

Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Dear David,

Welcome to another round of *Uncommon Sense*!

Jump into the **Self-Development** column to see what Ray Dalio, one of the most successful business leaders in America, has to say about the human brain.

And in the **Elephant in the Room** column, I bring you an opinion piece written by the editors of the conservative journal, *National Review*. They correctly and accurately portray the current political landscape from one of the two major parties, at least for a snapshot of where things stand at the moment. And it's sobering. Remember what you read when you go to the polls in November.

In the **From Ara's Journal** column, I share some very personal thoughts I am wrestling with concerning "tough love."

Not to be overlooked, in the **World of Words** column I bequeath to you a super-charged word to add to your ever-expanding vocabulary. Use it today in a sentence!

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood



Self-Development

What We Know About the Human Brain

One of the most fascinating and enjoyable books I've read recently is [Principles by Ray Dalio](#). Ray is the founder of Bridgewater, the nation's largest and most successful hedge fund. This book, which I am now reading again for a second time, is the first of two books that deals with the principles he has thought through and adheres to, and broadly deals with both work principles and life principles. The second book, not yet published, will deal with economic principles and investing principles. I look forward to reading it when it becomes available.

But for this first book, I find it wide-ranging in scope, covering such disparate topics as embracing reality, open-mindedness, decision-making, transparency, relationships, conflict resolution, hiring, people management, problem solving, and much more.

Of the many interesting things Ray Dalio writes about, the human brain stands out near the top. Here are some random statements he makes about the human brain that I will share in no particular order, shot-gun style:



- The conscious mind is in a battle with the subconscious mind.
- There are large parts of our brains that don't do what is logical.
- Our greatest moments of inspiration often "pop" up from our subconscious. We experience these creative breakthroughs when we are relaxed and not trying to access the part of the brain in which they reside, which is generally the neocortex. When you say, "I just thought of something," you noticed your subconscious mind telling your conscious mind something. With training, it's possible to open this stream of communication.
- Be aware of your subconscious -- of how it can both harm you and help you, and how by consciously reflecting on what comes out of it, perhaps with the help of others, you can become happier and more effective.
- There are no greater battles than those between our feelings (most importantly controlled by our amygdala, which operates subconsciously) and our rational thinking (most importantly controlled by our prefrontal cortex, which operates consciously.) If you understand how those battles occur you will understand why it is so important to reconcile what you get from your subconscious with what you get from your conscious mind.
- For most people, life is a never-ending battle between these two parts of the brain. While the amygdala's reactions come in spurts and then subside, reactions from the prefrontal cortex are more gradual and constant. The biggest difference between people who guide their own personal evolution and achieve their goals and those who don't is that those who make progress reflect on what causes their amygdala hijackings.
- Habit is probably the most powerful tool in your brain's toolbox. It is driven by a golf-ball-sized lump of tissue called the basal ganglia at the base of the cerebrum. It is so deep-seated and instinctual that we are not conscious of it, though it controls our actions.
- Brain plasticity is what allows your brain to change its "softwiring." For a long time, scientists believed that after a certain critical period in childhood, most of our brain's neurological connections were fixed and highly unlikely to change. But recent research has suggested that a wide variety of practices -- from physical exercise to studying to meditation -- can lead to physical and physiological changes in our brains that affect our abilities to think and form memories.

I am delighted to have read such an interesting book and I commend the book to you with my highest recommendation.

A Party of Stalkers by The Editors of National Review

James Hodgkinson seems to have slipped down the memory hole.

Hodgkinson was the left-wing activist who accused Donald Trump and Mike Pence of treason and - "fueled by rage against Republican legislators," as the Virginia attorney general put it - attempted to massacre a group of Republican congressmen practicing for a baseball game. He shot Representative Steve Scalise, along with a Capitol Police officer and two others, and very likely would have murdered a goodly chunk of the GOP caucus if not for the police assigned to protect Scalise, the majority whip. Senator Rand Paul was there, too, and escaped injury - that time: A few months later, he was attacked while mowing his lawn, suffering six broken ribs. The man who attacked him, Rene Boucher, is a left-wing Chomskyite social-media rage-artist who wrote about his desire to see someone "fry Trump's gonads." In 2013, a gunman attacked the conservative Family Research Council. In 2016, Micah Xavier Johnson massacred police officers in Dallas. Before that, five men associated with the Occupy movement made plans to blow up a bridge in Ohio.

We have a memory, a faint one, of Democrats lecturing Republicans about their "tone" not so long ago, something about Sarah Palin and metaphorical crosshairs.

We are a long way from arguing about graphic design.

The Democrats in 2018 seem to have taken the wrong lesson from Hodgkinson and the rest: They have embraced stalking and terror as political tactics. The so-called antifa have firebombed college campuses and committed political violence in order to silence dissenting speakers and to bully students into political conformity; Democrats have taken up stalking with gusto, recently chasing Ted Cruz and his wife out of a restaurant, while Representative Dave Brat recently discovered stalkers photographing his cars and property; police cordons have been broken, and buildings have been entered illegally; Senator Susan Collins has been threatened with rape. Hillary Clinton told her gang: "You cannot be civil."



An angry crowd at a town hall is protest, even when it is vulgar or unruly. Protest is part of democracy. But stalking and assault are not protest. Arson is not protest. The destruction of property is not protest.

This is *terrorism* - the attempt to instill in people the fear of physical harm or death in the service of a political agenda. This terrorism has been undertaken with the encouragement of Democratic elected officials and party grandees ranging from

Senator Cory Booker to former attorney general Eric Holder. It has been justified and minimized by left-leaning media figures such as Don Lemon.

The Left is in the grip of mass hysteria. Unable to get their way through the ordinary democratic process, the Democrats have resorted to extraordinary tactics, from the smear campaign organized against Brett Kavanaugh to attempting to pound down the doors of the Supreme Court. (We're betting on the 13-ton bronze door.) They now insist that institutions of American government ranging from the Senate to the Electoral College to the Supreme Court are illegitimate because . . . they're a little unclear on that part, but they are sure that they are not getting their way, and that's enough for them.

It's a temper tantrum, true, but a temper tantrum thrown by antifa thugs is a riot.

A screaming mob cornering someone in an elevator is not ordinary democratic discourse. It is a campaign of intimidation, and it should be recognized as such.

The first, best, and most effective remedy for this kind of undemocratic mob behavior is the ballot box. Republicans are right to make an issue of Democratic mob attacks in the upcoming elections, and voters ought to take it into account. The Democrats have shown themselves incapable of responsible political action, and incapable of responsible government, too. There are those who make the law and those who break the law, and leading Democrats have aligned themselves, enthusiastically, with the latter. They should be kept as far from the levers of power as voters can put them.

* * * * *

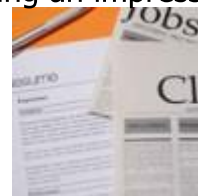
And that, my friends, is the latest elephant in the room.

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

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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

Tough Love

Recent developments in my life have made clear to me that tough love is not only "tough" for the person on the receiving end. Tough love is, in its own way, tough -- agonizingly so -- on the one dispensing it.

Tough love is grueling for both. And neither the giver nor the receiver of tough love can be certain that it was the right thing until long after the fact. . . Thus, tough love is a gamble. It might payoff, and it might not.



I can only pray that the tough love I am currently meting out will prove to be just and sound. It is a huge gamble.

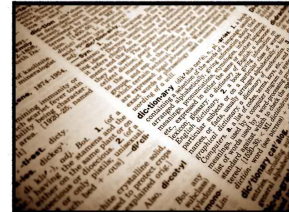
The World of Words

Foment

Building Your Power of Expression

Foment, Fomenting v.

Pronunciation: fōmənt, fōməntiNG



Meaning: To instigate or stir up (an undesirable or violent course of action.)

Usage:

- *They accused him of fomenting political unrest.*
- *He has zero credibility because he uses his airtime to do no more than foment anger and divisiveness.*
- *If you continue to use your platform to foment discord, I am going to remove you from your soapbox.*

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

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