


# Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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**Issue: # 138**

**February 28, 2017**

**Dear David,**

 Ara Norwood

Thanks for tuning in once again.

This issue of *Uncommon Sense* addresses the problems with email, and offers some solutions.

Also, we will examine a peculiarity among the Hollywood elites when awarding movies with designations such as Best Picture. As the oscars just took place a few days ago, this is very timely.

Finally, we explore the notion of bias, and how seemingly intelligent statements often are quite shallow, and are dripping with a hidden bias.

OK, let's get started.


## **Self-Development**

### The Avalanche of Email: Two Problems, Two Solutions

Email is a blessing and a curse.

The blessing: speed in getting a message out to one or to many, and speed in responding.

The curse: there are actually two of them.

The first curse is that email (and here I am referencing legitimate, meaningful email) can come at us with a speed and frequency that is overwhelming. Like the [classic episode](#) of I Love Email Lucy showing Lucy Ricardo on an assembly line trying in vain to keep up with the pace, we can become buried in email and it can consume us.

The second curse is that far too much email makes it into our In-Box rather than our Junk folder. So much of the emails that come our way are nothing but spam, time wasters, and distractions which render us less productive.

Here are two solutions:

The first solution: block out an hour of time each workday to go through your emails and deal with them. For me, I normally do so from 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM. If I'm not delivering an all-day seminar or in a very important client meeting scheduled at that time, I am attacking my emails. And by attack, I mean I respond to them quickly -- something most people do not do. (And that baffles me. People who are otherwise responsible and successful often fall on their swords when it comes to responsiveness in the email domain.) And after I respond to them, I file them, dragging and dropping them into clearly labeled files on my computer. Or, if I am certain they are not ever going to be needed in the future, I delete them.

The second solution: if the email itself is spam, or some kind of unwanted advertisement pitching some unwanted product or service, I look for the Unsubscribe Button, and I unsubscribe. That usually, though not always, brings those unwanted emails from that specific source to an abrupt end. I unsubscribe from multiple sources every single week.

Try to keep your In-Box very lean, with very few emails lingering in it. And follow the two solutions above. Do so and you will enjoy a measure of focus and clarity you otherwise might not have.

## **The Elephant in the Room**

### The Inauthenticity of Inclusivity

The Oscars took place last Sunday night. Most of the water-cooler gab the next day centered on the mishap involving which film took home Best Picture honors, with *La La Land* accidentally being named the winner, when, in fact, it was *Moonlight* that won.

I am not particularly interested in the mishap.

But I am keenly interested in the deeper meaning of *Moonlight* winning Best Picture, especially after reading one interpretation by a [Huffington Post](#) writer named Matthew Jacobs, who opines that the vote for *Moonlight* as Best Picture is a vote for inclusivity in Hollywood. Mr. Jacobs informs us that *Moonlight* is a drama about a black kid



grappling with his sexuality -- his homosexuality. So with this film, Hollywood was given an opportunity to address the grievances raised in recent years by black artists who felt shunned due to the lack of awards their films garnered, plus was given the opportunity to put a stamp of imprimatur on a film that seeks to humanize, normalize, and to some degree, even glorify gay sex, something Leftist Hollywood is enamored with.

Let's assume for the sake of this discussion that Mr. Jacobs is correct that by awarding *Moonlight* with the Best Picture designation, the Academy was sending a message that they value inclusivity. Essentially, what Hollywood is saying, if we are to believe Mr. Jacobs (and I do happen to believe him) is this: "If your film is the best film on its own merits of taste and excellence, it may not receive the recognition it has earned if it does not promote themes that the elitist Hollywood culture supports -- namely, in this case, homosexuality." In addition, Hollywood is also saying something akin to: "Since black artists, directors, etc., have been very angry in recent years at not winning awards as they believe they should, and we are weary of explaining the rationale for our decisions, we will very likely favor a black-oriented film, whether it merits such favor or not. It's a way of showing inclusiveness."

While I have read many reviews, I have not seen the film *Moonlight*. So I have no opinion one way or another as to whether it is a good film, an average film, or a poor film. (The reviewers seem to believe it is a great film.) But if Mr. Jacobs is correct, and that Hollywood voted as he said they did, then Hollywood misnamed the top prize. They should change the name of the category from Best Picture to Most Inclusive Picture. That would be far more honest, far more real, and far more accurate. There is nothing wrong with valuing inclusivity if that's what drives you. But let's stop kidding ourselves and pretending that inclusivity equates to excellence. Far too often, it does not.

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

## **From Ara's Journal**

### **On Bias**

Bias is a very interesting phenomenon. We all have them. The color how we see the world or how we approach a subject. Bias



Journal  
Writing

colors our approach, and tilts us toward favoritism or its opposite. Bias isn't necessarily bad. But bias can be limiting and it should be something we maintain an awareness of, both in ourselves, and with others.

Sometimes our bias will cause us to say or write something that, while true on the surface, and which causes the intellectual zombies among us to nod in agreement, is actually quite vacuous and, frankly, quite foolish.

An example of this came my way recently in a social media platform. Someone who considers him- or herself wise and profound offered us this: "Sometimes the nicest people you meet are covered in tattoos & sometimes the most judgmental people you meet go to church on Sundays."

Let's dissect this.

First, the statement is true. There are times that you might come across a person who is "covered" in tattoos and that person, at least at the moment you encounter him, is in possession of a lovely personality. And there are also occasions where you meet a person who is a regular church goer who is also quite judgmental -- of the person covered in tattoos, and of others they meet who's proclivities they find offensive, and perhaps even of other church-goers.

The problems with this statement, however, are legion. Where do I begin?

First, while it's a true statement, it is written with the intent to exonerate, generally, the person covered in tattoos and to condemn, generally, the person who attends church regularly. Thus, there is an inherent bias on the part of the author. It makes me wonder two things: How many tattoos does the author of this quip now have or plan to have in the future? And, how often does this person currently attend a church?

Second, the statement, while true, is almost void of relevance, because the opposite is also true: "Sometimes the nicest people you meet go to church on Sundays & sometimes the most judgmental people you meet are covered in tattoos." Yet the odds of you seeing such a phrase actually communicated are almost nil. We just sort of expect to see the original statement bandied about, as if it has the outer trappings of wisdom, while conveying the unexpected. The guy covered in tattoos is normally thought to be unstable and deeply troubled, and the church-goer is thought to be kind and charitable, and this construct turns all of that on its head.

Third, if you have a person who is "covered" in tattoos, does that not suggest that the person is very likely involved in extreme behavior, in aberrant behavior, and perhaps in possession of an unhealthy obsession with attention? And do not some people covered in tattoos live a criminal life, such as the man pictured here, who has gang tattoos on his face, and who recently shot and killed a law enforcement officer shortly after being released from prison?

Likewise, if you have a person who regularly attends a church, do you not have a person who is attempting to worship God with a community of fellow believers? Do you not have a person who is trying to exemplify the teachings of Jesus, who

taught us to love our enemies, to pray for those who persecute us, and, through parables, teach his followers to being like the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)? Did Jesus not include in his teachings that we are not to judge unrighteously, lest we be so judged (Luke 6:36-37)? However imperfectly such a person lives the teachings of Jesus, at least that person is putting herself in an environment where they are being exposed to profound and virtuous teachings that actually condemn pre-judging of others.

Fourth, the person who wrote this quip are themselves demonstrating a judgmental (though subtle) outlook towards both people covered in tattoos, and especially judgment towards their target -- church attenders. The person who composed the quip evidently has feelings of dislike towards those who attend church. And the composer of the statement surely wishes to cause others to both distrust and disdain Christians.

## The World of Words

### Aegis

#### Building Your Power of Expression



Dictionary

**Aegis**, n.

**Pronunciation:** ējis

**Meaning:** An aegis refers to the protection, the backing, or the support of a particular person or organization.

**Usage:**

- *The negotiations were conducted under the aegis of the United Nations.*
- *They had wrongly assumed that Lincoln Beach fell under the aegis of the Parks Department.*
- *The country of Tripoli had also come under the aegis of Jerusalem at an early date.*

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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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