not contagious, person who had missed her flight and could not walk more than a few steps on her own) and did so succinctly. In other words, I valued Paulette's time.

Fourth, when Paulette demonstrated even a partial willingness to assist, I not only said "Thank you," and did so with much sincerity, but I went farther. I asked her to write down the name of her boss and her boss's boss along with their contact info so that I could write them a letter singing her praises for providing me the needed help. She was somewhat shocked and delighted by this request, and that is precisely when she told me she would go the extra mile and allow me to escort the passenger all the way to the plane, accompanied by security.

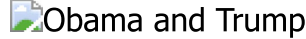
Ask yourself what lessons from the above story can apply to you the next time you are in a jam and need some assistance from others who may or may not wish to

help you.

## The Elephant in the Room

### The Changing of the Guard

Now that the transition of power is complete, and the baton has been passed from Barack Obama to Donald Trump, and the Leftist anarchists have done their ritualistic smashing of windows, destroying property, assaulting people, and burning down



buildings, it seems appropriate to review what has happened after 8 years of an Obama administration. Let's start with a variety of economic metrics.

**National Debt:** When Mr. Obama took office on January 20th, 2009, the National Debt stood at a precarious \$10.7 Trillion. After the first four years of Mr. Obama's presidency, the debt skyrocketed to \$16.3 Trillion. And when Mr. Obama left office on January 20th, 2017, the national debt had spiked to an unsustainable \$19.9 Trillion.

**Federal Deficit:** This is the amount of money we spend over our budget. When Mr. Obama took office, the Federal Deficit was a staggering \$1.3 Trillion. Four years later, at Mr. Obama completed his first term, the deficit had improved slightly, to \$1.1 Trillion. When he left office, Mr. Obama had managed to trim that number down to \$591 Billion.

**Highest Federal Income Tax Rate:** It stood at 35% when Obama became president and stayed there for his first four years. When he left office last Friday, it had increased to 39.6%.

**Prime Interest Rate:** It was at 3.25% in 2009 and remained there after his first four years. It ended at 3.75%.

**Unemployment:** At the of the Bush presidency in January 2009, unemployment was at 7.8% and remained there throughout the first four years of Mr. Obama's administration. When he left office, the rate had improved to 4.7%, but it should be noted that the figure does not account for those Americans who simply gave up and stopped looking for work.

**Poverty:** The US poverty rate stood at 13.2% at the beginning of Obama's first term. It went up to 15.8% at the end of his first term, but went down a bit at the end of his second term, to 14.3%

**Food Stamps:** Similarly, the number of people receiving food stamps was somewhat mercurial during Obama's administration: the number jumped from 32 million to 47 million, and ended, last week, at about 43.2 million.

**Gasoline Prices:** The same could be said for the average price of a gallon of regular gasoline. When Obama came into office, the average price was \$1.84, but after four years, that number had climbed to \$3.44. Happily, that number is now down to about \$2.37 a gallon.

**Housing Foreclosures:** Another rise and fall is seen in the number of housing foreclosures of the previous four-year period. When Mr. Obama came into office, we were in the early stages of the housing crisis, and saw 7.2 million foreclosures. The next four years, Obama's first terms, saw 13.5 million homes foreclose. The last four years saw that number drop to 4.63 million foreclosures.

**Household Income:** A bright spot during the Obama years shows that while median household income was at \$50,112 in 2009, it climbed slightly to \$51,939 at the end of his first term. Of course, while the numbers there were moving in the right direction, ask yourself if you would be happy with an \$1827 raise after four years of work. That's less than \$460 a year, four years in a row. When Mr. Obama left office, that number was at \$58,221.

**Military Budget:** When Obama took office in 2009, the military budget was set at \$481.4 Billion. After four years, that number was \$672.9. When he left office, the budget was at about \$582.7 Billion.

As the most powerful man on earth, the United States President affects the zeitgeist of the times. Thus, it is interesting to consider social issues and how society changes during a given administration. Given that Mr. Obama was the most Leftist president we have ever had, and that he was able to serve two terms, thus allowing Leftist ideology to gain the upper hand, it is telling that the country as a whole is more secular than it has been. Here are two Leftist chestnuts to evaluate:

**Same-Sex Marriage:** When Mr. Obama took office in January 2009, the number of states that had legalized same-sex marriage was . . . zero. On January 21, 2013, that number had climbed to 9. When he left office, the number was 50, as same-sex marriage was barely passed as federal law by a divided Supreme Court.


**Recreational Marijuana:** At the start of Mr. Obama's first term, the number of states that had legalized the recreational use of marijuana was zero. After four years in office, that number climbed to two. Today, as he leaves office, 8 states have made the decision to legalize what the federal government still considers illegal drug use.

**Abortion:** At the start of Mr. Obama's presidency, 3,319,505 abortions are estimated to have been performed over the previous four years. At the end of Mr. Obama's first term, that number had shot up to 4,849,600 estimated abortions. I do not have reliable statistics for the end of Mr. Obama's second term.

It will be very interesting to see what happens to this country after four years of a Trump administration, and how those categories I have listed above will change statistically.

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

### On Understanding

I am now convinced that we misunderstand each other much of the time. We talk past each other. Person A uses a word that Person B completely misinterprets. Far too often we assign bad motives to our opponents. Bad motives do exist at times, but not nearly as often as we imagine.  Journal Writing

It will take great effort to remember that a large percentage of the time, I will both misunderstand and be misunderstood. While few people have the desire or the patience to try to understand, I must commit to making every effort.

I want to understand others.

## The World of Words

### Excoriate

#### Building Your Power of Expression



Dictionary

**Excoriate**, v.

**Pronunciation:** ek'skôrēāt

**Meaning:** To censor or criticize severely. To denounce, condemn, attack, lambaste, or pillory.

#### Usage:

- *If President-Elect Donald Trump succeeds in stopping illegal immigration, bringing back jobs to America, lowering unemployment, and eradicating ISIS, the newspapers that have excoriated him may well begin to laud him.*
- *The arguments supporting the notion that man-made global warming as an imminent crises are so suspect and based on such faulty reasoning that it is surprising more people do not publicly excoriate them.*
- *To excoriate a person in public may make the critic feel superior but it does not usually foster wisdom or understanding.*

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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).

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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