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Dear David,

 Ara Norwood

Great to have you back. I loved writing this issue of *Uncommon Sense*! I'm sure you will love reading it.

You will read about the greatness of Abraham Lincoln in the **Self-Development** column.

In my **Elephant in the Room** column, I take on one of the most foolish and destructive trends taking place on some of our crazy college campuses. Read it and weep, or laugh.

And in the **From Ara's Journal** column, I offer some musings on loneliness, its pros and cons.

And thanks to the **World of Words** column, you will have the opportunity to expand your growing vocabulary even more!


OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood

Self-Development

Great Leaders of the Past: Abraham Lincoln

As I have, in recent issues of Uncommon Sense, profiled people from Eurasia thus far, I think it time we have our first American leader to profile, as well as our first, relatively speaking, modern profile. Abraham Lincoln is considered by most polls to be the greatest president the United States has ever produced. In this he is rivaled only by George Washington, who, admittedly, might be even a tad greater.

In determining the overall singularity of any historical figure, one can apply the crude but useful test of counting the number of times a person (real or fictitious) has been featured in films. On a list compiled at  Lincoln the end of the 20th century Lincoln came in 5th place with 137 entries devoted to him. The 4 ahead of him were, in 4th place: Frankenstein (159); 3rd place: Dracula (161); 2nd Place: Napoleon (194); and in 1st place was the fictitious Sherlock Holmes (211.) Lincoln thus did better than any other real figure except Napoleon.

Lincoln was distinctive in many ways; he had no middle name; he was our first Republican president, and our first sitting president to be assassinated; he was the only President to not belong to a church; he was an avid reader, yet only had about 18 months of formal schooling; he suffered from depression; and was the only President to earn a patent. (It was a device to buoy sea-worthy vessels over shoals.) As our 16th President, Lincoln led the US through the Civil War, preserving the Union and ending slavery.

If I had to select one word that best explains Lincoln's preeminence as a leader, it is the word virtue. He was a virtuous man on a grand scale, and a man that elevated virtue into a political principle.

In trying to find an Achilles Heal in his character, one comes up short, and in examining his record, it's tough to point to a particular moment in his life and say, "Here, he was morally wrong," or "In this instance, we have a rare glimpse of where he sullied himself." In fact, it's important to know that he was a lawyer and a very skilled one, albeit a self-taught one. But here is a letter that seems to shine a light on his deep-rooted virtue and decency.

*Springfield, Illinois
21 February 1856
To Mr. George P. Floyd,
Quincy, Illinois*

Dear Sir,

I have just received yours of 16th, which check on Flagg & Savage for twenty-five dollars. You must think I am a high-priced man. You are too liberal with your

money.

Fifteen dollars is enough for the job. I send you a receipt for fifteen dollars, and return to you a ten-dollar bill.

Yours truly,

A. Lincoln

This Letter should be framed and hung in every single law office in America.

In an 1854 speech on the Kansas-Nebraska Act, an act that had repealed the limits on slavery's extent as established by the Missouri Compromise of 1820, Lincoln committed to a position he repeated for the next 6 years:

[The Act has a] declared indifference, but as I must think, covert real zeal for the spread of slavery, I cannot but hate it. I hate it because of the monstrous injustice of slavery itself. I hate it because it deprives our republican example of its just influence in the world - enables the enemies of free institutions, with plausibility, to taunt us as hypocrites - causes the real friends of freedom to doubt our sincerity, and especially because it forces so many really good men amongst ourselves into an open war with the very fundamental principles of civil liberty - criticizing the Declaration of Independence, and insisting that there is no right principle of action but self-interest.

When he accepted the Republican nomination for the senate, he, quoting the New Testament (Mark 3:25), continued with the same themes:

"A house divided against itself cannot stand." I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved - I do not expect the house to fall - but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other.

One of the more noteworthy acts of leadership by Abraham Lincoln involved his debates with Stephen Douglas. These took place in 1858. In these debates, Lincoln came out against the practice of slavery while Douglas took a "let the states decide" approach. The result of these debates is that Douglas, not Lincoln, was re-elected to the senate, because while the Republican legislative candidates won more popular votes, the Democrats won more seats. But Lincoln had made his mark. In November 1860, he defeated Douglas for the Presidency, the first Republican to become President.

Lincoln believed war could be avoided, but he miscalculated the pro-slavery sentiment in the south. About a month after he was elected, 7 states seceded from the Union (South Carolina, Florida, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas) and claimed themselves to be the Confederate States of America. Four months later, at Fort Sumpter in South Carolina, Union soldiers were fired upon by Confederates and forced to surrender. This was the beginning of war.

Lincoln was deeply involved in war strategy even though he had no direct combat experience, and on one memorable occasion, while in the theater of combat, he was a bit careless, and received a blistering admonishment from one of his generals: "Get down you damn fool before you get shot!"

His Major Goal, even above ending slavery, was preserving the Union. But once he issued the Emancipation Proclamation that freed slaves in territories not already under Union control, he then went to work on the 13th Amendment which permanently forbade all future slavery.

Although the Battle of Gettysburg was a Union victory, it was also the bloodiest battle of the war and dealt a blow to Lincoln's war effort. The Gettysburg Address is one of the most quoted speeches in US History. It was delivered at the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, on the afternoon of Thursday, November 19, 1863, during the Civil War, four and a half months after the Union armies defeated those of the Confederacy at the decisive Battle of Gettysburg.

Lincoln's death was well-planned. Originally, John Wilkes Booth, a well-known actor and a Confederate spy from Maryland, had formulated a plan to kidnap Lincoln in exchange for the release of Confederate prisoners. After attending an April 11 speech in which Lincoln promoted voting rights for blacks, an incensed Booth changed his plans and determined to assassinate the president. Learning that the President and First Lady would be attending Ford's Theatre, he laid his plans, assigning his co-conspirators to assassinate not only Lincoln, but also the Vice President and Secretary of State.

Without his main bodyguard, Ward Hill Lamon, to whom he related his famous dream regarding his own assassination, Lincoln left to attend the play *Our American Cousin* on April 14, 1865. As a lone bodyguard wandered, and Lincoln sat in his state box in the balcony, Booth crept up behind the President and waited for what he thought would be the funniest line of the play ("You sock-dologizing old man-trap"), hoping the laughter would muffle the noise of the gunshot. When the laughter began, Booth jumped into the box and aimed a single-shot, round-slug 0.44 caliber Derringer at the back of the head of the President, firing at point-blank range.

Booth then leaped to the stage and shouted "Sic semper tyrannis!" which is Latin for "Thus always to tyrants") and escaped, despite a broken leg suffered in the leap. A twelve-day manhunt ensued, in which Booth was chased by Federal agents (under the direction of Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton). He was eventually cornered in a Virginia barn house and shot, dying of his wounds soon after.

Lincoln was larger than life; a monumental president who had monuments carved out of mountains in his honor, and who was affectionately referred to as Honest Abe, the Rail-splitter, the Great Emancipator, the Savior of the Nation.


The Elephant in the Room

Turing Our College Students into Toddlers

The University of Utah was in the news recently. Evidently they set up a "Cry Closet" in the library as finals week approached so that students who felt overwhelmed could go in there for ten minutes, play with stuffed animals, and have a good old fashioned emotional breakdown.

The University of Utah isn't alone. Back in the summer of 2016, Case Western Reserve University decided to provide what they call a "safe space" (loaded with coloring books no less) for students who were traumatized by the Republican National Convention, which took place in their city that same week. Let me get this right: a major political party has their convention, and the mere reality of that event causes some college students to descend into paroxysms of horror? Is this pathology widespread?

Later in 2016, Duke University followed suit and set up a Safe Space for those students who "feel marginalized and face constant attention for characteristics that are immutable-like their skin color or their religion, their immigration status or whether they're from another country-to be able to heal." Wait! Students need to heal from their skin color? Is skin color a disease?

Brown University also set up a Safe Space for students who might be traumatized about an academic  Safe Space debate that was to take place. I have to ask: When these fragile little doilies enter the cozy precincts of their safe spaces, do they really feel safer and empowered to take on the world? Do they somehow feel new bursts of vitality and courage? Or, when they leave the nest known as the Safe Space, do they fall right back into their previous pattern of trepidation and foreboding as they walk across this frightening thing known as a college campus?

The University of Pennsylvania set up a Safe Space with coloring books and puppies. Columbia University established a Safe Space where hot cocoa was offered to calm the frayed nerves of their delicate undergraduates. Cal State Fullerton set up a Safe Space for students there to take naps, just as they used to do in Kindergarten. Cal State Northridge did the same thing, installing six "nap pods" which cost about \$9,000 each. The University of Michigan set up vinyl cots in the library so their fragile little snowflakes known as students could curl up and dream their cares away, play with Play-Dough, and blow bubbles. The study tables that had been there were removed. Napping takes precedence over studying at that institution of lower learning.

It seems that only the President at the University of Chicago had the good sense to see the madness in the trendy foolishness taking place at such campuses and made a clear and unyielding statement that there would be no "safe spaces" there. Of course, the Leftist professors on that campus had a crying fit over that policy, but to no avail -- and since there were no Safe Spaces on that campus, what's a traumatized professor to do? Go to another campus to suppress their existential angst?

Does anyone besides myself and the president of the University of Chicago see that we are turning our college students (and some faculty) into pansies? Turning tomorrow's leaders into glass figurines is a recipe for a leadership void. But the

idea is so dopey and obtuse that one can only giggle and wait for the next absurdity to come along that outdoes the previous absurdities.

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

Shameless Plug

Is Your Résumé Overdue For an Overhaul?

You may be gainfully employed, you may be unemployed, or you may (knowingly or unknowingly) be heading for a layoff. Having an impressive résumé can set you apart from the competition and position you for your next job.

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Your résumé is your marketing brochure, and you do not get a second chance to make a first impression. Make an investment in yourself!

* * * * *


"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

On Occasional Loneliness

There are times that I am  Journal Writing lonely. Not often. But occasionally. The reason I am not often experiencing loneliness is because I live in a world where people are all around me. Yet even then I still experience the pangs of loneliness every once in a while, because merely having people "around" me doesn't equate to being connected to these people.

Even in moments of loneliness, I remind myself that such conditions will rectify themselves in short order. There are enough people in my life for me to reach out to, that doing so will alleviate loneliness. And there are plenty of people in my life who reach out to me with enough regularity that loneliness can never seem to gain a foothold in my consciousness.

Even putting people aside for a moment, there are other pastimes that squelch loneliness. Music is a great friend. Writing is exciting. Exercise demands a focus on that task. And relentlessly pursuing goals is a never-ending act of fulfillment.

And I must remember that even when loneliness overpowers other distractions, loneliness keeps me humble, keeps me contrite, and keeps me humane. And that's not such a bad outcome.

The World of Words

Serpentine

Building Your Power of Expression



Dictionary

Serpentine, adj.

Pronunciation: sɛrpəntēn

Meaning: This word can be used in various contexts, such as describing something that winds around like a snake, I happen to prefer it in the sense of something or someone that is cunning, subtle, and perhaps complex.

Usage:

- *This particular felon is known for his deeply manipulative and serpentine mannerisms.*

- *I don't think he likes clarity because he speaks in riddles and in such a serpentine way.*
- *Her serpentine and quirky peculiarities are very idiosyncratic and unique to her.*

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).

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