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Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Dear David,

 Ara Norwood

First off, allow me to welcome the many new subscribers, including about sixty of my new students.

Uncommon Sense is a unique publication. It is designed to give you much food for thought on a wide array of important matters.

Some of my readers primarily subscribe because they are interested in **Self-Development**. Hence, my opening column contains my thinking and experience on matters ranging from leadership, time management, career matters, building wealth, being healthy, thinking clearly, and getting ahead. In this issue, I share some insights into the importance of providing world-class service.

Others can't wait to read my **Elephant in the Room** column, which I use as my bully pulpit to address controversies and other troubling matters -- things that I believe are critical to a sustainable American culture. I often sound off on political intrigues, legal matters, social issues, educational absurdities -- sometimes with

tongue in cheek, and other times in a fairly debate-minded modality as I do with today's topic: a response to Dr. J on the notion that the progressive Left are concerned about the disenfranchisement of voters. I will deconstruct such thinking in this issue.

Others tell me they like to hear what I have to say in the "**From Ara's Journal**" column for it is there that I become more open and ruminate about deeper issues - religion, life and death, meaning, purpose, and being real. Today I address a troubling matter involving Islam -- two forms of Islam, actually.

And occasionally, I get a word-smith-type person, one who loves language and expression, who reads *Uncommon Sense* primarily to add a new word to their vocabulary which they get in the **World of Words** column. I selected a fantastic word for this issue for exactly those types of readers.

But as much as you love to read *Uncommon Sense*, rest assured I love writing it. So sink your teeth into this issue, and allow it to serve as food for thought.

OK, let's get started.


Ara Norwood

Self-Development

Serving Customers Is A Decision

I had placed a phone call to Amici's Pizza near my home to order several pizzas for take-out. When I arrived to pick them up, however, I realized that I had left my wallet in the other car, which was at home.

The owner of the establishment understood my plight and he decided to do what he always does, which is offer first-rate service. He put some thought into how he could spare me the hassle of having to drive back home to get my wallet. He asked, "Why don't you call your house? If anyone is home they can retrieve your credit card from your wallet and read me the number over the phone, saving you a trip." I was very impressed that he would make such an offer, but, alas, I knew there was no one home. So I made the trip back home to get my wallet.

Soon I was back at Amici's and I paid for the pizzas. However, when the owner lifted up the lids of both pizza boxes to show me his product, he realized that somehow the lids had been pushed down into the pizzas, so that when he lifted them up, there was  Serving Pizza cheese stuck to the inside top of the boxes. He felt that wasn't acceptable, so he insisted I allow him to make new pizzas for me. How could I refuse? I soon was walking out with two fresh pizzas, and he even threw in a free soda for my troubles.

I have to say, I was impressed to the point that it's unlikely I will order pizza from a competitor. His pizzas are reasonably good, but his service is far and away

superior to other establishments of this kind.

I think there are two important lessons in this story for me and for you, and I will illustrate them with a question:

First, when you see a customer in a bind (e.g., they forgot their wallet), do you just shrug your shoulders and wish them well, or do you put some mental energy into finding a way to help them?

Second, when you see that what you are delivering is not the very best that you can deliver, do you course-correct and go the extra-mile to deliver according to expectations, or do you cut corners?

This entrepreneur who runs a pizza shop made a decision to offer first-rate service. And it's as simple as that.

Service is a mind-set. It's a decision. It's a world-view.

And you can make that same decision in whatever your undertakings, whether it be to plan a high school reunion, or run a hospital, or evolve a relationship, or wash a car.

Now decide to decide.

The Elephant in the Room

Responding to the Leftist Paradigm, Part 10 of 10

Concluding 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.*

We come to our final foray into the challenge put forth by Dr. J, a man of the Left, a well-educated, thoughtful, and intelligent man. I appreciate the challenge he put forth, and I have been honored to respond to his challenge with evidence and analysis.


He began his litany of Leftist concerns and causes with racism, and ended it with disenfranchisement of voters. Interesting bookends. More on that shortly.

What he means by "disenfranchisement of voters" is this: he believes, along with others who see themselves as "progressives," that Republican insistence that voters be required to show ID before voting is intended so that blacks won't be able to vote. (Note: the reason Republicans want voting law to mandate ID has nothing to do with blacks per se and has everything to do with preventing voter

fraud whatever the skin color of the fraudster, but that is a separate topic that I will address at some point in the future.)

If you are confused, that is understandable. Allow me to remove the fog.

The "Progressive Left" in this country, virtually all of whom are members of the Democratic Party, has a constellation of beliefs. One of those beliefs is that blacks mostly vote Democrat. In this, they are correct; blacks, for reasons that elude me, vote Democrat in large numbers. (For instance, in the 2012 election, 95% of black Americans voted for Obama according to a [Gallup Poll](#). Even in the 2016 election, [88% of blacks](#) voted Democrat.)

Another belief of Leftists is that blacks, who make up somewhere between 11% to 13% of the U.S. population, are incapable of obtaining and/or maintaining ID. Leftists don't believe this about Asians, or about Hispanics, or about Whites. They don't believe this about Russians, or about Cubans, or about Arabs. But when it comes to blacks, the  Voter ID Progressive Left believe that this particular race of people are so inept, so incapable, and so dysfunctional, that they cannot possibly obtain or keep on hand a valid Driver's License or other ID.

Therefore, given this belief, Leftists assume that if the law required someone to produce ID at the polling booth during an election, blacks in large numbers, who vote Democrat, would be barred from voting. And thus, Democrats would lose more elections. And that's not fair.

I have to wonder, does the Progressive Left extend their belief about black inability to have a valid Driver's License to blacks being given a pass in not showing ID when ordering or buying liquor at a bar or at a liquor store? Do they also believe blacks should be given a pass whenever a law enforcement officer pulls them over and asks to see their ID? Do they believe that when a black is trying to board a plane, the current policy that ID is shown at the security gate should be waived since blacks are the only people that cannot acquire and hold on to a simple ID card? What about when showing up to their new job on their first day and someone in the Human Resources department asks to copy not one but two forms of ID for their employment file? What about a case where a patient shows up to a medical facility for an appointment with a doctor and is asked by the receptionist to show ID -- is that receptionist being racist if the patient is black?

Now, I don't think I have to comment on the silliness of such a belief. But I will comment on a related matter.


I consider the Leftist belief that blacks are incapable of obtaining or maintaining ID is about as racist as it gets. And yet, it is claimed by Leftists that conservatives are racist against blacks. Dr. J said as much in his litany of charges against conservatives (see his argument cited above, where racism is prominently listed first.)

Psychologists have a term for this; it is called "Projection" -- the notion of projecting on to someone else a character trait that you yourself have.

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

From Ara's Journal

The Vulnerabilities of Normative Islam

I don't know a lot of Muslims, believers in Islam. I met a nominally  Muslim woman, MM, in 1983. We dated a bit and I met her family whom I considered to be kind and decent. Six years later, I met a much more devoted believer in Islam, BA, who didn't go so far as to wear a burqa (which covers the face), but did wear the hair covering while at work. She was divorced with two children, and I considered her to be an extraordinarily kind and gracious woman. Later still, I met a young man, FT, who was from Iran. He struck me as a fun guy to talk to, but at times he could be quite self-centered and fairly aggressive and hot-headed in his demeanor. Over the years I have had a number of Muslims as college students. I am friends with one of them, AH, who I have come to know to be a positively lovely human being.

Journal
Writing

When America was attacked on September 11th, 2001, and nearly 3,000 innocent Americans lost their lives, the attack was carried out by Muslims -- believers in Islam. These Muslims thoroughly believe they were living out their religion -- that they had a moral obligation to destroy America and kill men, women, and children, none of whom these killers believed were innocent, and all of whom they believed deserved death.

I remember watching President George W. Bush going on live television and making the claim that we are not at war with Islam, and that Islam is a religion of peace.

I am not an expert on the religion of Islam. I've only read portions of the Koran, portions which I find troubling, but which I do not pretend to understand on a deep level. I don't know if it is fair or accurate to say that Islam is a religion of peace. I do know two things, though:

- Most of the Muslims I have had interaction with strike me as normal human beings just trying to make it in life. They work, they study, they love, they talk, they play -- just like anyone else.
- I am learning more about other Muslims -- a breed of Muslim that is fanatic, and violent, and dangerous. These other Muslims commit terrorist acts against others -- Jews, Americans, fellow Muslims they deem less than stalwart. These other Muslims are committed to waging Jihad -- a holy war - - against the west, and of destroying western civilization, replacing it with Sharia Law.

I find it curious that normative Muslims do not separate themselves from these other Muslims in clear and unmistakable language, just as I found it curious that the Catholic Church didn't deal with pedophile priests in striking and decisive ways. And just as I believed that a lack of decisiveness in the leadership of the

Catholic Church against renegade priests was harmful to the credibility of the Catholic Church, I further believe that a lack of unabashed condemnation of Islamic Terrorism by normative Muslims renders Islam vulnerable to suspicion, distrust, and prejudice.

But what if the terrorists are correct, and their understanding of Islam is sound? In other words, with if the Muslims I have known and associated with are actually lukewarm in their devotion to their own religion? These are sobering questions that require much thought and careful study. . .

The World of Words

Mosaic

Building Your Power of Expression



Dictionary

Mosaic, n.

Pronunciation: mōzāik

Meaning: Although this word has several definitions, the one I enjoy most refers to a combination of diverse elements, forming a more or less coherent whole.

Usage:

- *The political party resembled an incompletely constructed mosaic of competing interests.*
- *The dish was a mosaic of all food groups that actually tasted indescribably delicious.*
- *This symphonic work is a mosaic of diverse cultures (Indian, European, South American, and Turkish) as well as from wide ranging styles (baroque, rococo, nanigo rhythms, and even some 12-tone elements).*

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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