

Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

Quick Links

[Ara's Web Site](#)
[Facebook Page](#)

Dear David,

It's after 3:00 AM as I type this, as I have been putting the finishing touches on this issue of *Uncommon Sense* since about 9:00 PM Wednesday night. It is that important!

In today's **Self-Development** column you'll be treated to some ideas surrounding the intelligent and effective use of music.

In the **Elephant in the Room** column, I dig deep into the world of Jussie Smollett and his fake hate crime, and show that there are dozens of similar crimes that have been going on for some time, most all aimed at denigrating President Trump, or white males, or Christians, or Conservatives.

In the **From Ara's Journal** column, I reflect on the notion of judgement.

And in the **World of Words** column you will be treated to a most splendid word that will raise your power of expression significantly. So use it. Today!

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood



Self-Development

Using Music Effectively

Music. It's the universal language. And it does wonders in terms of fostering a desired atmosphere.

It is interesting to consider the myriad ways that music can be used in various contexts. Take my gym, for example. You walk into my gym to lift weights and there is highly energetic rock music or R&B or hip hop being played in the exercise areas. Yet when you walk into the locker room, you hear jazz. Evidently the former is meant to give you a bit of an adrenalin rush, and the latter is meant to calm you down a notch, and surround you in a kind of smooth groove.

Walk into any Starbucks and there is music playing. It's usually upbeat pop music. It makes for a pleasant vibe. Even though I'm not a coffee drinker, I often spend time in Starbucks writing. I find that the din of the music playing in the background, along with that of the baristas and the customers carrying on their

conversations, provides for just the right complexion of background noise for me to bang out some high quality writing.



I was doing business in San Francisco late last week, and while there, I had the opportunity to dine in a rather high-end restaurant called The Boulevard. Upon entering I was struck by the light but distinct sounds of Broadway tunes. It was both classy and elegant. It made the setting better.

When I walk through various courtyards and patios associated with outdoor malls, I often notice that music is being pumped into the area via speakers that are hidden in the bushes and plants. The music is spirited and upbeat, and it improves the environment.

Elevators often have music playing inside them (frequently referred to, derisively, as "elevator music.")

The takeaway: evidently lots of people enjoy music and people with the power to do so accommodate that need.

As a seminar leader, and also as a college professor, I routinely utilize the power of music to create a certain aura for my audiences and students. When they walk into the room, they are greeted by music. And the music is selected very carefully. For instance, the music they hear when they walk in the room is meant to foster a spirit of energy. So I might use tunes by **The Rippingtons, Snarky Puppy, Blood, Sweat & Tears**, or the band known as **Matt Bianco**. If it's a women's group, I might go with **Amy Grant, Michael Franks, Norah Jones, Stevie Wonder**, or **Suzanne Ciani**. If the audience happens to be composed of serious musicians, I may turn to artists such as **Ralph Towner, Tommy Emmanuel, Pat Metheny**, or perhaps the **New York Voices**. And when I am putting audiences through some deep, inner work (such as helping them define their governing values, or their personal mission statement), I might use music that is evocative of the mindset required for such contemplative work, such as **Peter Kater, Sam Cardon, Patrick O'Hearn**, or **Checkfield**.

I find that utilizing music very deliberately can be one of those subtle, nuanced elements in any event that can make it just a bit more elegant, a bit more inviting, and a bit more successful.

Try it yourself. Whatever it is you are doing, ask yourself if things would have a better outcome with appropriate music being utilized in fitting ways. Whether you are planning a party, a meeting, a reunion of some kind, an awards luncheon, a memorial service, or any other event, consider the music. Select it carefully. Give thought to the timing of when it should be played, how loud or quiet it should be,

and whether it is to take on a role of being front and center, or merely background ambiance.

Do this, and you will find that the people you are attempting to serve will, more often than not, feel glad they were a part of your event.

The Elephant in the Room

The Progressive Hoax Machine

The Regressive Left has an almost total monopoly on the news media. CNN, MSNBC, CNBC, NPR, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, NBC, CBS, ABC, *Time Magazine*, *The New Yorker*, *Newsweek*, *Vanity Fair*, *Rolling Stone*, *The Atlantic*, *Esquire*, *The Nation*, *Harpers* -- all are dominated by the hard Left and present a Left-wing view as if it is the norm, and regularly condemn, belittle, distort, and malign conservative viewpoints.

Perhaps that might explain the strange, warped, completely twisted propensity of many Leftists to assume the role of a victim in an effort to do two things: garner sympathy, and condemn Conservatives. And to make sure they are seen as victims, they will often stage events to victimize themselves. Given the propensity of most of the media, those Leftists who engage in such shenanigans likely feel they will largely be shielded in such capers.

Jussie Smollett is one of the more recent examples of a sick individual who filed a police report claiming that two white men attacked him in the wee hours of the morning (around 2AM) in Chicago on a freezing cold night. He claimed they physically assaulted him, called him disparaging names that belittled his race (he is black) and his sexual orientation (he is homosexual). How these two allegedly

white men knew of his sexual orientation was a curiosity, to say the least. Further, he claimed they doused him with an unknown chemical (bleach?) and somehow got a rope around his neck, as if they had intended to hang him. Yet they didn't take his cell phone away from him, and Mr. Smollett was said to have arrived at his home shortly thereafter with his Subway sandwich still in hand.



him, and Mr. Smollett was said to have arrived at his home shortly thereafter with his Subway sandwich still in hand.

And not to be forgotten, these two thugs allegedly said, "This is MAGA country!" That is an important detail because Mr. Smollett clearly wanted to make this attack somehow reflect badly on the President of the United States, whom he loathes.

Of course, this tale all came crumbling down when it became clear that the two men who attacked him were black, not white, were known to Mr. Smollett, were

paid by Mr. Smollett, and had participated in rehearsing the whole sordid event. Mr. Smollett was arrested.

Facts do not matter to the very people who initially came out and publicly condemned both the "attackers," and, by extension, **President Donald Trump** whom they asserted was somehow responsible for this attack. Democrats **Cory Booker, Kristen Gillibrand**, and, especially, **Kamala Harris**, all of whom are running for President in 2020, expressed outrage and condemnation. Ms. Gillibrand's shrieks included this: "We are all responsible for condemning this behavior and every person who enables or normalizes it." Yet, she did not condemn Jussie Smollett himself once it became clear that he was the one who enabled and normalized it. Kamala Harris was even more duplicitous when she was asked about her earlier condemnations on social media. [Click here](#) to see her absurd response. Other supporters of Jussie Smollett even went so far as to say that it doesn't really matter if Mr. Smollett staged a hoax; what matters is the larger issue of racism in America and how deplorable Donald Trump is. In other words: *facts do not matter, and neither does truth*. Further, reality does not matter to the Left. The narrative matters. Ideology matters. Maintaining their victimhood matters.

Lest anyone assume that Jussie Smollett's treachery was an aberration, here are some additional examples of persons who staged fake hate crimes in order to both maintain their victim status, and also to impugn Donald Trump, white males, Christians, or Conservatives:

- Going all the way back to 1987, race-hustler **Al Sharpton** introduced the nation to a woman of color named **Tawana Brawley**. [The claim](#) made by Miss Brawley, and put forth by Mr. Sharpton, was that she had been gang-raped by a group of white men, had their feces spread all across her body, had racial slurs etched into her body, and had been left to rot in a garbage bag. This entire story was a lie. Sharpton never retracted it nor apologized for his role in this lie.
- In 2006, a black woman by the name of **Crystal Mangum** who was a student at North Carolina Central University at the time, and worked as a stripper, escort, and dancer, claimed that three white male students from Duke University, who were members of the Duke Lacrosse team, [had gang-raped her](#). It was a complete lie.
- In 2014, *Rolling Stone* magazine [ran a story](#) they insisted they rigorously vetted that involved a horrific gang-rape of one **Jackie Coakley**, a 20-year old student at the University of Virginia. The white male students so accused received death threats, public shaming, bricks thrown through their windows where they lived, and had to go into hiding. Applications for admission at the University of Virginia dropped. Yet the story was a complete fabrication. But since the alleged rapists were white males, *Rolling Stone* writer **Sabrina Erdely** was only too eager to publish the fable. *Rolling Stone* eventually

retracted the entire story, and was sued by several individuals who had been maligned by the false reporting. *Rolling Stone* settled in those lawsuits to the tune of millions of dollars.

- On April 14, 2016, a black, openly gay pastor of a Christian church (aptly named Church of Open Doors, which he founded) located in Texas, went to Whole Foods to pick up a cake that the pastor had requested should have the following gay theme written on it in frosting: "Love wins." However, the pastor, Mr. **Jordan Brown**, age 31, claimed that while he was driving home, [he noticed a gay slur](#) had been written on the cake. He went to the media and launched a lawsuit against Whole Foods. At a news conference Mr. Brown choked back tears and played the victim role to the hilt. His lawyer, Austin Kaplan, said this: "Pastor Brown never asked for this to happen. He continues to be overwhelmed by the feelings of pain, anguish, and humiliation because of this incident." Yet it turned out that Mr. Brown had added the gay slur himself (the word "FAG"). He was forced to admit this and issue a public apology. In his apology, he disingenuously said he was sorry "for diverting attention from the real issues." What real issues? That the pastor is a sick individual with a need to be seen as a victim under false pretenses and harm a perfectly decent organization? Those real issues? Prior to his phony apology, the pastor had the temerity to say: "I'm horrified that this has happened and I'm hopeful that through my actions I can protect others in the Austin LGBT community." What a pile of ordure!
- An openly bisexual college student at North Park University by the name of Ms. **Taylor Volk** claimed she had [received hate-filled and threatening notes](#) and emails following Mr. Trump's election in November 2016. The idea was that this anti-LGBT stuff was coming at her precisely because of Mr. Trump's shocking and unexpected victory. Guess who wrote all the hate-filled threats? Ms. Volk herself.
- Jumping on the bandwagon of feigning victimhood due to Mr. Trump's presidential victory, **Ashley Boyer**, another woman of color, claimed she was [bullied by white men](#) at a gas station in Delaware who used racial slurs and death threats against her. Total fabrication.
- November 2016 seemed to be a banner month for fake hate crimes. Not wanting to be left out of the fiction, an 18-year-old Muslim woman who was a student at the University of Louisiana's Lafayette campus insisted that two white men, one of whom was wearing a MAGA hat (of course!) [attacked her](#), relieved her of her wallet, ripped the hijab off her head, and shouted racial obscenities in her face. She eventually admitted, after questioning from law enforcement officials, that she fabricated the whole story.

- Still in November 2016, **George Stang**, a Church organist at Saint David's Episcopal Church located in Bean Blossom, Indiana, reported that someone had [spray-painted a swastika](#) on the outer wall of the church, along with the words, "Heil Trump" and, not to be left out, the requisite gay slur. The *Washington Post* was particularly quick to condemn Donald Trump for such acts. But guess who actually did the vandalism: none other than said church organist himself. **George Stang** was finally arrested in May 2017 for criminal mischief.
- And we have to round out November 2016 hate crimes with this beauty: one week before Mr. Trump was elected President, Hopewell Baptist Church, located in Greenville, Mississippi and which serves the black community there, [was set on fire](#). The words, "Vote Trump" were spray-painted on one of the walls. The mainstream media, predictably, blamed Donald Trump. However, when the truth eventually came out, the arson was done by Mr. **Andrew McClinton**, age 34, a congregant of that very church who is black and not a fan of Donald Trump. It's not a hoax that the church burned to the ground, but it was a hoax that Donald Trump had anything to do with it.
- In December 2016, **Yasmin Seweid**, another 18-year-old Muslim woman in New York, claimed to have been [attacked by a group of Trump supporters](#) on a New York subway while onlookers did nothing. Ms. Seweid made the whole thing up.
- It almost appears to be an act of collusion, but also in December 2016, another Muslim woman, an unnamed student at the University of Michigan, claimed a man who was a Trump supporter [threatened to set her on fire](#) if she did not remove her hijab, which she claims she did. But it was a lie. It never happened.
- In early 2017, a white convert to Islam, a student named **Michael Kee**, who was attending Beloit College in Wisconsin, was the [victim of a series](#) of hate crimes, including racist threats spray-painted on his dorm room door and also a swastika spray-painted on the wall across from his room. Mr. Kee actually did the spray-painting himself.
- In March 2017, **Azhar Hussain**, a Muslim man who was a professor of aviation technology (and that alone is disquieting in our post-9/11 world) was the recipient of a series of emails [that threatened violence](#) against him because he was a Muslim. The Indiana State University professor also claimed he was physically attacked from behind on March 24th. Professor

Hussain wrote those emails to himself. And the claim of being physically attached was pure balderdash. He was arrested.

- In May 2017 at St. Olaf College in Minnesota, racist notes were found around the campus which [targeted black students](#). The notes sparked massive protests on the campus. Trouble is, the notes were a hoax that were penned by a black student whom the College Administration refused to name.
- In September 2017 at the Air Force Academy, a message board located in the dorms contained [written racial slurs](#) directed at 5 African American cadets. Turns out one of the five was the author of the fake hate crime.
- In November 2017 at Kansas State, a black male student by the name of **Dauntarius Williams** reported to the police that someone had [written racist graffiti](#) on his car. About a year later, another racist hate crime on the campus was reported, this time involving a racially-charged slur in a note left on a black student's apartment complex door. That student's name is **Broderick Burse**. In both instances, it was the alleged victim who victimized himself.
- In July 2018, an Odessa, Texas waiter at Saltgrass Steakhouse by the name of **Khalil Cavil** claimed a customer had left a note in lieu of a tip on the check [claiming that Cavil was a terrorist](#). Restaurant management was so outraged that they banned that customer for life. But alas, Mr. Cavil wrote the note himself. He later justified it by claiming he was trying to draw attention to bigotry that is very real. Only his stunt wasn't real.
- In September 2018, a Long Island woman of color, 19-year-old **Adwoa Lewis**, told police that a group of white teenagers terrorized her while driving home, shouting pro-Trump slogans, and then slashed her tires after she parked her car at home and [left a racist note](#) on her car. It was all a lie; she wrote the note herself.
- At Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa in December 2018, [a number of racist notes](#) left for black students turned out to be penned by one of the students, an 18-year-old female named **Krissie Ram**.

Truth is not a Left-wing value. Playing the victim card, and attempting to whip up public condemnation against conservatives, white males, people of faith, and Donald Trump are the deeply held Left-wing values at the current time.

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

Judge Not?

Recently, I was engaged in an intense conversation with a very dear friend, a smart, forward-thinking woman, whom I've known for more than 3 decades. We are very close friends and always have been, but I am struck by how profoundly different we process things. It's as if our brains are completely different kinds of organs. Seriously: I literally marvel at how differently I see the world from how she sees it.

We were talking about what I consider to be some of the societal ills of the present day -- ills that she imagines are not ills at all.

And at one point, this wonderful woman said to me, "So what you are essentially saying is that you do not believe in the words of Christ."

Being a devout believer in Jesus Christ, I rolled my eyes and responded, with mild irritation, "Come on! That's high school debate mentality. You can do better than that."



She then explained herself as follows: "Jesus said, 'Judge not, lest ye be judged.'"

She was referencing a passage from the New Testament, specifically Matthew 7:1. Now if this sounds like something a fundamentalist Baptist might say, bear in mind that she is Roman Catholic, but even more than that, she is, in my opinion, far more steeped in secular progressivism and science than she is in religion (even though she seems to try to strike a balance between faith on the one hand and rational thought on the other hand.)

I have been thinking about her reference to Matthew 7:1. Many people quote it (or try to quote it) when attempting to advise people not to judge others. And by that, they usually, perhaps unwittingly, seem to be opining that one should never judge others under any circumstances.

It's a foolish position to take and fraught with internal contradictions. (There I go again, judging. . .)

Let's start with the obvious. If she is telling me that I am guilty of judging others, is she not judging me in that exact moment?

Let's continue: If someone robs a bank and I condemn the bank robber, am I therefore violating the teachings of Jesus? Did Jesus really want us to never use this human capability known as *judgment*, ever? And if so, does evil then get a pass?

How should we view the judges on the Supreme Court, or any appellate court or district court? Are they, by virtue of the work they do, violating Christ's teachings?

Are we violating a gospel ideal if we exercise *good* judgment, so that we are not taken advantage of, or so that we do not do things that are foolhardy or dangerous? Does Jesus want us all to be dupes?

Personally, I believe Jesus had something else in mind. I believe He is warning us against *pre-judgment*. We have all been guilty of that to some degree. And I whole-heartedly accept that teaching. But I don't believe the seemingly straightforward admonition in Matthew 7:1 to not judge tells the whole story. Why

not? Because there are contrary biblical passages that address the topic of judging -- even passages that purport to quote Jesus directly.

For instance, John 7:24, quoting Jesus, reads: "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment."

Here we have Jesus admonishing us to judge, but not to pre-judge, based on appearances. He appears to be urging us to judge, but to do so righteously, fairly, and with finely-honed discernment. That certainly makes sense to me.

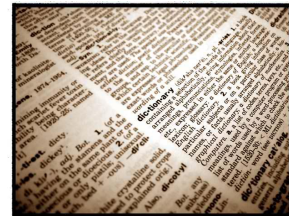
The World of Words

Punctuate

Building Your Power of Expression

Punctuate, v. (with object)

Pronunciation: pəNG(k)(t)SHəwāt



Meaning: While punctuation refers to elements of proper writing, such as the various markings that end sentences (the period), or commas, parentheses, apostrophes, and semicolons, etc., the word *punctuate* can be used to refer to any phenomenon that occurs at intervals throughout, or, to interrupt or intersperse an activity with something. The examples below should be helpful in clarifying this.

Usage:

- *She punctuates her conversations with a kind of snort when she is trying to make an important point.*
- *That country's history has been punctuated by coups.*
- *That final presentation was fantastic: it was punctuated with both wit and humor that surfaced what everyone has been thinking but no one dared articulate.*

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,

Ara Norwood
Leadership Development Systems

Leadership Development Systems, P. O. Box 801681, Santa Clarita, CA 91380-1681

[SafeUnsubscribe™ drdorough@yahoo.com](#)

[Forward this email](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [About our service provider](#)

Sent by ara@aranorwood.com in collaboration with



Try it free today