


Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Issue: # 143

May 22, 2017

Dear David,

 Ara Norwood

Welcome to *Uncommon Sense*, my free semi-monthly publication, where I get to comment on things that matter.

If you are receiving this through social media, why don't you consider becoming a regular subscriber so you never miss an issue. Visit my website to sign up (www.aranorwood.com).

If you are one of my many new subscribers, I welcome you, as I do all of my more than 1000 long-time subscribers.

We've got a lot to cover: the importance of timing, the problems with cultural appropriation (one of the latest fads of the Progressive-Left), and some views on friendship.

OK, let's get started.

Timing and Anticipation

About a month ago I walked into the local Panda Express to buy a quick dinner for my family who was waiting at home. Although this Panda Express has a drive-through window, I opted to go inside so I could get a first-hand look at my options. Since I was ordering for several people, and all of us wanted different entrees, I wanted to make sure that they had enough of everything I was about to order. It turned out, they didn't. There was no Black Pepper Chicken. So I asked how long it would be until they had a fresh batch of that dish ready. I was assured it would be in 5 minutes. I told the fellow behind the counter that I would wait until the Black Pepper Chicken was ready, and only then would I place my order.

So I waited. And waited. And waited. About 15 minutes went by, and then they brought out a fresh new tray of Black Pepper Chicken. I was ready to order.

However, it was then I noticed that in the intervening 15 minutes, during which time several other customers were served, they had run out of Orange Chicken, which was one of the items I was planning on ordering. Again, I was told it would be a 5 minute wait. Again, it was a 15 minute wait.


And again, while serving other customers in the interim, they ran out of a third dish I was going to purchase.

I waited a total of 45 minutes before I was able to place my entire order.

Inexcusable.

Now I imagined that this was an aberration.

That is, until I went back there again a week later to order dinner for myself. Once again, they were out of an item I was set on ordering, and I had to wait 15 minutes (after I was told I would only have to wait 5 minutes.) Are you starting to see a pattern?

My experience brings to mind an important management principle: anticipation. When managing any inventory, whether it be the books at a bookstore, or the beer at a brewery, or the condiments in your own refrigerator, being able to anticipate when things are going to run out and when you have to replenish your supply really take some thought and careful planning. When playing baseball, professional outfielders  Anticipation have learned how to anticipate where the ball will land so they can get their glove in the right spot to catch it. This principle applies to so many aspects of everyday life. Think about your clothes. Whether you take your business attire to a local Dry Cleaner, or whether you simply do the laundry in your own home, if you're not careful and attentive, you might run out of clean socks, or underwear, or jeans. Think about your food: have you ever found yourself completely out of milk, or juice, or ground turkey? In that case, you mismanaged a basic food item, and now

you either have to go without, or you have to disrupt your flow and make an unexpected trip to the grocery store. It happens at work also: we run out of toner, or other office supplies. We run out of the orientation packets for new employees going through our onboarding program. Or we run out of shipping supplies.

Back to the world of food. Great chefs, who are putting together a complete meal, recognize the complexity of their task. To do it masterfully, a chef has to make all sorts of critical decisions about timing -- when to start one dish that takes a longer time to complete, and when to start a different one that takes less time to complete, so that they all finish at about the same time. It takes some strategic orchestration with respect to timing one's activities that makes the difference between a pleasant customer experience and a regrettable one.

The folks working at Panda Express in my city do not seem to think about such matters. My experience is that they wait until a customer asks for an item they do not have, and only then do they take action, forcing the customer to wait. (They also set up false expectations by telling the customer to count on a five minute wait when fifteen minutes is closer to reality, but that is a separate issue.)

What to do?

For starters, I am going to have a friendly chat with the manager at my local Panda Express. Hopefully I can persuade that manager to teach those workers about the skill of anticipation. It serves my interests to see them succeed.

In addition, I can try to practice what I preach and do a better and more consistent job of anticipating needs in my own sphere of influence. With practice, I can improve.

And so can you.

The Elephant in the Room


Dissecting Leftist Ideology, Part 1: Cultural Appropriation

What I am about to tell you will blow your mind if, and only if, you are a normal, reasonable, sane human being. If you are not a normal, reasonable, sane human being, then your mind will still be blown, but not by what I am about to describe, but instead by the fact that I had the temerity to describe it.

In Canada, there is an organization known as the Writers Union of Canada. It's basically a trade association created for published authors and it serves about 2000 members. This group also publishes a quarterly magazine called *Write*, which purports to provide "news and views from a writer's perspective."

The most [recent issue](#), Spring 2017, contains about a dozen featured articles, essays, fiction pieces, or poetry. This particular issue was focused on the Leftist obsession with something called Cultural Appropriation, which is seen as something approaching a capital offense in progressive-left circles. Within its pages, one could be treated to a self-described "indigequeer" named Joshua Whitehead, who tells us that he is in a perpetual state of political depression and

that he cries often, "too hard, too easily," but assures us that crying is an act of aggression. That should give you a small taste of who the publication caters to.

Before I continue, allow me to first explain, to the uninitiated, what Cultural Appropriation means. Cultural Appropriation refers to the adoption or the use of elements of one culture by members of a different culture. Thus, if yoga is from India, others who are not from India have no business teaching yoga or practicing yoga, lest they be guilty of cultural appropriation. [If the term "Ya'll"](#) is a southern expression for the properly enunciated "You all. . ." then, so the thinking goes, no one from places outside of "the south" should ever utter that term. If bagpipes are played by people from Scotland, then people from Norway (or anywhere outside of Scotland) should not ever be allowed to play the bagpipes. And if flat-twist hair styles or dreadlocks are part of the cultural norms enjoyed by women of color, then [white women](#) must not  Cultural Appropriation partake of such things, (nor may they wear [hooped earrings](#).) You get the idea -- you are neither welcome to the front of the bus nor to the back of the bus. You are not allowed *on* the bus. Period. That's the mindset of those on the Left who are obsessed with Cultural Appropriation.

To continue: one of the editors of *Write*, Hal Niedzviecki, was fired recently.

Why was he fired? Because he dared to express an idea in an editorial that did not tow the Leftist party line. He deviated from the accepted orthodox doctrine of Leftist dogma, namely that cultural appropriation is an unforgivable sin. He is not entitled to his opinion. (Note: although it was published in the above-referenced issue, clicking on the link won't enable you to read it, for it has been removed -- censored -- from *Write* magazine.)

Whereas all the other articles in that issue that talked about Cultural Appropriation blithely spewed out the usual condemnation of the practice, Mr. Niedzviecki took a different approach; he spoke out in favor of cultural appropriation.

And the reaction of the Progressive Left was swift and furious.

One of the authors of an essay published in the issue, Alicia Elliott, in responding to Mr. Niedzviecki's views, wrote that "It felt like an intimate betrayal." Huh?

She went on to say in her usual understated way, "I can't even begin to describe the anger I'm feeling right now. I'm literally shaking." It's that big of a deal to her? She's physically shaking that someone believes something different than she? This must be some belief!

And what is it Mr. Niedzviecki believes that has caused such tremors in Ms. Elliott? Try this: "In my opinion anyone, anywhere, should be encouraged to imagine other peoples, other cultures, other identities. I'd go so far as to say there should even be an award for doing so - the Appropriation Prize for best book by an author who writes about people who aren't even remotely like her or him."

That's it?

So Mr. Niedzviecki believes that white people, for example, should be encouraged to think about people other than their own kind -- to reflect on people from other cultures and to write about what might be the experiences of other people. And this causes Ms. Elliott to twitch into spasms of rage and convulse into paroxysms of wrath? Can anyone help me understand the outrage?

Another, the above-mentioned Joshua Whitehead, tweeted, "This is shocking -- wish I knew this was going on before I submitted," as if some crime against humanity had taken place.

Another contributor, Helen Knott, wrote: "I am seriously disgusted that someone would use the Indigenous issue of *Write* as a jump point for a case for cultural appropriation on the backs, words, and reputations of the Indigenous writers featured in it. It's not enough that we are finding our voices, reclaiming our ability to tell stories, and having to heal to tell these stories. But people want to tell them for us."

A man has put forth an idea. The idea may be bad, it may be good, and it may be neither. But somehow, Helen Knott is sure that the mere putting forth the idea is somehow a sort of savage whip being snapped across the backs of indigenous writers, breaking their flesh, eradicating their words, and bringing their reputations to ruin.

A member of the *Write* editorial board, Nikki Reimer, resigned from her post over the matter, so deep was her outrage. And she confessed that she herself benefits unfairly from white privilege: "I can't and should not, and will not speak for any indigenous writer, but what I do attempt to do, in my life and in my work, is to listen to others who do not move through the world with my level of privilege." She went on to say that the editorial by Niedzviecki was "thoughtless and clueless," and that it "marks *Write* magazine as a space that is not safe for indigenous and racialized writers." Not safe? The magazine used to be a safe space but no longer is due to an idea?

The official reaction from the publication's editorial staff was predictable. Listen to their explanation to their outraged readers:

"The Writer's Prompt piece offended and hurt readers, contributors to the magazine and members of the editorial board. We apologize unequivocally. We are in the process of contacting all contributors individually. The intention behind the magazine is to offer space for honest and challenging discussion and to be sincerely encouraging to all voices."

Are the editors of this Left-wing publication listening to themselves? They actually imagine they believe in *honest* discussion while censoring -- and then firing -- their own editor? They actually believe in *challenging* discussion? They actually believe in being "encouraging to *all* voices"? What about Mr. Niedzviecki's voice? Where was the encouragement for his voice?

Usually when I am shining a light on the strange and dangerous things that Leftists do to hurt western civilization, I don't offer much in the way of opinion or commentary. My feeling is that by simply reporting what the Left does is enough to help the average human being sense the monstrosity that is the Left. And even though I think I have done just that by reporting the story as I have, I am going to now go one step further and offer some of my own commentary on the meaning of this Leftist obsession with cultural appropriation.

First, the person who is obsessed with cultural appropriation is not a charitable or gracious person. The person who is obsessed with cultural appropriation is both insecure and selfish. The person who is so obsessed does not like to share. That person is small-minded. And, as such, that person is probably petty and selfish and ungenerous in other aspects of their lives also.

Second, the person who is obsessed with cultural appropriation is possessed of a holier-than-thou outlook. Person A imagines that some element in her cultural heritage makes her a better person, and thus if Person B, who is outside of that culture, borrows or somehow utilizes that element, then Person A has been cheated, has been robbed of her uniqueness, by this outcast. The mere borrowing by Person B has somehow sullied Person A. Person A now thinks she is somehow less special and less unique than before the borrowing.

Third, making cultural appropriation a crime fosters ignorance. By not welcoming others outside of one's culture to experience elements of that culture, is to say, "We want to keep you outsiders in a state of ignorance."

Fourth, this leads to misunderstandings. When I was in college, I knew very little about the Jewish Passover meal. But then, one day, a non-Jewish professor, who was an expert in Judaism, held an authentic Passover celebration at his home and invited students to participate. I was fortunate to be included. I found the experience eye-opening, educational, and, frankly, rather inspiring. I didn't go and convert to Judaism as a result of my experience. But I felt I had a better understanding of Judaism, and a deeper appreciation of, and respect for, my Jewish friends and colleagues. I felt a reverence for the Jewish people. By contrast, the cultural appropriation police would have wanted to shut down the experience, resulting in the furtherance of stereotypes.

Fifth, Leftists who have a pathological fear of cultural appropriation need to understand that their view clashes with the preeminent American view of *e pluribus unum* ("from the many, one.") Thus, this unhealthy phobia that Leftists foment fosters tribalism, not unity. That weakens society.

Sixth, the sick, demented, warped fixation on cultural appropriation renders the one so fixated as being cut from the same mental cloth as those who believe in White Supremacism. We could call this fixation Cultural Supremacism. Perhaps those of us who are sane should try to stigmatize the behavior of the Leftist radicals by hurling unrelenting accusations of Cultural Supremacism at them every time they raise the specter of Cultural Appropriation.

Seventh, in the end, it seems to me that cultural appropriation simply gives voice to the Leftist need to have a crisis to whine about. Leftists are animated by crisis. Without a crisis, the Leftist cannot cause trouble, start fights, and allow strife to flourish. Cultural appropriation gives them another tool with which to disrupt the peace and tranquility of others.

And I'll share one final thought. The Progressive-Left (which is actually the Regressive-Left) likes to name-call. Thus, without much thought or analysis, they routinely label their conservative opponents names like homophobic, racist, intolerant, Islamophobic, sexist, bigoted, or xenophobic. This last label is an interesting one. Xenophobia is an irrational loathing of that which is perceived to be foreign. This extends to a fear or distrust that a member of one culture has towards members of another culture. Xenophobia is distinct from racism because members who share a national origin or culture may be from different races. Thus, to be a true American is incompatible with xenophobia because the melting-pot that is the American people is comprised of many races.

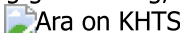
I can't think of a better example of a person plagued with xenophobia than a person who is drenched in an obsession about cultural appropriation.

But I thought the Left hated xenophobes. Apparently, they have become the very xenophobes they claim to loathe.

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

Shameless Plug

Norwood's Radio Appearance a Hit

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

You can [click here](#) to listen to (and see) the first half of the program, and you can [click here](#) for the second half. It was a great experience.

From Ara's Journal

On Friendship

Here I present some random, isolated thoughts about friendship.



Journal
Writing

Friendship is a profound undertaking.

The nature of the relationship we have with our close friends is a bit different than that which we have with our close family members.

Our closest friends bring us profound meaning, and deep satisfaction.

Our friends make the sting of life not only more bearable, but actually enables us to forget about it, as we are enraptured in the joys of life with them.

Our friends give us a sense of belonging.

Our friends can do us favors, and we readily do them favors. In other words, friends serve each other.

Sometimes our friends will surprise us. And sometimes our friends will abandon us. Perhaps that is because one of us changed, or perhaps because they were never really our friend.

True friends should stick together, but friends sometimes have to bluntly tell us when we are messing up. They do this because they love us. And we do it for them for the same reason.

Friends laugh together and sometimes cry together.

It is thus very important that one choose one's friends wisely, for friends of low stature tend to keep us down, while friends of high stature tend to pull us up.

It is important to invest in friendship.

The World of Words

Hubris

Building Your Power of Expression



Dictionary

Hubris, n.

Pronunciation: (h)yoo-brəs

Meaning: This word refers to excessive pride, or too much self-confidence. It usually leads to a downfall.

Usage:

- *The man is so cocky, so arrogant, that one can only marvel at his sheer, blind hubris.*

- *I believe a little more humility and a little less hubris, is in order, sir.*
- *His failure can be directly traced to his hubris.*

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Sincerely,

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