

Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Dear David,

I hope your Christmas was wonderful, and I wish you a splendid New Years Eve celebration and much success in 2019. This issue of *Uncommon Sense*, the final one for the year, consists of the following:

In the **Self-Development** column we consider the implications of you being the architect of your life and how that may impact goal setting.

The **Elephant in the Room** column, I explore with you the question of whether the radicalized outbursts of the Left deserve empathy or contempt.

In the **From Ara's Journal** column, I share a personal story about righting a wrong.

And in the **World of Words** column we serve up a very interesting and useful word for you to adopt, embrace, and utilize.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood



Self-Development

Charting Your Life

If you tend to think about your life in the context of years, you are not alone. A lot of us stratify our life that way; it just seems normal to think in terms of "This was a good year," or "This is what I accomplished this year." Organizations are structured this way, and that is why they produce annual reports, not 13-month reports.

At this juncture, it makes sense to recalibrate your objectives and your focus. It is requisite that you determine what you wish to have your life look like in 2019.

2018 was a wild ride in many respects. There were lots of surprises for a lot of people. Life is very dynamic and rather unpredictable. However, we should still give careful thought to how we wish to lead our lives. We are the architect of our lives in spite of the many unexpected events that we will always face.

It's possible that you had concrete goals for 2018. It may also be true that you achieved them. If so, I salute you.

But what if you failed to achieve them? Then you have to ask yourself whether you still have a strong desire to achieve those particular goals, or if there are newer goals that are even more important than the 2018 goals you failed to achieve. It might make sense to maintain a renewed effort for the original 2018 goals, but if you don't want history to repeat itself, you are going to have to come to terms with why you failed to achieve them in 2018. Whatever that answer entails, you are going to have to address those obstacles, whether they involved apathy on your part, or obstacles that you failed to manage, or a lack of resources. You cannot let the poor performance of the past continue on into the future.

Finally, I strongly advocate that you be very judicious in the number of goals you set for yourself in 2019. Having one or two -- and probably no more than three -- major goals that are both consequential and satisfying would be a wise choice. Having 7 or 8 major goals for the year is probably going to result in disappointment.

Lock in those goals now! Review them regularly. Be obsessed about them. Then work on them every single week throughout the year.

And when you do achieve them, take a moment to bask in the glory of the accomplishment. You will have earned it!



The Elephant in the Room

Empathy or Enablement?

15 years ago, the ever-insightful Charles Krauthammer wrote a short piece called [Bush Derangement Syndrome](#) (BDS). With his acerbic wit and wry sagacity, Krauthammer lampooned the lunacy found in certain quarters. He gave his clinical definition of this plague as follows: "The acute onset of paranoia in otherwise normal people in reaction to the policies, the presidency -- nay -- the very existence of George W. Bush."

Of course, with the 2016 election behind us, an election that the pundits promised us would go to Mrs. Clinton (85% chance of her being our 45th president, [we were assured](#)), the horrors of abject defeat that held the Regressive Left in a stupor of apoplexy have morphed into a new strain of BDS. This new manifestation of the contagion is called Trump Derangement Syndrome (TDS), and its symptoms are legion: nervous ticks, uncontrolled perspiration, random or periodic stuttering, eyes

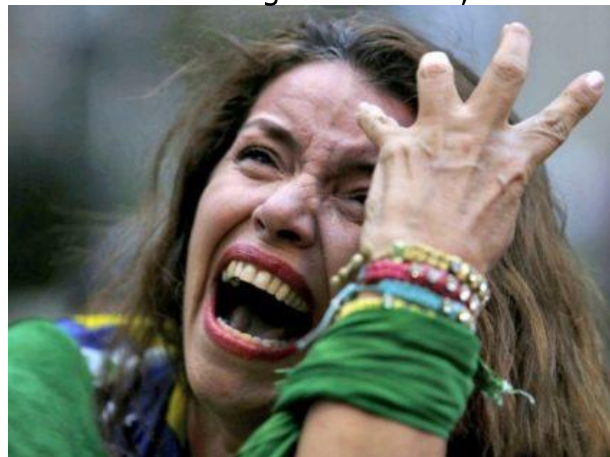
rolling back in their sockets, severe depression, a propensity towards violence, an inability to control one's bowels, erratic spasms that affect not only one's motor coordination, but one's intellect as well, and my personal favorite, [howling at the cosmos](#). I kid you not, many people suffering from acute TDS have made it a religious ritual, or a rite of passage to scream skyward. We're talking of biological adults experiencing a state of rapid regression while adopting the emotional maturity of a two-year-old who didn't get the lollipop they were demanding.



What is one to do when encountering such displays?

Two responses have been spotted.

Normal people who embrace American values find such remonstrations absurd, and treat them as such. Hence, you might find mentally healthy people shaking their heads in dismay, feeling contempt for those screaming heavenward, or perhaps finding it mildly rollicking, as if they were seeing people who appear to be human in form taking on the persona of a cartoon character.



Those on the Left find TDS a thing to be taken seriously, something that should not be laughed at, something that should pull from us our deepest sympathies. Indeed, in an encounter with a woman of the Left, while amusing myself with recent stories of TDS sufferers, I was strongly

chastised for not expressing sincere empathy for pathologies that are still being experienced two years after the election. This woman of the Left was outraged that a Conservative American could possibly feel something other than camaraderie, compassion, or oneness with those so suffering.

And that leads us to the question: When grown adults behave like spoiled brats, should we be supportive? Should we coddle them? Should we pander to their outbursts? Should we indulge them? Should our behaviors signal that irrational temper tantrums are acceptable?



Yes, if you are on the Left.

But for the rest of us, the answer has to be no, emphatically so.

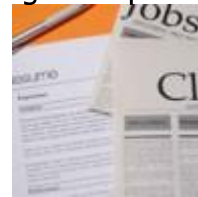
And that, my friends, is the latest elephant in the room.

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

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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

Apologize, Even When. . .

Some months ago, I was on the receiving end of a phone call that I wish I hadn't taken. The caller, let's call him Liam, needed my help on a matter. Or, perhaps I should say, demanded my help on a matter. I wasn't inclined to render such help in the first place for reasons I will not go into. But as I listened to Liam drone on and on about why he thought I owed him the help he was



insisting on, I began to notice something peculiar. Let me explain it this way.

My own approach to asking people for help is to recognize that if they have something I seek (whether it's knowledge, or money, or influence, or actions) they are under no obligation to render the help I am seeking. And therefore it behooves me to tread lightly, to ask politely, to be deferential, to be respectful, and to remember, as my father once taught me, that beggars can't be choosers. All of this is to say that I have no weight to throw around in such situations, and that it would be the grossest folly for me to try to browbeat someone into agreeing to provide the requested help.

What I found astonishing was that Liam was doing quite the opposite of what I thought was proper. He was chastising me, scolding me, guilt-tripping me, drawing attention to my flaws, as if any of that would cause me to do something I already, from the outset, didn't feel inclined to do.

Now, had Liam approached me in an appropriate manner, with hat-in-hand as it were, and if he had said just the right words, I might have given him the help he desired in spite of my misgivings.

However, because he came off the way he did, I became more and more disengaged, and I felt a growing feeling of annoyance, which morphed into outright contempt. While most of the conversation found me merely listening, with an occasional "Uh huh" thrown in, I found myself losing patience with Liam and wanting to end the call.

Eventually, I reached my limits.

And so I attacked him. Personally.

Not raising my voice in any way, I simply offered the following: *"Liam, allow me to make an observation. When you want something from someone, you might consider, in the future, to refrain from behaving like a boorish jackass. Just a suggestion."*

Liam stopped speaking. And then, having processed what had just happened, he chided me for name-calling, and then hung up on me.

I didn't hear from Liam for several months. I made no effort to contact him. Eventually I received an innocuous text message from him re. something informational. I responded. But I knew I had damaged the relationship. And as it turns out, my relationship with Liam is an important one.

I had occasion to communicate with Liam today, via text message. And during the course of the exchange, I felt compelled to apologize to Liam. So I did.

He thanked me for apologizing.

Now, does Liam owe me an apology also? Probably. But apologies should be offered when the conscience dictates, lest they be less than authentic. And apologies (such as the one I offered) should be unconditional. They should not be dependent on any amends I think I am due.

Liam may have not the slightest clue that his earlier behavior was inappropriate. And he may go through life acting like a bull in a China shop, which will ultimately close many doors.

But I was wrong to have insulted him. What I said may have been true, but it was uncalled for and unnecessary.

Still, there is something liberating about apologizing -- about saying, in effect, "I did X and I was wrong to do so. I am sorry and I regret it."

I would rather be a better human being and not have done anything that required an apology in the first place. But short of that, apologizing sincerely puts us back on the right track.

The World of Words

Intoned

Building Your Power of Expression

Intoned, v. past tense

Pronunciation: intōn d



Meaning: To have said or recited with little rise and fall in the pitch of the voice.

Usage:

- *"All rise," intoned the usher.*
- *Scarlett's reading, formerly intoned, was now delivered with excitement and enthusiasm.*
- *Uncle Richard intoned a chapter from the Bible and improvised a prayer.*

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