

Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Dear David,

I trust you are having an enjoyable summer. I sure am!
Let's get down to business.

This issue's **Self-Development** column focuses on a meta-issue: a Self-Development column literally about self-development. I hope it brings you value.

A disturbing trend is afoot, and the **Elephant in the Room** column shines a white-hot spotlight on the matter. Read it, then fortify yourself with courage and determination.

The recent earthquakes that hit SoCal on July 4th and 5th are the topic in the **From Ara's Journal** column.

And the **World of Words** column comes through yet again with a dandy of a word! Adopt it. Memorize it. Use it.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood



Self-Development

Self

"My soul is a hidden orchestra; I know not what instruments, what fiddlestrings and harps, drums and tamboura I sound and clash inside myself. All I hear is the symphony."

Fernando Pessoa

So much of my thinking on Self-Development comes from the enormous influence of others, particularly Stephen R. Covey (1932-2012). Covey was my first boss out of college. While I didn't report directly to him, I did have many opportunities to see him up close, and I had my share of individual time with the man. On several occasions, I was privileged to serve as a substitute speaker for him when he was not able to make a particular speaking engagement. And I was entrusted to open his first satellite office, out in San Francisco back in 1986. Those were days never to be forgotten.

Of the many key concepts I learned from Covey, few stood out for me as did the notion of roles, something I have written about previously in this column (see issue #9 published on August 17, 2011). And of all the roles I either now hold or have held in the past, none is more foundational, none is more fundamental, none is more core than the role I have labeled "self."

Whether one has adopted the role "self" as one of their key roles, all of us, by default, carry that role around with us. We are all individuals, autonomous "selves" with unique needs and aspirations.

For me, I conceive of my self as comprised of several distinct yet interrelated dimensions, or realms. These include the physical, the mental, the spiritual, and the social. And each of those dimensions needs regular attention and maintenance to stay sharp and functional.

The Physical: I see the human body as a wonderful and complex machine that was designed by God. Yet over the course of a lifetime, the body goes through a process of deterioration. Disease, injury, and the aging process takes its toll on the human body. While death is

inevitable, there are so many things one can do to enjoy a higher quality of life in the physical realm. The foods we consume, in the right portions, can not only provide nutrition as well as enjoyment, but can keep us from becoming obese -- something many people in America struggle with today. On that note, weight



reduction programs such as [Weight Watchers](#), [Nutrisystem](#), [Lindora](#), [The Mayo Clinic Diet Book](#), and apps such as [Noom](#) or [MyFitnessPal](#) can all help us keep our weight where it needs to be. Resistance exercise such as weight lifting or simply doing push ups or sit ups can provide great dividends. Cardio-vascular exercise such as Zumba, or running, or "spinning" (riding a stationary bike) is extraordinarily helpful for the heart, an organ that cannot be exercised directly, but only indirectly. Staying limber is also critical, and I begin every workout with some stretching exercises. Others practice yoga which is enormously helpful to the body. Taking supplements for various purposes can be very helpful, not only for general nutrition, but even to curtail the aches and pains that come with the aging process. In my own case, I have a lot of pain in my wrist, which worries me when I am lifting weights, especially when I am lifting heavy on things like bench press. But I recently began taking a supplement called Glucosamine HCI with MSM. It purports to "cushion joints and supports movement" as well as "helps to promote healthy cartilage." After only 4 or 5 days, I seem to feel a difference in my wrist. The pain and sensitivity seems to be less. Finally I will mention the crucial importance of sleep. I try to get 8 hours of sleep every night, and I'm very serious about that. When I fail, bad things follow. When I succeed, great things ensue.

The Mental: There is no question that our brains are complex, marvelous organs, capable of startling processes. It seems the more we "feed" our brains with new

information, new concepts, new ideas, the more those disparate strands of data are able to coalesce and spool out new and innovative breakthroughs. Thus, it behooves us to care for the mental capacities of the human brain. I do it in a myriad of ways, including reading books on a voracious scale. And not just reading books, but reading widely, meaning reading books that are very different in type. I also strive to expand my vocabulary, hence The World of Words column in this publication. Others develop their mind through the solving of puzzles, such as a crossword puzzle. Still, others attempt to do so through the learning of foreign languages. Sometimes, I simply schedule what could only be described as Thinking Time, actual time on my calendar to engage, deliberately, in the thinking process. Other times I observe (or participate in) debates; hearing a clash of opposing ideas is mentally stimulating and forces the brain to confront and make sense of conflicting viewpoints, each of which may have some degree of merit.



The Spiritual: We are spiritual beings, which is to say that the human soul is comprised of two types of bodies -- our physical bodies (flesh, bone, blood, etc.,) and our spiritual bodies which remain unseen, but which is a reality I accept on faith. I consider the spiritual dimension the real part of us -- the part of us that represents our true selves, and is fused with the physical body, until the moment of death, which is simply a separation of the spiritual body from the physical body. Our spirits are fed by the transcendent, those things that are divine, holy, and sacred. Our deepest values, our deepest yearnings fall within the realm of the spiritual. And people exercise this very personal dimension in a variety of ways. For me, practicing religion in a faith community of like-minded believers is one key way I exercise the spirit. In my own case, that happens to be [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](#), but Catholics, and Baptists, and Lutherans, and Episcopalians, and Evangelicals do similar things, as do Muslims and Buddhists and Hindus and Jews. In my own case, I look at one day a week, Sunday as it happens, as different than any other day of the week, and I try to make that day a holy day, a Sabbath, a day of rest from the normal, daily grind of the other days. I attend Church services. I partake of sacred emblems (bread and water) that have been set apart for sanctified purposes and used to help me renew sacred covenants I have made with God. Prayer, fasting, and the singing of sacred music are part of the process of feeding the spirit. Also, the reading and pondering of sacred literature, which, for me, includes the Holy Bible, the [Book of Mormon](#), and other sacred books of holy writ go very far in feeding my spirit. Being alone at the beach, the mountain top, the forest, or anywhere out in nature, can do much to feed the spirit. I am especially fond of being away from the city lights at night, and observing the stars in the heavens. Such moments bring the distinct impression that there is purpose and meaning to our existence, and that we are part of a vast plan, the architect of whom is God. It is hard not to feel sensations of awe in such moments.

The Social: We live in an interdependent world and all around us are people for whom the potential exists to form strong bonds of friendship. One never knows

where that next close friendship may come from. So I remain open to the possibility of forming new friendships, even in circumstances where it may not seem feasible to do so. Having a rich social life is important. It brings a certain sweetness with it, which offsets the many sorrows of life. I view my friends as valuable resources -- as sources of fun, camaraderie, and unbridled joy. I am



fortunate to have as close friends many men and women from various walks of life, scattered all over the globe. Every time I am with them, we both walk away from the experience enriched. I

learn from my friends. I have fun with my friends. I laugh with my friends. And sometimes I embark on great undertakings with my friends to try to make the world a better place. Having a great social life is very enriching. And there are countless ways to experience this. One of my favorite ways is through the deliberate and



systematic remembering of birthdays. I keep a spreadsheet containing the birthdays of those who are in my life whom I am blessed to count as friends. I also include colleagues on this list. It is a wonderful way to have an excuse to reach out to someone and say, in essence, "You matter to me. I am blessed because you are in my life."

The self is the fundamental essence of who we are as conscious beings. Developing the self is a life-long endeavor. Taking time each week to work on each of these four dimensions can bring enormous blessings and opportunities.

The Elephant in the Room

The Most Totalitarian of the Leftist Regime: LGBT Activists

What is it that enrages the LGBTQA+ activists more than any other single thing?

Is it Conservatism? No. While most activists from that group despise Conservatives and Conservatism, there are some among the LGBT crowd who are themselves Conservative in their political philosophy.

Well then, could it be organized religion in general, and Judeo-Christian religion in particular? Not quite. Granted, most activists in the LGBT community (some of whom are heterosexual themselves, but who, for whatever reason, fight fiercely for LGBT causes) possess a secular, godless outlook, and also despise Judeo-Christian religiosity, there are some people within the LGBT community that

practice some form of religion, including Christianity, often with certain rationalizations that overlook or distort inconvenient truths found in the Bible.

OK, so maybe the thing that gets their ire most is the very presence of Donald Trump. Wrong again. Only a small portion of the crazed vitriol directed at the President is based on personal animus towards Mr. Trump. Most of the shrill lunacy sent his way is based on ideological and policy matters he stands for, and not him personally. Mr. Trump was not subjected to that kind of deranged madness when he was host of the TV show, *The Apprentice*. Only when the Left realized he might actually build a wall on our southern border, thus curtailing illegal immigration, did they have a meltdown, since stopping illegal immigration would thwart the Left's plans to give voting rights to such criminals, thus keeping Democrats in power.

While LGBTQA+ activists are deeply bitter and mean-spirited people as a general rule, (a sort of twisted irony on the word "gay") the one thing that drives them over the top into seething paroxysms of rage is the notion that a gay man (or woman) could go to a therapist and say he (or she) seeks help in transitioning from homosexual practice to heterosexual practice. The internal and reflexive convulsions that LGBT



activists experience at such notions are breathtaking. They are so horrified and outraged at such possibilities, that activists have succeeded, at least in California, in making it illegal for a therapist to even suggest the possibility of such an option. Nor may therapists in California treat a patient who explicitly requests such help. Gay activists consider it anathema.

Why is it forbidden for a person to want to live another way of life sexually?

If a man approaches a therapist and claims he now wishes to transition into a female, the LGBTQA+ activists welcome that person as a hero, and want the therapist to help that person make such a transition. But if a homosexual man wants to experience heterosexual behaviors, that is something that drives the LGBTQA+ activist community out of their collective minds.

It's an interesting contradiction.

The LGBTQA+ activist may argue that such conversion therapy for the gay man seeking to live a straight life may cause profound damage - what kind of damage, we do not know. However, these same LGBTQA+ activists see no potential damage for a 13-year-old boy or girl wanting to undergo surgery and hormone therapy to switch genders, even though the [suicide rate](#) for doing so is through the roof.

Let that previous statement sink in for a moment: LGBTQA+ activists are adamant that young, impressionable teenagers are to be placed in a situation where the

likelihood is extremely high that teenager will commit suicide.

It is interesting to consider the fact that heterosexual men, generally speaking, are prone to a sex life that could be described as polygamous. (The same is true for homosexual men.) However, most heterosexual men, as they mature and gain some wisdom, forfeit their fantasy life to the stability and morality of a monogamous relationship - ideally through marriage. Would LGBTQA+ activists raise cries of alarm with that example, on the grounds that men who are monogamous are not living according to their true proclivities?

To show how far LGBTQA+ activists will go to force their views down the throats of the rest of us, the activists have [succeeded in persuading Amazon](#), the largest bookseller in the world, to ban all books authored by people, Christians as it turns out, who publish on the topic of converting from homosexuality to heterosexuality. You will no longer be able to read such books if you order from Amazon - it's as if the books have been burned. The LGBTQA+ activists simply confronted Amazon executives and demanded they ban the books, and Amazon instantly submitted. No discussion. No consideration of counter-arguments. No debate. Just instant capitulation - similar to Nike's folding on the Betsy Ross shoes the moment Colin Kaepernick told them not to sell the shoes, since doing so would hurt his feelings. Or something along those lines.

Regardless of whether sexual orientation transition therapy is helpful or harmful, LGBTQA+ activists do not wish to discuss the matter. They do not wish to debate the matter. They do not want you to even know about the matter, and for those who publish on the subject, the activists want such books to never see the light of day. They do not believe in freedom of speech. They do not believe in the First Amendment. And neither does Amazon.

This sort of totalitarian behavior from LGBTQA+ activists will continue until someone has the guts to stand up to them and put them in their place. Amazon, powerful as it is, doesn't have that kind of courage.

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

Earthquakes and Solidarity

On July 4th at 10:33 AM, Southern California experienced an earthquake that measured 6.4. At that exact moment I was aggressively beating the tar out of the heavy bag at the gym. Boxing is a passion of mine, and although my opponent doesn't hit back, I was focused because I had allowed myself 60-second rounds and I didn't want to be distracted. As soon as my timer went off signaling the end of the round, people around me were asking if I felt the earthquake. I had not.



The next day, I was working late. At 8:19 PM, sitting on a couch on the 2nd floor of a building with a client, a 7.1 tremor hit. I remember feeling a sort of rolling sensation. My client appeared frightened, and I stood up and told her not to worry, and that I wasn't the least bit frightened (which was true.) But we cut short our business and I headed home, stopping at a service station to fuel up.

While I was pumping the gas, I noticed a man on the other side of the island filling up his car. He was looking at me with what I would describe as an expectant expression, as if he wanted to make eye contact. As soon as I looked at him, he hesitated, then he spoke.

Him: Did you feel the earthquake?

Me: Yes, I did. Did you?

Him: Yeah. I was driving at the time, but I felt it. Where were you when it hit?

Me: I was in the San Fernando Valley.

Him: What were you doing, exactly, at the moment it hit?

Me: I was at an office building doing some work with a client.

Him: Did it rattle you?

Me: Somewhat, but I didn't get the feeling it was that big of a deal. I'm not sure where the epicenter was, however.

From there, he went on to talk further about the earthquake and how he experienced it. I sensed that his talking about it was therapeutic for him, and so I acquiesced to his line of questioning. I also sensed that he was not the kind of man who would normally initiate a conversation with a complete stranger at a gas station.

So why did he do it then?

My impression is that when things of great import take place, be it unusual natural phenomenon, disasters, car accidents, dangerous close calls, or things that are very much out of the ordinary, some people have a need to bond with other people, including strangers, as they recount the experience and try to make sense of it. We all have our "story" when such instances occur. Sometimes our story is riveting, other times less so. But we as a species seem to draw strength and a sense of belonging from each other when we share such stories.

That is probably a good thing.

The World of Words

Ebullient

Building Your Power of Expression

Ebullient, adj.

Pronunciation: ɪbʊˈlɪənt, ɪbəlɪənt



Meaning: To be ebullient is to be cheerful and full of energy.

Usage:

- *No, not at all; I felt she sounded rather spirited and ebullient.*

- *The thing I like most about you is your sunny and ebullient disposition.*
- *Try not to be so gloomy. You don't have to be ebullient, but at least try to strike a posture of neutrality.*

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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Sincerely,

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