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Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Dear David,

 Ara Norwood

Let me begin by thanking you for being a loyal reader of Uncommon Sense. I truly wish you a splendid and safe New Year celebration tonight.

In this issue of *Uncommon Sense*, I use the **Self-Development** column to talk about goal setting, a theme I have written about many times.

Check out **The Elephant in the Room** column, where I cannot help but comment on the Leftist penchant to put narrative over truth. Global Warming is the topic this time.

In the **From Ara's Journal** column, I reflect on 2017 and share my approach to do so.

And we end with yet another useful word in **The World of Words** column that will help you expand your power of expression.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood


Self-Development

Goal Setting Pep Talk

This topic, one that I generally address in late December, is one of my very favorites. I suspect my interest in this topic stems from the realization that when you are engaged in goal setting, you are engaged in leadership at its highest levels -- self-leadership. When we discuss goals, we are literally talking about something profound. We are talking about the power you have to direct your life, orchestrate your outcomes, and map out where you will take your life.

In 2017, I set 8 goals for myself. As the year comes to an end, I see that I have accomplished 6 of them. While I'm disappointed in failing at 2 of those goals, I have deep satisfaction that I did end the year with 6 significant accomplishments for the year.

The key message I want to pass on to you involves the notion of focus. Eight goals was probably a bit too much to expect to hit in one year -- especially given the fact that all 8 were significant.

My advice is that we look at each new year as an opportunity to place our energies on a very limited number of very significant goals -- probably no more than three. Again, these goals are to be significant. They may involve something tangible you wish to acquire, such as the car of  Goal Setting your dreams. They may involve an experience, such as a dream vacation. They may involve skill acquisition, such as learning a new foreign language, or mastering a certain software program, or becoming proficient on a musical instrument. They may involve money matters, such as the acquisition of cash, or the elimination of debt. They may involve relationships in some way, such as the establishment of a new friendship or romantic relationship, or getting together with specific friends you haven't seen for a while. They may involve other things -- the possibilities are endless. But all great goals are:

- Clearly defined
- With an understanding of current reality
- A clear target (i.e., where you want to be, what you want to do, or what you wish to have)
- And a deadline date (which, for me, is almost always December 31st.)

Having only a very few significant goals provides the focus needed to accomplish them. Too many goals means our energies and resources are stretched too thin, and we can easily be stymied. President Kennedy announced one colossal goal in the early 1960s: to land a man on the moon and bring him back safely to earth

before the end of the decade. He did not announce ten new goals of that magnitude. Had he done so, we likely would not have accomplished many (if any) of them. Steve Jobs is reputed to have said on one occasion that he is very proud of the many worthy goals Apple had decided not to pursue.

As for myself, I have decided that for the year 2018 I am going to focus on only two specific goals. Both of these goals are very lofty. One involves writing my first book, thanks to the prodding of RS, a constant source of encouragement and inspiration. And the other involves taking my musical performing duo, Dawn of Ascension, to the next level, with a specific number of live (paid) performances. That will involve a lot of rehearsing, the building of our repertoire, some equipment acquisition, and a lot of marketing.


But I will absolutely accomplish both goals over the course of 2018. And I will be highly satisfied in doing so.

Now, what about you? What will you focus on in 2018? Focus on a very few lofty goals (no more than 2 or 3), map out your game plan for all the things that have to happen in order to accomplish them (and celebrate the accomplishment of these sub-goals), have a deadline, and then organize your life around their pursuit. And I look forward to watching you take a bow when you finally cross the finish line!

The Elephant in the Room

Rachel Maddow and Global Warming: Perpetuating a Narrative at All Costs

A quick anecdote: I was listening to the radio earlier this week, and a report came on concerning the record-breaking low temperatures the eastern states are experiencing. Then the talk show host played a recording of extreme Leftist Rachel Maddow, whose show airs on MSNBC. Ms. Maddow said something along the lines of "I guess we can now say that Global Warming is any temperature change." A male voice on her program concurred.

Lovely! This is a classic case of "heads I win, tails you lose." This sort of legerdemain, common in Leftist modes of thought, is actually quite funny. Think about it. Maddow is saying with a straight face that when the temperature goes up, that  Global Warming can be called Global Warming, and if the temperature goes down, that can also be called Global Warming. **This is what Global Warming looks like**

- A *rise* in temperature = warming.
- And a *drop* in temperature = warming.

Hot and Cold mean the same thing. Which is to say that words do not mean anything. This would be no different than if Leftists were to say:

- A *rise* in income = wealth.
- And a *drop* in income = wealth.

It might be tempting to imagine that Leftists, who fancy themselves as uber-intellectual, as brilliant brainiacs, have become less and less erudite with the passage of time -- as if we are witnessing an actual breakdown of their cognitive capacities taking place before our very eyes. But such is not the case. What is happening here is a clear manifestation of a chosen narrative carrying more weight than truth or reality.


Leftists have their reasons for wanting -- needing -- global warming to be taking place. Therefore, regardless of what the evidence points to, it will be interpreted in a manner that supports the narrative, regardless of how nonsensical it sounds.

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

Reflections on 2017

As the year ends tonight and a new year comes upon us, I think it helpful to reflect on the year 2017. There are so many ways to approach this.  Journal Writing Thinking in macro terms, I reflect on some of the major events that took place in our country and in our world in 2017. Many of the news items were bad news, but some of them were quite interesting. Here's a random recollection, in no particular order:

- This was the year of the worst mass shooting in history, when Stephen Padock opened fire on concert goers attending the Route 91 Harvest Festival in Las Vegas, killing 58 people and wounding 546 before turning the gun on himself.
- Islamic terror struck our shores a few times, with a radicalized Muslim ramming a truck into people in New York City in late October, and then another radicalized Muslim detonating a pipe bomb he was wearing while walking among commuters in a New York City subway in mid-December.
- Donald Trump was sworn in as our nation's 45th President.
- North Korea did a lot of saber-rattling.
- The Stock Market performed.

- There were various Cyber Attacks resulting in a lot of private information being stolen.
- A solar eclipse took place in August.
- A wave of sexual harassment accusations became public, impacting many in the Hollywood Entertainment world, the media, and politics.
- Southern California experienced a number of devastating fires in December.
- As for famous people who died, we said goodbye, sometimes with sadness, and occasionally with relief, to Mary Tyler Moore, Al Jarreau, Larry Coryell, Chuck Berry, Don Rickels, Allan Holdsworth, Gregg Allman, Adam West, Martin Landau, John Abercrombie, Louise Hay, Walter Becker, Hugh Hefner, Charles Manson, Tom Petty, Fats Domino, David Cassidy, Jon Hendricks, Jim Nabors, and Jerry Lewis.

It is also instructive to review the year on a micro level. This is a very personal undertaking. Here is what I tend to look at:

I review my relationships first, noting any new friends I have acquired, any friends I have lost, the state of my various friendships, and what my social life was like during the year.

I like to review any and all books I read during the year, any any speeches, workshops, teaching, or publications I produced . I also think it is important to review any places I traveled to, and any events of significance I attended.

Further, I tend to review things I might have acquired, whether that involves a new suit, a leather briefcase, a Boluva wrist watch, or even something seeming intangible, such as a TD Ameritrade account.

It's also worthwhile to review the state of one's physical health, as well as one's financial health. There are other things I review as well, things that are peculiar to my own circumstances, such as how I evolved as a musician, how I evolved spitually, what my home life was like, and my overall perspective and how it changed over the course of the year. I also review (since I keep track of such things) what made me weep over the course of the year. As it happens, this may well be the first year I never wept once. Not sure if that's a good thing or a bad thing.

Finally, I like to remind myself of the most tragic or disappointing things I experienced over the year, as well as my key accomplishments, my victories, and my happiest moments. I conclude this exercise by reflecting on to my outlook to 2018 and beyond (including what I will continue doing, what I need to discontinue doing, what I need to change, or improve, etc.)

This annual ritual keeps me on the right track.

Glacially

Building Your Power of Expression



Dictionary

Glacially adv.

Pronunciation: ɡlāSHəl ee

Meaning: I use this word to describe things that move at a very slow pace, the way a glacier moves very slowly and imperceptibly.

Usage:

- *I can't hire this person; she is so meticulous, and so stuck in the weeds, that she moves glacially, not rapidly as I expect the right candidate to do.*
- *The song dragged on rather glacially. It just wouldn't end.*
- *I don't participate in speed-dating; I rather prefer my dates to move glacially, enabling us to get to know each other more deeply.*

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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