


Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Dear David,

 Ara Norwood

Welcome back to another foray into the world of ideas. And a hearty welcome to all of the new subscribers to *Uncommon Sense*.

In the **Self-Development** column, I share a few quick thoughts on developing your intellect. Read it, then act on it. Do something to bolster your brainpower.

In the **Elephant in the Room** column, I share some observations about how two leaders handled the same geo-political issue, and got very different results.


In the **From Ara's Journal** column, I offer some musings on a social matter we all face from time to time. Perhaps you'll find it a breath of fresh air.

And, of course, we close this issue with our **World of Words** column, where I treat you to a dandy of a word! I hope you will find a way to use it today!

OK, let's get started.

Developing Your Intellect

What is intellect? What does it mean to be smart? And does it matter either way?

Let me put it to you this way: having a strong intellect is somewhat akin to having financial wealth. It  Intellect may not be the most important thing in life, but it is better to have it than not have it. And, like financial wealth, having a sharp intellect will open doors for you that would not otherwise open.

Case in point: One of the smartest men I know is JM, whom I've known since college and hold in high regard. He used to work for the FBI here in Los Angeles where I live. I also knew a number of other FBI agents out of the Los Angeles office, and we talked often about JM. I remember one of the agents told me, "JM is way too smart to work here." Now, regardless of what that comment might say about the FBI, it does say a lot about JM. And thus, it did not surprise me to see JM eventually leave the employ of the FBI and go into the business world, landing C-Level roles in various blue chip organizations. And while I am sure that things such as hard work, perseverance, and timing played their role, it's hard to escape the fact that JM's towering intellect was a key factor in his career success.

Intellect is the faculty of reasoning and understanding that one acquires as one exercises one's mind. It involves the depth of understanding that one possesses, perhaps in academic matters, perhaps in matters that are abstract. It's not the same thing as wisdom, but it is something that renders its possessor as capable of thinking through matters on a deeper level.

Here are four ways to enhance your own intellect:

First, figure out who the really smart people are that you admire and respect. I emphasize the "admire and respect" component because there are plenty of really smart people out there whom you should stay away from. For me, I am really impressed with [Victor Davis Hanson](#), [Charles Krauthammer](#), and [Dennis Prager](#). So I read their articles and columns, I try to catch them when they are a guest on a television broadcast, and I pay careful attention to the things they say or write about. In short, I get familiar with their thinking. And it rubs off on me a little. So figure out who the intellectual titans are that you really admire, and expose yourself to their thinking.

Second, read widely. I'm talking about books more than articles or columns. When you read a book, especially a book written by a highly brilliant writer, you are exposing yourself to a carefully edited argument, or point of view. No book is perfect, and all have their weaknesses. But every good book you read will impact and shape your own intellect. It will change you for the better.

Third, expand your vocabulary. You can do this by paying attention to the World of Words column in each issue of *Uncommon Sense*. But however you do it, expand your vocabulary and use words elegantly and with a cultivated, polished manner. People will immediately deem you a person of intellect and will respond accordingly.


Fourth, engage in the memorization of certain things. Memorize poetry, memorize scripture, memorize great speeches (like those of Churchill, Kennedy, Reagan, Mother Teresa), memorize the Declaration of Independence, memorize Shakespeare, memorize profound passages from any book that you find important. People will be in awe at your mental prowess because you will be seen as someone in possession of a certain level of discipline.

And as was the case with JM, doors will open for you.

The Elephant in the Room

Identifying the Enemy

When Barack Obama became president of the United States in January 2009, something strange started taking place in America. President Obama made it an unspoken policy that no one in leadership was to refer to an Islamic terrorist as an "Islamic terrorist." Knowing that words matter, Mr. Obama made a deliberate, overt call that tying terrorism to Islam was simply not going to happen on his watch. Even if the signs of an Islamic connection were obvious and overt, Mr. Obama was going to deny reality and expunge any vestiges of Islamic religiosity from the equation.

And it became downright silly. Even when the terrorist was from a predominantly Muslim country; even when they had a telltale Muslim name; even when there was blatant evidence that they revered the Koran; even when they shouted the words "Allahu  Islamic Terrorism akbar!" (God is great, or, more accurately, God is greater) as they carried out their slaughter; and even when the terrorists themselves left unmistakable evidence that what they were doing, they were doing to extol the virtues of Islam as they saw it. Still Mr. Obama would never allow himself or others in his administration to so much as mention the word *Islam* when discussing Islamic terrorism, opting instead to call it something more generic, like "Violent Extremism" -- thus divorcing it from any particular ideology.

Mr. Obama's stance became the stance of everyone in his government, every Democrat in state government, and even every Democrat in local government. If you were a Democrat, you instinctively understood that you were to tow the line and never mention Islam when Islamic radicals blew themselves up. The rest of us just scratched our heads and wondered why there was such aversion to stating the obvious.

Today, it's different. We have a new occupant of the White House who has no qualms about identifying Islamic terrorists as Islamic terrorists. And in doing so, the country is not turning on Islam as a whole (one of the fears I imagine animated Mr. Obama.) Instead of walking on egg shells and tiptoeing through the

daisies of mealy-mouthed political correctness, Mr. Trump has called it what it is, and has unleashed our military to decisively take the fight to ISIS. And the results have been profound: ISIS, while not completely eradicated, is a shell of its former self. Their dreams of imposing a caliphate are over. They are crumbling under the focused assault and unbridled might of the United States Armed Forces. Their brutish, inhumane, sadistic barbarism is no longer being unleashed on innocent men, women, and children.

The lesson in all of this? Identify your enemy for who he is and then go after him full force, or place more value on Political Correctness than on human life. Trump chose the former. Obama chose the latter.


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.

Shameless Plug

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* * * * *

"I purchased Norwood's résumé guide last month and it's amazing! He goes through the processes step-by-step and you end up with not only a

résumé that will get you that interview, but the skills necessary to be confident so you succeed in your interviews resulting in you receiving job offers (yes, offers)." -- D Smith, Santa Clarita, California

"I could not have gotten my first job without your expertise. Thank you so much! I learned that I had to reword and improve my résumé in order to be taken seriously in the workforce. I had been given tips from my professors in Health Science and other professionals but your advice was just what I needed. It took weeks of frustration waiting for interview calls when I happened to stumble across your website and discovered that I needed help. Your publication enlightened me with your knowledge on the wording and format needed to attract an employer. Furthermore, your booklet helped me recognize certain skills and work experience that I would have never considered important until you got me thinking about it. Thanks for a great product!" -- R. Espana, Valencia, California

From Ara's Journal

He Doesn't Like You? So What?

We all prefer to be liked than disliked.



There are people out there, however, who simply will not like us. And we shouldn't worry about it.

I'm not talking about situations where we have obviously behaved badly, where we were obnoxious, rude, or brusque. In those situations, we don't deserve to be liked.

I am talking about situations where someone in your orbit, perhaps someone who is involved in the periphery of your life, shows disdain for you, and you have no idea why.

The temptation for some is to fret about it, and want to get the other person to like them. Some even go so far as to approach the other person and try to find out if they have done something to offend the other person. When the relationship is solid, and when it has some history, it is appropriate to try to mend fences (assuming the relationship is meaningful to you.) But when the relationship resides in the outlying regions of your life, it's best to acknowledge the person seems to hold disdain for you, and then simply leave it alone.

There is a guy, LM, who is a personal trainer at the gym I frequent. The fellow is, generally speaking, affable, buoyant, and extroverted. He smiles regularly, and warmly greets most everyone who enters the gym. He is a force of positivity. Except when it comes to me. . .

It wasn't always like that. My initial encounters with LM were positive. I always thought of him as warm and gregarious. But eventually, I began to notice a

cooling of sorts taking place where I was concerned. It was subtle, but it was unmistakable. Even today, when I walked into the gym shortly before 6AM, I said hello to him as he was looking in my direction. He did not respond. Perhaps he was in a trance. But just a few minutes later, when he was entering the locker room as I was about to exit it, he warmly said hello to a guy who was sitting near the exit. I then said hello to him at point-blank range. He couldn't have possibly not heard me. Yet I scarcely received a grunt in response. Clearly, LM does not like me.

And you know what? I couldn't care less. LM is tangential to my life. His not liking me means almost nothing to me.

I do not say that with disdain. I do not hold LM in contempt. And I do not think I am somehow "better" or "bigger" than LM. I presume his contempt is deliberate, and I presume it stems from something -- something he thinks about me, or something he heard about me, or something about the way I look, or who knows? Perhaps he imagines I disrespected him in some way, possibly by my not hiring him as a personal trainer. Or perhaps he possesses some sort of prejudice against what he imagines I am. I have no way of knowing. And I have no intention to try to rectify the dynamic.

Life is short. Time is scarce. And apart from having taken the time to record my musings on the matter in this column, I won't likely give the matter another moment's thought. Instead, I will focus on the relationships I have that really matter. That is where the joy, passion, excitement, fun, and discovery lay. And those are the things that I find magnetic.

The World of Words

Magnanimous

Building Your Power of Expression



Dictionary

Magnanimous, adj.

Pronunciation: mag'nānəməs

Meaning: We often hear of a person with a magnanimous spirit, or who delivers a magnanimous gesture. Such a person is generous, forgiving, benevolent, and big-hearted. The word magnanimous is often used in the context of behaving in a gracious way towards a rival or someone who is less powerful than oneself.

Usage:

- *Alexander the Great was many things, but to say he was magnanimous would be a falsehood.*

- *His high-minded nature enabled him to extend his hand to his defeated nemesis, totally predictable behavior given his magnanimous disposition.*
- *Despite the trash talking made against him by his opponent, the boxer was magnanimous enough to praise.*

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,

Ara Norwood

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