


# Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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**Dear David,**

 Ara Norwood

Great to be back in touch with you again!

This issue of *Uncommon Sense* is loaded with content.

In the **Self-Development** column, you'll get a sense of the importance of flexibility exercises.

In the **Elephant in the Room** column, I address the recent politicization of natural disasters such as Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Irma.

In the **From Ara's Journal** column, I share some of my thoughts about bodies. You'll have to read the column to see what I have in mind.

And you will love the **World of Words** column, as I offer up a fantastic addition to your ever-expanding vocabulary.

OK, let's get started.


Ara Norwood

## **Self-Development**

### Staying Flexible

Our bodies are machines. As such, they need to be maintained.

One of the most overlooked aspects of staying fit involves flexibility. As we age, our bodies change in ways that make us vulnerable to injury. We stiffen and become more brittle, less pliable. Our posture becomes compromised. We become prone to getting hurt or straining our backs.

All of this can be avoided if we remember to take the time to work on our flexibility through stretching. A  Stretching workout routine that is limited to resistance work (i.e., lifting weights) or cardio work (i.e., running) is truly limited. A lot of very gifted athletes have been discovering the immense value that comes from some form of flexibility work prior to any other workout they engage in, from dynamic stretching to yoga.

I highly recommend you take the time to learn about the importance of stretching and the proper way to engage in flexibility exercises, and then add that to your workout routine. While I'm not going to spell out specific stretching routines in this article, I will suggest that holding (not bouncing) a stretching position for about 15 seconds is appropriate. I recommend you attend a yoga class or get help from a personal trainer to learn how best to work on your flexibility. The benefits can be enormous.

## **The Elephant in the Room**

### Politicizing An Act of God

*"Because we are imperfect souls, our knowledge is imperfect. The history of learning is an adventure in overcoming our errors. There is no sin in being wrong. The sin is in our unwillingness to examine our own beliefs, and in believing that our authorities cannot be wrong."*


Neil Postman

When your politics is your religion, and when you are possessed (yes, possessed) by a zealot-like obsession with your political agenda, this is the result: you stop thinking clearly. In fact, you stop thinking at all. You foment vitriol. You become part of the lunatic fringe. Everything you perceive is processed in such a way as to support the most warped and incorrect of views, and to demonize your opponents whom you regard as Satanic (or, since you don't really believe in God and mock

the notion of Satan, as the very embodiment of evil.) In short, you become uncivil.

This country has recently faced devastating hurricanes. Hurricane Harvey dumped an unheard of amount of water on parts of Texas, and Hurricane Irma pounded Florida, though not as bad as predicted.

These are sobering moments where people try to survive, cope, and overcome the challenges they were handed.

But many Leftists turn their attention to their political opponents and use such disasters the same  Global Warming Cartoon way they use everything else: as a battering ram against people who see the world differently than they do.

In the world of social media, where people sometimes forget all about principles of decency and respect, we find responses such as the following word-for-word diatribe:

*"Harvey hit a Republican-controlled State with a Republican, climate-change denying governor. Irma is heading toward a Republican-controlled State with a Republican, climate-change denying governor. It could also hit Republican-controlled Georgia, Republican-controlled South Carolina, or Republican-controlled North Carolina. Perhaps Republican-controlled Mississippi or Republican-controlled Alabama. I wonder if there's a message in here somewhere?"*

The writer of this smug, gloating statement imagines he is clever. He is not. I do not believe this writer is a round-the-clock numbskull, but he would certainly find it an insurmountable challenge to compose something of greater idiocy than this.

So he need not wonder if there's a message. There is. The message would be no different if California, which is dominated by Democratic Party (i.e., Leftist) ideology, were to experience an earthquake or a fire or some other natural disaster. And the message is: the world is unruly and challenging. Life throws curveballs at us. Bad things happen. And nature does not regard political affiliation when it unleashes its furies, as there are plenty of Democrats in these states. Florida Dems outnumber Republicans 44% to 37%. Same with Texas, 40% to 39%. Same with North Carolina, where 43% claim they are Democrats and 41% claim they are Republicans. Georgia is tied, with 41% each. Even where Republicans are the majority, there are still plenty who identify as Democrats: 35% in Alabama, 39% in South Carolina, and 42% in Mississippi. Does the writer believe that acts of nature target states where so many Democrats also live, simply because it's worth it as long as Republicans suffer?

Yet as bad as the above post is, it doesn't hold a candle to this one:

*"IRMA is EXACTLY what Republican energy policies produce. Exactly. With no wiggle room. This is precisely what we've been warning about all these years. IRMA - If Republicanism Means Anything, And, this is all being inflicted upon the world so a few rich f\_\_ks can become even richer f\_\_ks. No good comes from these policies, just profits for a few rich f\_\_ks. F\_\_k you, Republican Party. My*

*white-hot, complete hatred for you is not nearly enough. At this point, I can only hope IRMA hits Republicans. Remember, Republicans are the only climate-change deniers in the world. And, they know they're lying. F\_\_k you, Republican Party. This is on you."*

I wonder if this writer has strong feelings about the topic.

Obviously, I don't need to comment further on this unhinged, profanity-laced, psychotic drivel. I can only hope the writer's disdain for the 2nd Amendment is enough to keep him or her away from firearms for a while.

But such views are not limited to the average Leftist on the street. People in power and people of influence hold similar views, albeit expressed with somewhat more elegance and less vitriol. For instance, CNN's Chris Cuomo had a recent exchange with White House advisor Kellyanne Conway on the response to Hurricane Harvey and the effects of climate change on tropical storms. Mr. Cuomo suggested there must be a discussion about the role of climate change, asking whether President Trump will focus on the issue. Ms. Conway wisely responded that now is the wrong time to be discussing such a politically-charged issue while people are suffering and dying. But Mr. Cuomo wouldn't let up, countering that the conversation is important to have right now, presumably while people are drowning or fleeing for their lives, and that "scientists say climate change is part of the equation" when it comes to the severity of hurricanes. And since it is "part of the equation," it is *all* of the equation and the only thing worth discussing. Ms. Conway shot back deftly: "I'm exposing the irony of the conversation. You play amateur climatologist tonight and I'll play professional helper to those in need."

Of course, Mr. Cuomo's assertions about the impact of climate change on hurricanes is at odds with what reputable scientists have been saying. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, for instance, [noted earlier](#) this year that there are "no significant observed trends in global tropical cyclone frequency over the past century." Likewise, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration [found something similar](#) in March 2017, noting that it is "premature to conclude that human activities - and particularly greenhouse gas emissions that cause global warming - have already had a detectable impact on Atlantic hurricane or global tropical cyclone activity." Climate scientist Judith Curry also roundly criticized her counterparts for drawing connections between global warming and hurricanes with this cautious observation: "While there was a large amount of water vapor ingested into Harvey, the huge amounts of rain are associated with Harvey's stalled movement, while still close enough to the Gulf to continue to suck in moisture," she wrote on her blog shortly after Harvey's arrival.

Still, the social justice warriors on the Left, in true Totalitarian fashion, want to see their opponents imprisoned, not debated. Thus, Brad Johnson of Climate Hawks Vote, a radical Left-wing advocacy group that thinks it understands climate science, claims that disasters like Harvey and Irma are precisely why government officials (and probably everyone else) who "reject science" (as Mr. Johnson imagines he understands it) [should be, . . . incarcerated](#). In other words, if the Governors of, say, Florida and Texas, whom Mr. Johnson surmises spend their days denying science, were to be locked up in a Federal Prison, nature would be different and hurricanes would not take place. I'm sold.

But Regressive Leftists such as Mr. Johnson betray a colossal ignorance of the great conversation taking place in reputable scientific circles. How else can one explain [a 2012 article](#) in the *Journal of Climate*, authored by Dr. Roger Pielke, a political scientist and an authority on how science gets politicized? In the article in question, Dr. Pielke outlined the hard scientific data which demonstrated that tropical cyclone landfalls (globally) have not risen with any consistency between 1970 and 2016, as the chart below illustrates.

Global Warming 01

As is apparent, there is no unambiguous upward trend for hurricanes, and the last three bars in the graphic show a downward trend. In fact, close inspection shows 13 downward trends interspersed with 13 upward trends. If, as Leftist believe, man-made carbon emissions are responsible for more and stronger hurricanes, the blue bars in the above graphic should show a consistent upward trend, not a sporadic up-and-down trend.

Further, based on [published data](#) compiled by the Hurricane Research Division of the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, the graph below demonstrates unequivocally that US landfalling hurricanes involving Category 3 through 5 over the last 40 years (including Irma) are trending downward -- not exactly helpful to the agendas of today's spasmodic, maniacal cranks on the Left:

Global Warming 02

Now, with this scientific data before us, what are the Leftists who have embraced the religion known as Global Warming going to do?

Easy. Trot out various scientists, some of them with a background in Climatology, and make claims that the data I am citing here is false, flawed, and wrong. But what they will *not* do, what they will *never do*, is explain exactly *how* the data is flawed. This simply validates my long-held contention that some scientists behave very unscientifically. I think they are fair game for charges of "anti-science."

Still, I maintain hope in the face of the madness. Why? Because the University of Tampa [did the unexpected](#) and courageous thing recently and fired a visiting assistant professor who suggested in a tweet that Hurricane Harvey's destruction is "instant karma" for Texas because it voted Republican. Sociology professor Kenneth L. Storey posted the tweet and two responses on Sunday before removing the entire thread and his profile photo, the *Tampa Bay Times* reports. The original post, captured before it was removed, read, "I dont [SIC] believe in instant karma but this kinda feels like it for Texas. Hopefully this will help them realize the GOP doesnt [SIC] care about them."

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

### A Fascination With Bodies

What kind of bodies, you ask?



Journal  
Writing

Bodies of water. (What were you expecting?!)

I have heard so many terms used for different kinds of bodies of waters from my youth, and I use many of them in my routine language, but it's ponderous to contemplate how little I really understand why a given body of water is so named. So I did a little research.

How is a **Sea** different from an **Ocean**?

Both are large bodies of salt water. An ocean is a large body of salt water that is part of the hydrosphere, with the Pacific Ocean being the largest, followed by the Atlantic, and then the Indian Ocean being the smallest. By contrast, a sea is a large body of salt water partially enclosed by land, often a division of an ocean. Some of the more prominent seas include the South China Sea, Caribbean Sea, Mediterranean Sea, and Bering Sea. Also, I should mention in passing that an **Inlet** is an arm off a larger body of water.

What is a **River**?

A river is a large, natural stream of freshwater, often originating in mountains, flowing from higher to lower ground. A river is larger than a Creek. The Nile is the world's longest river. Other notable rivers include the Amazon, Yangtze, and Mississippi. Related to rivers is the **Estuary**, which is the wide part of a river where it nears the sea.

What about a **Lake**?

A Lake is a body of (usually, though not always, fresh) water surrounded by land. Lake Superior, Lake Tahoe, and the Great Salt Lake are all examples. Smaller versions of similar bodies of water would include a **Pond**, which is artificial in origin.

I mentioned **Streams**. A stream is a body of water with a detectable current, confined within a bed and banks.

I was curious about the differences between a **Creek** and a **Brook**, as both are smaller versions of a stream. Here's the best way to think about them: You can

step over a brook. You can jump over a creek. You can wade across a stream.

Then there are the bodies of water that are largely defined by their interplay with land. For instance, a **Gulf** is an arm of a sea or ocean that extends so that it is partly enclosed by land, usually on 3 sides. Similarly, a **Bay** is an indentation of a shoreline, and is smaller than a gulf. In contrast, a **Harbor** could be either an artificial or naturally occurring body of water where ships are stored.

Some bodies of water are tied to the seaworthy vessels that traverse them. For instance, a **Channel** is a deep and relatively narrow body of water that allows the best passage for vessels, whereas a **Canal** is an artificial waterway, usually connected to existing lakes, rivers, or oceans.

Other bodies of water are decidedly narrow. For example, a **Strait** is a narrow channel of the sea joining two larger bodies of water. You may have heard of the Strait of Gibraltar, or the Strait of Hormuz. However, a **Sound** is a long, narrow inlet, or a strait between the mainland and an island, enabling the joining two larger bodies of water. A sound is larger than a bay. You may have heard of Puget Sound. Likewise, a **Fjord** is a narrow inlet of the sea between cliffs or steep slopes.

Some bodies of water are shallow. A **Lagoon**, for instance, is a body of comparatively shallow water separated from the deeper sea by a shallow or exposed coral reef, sandbank, or similar feature. A **Shoal** is a stretch of shallow water. And a **Spring** is a point where groundwater flows out of the ground, and is thus where the aquifer surface meets the ground surface. Then there are the bodies of water that are part of the wetlands. A **Marsh** is just such a wetland, and it features grasses and various other plant life, in a context of shallow water. A **Swamp** is also a wetland, but in this case, one that features permanent inundation of large areas of land by shallow bodies of water.

There are many other terms out there identifying various and distinct bodies of water, but this small list has given me new understanding, and new appreciation, for our planet and the various bodies of water that occupy it.

## The World of Words

### Discursive

#### Building Your Power of Expression



Dictionary

Discursive, adj.

Pronunciation: də'skərsɪv

Meaning: This word usually pertains to speech or writing. It concerns a form of communication that digresses, wandering from subject to subject in an expansive and sometimes fluent manner, and sometimes in a rambling manner. Applying the term to others could be a compliment or a criticism, depending on the context.

Usage:

- *William F. Buckley had, at his command, all the discursive brilliancy which fascinated an audience.*
- *The essay is discursive and badly arranged, but is marked by a power of style and a vigor of narrative.*
- *In mastery of prose language he has never been surpassed, when he chose to curb his florid imagination and his discursive eagerness of soul.*

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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)).

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