Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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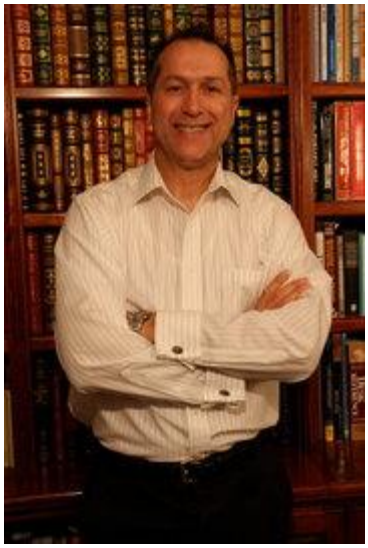
Issue: # 205 **December 16, 2019**

Dear David,



So wonderful to discuss with you some very important matters.

I believe you are going to find much value in this issue of *Uncommon Sense*, as the topics are of immense importance.

We open with the **Self-Development** column where you will find some content around your social life, particularly around your dating life. I hope you take my suggestions to heart.

As is often the case, the **Elephant in the Room** column affords me a sort of bully pulpit to address one of the issues of the day. This time, it's about the impeachment of President Trump. Please do read it.

In the **From Ara's Journal** column, I offer some of my pondering about a very sensitive subject: sex.

Once again, the **World of Words** column bequeaths to you a word intended to enrich your power of expression.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood

Self-Development

Double-Dating

I address this to couples. (For you singles out there, you may certainly benefit from this content once you get into your next relationship.)

Whether you are married or not, if you are in a serious relationship with a member of the opposite sex, I would hope that the two of you go out on occasion. Most healthy couples go out once a week. Some go out more often than that.

What do I mean by "going out"? Just that: leaving their abode and getting out to enjoy an activity together. Going to a restaurant to enjoy a meal is often the default activity. Movies, museums, a walk in a park, a bike ride, attending a concert or a play, a drive out in the countryside, going bowling, window shopping,

people-watching, or a beach excursion are all possibilities, and I've barely scratched the surface. Such activities can be fun and bonding for any couple. I highly recommend couples date with some regularity.

In addition, I cannot stress enough the value of going on occasional double-dates. Meeting with another couple brings an entirely different dynamic to the equation. When there are four people involved, the complexity becomes a bit more pronounced as you have the possibility of four people contributing to a conversation rather than two. Placing yourself in a situation where you now get to interact with three other people can be a heady experience. The richness that comes from adding another couple to the mix, with their unique personalities, interests, backgrounds, experiences, and outlooks can bring with it a very fertile mix of ideas and make the conversations that take place very vivid.

Furthermore, when a couple (let's call them Dwight and Suzette) is out with another couple, the friendships that spring from such connections can be very valuable to both Dwight and Suzette. Having other people to connect with can enrich and strengthen the relationship Dwight and Suzette have with each other. The double-date can bring a new layer of fun to the two of them.

Granted, not every couple is a good match with every other couple. And if you make a concerted effort to engage in more double-dating in the future with couples you do not know well, it's possible you could be disappointed on occasion. But stick with it. When you find another couple you hit it off with, make it a point to develop that relationship by repeating the process of going out with them, perhaps every month or two or three.

And I understand that, to use my earlier example of Dwight and Suzette, it is entirely possible that Dwight enjoys the interaction with the other man more than Suzette enjoys the company of the other woman, or vice versa. Still, it doesn't have to be equal in terms of how strongly Dwight or Suzette enjoy the other couple. As long as both Dwight and Suzette don't find it painful, it's a good idea to continue to build the relationship with the other couple, for some people take longer to connect than others.

My advice: talk to your spouse or significant other, and make a quick list of other couples you are aware of. Get agreement from your partner, and then place a call to that other couple and invite them out. Try it. You have little to lose and much to gain. Now do it!

The Elephant in the Room

How Not To Conduct an Impeachment

I have been asked by a number of people to comment on the recent impeachment of our President. Here are some random thoughts.

The Democrats have a huge credibility problem. Regardless of whether President Donald Trump is guilty of high crimes and misdemeanors, Democrats have spoiled their own credibility by making it clear it was their intention to impeach the President dating back to the commencement of his presidency. Let's review:

On Monday evening, January 30, 2017, President Trump fired Sally Yates, who at that time was serving as Acting Attorney General. The back story is that the President had issued an executive order involving a 90-day travel ban on citizens from 7 specific Muslim-majority countries. Ms. Yates was terminated for deliberately undermining the President's executive order and for instructing the Justice Department to also ignore the President's orders. Termination was inevitable. However, a little-known Washington attorney named Mark Zaid responded to this termination by tweeting that a "coup has started" and that "impeachment will follow ultimately." The President had only been in office 10 days, and yet impeachment had clearly been part of a coordinated, premeditated scheme by his political enemies. (It might be of interest to note that Mr. Zaid is one of the attorneys representing the anonymous Whistle Blower who started this whole circus. Does this detail pass the smell test? Hint: How much of the Whistle Blowers testimony was authored by Mr. Zaid? All of it, or only most of it?)

Yet the irresponsible calls for impeachment continued to mount as events transpired, from the firing of FBI Director James Comey, to the launch of the Mueller Investigation (which turned out to be a dud), to Jerry Nadler's desires to impeach the President for an alleged, pre-Presidential affair with Stormy Daniels, to the foul-mouthed and barely literate Palestinian-American congresswoman from Michigan, Rashida Tlaib, who, on the very day of her being sworn into Congress, publicly screeched her intent to "impeach the [expletive]!" Not a paragon of rectitude and virtue herself, Ms. Tlaib is currently under investigation for campaign finance fraud and has been accused of improperly diverting campaign funds for her personal use. Several other members of the Anti-Trump Squad (all Freshmen congresswomen) are under similar investigations.

Then there is the unhinged Democrat Congressman from Houston, Al Green, who insists - without evidence - that Trump is a Russian asset (post-Mueller investigation) and therefore must be impeached. He also insists - without evidence - that President Trump is a racist and therefore must be impeached at once.

It is hard to take the advocates of impeachment seriously in the face of all of this pre-determined animus towards President Trump. It seems much more plausible that the people pushing for impeachment have simply never gotten over the fact that they lost the general election in 2016, and lost decisively. It was a particularly bitter defeat, given their absolute and smug certitude that Hillary Clinton would emerge victorious.

But what about the current charges against the President?

He was originally accused of bribery, but that was only because partisan focus groups suggested that charge, though baseless, would resonate well with the anti-Trump segments of the electorate. So what is the President ultimately being accused of? *Abuse of Power* and *Obstruction of Congress*. Based on what evidence?

None. Opinion and hearsay is not evidence. Neither is believing you know what the President felt inside.

Two key pieces of evidence do seem relevant, but they do not help the prosecution. First is the assumption of *Quid Pro Quo* (a legal term meaning "If you do this for me, I will do this for you.") Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who is the alleged victim of the claim of bribery, coercion, and *quid pro quo*, denies anything of the sort occurred. Think of it this way: If you were accused of assaulting someone in a back alley, and that purported victim was to say that no such assault ever occurred, what do you think the DA assigned to the case would do?

The other piece of evidence concerns the very words *quid pro quo* coming from the mouth of the accused. Yet the one time the President used those words found him using them in a way that exonerates him, as he explicitly stated he did *not* want any sort of *quid pro quo*. This doesn't matter to the mind-reading Democrats. They "know" what he really meant.

What about the charge that President Trump wanted President Zelensky to investigate Joe Biden, possibly his political rival in the 2020 presidential election? Does that not prove that President Trump was soliciting a foreign country to meddle in a presidential election? And is not that an impeachable offense?

This construct represents "spin" on the part of Democrats. This is the narrative they insist is true. But again, they are refusing to look at some very problematic realities. President Trump clearly had some concerns that both Joe Biden and his son, Hunter Biden, may have been involved in some deep, dark corruption in Ukraine, and if so, it is only natural the President Trump would want to get to the bottom of it.

Joe Biden openly pressured the Ukrainian government to fire a prosecutor who was about to investigate a corrupt Ukrainian energy company known as Burisma Holdings. Evidently Mr. Biden, who served as Vice President in the Obama administration at that time, did not want this particular prosecutor on the case, so he threatened Ukraine with the withholding of one billion dollars in federal aid unless that prosecutor was fired, and Mr. Biden openly and brazenly bragged about doing so. Does anyone really believe this sounds above-board?

Furthermore, while Joe Biden served as Vice President, his son, Hunter, who has absolutely zero experience in the energy industry was mysteriously placed on the Board of Directors for Burisma Holdings and was paid a whopping $83,333 per

month, even though Hunter Biden never once set foot in Ukraine. Again, does this have the appearance of being squeaky clean?

And this brings us to the heart of the matter. The Democrats have raised charges. They have drawn up articles of impeachment. They have brought forth witnesses who "know" what Trump was thinking. If Trump said to Zelensky, "We need you to do us a favor," his enemies know he actually meant "I need you to do me a personal favor and help me get reelected." What evidence do they have of such accusations? Only their assumptions. Only their hopes and dreams. The 2016 election must be done over again. They cannot bear the possibility that the President might win reelection in 2020. He must be impeached. They must win. It is their destiny. Anything short of their winning is simply unfair.

Impeachment was meant to be used as a sort of nuclear option, not as a partisan cudgel to be used to bludgeon one's political opponents. It was meant to be used as a last resort, when the crimes in question are so egregious, so obvious, so unarguable, that both of the major parties were largely unanimous with turning to impeachment as the only meaningful solution.

That such has not been the case one can only conclude President Trump is correct that this impeachment process is little more than a partisan witch-hunt. And the outcome is very likely to have an insidious and corrosive effect on future administrations - administrations that may see the swearing in of any future president as payback time for the opposition, as the impeachment process becomes an automatic ritual every four years.

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

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From Ara's Journal

On Sexuality and its Meaning

Sex remains one of the most consequential topics in all of life. It is a highly charged subject. It is on the minds of many people for different reasons. Men have it on their minds much of the time because of the way they are wired. Women have it on their minds, usually for very different reasons (i.e., they are often wary of the motives men might have for behaving in certain ways towards them.) Unfortunately, most people have a gross misconception of this singular topic. Whereas the Howard Sterns of the world will talk about it in very gross and forceful ways, attempting to remove its mystique and singularity, and the more Puritan among us will often not talk about it at all, I believe a healthy and sensitive conversation is long overdue.

Unlike so many other aspects of life that capture the attention of various men (sports, career, other hobbies like horse racing, gambling, etc.,) the nature of the sex drive itself has been shown to cloud the judgment of many a man, especially men in power. One need only ponder the likes of Bill Cosby, Harvey Weinstein, Bill Clinton, Matt Lauer, celebrity chef John Besh, singer Nick Carter, comedian Louis C. K., Disney animation chief John Lasseter, comedy festival organizer Gilbert Rozon, actor Kevin Spacey, and many, many others to realize that the sex drive, whatever its peculiarities, has compelled some seemingly intelligent and accomplished men to behave like unbridled Neanderthals. It is difficult to avoid the opinion that sex can have an addicting influence, especially in men. The intense physical and psychological sensations that accompany it can cause selfishness to take root, meaning a person's deeper motives can be bent on conquest and self-satisfaction, rather than, say, an innate desire to satisfy one's partner, or to express the most bonding levels of love to a singular individual to whom one is deeply committed.

The significance of sex is not hard to perceive when one realizes that this act alone has the power to beget life. While the Book of Genesis opens with a portrayal of the creation of the first humans, and mystery shrouds the precise mechanism by which our first parents were physically created, we know that once that creative enterprise was actualized it fell to the exclusive purview of sexual intercourse between men and women to spawn new human life. This has been the case since the dawn of time. Thus, with sex, we are talking about an act that contains awesome and curious power, and hence, responsibility.

Experienced in the right circumstances, sex can engender a level of bonding between two people that is unmatched by any other experience of which I am aware. Yet this same unique act can, in the wrong conditions, cause alienation, regret, disorientation, and feelings of remorse, guilt, or bitterness.

There is a reason sexual intimacy is not meant to be entered into lightly or casually. There is an even larger reason it is not to be haphazardly experienced with just anyone. A man might impulsively entertain the notion that inasmuch as this uniquely fulfilling experience, which brings with it a rush of euphoria and immense pleasure, then it follows that the more one experiences it with as many people as possible, the more fulfilled one's life will be. Yet the opposite is the case; promiscuity destroys its purpose and leaves its pursuers bereft of meaning and true satisfaction. Men with an out-of-control libido invariably lead unfulfilled lives. Women who submit to such men are relegated to an emptiness that gnaws at their souls.

Profound are the many statements pertaining to sex that come to us by way of Judeo-Christian religion. From the Jewish Torah, we learn that we are forbidden to commit adultery (see Exodus 20:14). Both Catholics and Protestants take very seriously the elaboration of Exodus 20:14 coming from Jesus, wherein He stated "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." (Matthew 5:27-28.) In fact, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints take it one step even further, since their unique canon of scripture, containing modern-day revelation from God, states: "Thou shalt not, . . . commit adultery, . . . nor do anything like unto it." (Doctrine & Covenants 59:6.)

The ideal circumstances that welcome sexual expression appear to be very narrow. These strictures allow for no wiggle room. Breaching the confines of divine sanction where sex is concerned consistently results in misery and sorrow. At the extreme ends of the spectrum, pornography, prostitution, and promiscuity seem to occupy a unique place in the human psyche as shameful manifestations of the misuse of this unique, life-giving, soul-fusing experience.

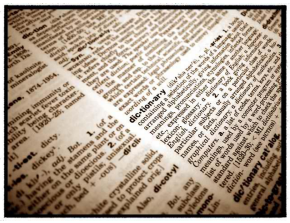
It is difficult to escape the growing awareness that we are encountering something profoundly sacred, holy, and divine in its origins. Hence, it is an intelligent individual that ponders deeply the wisdom of holy writ in sorting out what role sex can and should have in their lives. There is an ideal environment for sex: one man, legally and lawfully married to one woman. Every other construct falls short of that ideal.

Hence, sex is significant, and profoundly so. It is not to be used carelessly or casually, thoughtlessly or commitment-free. Much suffering would be alleviated if it were honored and protected as the gift from above it was intended to be.

The World of Words

Veracity

Building Your Power of Expression



Veracity, n.

Pronunciation: vuh-ras-i-tee

Meaning: This splendid word refers to the habitual observance of truth in speech or writing. The veracity of something refers to its accuracy and correctness. It is factual by nature.

Usage:

- *He was not noted for his veracity.*
- *We need to question the veracity of her account.*
- *The investigators in this case expressed grave doubts about the veracity of his testimony.*

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Sincerely,

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