


Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

Quick Links

[Ara's Web Site](#)
[Facebook Page](#)


Join Our List

 [Join Our Mailing List](#)

Issue: # 141

April 10, 2017

Dear David,

 Ara Norwood

The weather is getting more temperate here in SoCal, just as the traffic is getting more gridlocked! I guess we just have to acknowledge the good with the bad.


In this issue of *Uncommon Sense*, I bring you some good news and some bad news: the good news being that it is easy to abandon an undesirable trait to instantly bend the odds of success in your favor. You will read about it in the Self-Development column. The bad news concerns some macro-trends I speculate about involving societal norms. The picture may look a bit bleak for We The People if my prognosis turns out to be correct. You can read about that in the Elephant in the Room column. These items, plus a few more, will give you some food for thought.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood

Abandon Your Victim Mentality

The Founders of our republic were all forward-thinking, strong minded men of steely determination and capacity. They essentially willed this country into existence. They didn't make excuses, and they thought in terms of possibility. A large portion of their legacy can be traced back to how they thought about things, for the power of their very thought process led to great things.

Today, far too many of us seem to take pride in our victimhood. We whine; we snivel; we talk in terms of how no one is  cutting us a break. It seems as if we are raising a new generation bound in victimhood who do not think in terms of personal responsibility.

The victim mentality is alive and well. This mentality maintains it is others, not ourselves, that are responsible for our happiness and for our outcomes. Thus, it is no surprise that people inflicted with this mindset accomplish nothing.

It's easy to spot someone with the victim-mentality. One need only listen to the language of such persons to detect them. They complain a lot. They are not happy people. And they are quite self-absorbed. Their language is telltale and predictable: "It's not my fault." "I didn't do anything wrong." "They did this to me." "Life is so unfair."

While it is true that life is often unfair, people of accomplishment don't dwell on that. They pick themselves up from the unfortunate episodes we all are exposed to, and they move on with their lives. They try their best to avoid bad situations, but when such situations are unavoidable, they try to learn what they can, and they take a "better luck next time" approach to life as they continue to live a life of accomplishment. They don't allow themselves to get stuck in a negative rut.

So to break free from any hint of a victim-mentality, adopt these 5 unarguable truths:

- No one owes you a favor.
- The world is, by nature, filled with disappointment.
- You are responsible for your own outcomes.
- You will not always win.
- If you think in terms of victimhood, you are a victim. If you think in terms of contribution and possibility, you will virtually always have a better outcome.

The Elephant in the Room

The Veneration of the Macabre

*"Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."*

- - **Alexander Pope**

Perhaps I err a bit with this title, for the word *macabre*, (pronounced məkəb), is normally associated with things that are lurid and gruesome due to their association with gore and/or death. What I have in mind may or may not have ties to physical mayhem, but mayhem of a different order -- the mayhem of normalcy.

It is difficult not to notice that within my lifetime there has been a trend towards the bizarre, the peculiar, and the odd -- at least in certain circles. There seems to be no end of imagination among some for trying to abandon normalcy and embrace strangeness. What is troubling is that society, whose paradigms seem more and more fluid with the passage of time, often embrace and adopt the aberrations of the demented. We even have invented the idea of protected classifications of certain types of behaviors that are not to be challenged but celebrated. We often hear the word "pride" associated with such things.

Sexuality seems to have been at the forefront of such matters, with sexual preference being the earlier of two trends, and now gender identity being the later manifestation. With sexual preference, the questions became, "Who is to say that heterosexuality is truly legitimate?" and "Why should heterosexuality have preference as the standard orientation simply because most people identify that way?" This led to the gay rights movement, with men and women who are homosexual in their preference demanding more and more legitimacy, resulting in a situation where the most [stringent financial penalties possible](#) are imposed on professional basketball players who so much as utter a slur involving the word "faggot," or the public announcing by a professional basketball player that he is gay resulting in [a phone call](#) from a recent President of the United States to congratulate him on his courage.

The current hot topic of the day involves the very notion of gender, and what it is that makes a person a male or a female. We have activists today that are fervently working to change the simple, familiar, traditional notions of male and female into a complicated, muddled mess. Traditional pronouns of he/she, him/her, his/hers are being replaced with new words like Ze, Zir, Zirself, etc. College campuses are indoctrinating young students with new admissions applications, replacing the traditional male and female gender choices with a multitude of possibilities (and New York City actually [recognizes more than 30](#) distinct gender identities.) People are now being told that neither your chromosomal makeup nor your genitalia is an indicator of your gender, but how you subjectively feel inside is the actual determinant, and that since your feelings are fluid you can change your gender from day to day based on how you personally feel that day, and which bathrooms or locker rooms you use at Target or in school can also change from day to day.

Where do these trends take us? What new forms of the macabre lie in store in the years ahead? What issues will the activists who disdain normalcy put forth that our grandchildren will one day have to face as adults?

Here are some possibilities:

- Co-operative cannibalism. The day may come, strange as it seems, where the argument will be made that if two people are in love and in agreement, who are we to say that they cannot eat each other? After all, if no one is imposing their will on the other, and they are two consenting adults, who are we to judge? As grotesque as it sounds, this sort of madness may one day pick up steam. And it has [already happened](#) in the past.
- Sexual preference outside the human species. Since men can now say they are sexually attracted to other men, what is to stop them from saying they are innately "born" to be sexually attracted to a camel, or a buffalo, or an ostrich? And why stop at a particular species? Might some persons one day get it into their heads that all animals are their special friends, as they do not wish to discriminate by favoring only seals? And what about the truly bizarre -- such as a man being aroused by the notion of having a sexual encounter with a hornet's nest? If you find that inconceivable, a [story was published](#) by various news outlets a few years ago that this did, in fact, happen, and although the story turned out to be a hoax -- fake news -- I wonder how long before someone attempts it now that the idea has been released to the public.
- Altering the human species. The day may come where people not only find animals sexually attractive, they may wish to transform themselves into animals. If you find that hard to fathom, allow me to introduce you to Richard Hernandez. Mr. Hernandez wasn't content with embracing the world of the transgender by becoming a female. So this enterprising person became Eva Medusa, AKA The Dragon Lady. He surgically had his nose and ears removed, had the whites of his eyes changed to green, had his teeth modified, has a new forked tongue, and has had horns implanted in his head, as well as full-body tattoos and scarification on the face to try to resemble what he imagines is a female dragon.

 Before
Before

 After
After

While I don't know what possessed Mr. Hernandez to do this (though I have a theory), his transformation may not remain a singular event. He may one day be the founding father (mother?) of a new trend that may catch on with a specific sub-culture, which is to say it may someday become trendy. Someone may want to undergo the painful procedures needed to look like other mythical creatures -- a unicorn, a werewolf, a fairy, a mermaid, a sphinx, a minotaur, a faun, a gorgon, or a gargoyle. Some of these may be more difficult to pull off, but with Mr. Hernandez as their inspiration, there's no telling just how creative the madness could get.

- Ritualistic Self-Immolation. For those unfamiliar with the terminology, immolation involves burning alive, usually another person and often for sacrificial purposes. Individuals [actually do this on themselves](#) in various


parts of the world to signal they are fed up with current conditions or to draw attention to themselves. (Quite a commitment.) Might it become a trend? Might it one day be fashionable to inflict the most dreaded of pain onto oneself, willingly, simply to make a statement?

As we, the human species, continues to devolve, the macabre may become the new normal, and today's normal may one day be seen as a thing of hideousness.

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

Shameless Plug

Norwood Addresses Executive Team

It was my distinct pleasure last month to present a two-day seminar to an executive team of a 1000-person organization in the financial services sector. Presenting content around the notion of Private Victories, I found myself in a room with mostly C-Level executives who  Ara Seminar were both challenging as an audience, yet anxious to continue to learn. I learned from them. And I think I delivered value. The CEO send a brief but pointed message to me following the first day of the program: "I just wanted to let you know that I think you did an outstanding job for the Executive Team with the training. Definitely in your zone."

If your organization is up for a compelling workshop to jump-start their effectiveness, feel free to reach out to me. You can drop me a line at ara@aranorwood.com.

From Ara's Journal

On the Aging of the Aged

Two days ago was the birthday of my mentor, John Sorenson. He  Journal Writing turned 93.

Sorenson was best known for his work at a college professor in the Anthropology Department at Brigham Young University, but he was much more than that. He was a gifted thought-leader, a penetrating writer, and a critic of sloppy, careless thinking. He is probably one of the greatest scholars of the Book of Mormon that ever lived, and his grasp of Meso-American archeology and cultural anthropology was beyond vast. His 826-page magnum opus, [Mormon's Codex](#), is the most groundbreaking publication in history that establishes the Book of Mormon as an authentic, ancient Mesoamerican Codex by showing hundreds of what he calls "correspondences" (or what I would call parallels) between what the Book of Mormon teaches and what professional archeologists and anthropologists have come to understand about ancient Mesoamerica. Sorenson found over 400 such correspondences, demonstrating unequivocally that the Book of Mormon could only have been written by someone from that culture.

I didn't call him on his birthday because I suspected that he would be busy with his many children, grandchildren, and even the more than 20 great-grandchildren who would be visiting him.

But I did call him yesterday and we had a very nice chat.

I let him know how appreciative I am over the deep influence he has had on me over the years. I told him that perhaps no one has influenced how I think, how I process things, or how I solve problems as he has. He seemed authentically pleased to hear this.

I told him that I introduce my college students to the concept of mentoring at the second session of each course I teach, and in doing so, I introduce them to him, showing a photo of him in a PowerPoint slide, as I explain how he has mentored me over the years, albeit it mostly from a distance.

I asked him who the people are who served as thought-leaders to him in his younger days, and he named some people I was unfamiliar with. I asked him who his closest friends had been as an adult. He named a couple of people. I asked if they were still alive. He told me that they had died long ago. I asked him if he felt melancholy or deep nostalgia at the passing of his various friends. His answer surprised me. He said, "Not at all. When they died, I thought, 'Good for them!' They are now in a fine place and I look forward to joining them there soon."

I asked him if he slept well (as I recall from earlier conversations in past years that sleep had been an issue for him.) He replied that he slept just fine these days. I asked him how his health was at 93. He replied, good-naturedly, that his health was about as good as it could be, and that his wife, Helen, takes good care of him, and that he tries to take good care of himself as well.

He took the time to inquire about my own life, my college teaching, and things of that sort. He seemed authentically interested. And yes, we did discuss Emerson's oft-asked query of "What has become clear since we last met?"

There was a certain sadness in me as the 13-minute conversation wound down. I did get a bit choked up as we wrapped up the call. I recognize that call could quite possibly be the last time I speak to my mentor. I also recognize I will never be half the man he became, and thus, probably not ever as valuable to others as he was to me. But I feel deeply privileged to have crossed paths with this towering colossus of brilliance, this good man, this wise man.

Happy Birthday, John Sorenson, a mentor, a father-figure, a friend.

The World of Words

Iteration

Building Your Power of Expression



Dictionary

Iteration, n.

Pronunciation: idəˈāSH(ə)n

Meaning: An iteration involves the act of repetition, perhaps of a process or utterance. If you have a new form or version of something, you have the latest iteration.

Usage:

- *Much of this iteration of the Man of Steel borrows from the comic books for source material.*
- *The architect drafted several iterations of the floor-plan before deciding on his final design.*
- *This is my third and final iteration of this recording, and I do not expect to work on this any further.*

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
Leadership Development Systems

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

SafeUnsubscribe™_drdorrough@yahoo.com

[Forward this email](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [About our service provider](#)

Sent by ara@aranorwood.com in collaboration with



[Constant Contact](#)

Try it free today