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Issue: # 148

July 31, 2017

Dear David,

 Ara Norwood

I am pleased to be part of your start of a great week as July comes to a close.

I am back into my normal routines once again, and it feels good! It's a great thrill for me to present you this issue of Uncommon Sense, one I feel particularly proud of.

In the **Self-Development** column, you will read about a simple idea that could possibly make a world of difference in your health and well-being.

In the **Elephant in the Room** column, I respond to a challenge by my good-natured nemesis, Dr. J, a brilliant and erudite Liberal who takes great pleasure in goading me from time to time. I'm just glad he's a regular reader.

In the **From Ara's Journal** column, you'll read some ponderous reflections I have about some of today's pop music, and how I tie it into some contemplations about the purpose of life.

And don't forget the **World of Words** column, where you can build your power of expression with a real keeper!

OK, let's get started.


Ara Norwood

## **Self-Development**

### Staying Functional

I keep a pillow in my car. The reason I do this is simple. There are some days that I find myself dragging while trying to work. I'll be at the office, and I can sense that I'm exhausted for whatever reason. At that point, I recognize that I have a decision to make: I can either plow ahead, in spite of the fatigue, and at least look busy (while unable to accomplish significant results), or I can abandon my post, go into my car, and lie down and rest for a period of time. I usually opt for the latter.

Typically I just sit in the front seat (the driver's seat) and recline it as far back as it will go (although I have occasionally curled up in the back seat.) Then, with the pillow under my head, I find that I'm fairly comfortable.

With my sun shield covering  the front windshield to keep out some of the light, and with my tinted windows, it's a reasonably good environment for a quick nap.

I usually set a timer to about 20 to 40 minutes. And I find that even if I don't actually fall asleep, just having a rest period is rejuvenating.

Thus, I am able to go back to work in a short amount of time with recharged batteries. I have the energy to produce good work after such a respite.

I recognize that there are some jobs, particularly hourly jobs and various other entry-level jobs where this is impossible. Yet even in those jobs, a person with a one-hour lunch break could use that break to quickly eat lunch in ten or fifteen minutes, then use the remainder of the time to rest in one's vehicle. And having the extra pillow in the car makes a big difference.

Try it if you have the need. It may work wonders for your productivity.


## **The Elephant in the Room**

### Lying About Lying

In Issue #147 of this publication, which came out about a week ago, I wrote about a speech delivered earlier this month by President Trump concerning the vulnerabilities of Western Civilization, and the various forces that seek to undermine it. I evidently struck a nerve in my long-time, good-natured colleague and liberal gadfly, Dr. J, who laid down another challenge. (Long time readers may

recall the lengthy exchange I had last year with Dr. J on a host of themes concerning Left/Right differences -- see issues 121-126, 133-134, 136-137.)

Dr. J's response to my recent column was curious because he didn't respond to anything directly I had written -- no agreement, no disagreement, no refutation, no counter-argument. Instead, he sought to discredit President Trump by labeling him a liar. He included a link to an [Op-Ed hit job](#) from the *New York Times*, not exactly a fair and balanced source, claiming to document President Trump's lies. In fact, and let's be candid, the *New York Times* writers hate Donald Trump with a passion that is so intense, they cannot possibly bring themselves to write in an objective manner. Granted, this is an Op-Ed piece, but whether news or opinion, all of the Leftist writers at the *New York Times* (which is virtually all of them) publish things on President Trump that is agenda-driven, not fact-driven.

The compilation highlights alleged lies that they believe were uttered beginning on January 21st and up to July 19th of this year. They believe they have caught Mr. Trump in 116 separate lies within that time period. If they are correct, that would mean that President Trump lied  an average of 38.7 times a month -- more than a lie a day, every day.

Perhaps I should point out that not all lies are created equal. We sometimes use the term "little white lies" to refer to those untruths that are told without malice, usually to spare someone's feelings, such as when a wife asks her husband whether she looks "big" in a particular dress [let us imagine she does] but he says she looks fine so as not to hurt her feelings. Some lies are told to hide an embarrassing moral lapse, such as when President Bill Clinton told the American people, "I did not have sex with that woman," when in fact, that is exactly what he had. Some lies are told out of an unhealthy impulse to make ourselves appear better than we are. These are the lies of the insecure, of people who have a need to vaunt themselves in order to make sure people see them as accomplishing greatness. Such are the lies of Donald Trump.

Then there are truly consequential lies that directly and adversely affect people -- lies where we try to get people to vote for something and change the course of, say, healthcare, based on a flagrant lie, such as President Obama's statement regarding the Affordable Care Act: "If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. If you like your plan, you can keep your plan." Barack Obama repeated that bald-faced lie repeatedly, and successfully passed law based on that pernicious lie.

Likewise, Hilary Clinton, whom the late William Safire of the *New York Times* called a "congenital liar," once said during a foreign policy speech in March 2008, that she remembered "landing under sniper fire" during a trip to Bosnia she took as First Lady in March of 1996. Yet a CBS News video of that arrival shows no such duress, and CBS reporter Sharyl Attkisson, who was covering Mrs. Clinton on that trip, said she did not recall, "and did not note, any close calls on this trip with sniper fire or any other dangers." This was not merely a lie to make herself look heroic, and there is no stretching of the truth here. This statement was not the result of an off-handed, spontaneous comment that garbled some of the details; rather, it represented planned, deliberate deception, the fabricating out of whole cloth complete untruths, and was meant to influence people to vote for her in the 2008 election.

Some untruths are not even lies, because a lie can only occur when one *knowingly* tells an untruth. I recently held a big event at a hotel up in Palo Alto with hundreds of people in attendance and a lot of AV equipment being used. A camera operator who was hired for the event needed a VGA connector cable. I happened to have one I keep in my computer bag, so I loaned it to him. A day after the event, I wrote to the head of that AV company to inform him I never got that VGA cable back from the camera operator. That was flat-out untrue, as I discovered a few days later when I found it in my computer bag. I wasn't lying, because I was unaware the cable had found its way back into my computer bag. But I was speaking an untruth.

Asking me to respond to all 116 alleged lies in the list compiled by the *New York Times* writers would be beyond the scope of this publication. But I will take the first 3 as representative of the whole (which they are) and offer some observations. Please note that the parenthetical comment following each quoted "lie" is a comment by the *New York Times* writers and contains a link to some body of evidence that is intended to refute the Trump quote in question.

**1. January 21. "I wasn't a fan of Iraq. I didn't want to go into Iraq."  
(He was for an invasion before he was against it.)**

*This is their idea of a lie?* A passing, off-hand remark constitutes a lie? I'm willing to do something the authors at the *New York Times* simply will not do: give the President the benefit of the doubt. When commenting on world affairs that are as complex as something like the pros and cons of going into another sovereign state and removing its dictator from power, it would be surprising if a business mogul like Trump, who was never a politician, would have an iron clad, cogent, unchanging stance from day one. People sometimes change their minds as they grow in their understanding of events, or as they are influenced by other thought-leaders. The changing of one's mind does not constitute a lie. Evolving in one's thinking does not constitute a lie.

But what if Mr. Trump had added absolutist language such as "At no time in the past was I a fan of Iraq; at no time in the past did I want to go into Iraq"? Then I think it might be fair to say that is an untrue statement, but how big a deal is that? We're talking about a person holding a private position on a matter. While I prefer consistency, I am cautious about writing the person off entirely due to such inconsistencies which plague all of us.

And when you click on the link provided by the authors, which is intended to show Trump was in favor of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, what do we learn? That Howard Stern, in a 2002 interview with Trump, asked "Are you for invading Iraq?" To which Mr. Trump responded, "Yeah, I guess so." Does his answer sound like a well-honed, carefully thought-through position?

**2. January 21. "A reporter for Time magazine -- and I have been on their cover 14 or 15 times. I think we have the all-time record in the history of Time magazine." (Trump was on the cover 11 times and Nixon appeared 55 times.)**

There are two claims being quoted: the number of times Trump has appeared on the cover of *Time*, and his assertion that he "thinks" he has the all time record in that regard.

Let's address the issue of how many times Donald Trump has appeared on *Time*. He claims 14 or 15, the *New York Times* writers claim only 11, and thus, they charge him with lying, as if he knows full well the number is 11 but he is deliberately inflating that number to 14 or 15. Here it turns out that the *New York Times* writers are just plain incorrect, and Trump is accurate, as he has been [featured on the cover](#) of the following issues of *Time*:

- 1/16/89
- 8/31/15
- 1/18/16
- 3/14/16
- 7/25/16
- 8/22/16
- 10/24/16
- 11/14/16
- 11/21/16
- 12/19/16
- 1/30/17
- 2/27/17
- 3/20/17
- 5/22/17

Guess what? That's 14. So how did the *New York Times* writers come up with 11? They will have to answer that. But to say unequivocally, without qualification, that Trump was only on the cover of *Time* magazine 11 times is simply false. Should we all now accuse these journalists of the very crime they attribute to Trump -- of lying?

As to the boast that he "thinks" he has been on the cover of *Time* more often than any other figure, that's not a lie, for he is allowed to think falsehoods. And "think" is not an assertion, it's an assumption. I may "think" the capital of California is Los Angeles, but I would be wrong, not lying, if I really do think that. Being wrong is not necessarily the same as being dishonest.

### **3. January 23. "Between 3 million and 5 million illegal votes caused me to lose the popular vote." (There is no evidence of illegal voting.)**

It's intriguing to ponder where the link tied to their refutation would take me. I was expecting some robust, objective third-party, perhaps a research firm like Pew or Gallup. Instead I was taken to a *New York Times* article that essentially called Trump a liar. The article was not serious news reporting, but instead was a thoroughly partisan hit piece drenched in bias, with unprofessional jabs such as:

- "used his first official meeting . . . to falsely claim,"
- ". . . reality appears to have bothered him. . ."
- "Moving into the White House appears not to have tempered that anxiety,"
- "Mr. Trump used the opportunity to brag about his victory."

The *New York Times* writers insist that Trump lied about illegal voting, and they insist there is no evidence of illegal voting: "Voting officials across the country have said there is virtually no evidence of people voting illegally," yet in 138 of Virginia's counties and cities, voting officials, without much fanfare, removed over 5500 voters from the rolls for being non-citizens in recent years, and about one-third of them had [cast ballots](#).

While President Trump may have, as he often does, overstated the scope of the issue, he certainly appears to be correct that Hilary Clinton benefited from popular votes cast by illegal aliens, as a study by political scientist Jesse Richman of Old Dominion University revealed. Richman's research extrapolates that Mrs. Clinton probably received 834,381 net [votes from non-citizens](#).

Bottom line: While there may not be voter fraud at the levels that President Trump believes, the consensus from liberals that there is no evidence of voter fraud is simply ludicrous, as there is plenty of it going on. And while President Trump's claims may be wrong in scope but not in substance, they do not constitute lies. The only lie here is the lie by the *New York Times* reporters who assert, falsely, that there is no evidence -- none, nada, zilch -- of voter fraud.

The rest of the alleged lies are petty and absurd. They amount to bravado on the part of President Trump and involve inconsequential, opinion-based matters such as the size of the crowd at the inauguration, bad coverage by the press, paid protesters, and his alleged influence in causing certain companies to produce more jobs. None of the so-called lies are on substantive matters. And many times, the links provided by the *New York Times* reporters, when checked, do nothing to bolster their claims (for example, the last of the February 16th lies, where President Trump complains at the lack of media coverage of Mrs. Clinton having received debate questions in advance. The Times reporters claim, parenthetically, that it was widely covered. Yet when you click on the link they provide to bolster that claim, you simply get a blog that repeats the same mantra that it was widely covered without a scrap of evidence, and when you click on that link provided by that blog piece, you are taken to one single news report that was published in the *New York Times*. There is no actual evidence provided of widespread media reporting, merely allegations -- without evidence. Classic sloppy, careless, reporting of the fake-news variety.) The *New York Times* reporters who wasted everyone's time (especially mine) by publishing this diatribe, have done themselves a huge disservice, and are thoroughly discredited.

So why did a man as intelligent as Dr. J fall for such nonsense? Because, as a liberal with strong Leftist leanings, he was coddled by the narrative. It is so emotionally intoxicating to buy into the notion that President Trump is a liar that



they don't bother to question the pronouncements of the *New York Times* writers, but instead just gullibly lap it all up. And, so the logic goes (to the degree that there is anything approaching logic involved), since Trump is a liar, the magnificent and crucially important speech he gave in Poland earlier this month, warning of the secular acids eroding Western Civilization, can be ignored, because if he lied about how many times he was on the cover of *Time* magazine (which he didn't) then he's probably lying about our civilization being under siege as well. We can go back to fiddling while Rome burns.

Given that these same *New York Times* writers have ignored the many substantive lies uttered by President Obama ([Politifact lists over 70](#)), and [Secretary Clinton](#), (and both lists are grossly understated, given the love-affair the media has with Leftist political figures), what we should all learn from this exercise is that Leftists don't have a beef with liars. Leftists have a beef with Republicans.

Truth is not a Left-wing value. Their narrative, however, is.

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

Check out [my website](#) for tools to help you with your career, your presentations, and other matters.

## From Ara's Journal

### Music Matters

I love music. It is often called the first art, and I feel it has no equal, at least not for me. No painting, sculpture, photograph, dance, theatrical production, literary work, or piece of ceramic has ever affected me as deeply as music has. Listening to something surreal, such as Donna Carter, a soprano of unusual sensitivity and control, singing Agnus Dei from the "Mass in G major" composed by Francis Poulene (1800-1963) and being lead by choir master Robert Shaw, is breathtaking in scope and seems to transport me to a sacred space. Such pieces rank right up there with Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, or Bach's *Mass in B minor*, or Verdi's virtuosity-laced opera, *Falstaff*.



Journal  
Writing

I believe that music has meaning, and in the case of today's popular music (i.e., rock, blues, jazz, country, etc.) all evoke images or express meaning and ideas and concepts and views, especially when lyrics are involved.

Some of today's popular music troubles me. I'm not talking about rap, which I don't even classify as "music." What I have in mind is Ed Sheeran's recent hit, "Shape of You" and while I find the rhythm kind of funky and magnetic, what bothers me about the song is not the limited range of the melody, or even the rather predictable choice of lyric, but the idea of being "in love with your body" -- the punch line of the entire song. Now, I'm not particularly prude, though I am

prudent, and so while the notion of being attracted to the beauty of your partner's body is not problematic to me per se, and in fact is actually a wonderful thing, I find Sheeran's fixation on his lady's body at the expense of any other aspect of her a bit one-dimensional. Can he also be in love with other dimensions of his woman -- her character, her intelligence, her devotion to him, her kindness to others, her idealism, her spirit, her goodness, her honesty, her persona? And if so, cannot some of those characteristics find a spot in the song somewhere? Is she merely a "thing" -- a body, and nothing more? Is her body all she brings to the relationship?

Likewise, John Lennon's "Imagine" is seen by many as a fountain of wisdom, reaching a level of sagacity that rivals the Analects of Confucius or the Psalms of the Old Testament. The song is about idealism -- the idealism of John Lennon and Yoko Ono, which is fitting for I doubt anyone could have composed such a song unless they were possessed by a similar naïve, childlike wonderment. While simple in form, the melodic elements of the song are lovely, and it was scored for instruments that lend themselves to that overall desired outcome of an artistically inviting sound. Thematically, some of the notions in the song are noble: a desire for brotherhood, oneness, no greed, peace. Those things are good. Then there are the other notions which betray the atheistic utopianism: No heaven (and thus, no God), no religion (and thus, no standards), living for today (not thinking about the future, and thus, not being prepared). And the line that troubles me the most is "Nothing to, . . . die for" (and thus, no important causes, no great values, no real commitment to anything important, just a drab secularism.)

There are causes worth dying for, and people die for their country with honor. This life of ours is fraught with challenge, with problems to solve, with miseries to overcome. I think God placed us here in this environment to see how we will handle the vicissitudes of mortality. I sense that the unfairness of life, the disparities of life, are somehow part of a divine plan, the full meaning of which eludes even the most thoughtful among us. And thus we walk through life on faith that there is meaning, there is purpose, and that there are some things worthy of our very lives.

Perhaps I will one day be brave enough, bold enough, to compose music with that in mind.

## **The World of Words**

### Granular

#### Building Your Power of Expression



Dictionary

Granular, adj.

Pronunciation: ɡranyələər

Meaning: The literal meaning has to do with things that resemble or that consist of small grains or particles. But when something is characterized by a high level of granularity, such as a database, the meaning refers to getting down into the specifics, the micro-level, up-close-and-personal, nitty gritty, highly detailed, etc.



Usage:

- *I'm not looking for a granular explanation that delves into the details; what I seek is an overview.*
- *The book is excellent in that it discusses the root source of slavery at a very granular level.*
- *The granularity of the philosophic argument is so persuasive, that even the most hardened skeptics are dumbfounded by its pristine logic.*

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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,**

Ara Norwood  
Leadership Development Systems

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

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