

Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Dear David,

Didn't we just celebrate New Years Eve the other day?
And now the first of 12 months is coming to a close!
Time flies.

In the **Self-Development** column you will be treated to a very important mindset I encourage you to embrace. Doing so will impact your success in profound ways.

In the **Elephant in the Room** column, I review some of the very troubling stories that caught my eye in the month of January 2019 that suggest to me our country is in grave danger by internal forces. No conspiracy stuff; just actual trends that are deeply troubling. You need to face the facts of what we are up against. And it's not pretty.

In the **From Ara's Journal** column, I reflect on loss; losing a loved one, and how those inevitable future losses might be handled now, before they occur. Just some random food-for-thought.

The **World of Words** column continues to give you strength in your ability to express yourself. So adopt the word you will find therein, and use it. Today!

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood

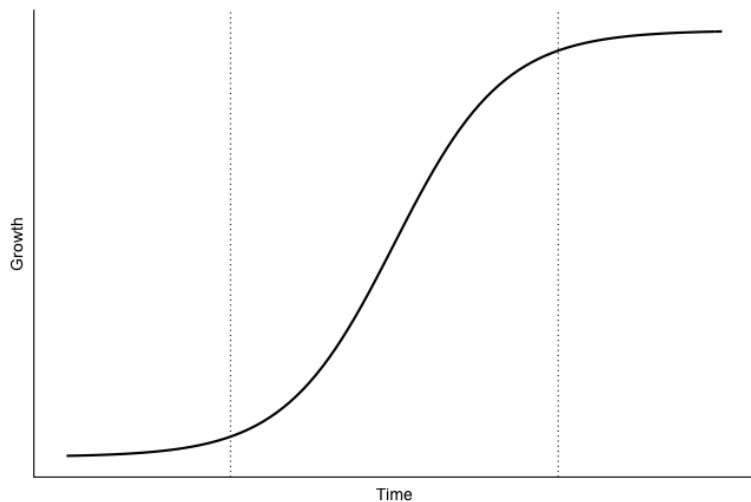


Self-Development

Knowledge Acquisition

Ever hear of the S-Curve? The S-Curve is a conceptual model that, as its name implies, is in the shape of an S, similar to the image you see below. The model is meant to capture the reality common in many walks of life that progress in any endeavor starts out slowly. In the early stages of an undertaking, there are lots of mistakes and advancements do not come easily. But at some critical point, learning from one's mistakes leads to a break-through, and then another break-through, and, as knowledge builds on knowledge, discoveries and improvements start to come more easily. Momentum builds, and things start to take-off, sometimes with alarming speed. Innovations and improvements begin to flourish, and the product or process in question evolves in magnificent ways. Just think of where we are today with commercial flight, compared to where we were when the

Wright Brothers were on the scene. Or consider the first telephones compared to today's smart phones. Or reflect on today's military weaponry with that in use during the Civil War. Or our understanding today of dreaded diseases like Small Pox or Polio compared to our understanding of 100 years ago.



But, you will notice as you study the S-Curve illustration, that eventually progress begins to taper off. Progress no longer enjoys the steep incline it once did, and there is a diminishing return on new ideas, as progress begins to slacken.

I would like to suggest that while the S-Curve is a common story for many endeavors, I do not believe it has to be that way when it comes to knowledge acquisition. What I am suggesting is that when it comes to learning and obtaining new understanding of things, the tail-end or top of the S-Curve need not taper off for us if we decide we want to be life-long learners.

The reality is this: if we are blessed to live a long life, say 75 years, 80 years, 90 years, or more, and provided we are not stricken with some form of dementia, there is no reason we cannot spend our entire life -- all 90 years of it -- acquiring new knowledge. The truth is that there is more knowledge out there to absorb than there are hours of life allotted to us. I have been told that a prominent practitioner of the martial arts, Ed Parker, claimed that it would take "several lifetimes" to truly understand all there was to know about American Kenpo. And yet, for many of us, we have varied interests, curiosity about many disparate disciplines. We will run out of "life" long before we have learned all there is to know about any complex subject, let alone many complex subjects.

There are many ways to put yourself on a track of lifelong learning. The first is to make a decision that that is what you are going to do -- acquire knowledge all your life. Too many people drop out of the race of knowledge acquisition. Some do so right after college graduation. They don't go very far in life. Others do so at a mid-point in their careers. They recognize that they have acquired a reasonably broad body of knowledge as it relates to their career, and, thinking they've "arrived," they no longer push themselves to acquire new knowledge. They rest on their laurels and essentially ride out their later working years on their own supposed coattails. They fall far short of where they could have been, and they end up being unable to contribute effectively later in life when matters of greater complexity present themselves.

In addition to making the decision to become a lifelong learner, one must act. One must organize one's life in such a way that time is allocated for things like reading voraciously and widely, and for having conversations with smart individuals. One

must be capable of listening more than talking. And one must engage in thinking time, putting together myriad "learnings" in various disciplines in a way that forms a cohesive whole.

Finally, one must be able to synthesize what one learns in pragmatic, practical ways that lead to solutions, opportunities, and contributions.

The man or woman who does these things will lead an extraordinary and fulfilling life.

The Elephant in the Room

The Left and the War Against the Holy (and everything else)

2019 is well underway and Congress has been won by the Democrats, fair and square. Inasmuch as the Left has taken over the Democrat Party, it is instructive to see how Leftist Dems have behaved now that they are a bit more emboldened than normal. Here are some of the happenings that took place in January:

- SNL Alum **Jane Curtain** declared that her New Year's Resolution was to make sure [the Republican Party dies](#). Jane, you ignorant _____!
- An anti-Semitic doctor at the Cleveland Clinic's Lerner Research Institute, **Lara Kollab**, openly stated that her hatred of Jews was so vast that she would not have a problem prescribing them [the wrong medications](#).
- Democratic Virginia Representative **Jennifer Wexton** [placed a transgender flag](#) outside of her office after being sworn in at Capital Hill. I suspect she places more reverence for that flag than she does the stars and stripes.
- Media hound **Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez**, another Democrat newcomer to Congress, wishes to punish the wealthy by [having them taxed](#) at 70%. She also insisted that civilization [would end in 12 years](#) due to Global Warming.
- Not to be outdone for outlandishness, another new United States Representative, **Rashida Tlaib**, a Michigan Democrat, [openly referred to](#) the President of the United States as a "Mother F****er" in a speech to supporters, as she promised to seek impeachment of the President. Shortly thereafter, she made headlines with a comment that revealed she is not only vulgar and disrespectful, but also an anti-Semite.
- Another Freshman Congresswoman, **Ilhan Omar**, a Democrat from Minnesota, has been found to have a colorful past that included [sympathies for ISIS](#). Man! The Democrats really brought in a number of curious characters to lead our country (one obsessed with the Transgendered community, two radical Islamicists who hate Israel and love ISIS, and an outspoken former bartender who opines on economic policy and climate science, subjects about which she knows nothing.)



- The Transgender Community, which makes up a tiny fraction of the U.S. population (less than 1%) got some support from New York City, which [instituted a new law](#) allowing the choice of "X" in addition to "Male" or "Female" on birth certificates, thus normalizing the abnormal. They also got support from a California State Senate Committee which voted to [ban the words "He" and "She."](#) Of course, the Leftist politician announcing the totalitarian rule, **Hannah-Beth Jackson**, proved she was unable to abide by it, referring to a former teacher as "she" during her announcement. She was shouted down for the gaffe by an audience crazier than she is. And the "T" in LGBT got yet another show of adoring support when a Washington DC restaurant [was fined](#) for asking a man who entered to woman's bathroom to show ID, which he refused to do. We've come to a point now where one person, whether trans or pervert or both, is protected while 30 or 50 or 200 women who are uncomfortable with a man entering their bathroom are told to get used to it.
- The **American Psychological Association**, which has been taken over by the Left, now claims that ["traditional masculinity" is toxic](#). They want males to either become feminized little pansies, or, if men retain their masculinity, to be ostracized.
- In a delicious and memorable bit of slap-stick, a black, race-bating CNN legal analyst, **Areva Martin**, [accused a black man, David Webb](#), of white privilege on a radio show, unaware that he was black. This not only shows the lack of preparation and awareness of the CNN talking head, but also the knee-jerk, reflexive impulse to use the race-card at every opportunity.
- **Google employees**, who are about as far-Left as one can go, had an [emotional meltdown](#) at a weekly meeting when an executive used the horrific, emotionally-charged word "family." Why? Because "family," as it is traditionally used, implies a mother and father and children. This did not sit well with an audience of radicals who think "family" should instead be about a bunch of homosexuals shacking up together, spooning each other. (Although this meeting took place in March 2017, it was reported in January so I decided to include it here.)
- **Kamala Harris**, who is running for President, made it clear she has a [hatred for religion](#) by attacking the Catholic service organization, Knights of Columbus.
- Leftist haven **BuzzFeed**, which tries to pass itself off as a news organization, put out some [Fake News](#) that asserted **President Trump** ordered his lawyer **Michael Cohen** to lie to Congress. This assertion was openly refuted by Special Prosecutor **Robert Mueller**.
- The **New York Times**, which is the Secular Bible, continued to publish fake news about [Global Warming](#), claiming that scientists agree that the Polar Vortex -- extremely freezing -- is evidence of Global Warming. This convoluted thinking, that "hot is cold and cold is hot" is dismissed by most competent scientists who don't have an agenda to foist on an unsuspecting public.
- In another [redefinition of marriage](#), a Leftist kook out of England by the name of **Pascale Sellick**, has announced she is getting married -- to an inanimate object (her quilt.) Leftists consider this normal and beautiful.
- **New York** decided that unborn babies can be dismembered and slaughtered [right up to the day](#) they are supposed to be born. In fact, they can be killed outside the womb if the abortion procedure itself didn't butcher them as

intended. Further, New York Democrats [passed a bill](#) to fund college for illegal immigrants, showing that they do not believe in being law-abiding. A radicalized Leftist Democrat named **Kathy Tran** who represents Virginia, also [sponsored a bill](#), The Repeal Act (as in, Repeal restrictions on 3rd Trimester pregnancies), which would allow abortions to take place right up to the moment of delivery. [Click here](#) to see Kathy Tran being questioned by a Republican lawmaker and trying to obfuscate before he leaves her no room to maneuver and she has to reveal the horrific and stark realities of her bill.

- At Duke University, Professor **Megan Lee Nealy**, who sent out a memo urging foreign students to speak English, was disciplined and [forced to resign](#) from her administrative position as Director of Graduate Studies for Biostatistics. Her Dean, **Mary Klotman**, not only publicly censored Professor Nealy, but urged students not to speak English. Dean Klotman does not believe in American exceptionalism, and she wishes to fundamentally change the United States of America into something it is not.
- A pair of debate partners from **Layton High School** in Utah were disqualified from a debate simply [because they quoted](#) some conservative thought-leaders. This did not sit well with the Leftist Thought Police who was judging their debate. Quoting Leftists is encouraged; quoting Conservatives will result in punishment.
- A *Washington Post* reporter, **Dave Weigel**, during a podcast, made it clear that he has unbridled contempt for President Donald Trump and for those who support him, [calling them "rubies,"](#) (unsophisticated country bumpkins.) Is there any doubt the *Washington Post* hires reporters who are not there to simply report the news, but to shape the news they report to fit their Leftist ideology?
- Santa Barbara City College's Board of Trustees, lead by **Robert Miller**, is so anti-American that they are [ditching the Pledge of Allegiance](#) altogether because they believe it is racist.
- And finally, the **House Committee on Natural Resources**, which is controlled by Leftist Democrats, made their first order of business to [eliminate any reference to God](#) from the oath they administer to witnesses testifying before their panel. The existing wording of the oath reads, "Do you solemnly swear or affirm, under penalty of law, that the testimony you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?" They wish to remove the latter phrase, simply because they hate the notion of God. They also hate the notion of gender, and are planning to remove any wording such as "his or her" throughout the document.

Looks like the Left is alive and well. America is not.

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

Need Help Preparing For That Next Big Interview?

So you have trouble with job interviews? You get nervous? You feel unprepared? You get psyched out? I understand. And that is why I am pleased to alert you to my eBook: ***Your Interview Roadmap***. At over 12,000 words and with six appendices, this guide book will open your eyes to what really goes on in the world of interviewing from both sides of the table, and will prepare job seekers to hit it out of the park 80% of the time. (OK, more like 90%, but I prefer to be understated.)



If you are interested in purchasing the product, you can [click here](#) to make your purchase. The advice you will glean from this eBook is golden! I would charge you six times the price of the eBook to give you the same advice in person.

If you've done poorly in job interviews in the past, you can turn it around. The answers are there. Take action!

From Ara's Journal

Saying Goodbye

I have a dog that is dying. He's at least 12 years old, which means, in "dog years" he is an old dog. He is coughing uncontrollably, as if he has pneumonia or something along those lines. I suspect he is suffering and will probably be put down soon. I will say a final goodbye to him in the coming days.



A dear friend of mine just lost her mother. My friend is here in southern California and her mother was living on the other side of the world. She didn't get to say her last goodbye. Both losing her mother and being deprived of that solemn, painful moment of saying goodbye for the last time is emotionally devastating for her. It's as if she was deprived of one of the most sacred, albeit saddest, moments in that

special relationship. I mourn for her loss, but I also mourn for the lack of resolution and repose that might have been hers, but won't be. This will scar her.

Life is very transitory. These fleeting moments, inherent in mortality, are unpredictable. We never know when we will breathe our last breath, or when others who are close to us will close their eyes for the final time. Although having a faith-based world view can provide some measure of hope and comfort, with the belief that this life is not all there is, and that we will continue our relationships in the eternities, I am struck by the fact that the person I am going to have lunch with today may be gone tomorrow. So how should my goodbyes be conducted when we part company after lunch? I certainly don't want to throw my arms around him or her, weeping, and make them wonder if I have lost my mind. But at the same time, I am starting to recognize, now that I (and most of my associations) am starting to move into what could be called our sunset years, that each goodbye should be something more than routine. Perhaps there is a subtle way in which I can leave people feeling that our time together, over lunch or whatever, meant something to me. Perhaps that will take some of the sting out of the inevitable future valedictories.

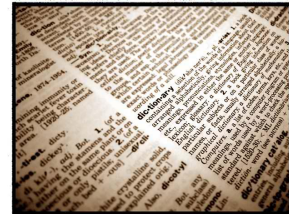
The World of Words

Prodigious

Building Your Power of Expression

Prodigious, adj.

Pronunciation: prə'dijəs



Meaning: When something is said to be impressively great in terms of extent, size, or degree, that thing could be said to be prodigious.

Usage:

- *The stove consumed a prodigious amount of fuel.*
- *His vocabulary is so vast, so prodigious, that I believe he exceeds that of Shakespeare's.*
- *Their defense is so potent against the pass that one can only say the number of interceptions they have returned for touchdowns this season has been nothing short of prodigious.*

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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