

Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence


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Issue: # 136

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Dear David,

 Ara Norwood

Welcome to another round of *Uncommon Sense*. It pleases me greatly that you are committed to growth and development.

We begin with an idea you will likely find intriguing, involving how you can draw upon your own hand-picked board of advisors.

I post my penultimate response to Dr. J on his challenge that it is the progressive left that is committed to cleaning up pollution.

And finally, I opine on the notion of distractions and attention spans, since it is clear that our span of attention today is not what it once was.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood


Self-Development

Developing Your Personal Board of Advisors

We hardly know anything. Really. When you think about the vast amount of knowledge that is possible, and the amount of time we waste on things that matter very little (reality television, staring vacantly into the abyss that is our electronic device, reading email that provides no value, etc.) it's no surprise that our depth of knowledge on even the things we know the most about is actually quite shallow.

Even when we once did learn something of value, something we could have said we had knowledge of, it is not a guarantee that such knowledge will remain with us. We are all amnesiacs to some degree, and the older we get, the more some bits of knowledge that served us well in yesteryear will be lost among the rubble of lessons learned that are now lessons misplaced. The adage, "If you don't use it, you lose it," really does apply. As a sophomore and junior in high school, I got rather good at math, both algebra and plane geometry. Today, neither discipline is among my skill sets.

Thus, we are, of necessity, dependent on others -- others who also know very little, but probably know more than we do. Still, there are a favored few, small in number, that can lend their wisdom to us so that we can entertain useful perspectives about matters we need assistance on. There are decisions we need to make and problems we need to solve for which men and women of unusual gifts have the capacity to provide assistance.

The people of unusual capacity that we can draw upon are of two types: people we know, and people we do not or cannot know directly. Both groups can comprise our personal Board of Advisors.  Board of Advisors

Let's begin with a consideration of people you know, at least on some level. They might be close friends, work associates, or perhaps people you know only peripherally. Think of the 3 or 4 -- or 6 or 7 -- people you know personally who are among the best and the brightest. Perhaps they are brilliant at problem solving. Perhaps they are what you would think of as ingenious. Perhaps they are people of depth. Perhaps they are deeply wise, or deeply virtuous. Or perhaps they simply inspire you on some level. As you consider the men and women of great accomplishment that you know on some level, you might consider drawing up a written list of those individuals and write down their attributes next to their name. Here is my list as an example:

- **Ross Baron:** extremely sharp and fast on his feet; uber-brilliant at macro issues; straight-shooter.
- **Tammy Fairbanks:** pure virtue; a prophetess; the truest of disciples; adept at building bridges of understanding.
- **Dennis Prager:** extraordinary in sorting out good and evil.
- **John Sorenson:** propensity to research in-depth and write with a compelling clarity that is virtually bullet-proof.
- **Keri Tombazian:** Good-hearted; brings out the nobler qualities in others; exudes sunshine.
- **Terry Warner:** Master of self; personifies integrity.

You are not limited to those you know personally. You can know them indirectly, through their writings, speeches, biographies, and other such things. In other words, if you admire Steve Jobs, the legendary CEO of Apple, you can draw upon his knowledge, personality, or style by getting to know him via his speeches (still on YouTube), or his biography (a very good one was written by Walter Isaacson) or his own writings which are easy to come by. When you get to know the mind of Steve Jobs, you can make reasonable guesses as to what he would do in a given situation. You can actually draw upon him for advice and receive his advice, as it were, by tapping into what you know of his mind. When you ponder deeply what Jobs would do or say in a given moment, you may benefit from an insight that you yourself may not have come up with.

Imagine if you spent time getting to know the mind of great people so that you knew what they would likely do in a given situation. As you think on the people you most admire, you can create a second, equally valuable cadre of advisors you can draw upon. If I were to assemble my own, the team might consist of the following:

- **Winston Churchill:** Perhaps the most courageous man of the 20th century.
- **Peter Drucker:** Consistently sees what others miss.
- **Victor Davis Hanson:** Master of sorting our complexity and explaining it in clear ways.

- **George Washington:** Impeccable judge of character; possessed steely determination against impossible odds.

Advice: Think of the small handful of people you know or know of that you believe to be truly "great" or "virtuous," or "wise." Make it your mission to get to know them and how they conduct themselves. Make these men and women members of your own personal Board of Directors. Your board may change from time to time. But they will always be there for you to draw upon, learn from, and use as a springboard to growth.

The next time you have a thorny problem to consider, or a dilemma to unravel, summon in your own mind the members of your Board of Directors. Call upon them one at a time and reflect on what they might tell you. Their collective wisdom will help you time and time again.


The Elephant in the Room

Responding to the Leftist Paradigm, Part 9 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.*

This particular claim by Dr. J seems to be a theme & variation of the issue of Global Warming, which was dealt with in *Uncommon Sense*, #125. Speaking for myself, an ordinary citizen who cherishes American values, one would imagine from Dr. J's claim that I must not care about pollution. That is part of the larger narrative that the progressive Left wishes to promulgate about conservatives.

So let me say that as a religious man, I believe the earth is the Lord's footstool. Therefore, I believe the earth needs to be cared for, not abused. For the record, I disdain pollution of any kind, (air, sound, land, water), and whenever I have an opportunity to make a  difference to keep the earth and its resources clean, I try to do so. I do not know where Dr. J or the Left came up with the notion that they are the ones who are the real stewards of the earth's care, but I would suggest they look hard in the mirror and live up to the lofty standards they loudly proclaim.

Does Leonardo DeCaprio, a talented actor and a man of the Left who is very outspoken on the environment, really pack any credibility in lieu of the fact that he spends a fair amount of time partying on energy consuming yachts, or globe trotting on private jets or purchasing and living in carbon-producing mansions?


Or what about Al Gore, one of the most outspoken activists on the environment? Back in 2010, he gave a lecture in Gothenburg, Sweden on sustainable development. Gore even asked his guests to please use public transportation to attend the event so that there would be fewer CO2 emissions. Yet Gore told the driver of his private car to leave the engine running for the almost hour-long lecture. This is yet another example of the Left pointing a finger at conservatives for imagined offenses that the Left themselves have trouble avoiding.

Finally, those industrialists who are irresponsible where pollution is concerned are found on both sides of the political spectrum. There is nothing uniquely "liberal" or "progressive" about those who are concerned about pollution.

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

From Ara's Journal

On Attention Spans

Distractions are everywhere. They seem part of the warp and woof  of our current culture. Sort of makes me want to tune out at times.

Journal
Writing

The invention of the microwave oven is symbolic of the speed at which people operate much of the time. Cutting corners, exhibiting impatience, desiring ever quicker conclusions to whatever they are doing. I think of the typical MTV video I used to watch during my college days, or similar music videos I regularly see during my workouts at the gym. The camera cannot seem to stay on one image for more than about a three-quarters of one second before hopping over to another seemingly random, disjointed image that doesn't allow for any context or common thread establishing a coherent theme.

All of this is in stark contrast to an earlier era in the mid 19th century. Neil Postman captures it well:

The first of the seven famous debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas took place on August 21st, 1858, in Ottawa, Illinois. Their arrangement provided that Douglas would speak first, for one hour; Lincoln would take an hour and a half to reply; Douglas, a half hour to rebut Lincoln's reply. This debate was considerably shorter than those to which the two men were accustomed. In fact, they had tangled several times before, and all of their encounters had been much lengthier and more exhausting. For example, on October 16, 1854, in Peoria, Illinois, Douglas delivered a three-hour address to which Lincoln, by agreement, was to respond. When Lincoln's turn came, he reminded the audience that it was already 5 pm. , that he would probably require as much time as Douglas, and that Douglas was still scheduled for a rebuttal. He proposed, therefore, that the audience go home, have dinner, and return refreshed for four more hours of talk. The audience amiably agreed, and matters proceeded as Lincoln had outlined. (Amusing Ourselves to Death, p. 44.)

Postman then astutely asks, "What kind of audience was this? Who were these people who could so cheerfully accommodate themselves to seven hours or

oratory?"

What kind of people, indeed? God grant me patience. And grant it right now!

The World of Words

Pastiche

Building Your Power of Expression



Dictionary

Pastiche, n.

Pronunciation: pastēSH

Meaning: This word is traditionally used in the context of art. It usually refers to a work of art that is comprised of borrowed styles from a number of other works of art, perhaps from a different period of time. I often use the term in a broader context to mean anything that is comprised of various component parts of other sources.

Usage:

- *It's hard to categorize his writing style; I suppose it's best to see it as a moving target, a conglomeration of various styles, a pastiche of sorts, both ancient and modern, both humorous and sobering, both plain-spoken and symbolic.*
- *You're going to love this restaurant! They have everything. Think of it as a pastiche of east and west, Cajun and Asian, Mexican and soul food. They even serve pizza.*
- *This hodgepodge of musical styles defies labeling. It is so elusive to categorization it can only be called a pastiche of timbre, color, rhythm, and modal structure.*

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,

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