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Dear David,

 Ara Norwood

I hope this finds you well. The busyness of my life at this season does not derail my efforts to continue to publish ***Uncommon Sense***. I am glad your busyness does not prevent you from reading it.

This issue begins a trend I am starting, of offering a brief profile of various leaders from our past. I start with Alexander The Great, an interesting figure. Future profiles may look at any of the following: Leonardo da Vinci, Ronald Regan, Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King, Brigham Young, Winston Churchill, Gandhi, George C. Marshall, Ann Sullivan, or Martin Luther.

In this issue, I also offer some thoughts on the Transgender Movement. And in my "From Ara's Journal" column, you'll read an account involving the power of listening.

And don't forget to add the word (see the "World of Words" column) to your vocabulary.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood

Self-Development

Great Leaders of the Past: Alexander


History has much to teach us about leadership, both where people excelled and what sorts of things brought about their downfall. Alexander The Great is one such subject where history shines some light on good and bad leadership qualities. And while space constraints won't permit me to do justice to a profile of the man, a few tidbits should suffice.

Alexander was a military leader, and was one of the most successful military leaders of all time. The word on the street in historical circles is that he is presumed to be undefeated in battle. One of Alexander's strategies of maintaining a strong army involved a policy of fusion -- integrating many foreigners into his armies once those foreigners had been defeated in battle, a sort of a "if you can't beat us, join us" policy.

Alexander showed early signs of pluck and determination as a boy. For instance, at age 10, a horse trader brought his father Philip a horse, which he offered to sell for thirteen talents (a boatload of money.) The horse was wild, and refused to be mounted by anyone, so Philip ordered it to be taken away. Alexander, however, asked for a turn to tame the horse and eventually managed to mount the horse successfully. Philip bought that horse for him.

Alexander was taught by the best instructors possible. At age 13, he became a student of Aristotle, with whom he studied for 3 years. From Aristotle, Alexander was exposed to many disciplines, including healing, biology, philosophy, happiness, religion, classification, logic, and art. It was also from Aristotle that Alexander got his undying love for the works of Homer, and in particular the *Iliad*, with Aristotle gifting him an annotated copy which he would take with him on various future military campaigns.

Alexander was thrust into leadership at a rather early age. When his studies with Aristotle ended at age 16, his father, Philip had left to go to war and left his son in charge of things, as Regent of the Kingdom. Four years later, when his father was assassinated, young Alexander, now 20, was the new leader. All potential rivals to the throne were immediately ordered to be put to death. Indeed, Alexander lived in a world where life was cheap.

I believe his greatest leadership quality was decisiveness. This same strength also left him vulnerable at times,  Alexander The Great plunging into some battles without a real plan, and when conditions were not favorable to him.

I have tried to understand the character of Alexander, but I have found it next to impossible to come away with anything concrete. He did seem generous at times,

but he also came across as ruthless and unforgiving at other times. And it is important to note that when studying ancient sources, they are generally written with an agenda, either glorifying or denigrating their subject, making it tough to evaluate the actual character of a man.

If I had to summarize his strengths and his weakness, I would characterize them as follows:

For his strengths, he was bold, brave, ambitious, generous, skilled, a smart tactician, and he led by example.

But his weaknesses were serious: he suffered from hubris, he was unforgiving, he lacked self-control, he seemed possessed by a lust for power, and seemed to prize conquest for the sake of conquest. I think he eventually lost his mind, went a little insane, and died at the age of 33.

As the ancient historian, Plutarch, once wrote, "No beast is more savage when he is possessed of power equal to his passion." I think this applies well to Alexander.

The Elephant in the Room

Fixed or Fluid?

One of the stranger curiosities being thrust on the American people currently is the obsession of homosexual activists with gender identity matters. For decades, they have been fighting for laws to be changed to favor their sexual orientation agenda, and their efforts finally won them the right to marry in all 50 states when the Supreme Court ruled, barely, in their favor in June 2015. Now that they have achieved such a victory, they seem to be very focused on activism around a new cause, one that does not deal with sexual orientation, but on gender identity.

Just as the activists used to loudly claim, in a "Heads-I-Win-Tails-You-Lose" manner, that sexual orientation could migrate from "straight" to "gay" but not the other way around, they now assert, [without any science](#) to back it up, that gender is fluid, not fixed.

What they are actually trying to do is to foist an agenda on the public. The agenda is this: for reasons that do not make any sense at all, probably not even to them, they want us to believe that a man is actually a woman, and that a woman is actually a man, and that this is to be thought of as "normal," not as "confusing," and that, better yet, it is possible for that man who is a woman, and that woman who is a man, to be neither man nor woman. This is because, they assure us, there are not two genders, but either dozens of possible gender descriptions, or, if you don't like that model, there is no such thing as gender, because in the mind of some of these activists, we live in a genderless world. Gender, to them, is a mirage.

By the way, if you are curious as to the various possibilities that the radicalized activists have conjured up for the new gender identities replacing the obvious and traditional male-female standards, here is what they dreamt up:

- Agender
- Androgyne
- Androgynous
- Bi-gendered
- Butch
- Cross-dresser
- Drag Queen
- Female-to-male
- FTM
- Gender Bender
- Gender Blender
- Gender Fluid
- Gender Gifted
- GenderQueer
- Hijra
- Male-to-female
- MTF
- Non-binary Transgender
- Pangender
- Person of Transgender Experience
- Trans
- Transexual/transsexual
- Trans Person
- Two-Spirit

Can you imagine someone making the following claim: "I am neither male nor female. I am to be thought of as "Drag Queen" (or "Gender Blender" or "Two-Spirit")?"

Personally, I don't think they are inclusive enough. What about the following:

- Squelch-Gendered?
- Platypus Compound?
- Wart-Gender Pirate Singularity?
- Freckled Jellyfish Excretion?

Now, of course, I just made those up out of whole cloth, but really, why not include them? As soon as a certain type of person reads those four descriptors of gender identity, he/she is sure to claim that he/she does identify with one of them. Or all of them: "Oh, I am something really unique: I am a Squelch-Gendered Platypus Compound, along with a little Wart-Gender Pirate Singularity and Freckled Jellyfish Excretion thrown in."

Leaving aside the absurd for a moment, here is my serious take on the issue of gender identity matters.


First, there is a tiny portion of the human population that are born with chromosomal quirks that seem to defy the normal male-female standards. The

numbers are infinitesimal and we don't need to create brand new laws forcing the population at large to reorient their life around such minuscule situations.

Second, there is a very small, but (thanks to the activists) growing number of people who, usually during adolescence or their teen years, experience some degree of gender dysphoria. In other words, a boy psychologically starts to believe that he is actually a girl trapped in a boy's body, or a girl starts to become persuaded that she is actually a boy trapped in girl's body. LGBT activists love when this happens, and they work to brainwash such persons to develop and entertain and escalate such confusing thoughts.

Third, when people who entertain such thoughts eventually have sex-reassignment surgery performed on them, they usually fail to experience the peace and resolution they were expecting. This leads them to commit suicide in [much higher numbers](#) than other persons who do not experience such trauma. Activists, being true to form, claim such high suicide rates are due to discrimination and bullying, but [this is a myth](#). The transgendered who experience sex-reassignment surgery were sold a bill of goods by the activists, a bill of goods which did no more than to feminize males, or to masculinize females. The truth is, most young people who experience such confusion about their gender easily outgrow such feelings in short order and with the help of trained therapists.

Fourth, the activists have persuaded large numbers of impressionable young people with unformed minds to see the notion of gender fluidity as chic, hip, and trendy. Thus, many kids who have no type of gender dysphoria whatsoever have jumped on the bandwagon out of a sheer sense of pointless activism. Their mindset seems to be bent on challenging normalcy, convention, and tradition. They are basically daring others to challenge their weirdness so they can label such challengers as bigots and have them formally punished into silence. And this does actually happen: people brave enough to dare state the obvious -- that there are two genders consisting of male and female -- are [routinely ostracized](#).

Fifth, when child predators watch organizations like Target Stores fall prey to the demands of the activists, and [embrace policies](#) allowing men into women's bathrooms provided the man claims he believes he is a female, the predators jump for joy. They know that  Trans they can, with impunity, go into women's restrooms after they see a young girl go in there, and they can molest that girl much more easily, since no one will dare question what a man is doing in a woman's restroom thanks to the LGBT activists who have stigmatized such questions. The LGBT Activist is the Child Predator's best friend.

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.

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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

Some years ago I received an electronic message. The woman who sent it requested I contact her by phone. Both she and her husband were clients of mine, but I knew the husband much more than I knew the wife. So I was a little surprised at the request, and a feeling of foreboding came over me as I dialed her number. That feeling proved to be justified, for when she answered the phone, I could tell she had been crying. . .

She got right to the story. I won't share the details here except to say that she feared her marriage was coming to an end that very afternoon, and not because she wanted out. He did.

So she poured out the details to me. And I listened. I did not say a word as she went on, with detail after detail, until about 25 minutes had elapsed, and I was still listening, and not saying a word. I truly did not know what to say. I had no clue how to help this woman. And the things she was telling me were very surprising to me, for my earlier interactions with them made me feel that if any two people were deeply and hopelessly in love, it was them.

Eventually, she became aware of my silence, and thus, wasn't even sure I was still on the line, so she asked, "Are you still there?" I assured her I was.

After she finished telling me her story, she then requested my counsel.

I still did not know what to offer her. I took a deep breath.

And the thoughts flowed.

Impression after impression came into my mind. I do not know if this was revelation from a divine Source, or if this was just internal inspiration coming together for me at just the right time. The things I said to her made sense to both of us. They had a logical and hopeful ring to them. And she later informed me that as she did the things as I advised her to do, her marriage problems got solved. Healing took place. Understanding replaced suspicion. Compassion replaced insecurity. Love replaced animosity.

I take no credit for those outcomes. But I do know this: I gained a renewed appreciation for the power that comes from speaking less and listening more.

The World of Words

Assuage

Building Your Power of Expression



Dictionary

Assuage, v.

Pronunciation: ə'swāj

Meaning: To assuage is to make something (usually an unpleasant feeling) less intense. It is to satisfy or to calm or to bring relief.

Usage:

- *The latest letter that arrived assuaged the fears of most members.*
- *An opportunity occurred to assuage her desire for knowledge.*
- *Let's get together over coffee and discuss your concerns, for I am confident I can assuage your anxieties.*

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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