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Dear David,

 Ara Norwood

I hope you are enjoying the warm weather.

I plan to heat things up with this issue of Uncommon Sense. In it, you will read up on the pitfalls of multitasking. I'll share some insights about media bias that is simply shameful. And I have some sobering thoughts about the downward spiral our world seems to be in. Plus, a new word to add to your vocabulary.


OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood

Self-Development

The Misunderstanding of Multi-Tasking

Look at most any job posting and you'll see organizations touting the need to hire someone who is adept at multi-tasking. This is unfortunate because multi-tasking is not only overrated, it's actually a recipe for sub-par work.

What most people have in mind with respect to multi-tasking is the notion of 3 or 4 or 5 or 6 different projects or tasks in front of you at your workstation and you are hopping around from one to the other. You pick up the phone to call the airlines to book a flight. While you are on hold, you continue using your calculator to tabulate some numbers for a weekly report you have to submit. But then, one of the numbers reminds you of  Multitasking

something, so you quickly go to check out a website. You open a new browser and there's Google, which you drag to the monitor on the right side of your desk. But before you can locate what you were looking for, the airline agent comes on the line to assist you. You begin to tell her about your impending flight you need assistance on, when you get an important text message asking you for a quick piece of data. You pull up your email to look for that requested piece of data, while you are, in halting, tentative English, giving information to the airline agent (who is wondering why you are so hesitant.) You end up taking longer on the phone with the airline agent than was necessary, and you forgot all about the numbers on the calculator, which shut off eventually due to inactivity.

Multi-tasking of that sort can be messy and confused.


My recommendation: don't attempt to multi-task. Instead, focus all of your energies in an unbridled fashion on the key task at hand. Give your full devotion to that task. If you get sidetracked by an unavoidable interruption, fine. Deal with that interruption, but mentally bookmark where you left off with regard to the previous task, and get right back to it as soon as the interruption gets resolved.

Do this, and you will quickly discover that you will end the day having accomplished more -- much more -- than you would have had you attempted to look like a hero multitasking.

The Elephant in the Room

The Left and the Decline of Journalistic Standards

I read a speech by Michael Goodwin recently and I found it riveting. Mr. Goodwin is the chief political columnist for *The New York Post*. Prior to that, he worked for *The New York Daily News* and *The New York Times*. He is a very seasoned journalist.

His speech was delivered to some college students at a national leadership seminar held in Atlanta. I was so struck by his candor that I decided to share some excerpts here  Media Bias

with you. You can read an adapted transcript by [clicking here](#).

- I've been a journalist for a long time. Long enough to know that it wasn't always like this. There was a time not so long ago when journalists were trusted and admired. We were generally seen as trying to report the news in

a fair and straightforward manner. Today, all that has changed. For that, we can blame the 2016 election or, more accurately, how some news organizations chose to cover it. Among the many firsts, last year's election gave us the gobsmacking revelation that most of the mainstream media puts both thumbs on the scale - that most of what you read, watch, and listen to is distorted by intentional bias and hostility. I have never seen anything like it. Not even close.

- One study estimated that Trump had received so much free airtime that if he had had to buy it, the price would have been \$2 billion. The realization that they had helped Trump's rise seemed to make many executives, producers, and journalists furious. By the time he secured the nomination and the general election rolled around, they were gunning for him. Only two people now had a chance to be president, and the overwhelming media consensus was that it could not be Donald Trump. They would make sure of that. The coverage of him grew so vicious and one-sided that last August [I wrote a column](#) on the unprecedented bias. Under the headline "American Journalism Is Collapsing Before Our Eyes," I wrote that the so-called cream of the media crop was "engaged in a naked display of partisanship" designed to bury Trump and elect Hillary Clinton.
- The evidence was on the front page, the back page, the culture pages, even the sports pages. It was at the top of the broadcast and at the bottom of the broadcast. Day in, day out, in every media market in America, Trump was savaged like no other candidate in memory. We were watching the total collapse of standards, with fairness and balance tossed overboard. Every story was an opinion masquerading as news, and every opinion ran in the same direction - toward Clinton and away from Trump.
- On one level, tougher scrutiny of Trump was clearly defensible. He had a controversial career and lifestyle, and he was seeking the presidency as his first job in government. He also provided lots of fuel with some of his outrageous words and deeds during the campaign. But from the beginning there was also a second element to the lopsided coverage. *The New York Times* has not endorsed a Republican for president since Dwight Eisenhower in 1956, meaning it would back a dead raccoon if it had a "D" after its name. Think of it - George McGovern over Richard Nixon? Jimmy Carter over Ronald Reagan? Walter Mondale over Reagan? Any Democrat would do. And *The Washington Post*, which only started making editorial endorsements in the 1970s, has **never once** endorsed a Republican for president.
- I found the whole concept appalling. What happened to fairness? What happened to standards? I'll tell you what happened to them. The Times top editor, Dean Baquet, eliminated them. In an interview last October with the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard, Baquet admitted that the piece by his media reporter had nailed his own thinking. Trump "challenged our language," he said, and Trump "will have changed journalism." Of the daily struggle for fairness, Baquet had this to say: "I think that Trump has ended that struggle. . . . We now say stuff. We fact check him. We write it more powerfully that [what he says is] false."


- Baquet was being too modest. Trump was challenging, sure, but it was Baquet who changed journalism. He's the one who decided that the standards of fairness and nonpartisanship could be abandoned without consequence.
- With that decision, Baquet also changed the basic news story formula. To the age-old elements of who, what, when, where, and why, **he added the reporter's opinion**. Now the floodgates were open, and virtually every so-called news article reflected a clear bias against Trump. Stories, photos, headlines, placement in the paper—all the tools that writers and editors have—were summoned to the battle. The goal was to pick the next president.
- Thus began the spate of stories, which continues today, in which the Times routinely calls Trump a liar in its news pages and headlines. Again, the contrast with the past is striking. **The Times never called Barack Obama a liar**, despite such obvious opportunities as "you can keep your doctor" and "the Benghazi attack was caused by an internet video." Indeed, the Times and *The Washington Post*, along with most of the White House press corps, spent eight years cheerleading the Obama administration, seeing not a smidgen of corruption or dishonesty. They have been tougher on Hillary Clinton during her long career. **But they still never called her a liar**, despite such doozies as "I set up my own computer server so I would only need one device," "I turned over all the government emails," and "I never sent or received classified emails." **All those were lies, but not to the national media. Only statements by Trump were fair game.**
- If I haven't made it clear, let me do so now. The behavior of much of the media, but especially *The New York Times*, was a disgrace. I don't believe it ever will recover the public trust it squandered.

There is much more in the speech which is fascinating, compelling, and yet disturbing. I highly recommend you read it, especially the thoughtful advice Mr. Goodwin imparts towards the end of his speech.

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

Shameless Plug

Need Help Preparing For That Next Big Job Interview?


So you have trouble with job interviews? You get nervous? You feel unprepared? You get psyched out? I understand. And that is why I am pleased to alert you to my new eBook: *Your Interview Roadmap*. At over 12,000 words and with six appendices, this guide book will open your eyes to what really goes on in the world of interviewing from both sides of the desk, and will prepare job seekers to hit it out of the park 80%  Job Interview of the time. (OK, more like 90%, but I prefer to be understated.)

If you are interested in purchasing the product, you can [click here](#) to make your purchase. The advice you will glean from this eBook is golden! I would charge you six times the price of the eBook to give you the same advice in person.

If you've done poorly in job interviews in the past, you can turn it around. The answers are there. [Take action!](#)

From Ara's Journal

Reluctant Warriors

This world seems calibrated towards degeneracy, not progress. We  Journal Writing delude ourselves by seeing today's faddish firms (Apple, Google, Facebook, Tesla, Uber, Amazon) growing and providing more and more products and services, and then imagining that those trends are evidence that we are evolving. We are not. Many people today are capable of unbridled cruelty; many young people today have no compunction about sending the most hate-filled text messages to others. Far too many people would never lend a hand to help someone in trouble, whether that trouble involved rescuing someone from a burning building, or stopping an assault. Far too many graffiti taggers would not hesitate draw a gun and shoot to kill any person who demanded they stop their vandalism. Far too many citizens are horrified at the notion of deporting illegal aliens -- people who are here against the law -- even when those illegal aliens commit additional felonies in this country.

It takes real effort to stand for what it right. And evil has now reached such a critical mass, to the point that it is fashionable to wallow in it, that those who dare to stand up to evil are now routinely shouted down, mocked, and belittled.

I see no way to a peaceful resolution. Those who stand for what is right and good and true are going to have to become warriors, reluctant warriors, but warriors nonetheless. Those who cherish goodness and truth and virtue are going to have to learn to be bold, blunt, and confrontational. That is the only thing that will send wickedness to flight.

The World of Words

Sardonic

Building Your Power of Expression



Dictionary

Sardonic, adj.

Pronunciation: särdänik

Meaning: When something is sardonic, it has a sarcastic, cynical tinge to it. A sardonic laugh usually implies mocking or sneering to some degree. There is usually a bitterness associated with the term. Think "disdain" or "derision."

Usage:

- *The tyrant allowed a sardonic smile to form on his face once he realized he had captured the enemy he had sought for so long.*
- *His mouth twisted into a sardonic grin.*
- *She paused, and her voice took on a sardonic tone.*

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

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