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Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Dear David,

 Ara Norwood

Welcome to another injection of thought-provoking content! It's great to have you as a reader, and I look forward to sharing this issue of *Uncommon Sense* with you.


I think this issue has something for everyone, whether it involves an important human relations tip I give you in the Self-Development column, or some thoughts about some trendy but troubling language that is floating around out there in many circles in the Elephant in the Room column, or some musings about the "paths" we venture into on matters both spiritual and secular in the From Ara's Journal column. Of course, for those who love language as much as I do, there is a word you can either adopt, or remind yourself to use, in the World of Words column.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood

The Power of the Pause

There are times when we are hung by the tongue. We become reactive. We engage in a knee-jerk response. We open our mouths and say something untoward. We speak in a way that is unduly hostile or inconsiderate and we can't take back our words.

Some of the best advice I have received, which came to me from my first boss after college (Stephen R. Covey), was that we regularly pause before responding. When someone says something  Yellow Light or does something that is not to our liking, or is perhaps offensive, we would do well to pause before saying something that may escalate matters.

In doing so, our actual response will be measured, thoughtful, and judicious. We will be less likely to say things or do things that we might later regret. We will have to apologize less because we will have less to apologize for.

The pause enables us to think more clearly and less reactively. The pause gives us the needed time to calculate in our minds a proper response, not a reactive one. And sometimes the pause might indicate we ought not to respond at all.

The pause could last only a few seconds, or could last a much longer time-horizon. Without the pause, we might put words to the intensely negative or hostile feels we are experiencing. We won't be in control. We will have lost command of our faculties and thus, we are not our best self. And who wants to speak when not at our best?

Here's a fact: virtually every time I fail to pause after experiencing some negative feelings, I end up making the situation worse, not better. Conversely, about 95% of the time that I pause after being on the receiving end of something I don't like, I find that my responses are clearer, more informed, more helpful, and that get better results.

My advice: Practice the pause before speaking, especially in intense situations.


The Elephant in the Room

Being on the Right Side of History

In late 2013, Mary Cheney, a daughter of former Vice President Dick Cheney, publicly castigated her sister, Liz Cheney. At issue was the fact that Mary, who is a lesbian and is married to woman, was angry that her sister Liz publicly stated she was not a supporter of same-sex marriage. Mary posted the following on social media: "Liz -- this isn't just an issue on which we disagree -- you're just wrong -- and on the wrong side of history."

Smug. And callow.

The examples of people claiming this or that position represents the right side of

history or the wrong side of history are legion. Trump-hater Kevin Maney wrote an [opinion piece](#) for *Newsweek* earlier  this year titled "Trump is Standing on the Wrong Side of History." His opening paragraph, consisting of a single sentence: "Donald Trump is a spasm." And it goes downhill from there.

Others, like Mary Cheney, believe that to promote same-sex marriage is to stand on the right side of history, and they are galvanized by the fact that the Supreme Court, in a 5-4 decision, ruled in their favor in June 2015. Likewise, those who wish to legalize the recreational use of marijuana imagine themselves to be on the right side of history. Still others who believe that we should let violent felons out of jail, or who believe that sanctuary cities should overtake the country and house all who are here illegally, including violent, dangerous criminals, imagine that they are on the right side of history. Using slightly different words, Karl Marx believed that those who supported socialism were on the right side of history, and there was a time that colonial slave owners insisted that they were the ones on the right side of history, as the practice of treating blacks like human chattel became widespread in the south.

Barack Obama, while president, [used the phrase](#) many times, applying the "right side of history" to himself and his constituents, and applying the counterbalancing term "wrong side of history" to Muammar Gaddafi, Vladimir Putin, and other tyrants.

When people claim their viewpoint places them on the right side of history, what they are really saying is this: We are correct in our position and you who oppose us are wrong. In other words, although such people who make such claims usually don't believe in prophets of God along the lines of a Jeremiah, a Moses, or John the Baptist, they do consider themselves prophets of a different stripe. They fancy themselves as being in possession of a predictive power of how history will turn out, and they hope their opponents will fall for such malarkey and simply give up and go away. To be on the right side of history, in the minds of such progressives, is to have left a bygone era of primitive beliefs and to have embraced a new and enlightened paradigm that everyone from the old school should be shamed into adopting. The permissive adaptation of new norms is an effort to worship at the shrine of equality. Yet this erotic attraction many have with equality is a farce.

Or, as the young but perceptive [Ryan Shinkel writes](#), "This 'arc of history' narrative is used to legitimize the vigilante justice wielded against the bigoted foes of progress. Because the future will inevitably turn toward 'equality,' we are told, millennials who stand in the way have no future. They will be history. The majority of the Republican Party can be excused—they are from an older generation. But when you grow up in a time of progress, the revolution will not be merciful."

Even more on target is Jim Good. Writing in [Taki's Magazine](#) on this very subject, he opines: "Although their chapped and cracked lips speak of 'equality,' they truly see nothing as equal and can't help but view all of history in terms of skin color, gender, sexuality, and especially ideology. Anyone who disagrees with their resolutely intolerant collectivist notions is far less than equal and is viewed instead as a soon-to-be-obsolete subhuman fossil. They can never get over their oft-

despised cultural 'other,' and the other is never their brother."


He goes on, with this gem: "Being on the wrong side of history these days seems to mean 'not being a one-worlde communist transgendered mulatto lesbian,' and I'm fine with that. The 'advanced' areas are the ones with high taxes, high congestion, and high crime, so I find myself creeping out toward rural climes, where everyone is supposedly 'backward.' I want no part of the dysgenic, doped-up anomie of our emergent dystopia filled with TV-addled sweatpants-swaddled creatures of inarticulation, where shortened attention spans and blunted analytical skills are somehow seen as signs of progress. History seems headed in the wrong direction, so I'm happy to be on the wrong side of it."

In the end, people of wisdom are no more interested in being on either the right or wrong side of history than they are in having wasted their lives pushing this or that transitory fad. What matters to people of depth is holding to positions that are sound, that are moral, and that do good -- not positions that receive applause from the masses.

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


Shameless Plug

Norwood to Appear on Total Financial Solutions Radio

On Tuesday May 2nd, from 12:00 to 1:00 PM, I will be appearing on the Total Financial Solutions radio program. This program airs every Tuesday on KHTS which is  Radio located at 1220 on the AM dial here in Southern California. I will be discussing a variety of topics, including goal setting, time management, leadership, and the principles of success.

From Ara's Journal

The Many Paths of Salvation

One of the more interesting features of life on this planet concerns  Journal Writing the many paths that people have designated as the "right way" to salvation. I do not limit this observation to the field of religion. We see this in the fields of health and fitness, nutrition, politics, speech writing, framing houses, kicking field goals, quitting smoking, and, of course, getting to heaven.

Of course, with respect to religion, we see many similarities on the ethical side and many differences on the theological side when one compares the teachings of the major Christian faith traditions – Roman Catholic, Protestant, Eastern Orthodox, and LDS (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints). Then there are non-Christian faith traditions such as Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Jainism, Shintoism, Taoism, and many others.

When it comes to other non-religious fields like some of those I mentioned above, say, speech writing, I imagine that your path to salvation involves whether you find a methodology that renders you an effective speech writer. And perhaps there are

other methods to the craft that you elude you for years, but once you discover them, you may find that they worked even better for you.

With religion, however, it's a different matter. How does one "know" if their path is bringing them towards the divine? Is there one path, or many? If there is a God (as I affirm there is) does this God have one "right path" that He expects us to follow, or does He allow for more than one path to return to Him, or does He not care either way? In other words, do all roads lead to Rome?

If one is to accept at face value the teachings of Jesus as found in the New Testament, it is difficult to come to a conclusion other than the path does matter:

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matthew 7:13-14.)

This sobering passage is worthy of deep pondering.

The World of Words

Exonerate

Building Your Power of Expression



Dictionary

Exonerate, v.

Pronunciation: igzänəṛāt

Meaning: To exonerate a person is to absolve them from blame or wrongdoing.

Usage:

- *Although the evidence against him looked pretty compelling, in the end the jury decided to exonerate him.*
- *Unfortunately, there is no way to exonerate Hank from the robbery charges since there is video footage showing him committing the crime.*
- *If you would just listen to my entire story, you will find that you will readily exonerate me from any wrongdoing.*

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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