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Issue #218

June 26, 2020

Although I am on the road, I am happy to be sending you my latest thinking in this issue of *Uncommon Sense*.

Do you need a pep-talk about your health? The **Self-Development** column delivers!

There is no question our nation is undergoing severe strains, and this issue's **Elephant in the Room** column addresses what some of the commotion is about.

In the **From Ara's Journal** column I address the concept of the stupid question.

And, of course, **The World of Words** column provides another gem of a word to enhance your ever-expanding vocabulary.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood



Self-Development

Cardio-Workouts

Physical exercise is a critically important thing to engage in with regularity. And there are many ways to do it.

Some people like to focus on strength, and so they might lift free weights, or work on some sort of machine that offers resistance training, or do things like pushups or pull-ups. Some might focus on their flexibility, which may involve various stretching routines, or perhaps yoga. Still others may get their exercise from things that develop their hand-eye coordination,



such as playing racquetball, golf, tennis, bowling, or even various martial arts such as Judo, Akido, Kung Fu, or Okinawan Kempo.

However, one of the very best types of workouts involves cardio-vascular exercise. One key reason for this is the human heart cannot be exercised directly the way your calf muscles can, or your biceps can. But the heart can be exercised indirectly. We call this kind of exercise cardio-vascular exercise. Here are some possible options for you to consider:

Distance running: Many people are languid and not all that active. If you look around, you may notice that many people are overweight. Some are what might be termed obese, and some morbidly obese. Distance running would likely turn that around. (Note: a person who is morbidly obese is not in any condition to run for any distance. But maybe that person can run, slowly, to the end of their driveway; perhaps the next day that person can run to the mail box; perhaps the day after that, they can add another 5 or 10 yards, and they can continue to increase the distance over time by a very small amount each day. Eventually, such a person may well be capable of running a mile. However, I hasten to add a disclaimer that I am not a medical professional and my advice should not be followed without first consulting a competent physician.) Back to my original point. For most people, starting small and running whatever distance they are capable of handling will be excruciatingly taxing at first, but it gets easier over time. Case in point: I had not been running for several months during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. Then one day I decided to run 1 mile. It almost killed me. I had to stop and rest about 5 different times, and the pace at which I ran was horrible. But I got through it. A day or two later, I ran the mile again, and I only had to stop and rest once – at the half-way point. After that, I didn't have to stop at all. A few weeks later I increased the distance to 1.5 miles, and recently increased it to 2 miles. It makes a difference in my overall health. Try distance running. You may be pleasantly surprised.

Sprinting: With sprinting, you are engaging in a very different experience compared to distance running. You are running somewhere between 80% of what you are capable of to 100% of what you are capable of, but you are running short distances. Perhaps 40 or 50 yards on the short end, or up to 120 or even 220 yards on the long end. You certainly want to prepare for such runs by stretching out carefully beforehand. When I do sprinting, I might do eight different 200-yard sprints. Other times I might try a longer variation, which isn't technically a sprint but a near-sprint, and do two different 880-yard runs, or six different 440-yard runs. Sprinting is another great way to get in a good, quick cardio workout.

Swimming: This is a great exercise to do, but is not as convenient as is running since you can run in many different environments but you can only swim in a pool which may not be available. (And yes, I am aware one could swim in a body of water like the ocean or a lake, but I am not advocating that here.) Swimming has a number of advantages over running. When you swim, your body is using more of your muscles than you would do with running, so you are getting a great overall workout. Plus, with swimming, your body is horizontal, not vertical as in running, which means your blood flow is less strained. With swimming, your body is generally cooled by the water so you don't overheat as you might do when running. And with swimming, injuries are usually less frequent than is the case with running. I have the highest respect for the athleticism of competitive swimmers! And swimming really is an amazing source for cardio-vascular workouts.

Jump Rope: Using a jump rope is not only good for hand-eye coordination but is also wonderful for cardio-vascular workouts. And they make jump ropes that have weights in the handles which can further serve to strengthen your arms.

Aerobic Dance: Whether it is Zumba, or Jazzercise, or any other of the many dance crazes that are now popular, this can be a fun way to get in your cardio fitness

exercise. Such classes are ubiquitous; you can find them almost anywhere. Most of the health clubs offer them (Gold's Gym, 24-hour Fitness, LA Fitness, etc).

Add cardio to your workout routine (or start with cardio if you don't have a workout routine yet.) Start small. Build up over time. Consistency and sustained effort, especially if you track your results, will bear much fruit for you and keep you healthy!

I have more to say about this topic, but I need to go. I've got a 2-mile run calling my name right now!

The Elephant in the Room

Our Country Under Siege

The United States of America is under siege, right here, right now! In no way is it an overstatement to say that we are in grave danger of losing our country, as the Secular Left, people who fancy themselves as progressives (when in fact they are "regressives") are attempting to rip the nation from its moorings and transform it into a totalitarian state. And they are largely succeeding. Too many American Conservatives, too many Patriots, are just standing idly by and watching it happen, seemingly helpless or clueless as the Left boldly takes over in one sphere of influence after another.



To unpack the madness let us focus on the destruction of monuments.

What is a monument? It is a tangible, physical object, often a statue, a work of art, a building, or some other structure (perhaps a wall of remembrance) that depicts or commemorates a famous person or a notable event.

A monument may depict something horrific that happened, such as the Holocaust, where every 2 out of 3 European Jews were slaughtered. An example of this would be the work of sculpture at Yad Vashem located in Jerusalem, or the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles. These memorials are not celebrating the Holocaust; they are monuments of remembrance and are symbols of solemnity. They are reminders of something deeply consequential that took place. They serve to educate us about both the darker elements of the nature of mankind as well as the resilience of the human spirit. They also speak to the mercies of God in sparing a remnant of His people during their darkest hours.

Similarly, we have monuments honoring our heroes. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill, and many others. The Jefferson Memorial in Washington DC is just such a monument. The Washington Memorial, a 555-foot tall obelisk, also in Washington DC, serves to memorialize our first United States President.

Conversely, we have monuments that commemorate Confederate leaders from our Civil War era. This is because they were notable men who played a key role in one of the most consequential moments in our nation's history. Erecting a monument to such figures does not mean we, as a nation, support what they fought for. Instead, it means that we remember the key players – on both sides – to maintain a sense of our history. *All* of our history. For it is *all* of our history that provides the critically important lessons we need to learn. And it is those lessons that provide us with wisdom.

Take the biblical story of David and Goliath from the Old Testament. It is found in the 17th Chapter of 1 Samuel. If the social justice warriors of today had their way, Goliath would be excised from the story. (Or, on second thought, today's social justice warriors would probably prefer to excise David, whom they would call a racist and a murderer.) The bottom line is that the totality of the story would be modified in such a way that the story would no longer have coherence. The story would not be told. The lessons would not be learned.

And that is precisely what we see taking place right now all over America. If your doubt that, consider these examples:

Christopher Columbus: A statue commemorating the great explorer is going to be removed from California's State Capital in Sacramento, where it has stood since 1883. Why? Because three Leftist Radicals who happen to be legislators decided Columbus is a deeply polarizing historical figure. They seem to have just now come to such a warped conclusion. Likewise, a statue of Columbus that has stood in a St. Louis park for 134 has [already been taken down](#). Further, vandals and radicals have destroyed statues of Columbus in Miami and in Boston. Why? Because Columbus represents America, and the radicals hate America. They wish to destroy America.

St. Junipero Serra: Father Serra, the founder of California's Catholic Mission system, is now seen as a violent madman towards what are called "oppressed" communities. We can ignore the fact that the protesters know virtually nothing about Father Serra, or the sacrifices he made on behalf of native Americans. Removing statues of Father Serra is said to be something that will bring about healing. Healing to whom, exactly? No one can say. Thus, radicals in California cities like Ventura, San Luis Obispo, Carmel, San Francisco, and Los Angeles are busy tearing down any monuments to the man, and are too preoccupied with their insane, chic madness to bother pondering such questions.

Theodore Roosevelt: The Teddy Roosevelt statue, which has stood outside the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, [has been removed](#). Radical professors hail this decision, claiming the statue supports slavery and genocide. Curious, but whenever I have thought about Teddy Roosevelt, the thoughts of slavery or genocide never once entered my head. Still, Roosevelt is, perhaps, the most *American* president we have ever had, meaning the president who most embodies American ideals of thrift, independence, exploration, and leadership. But the radicals, who hate American ideals, cannot countenance a statue of our 26th President, especially given that he was a Republican.

Thomas Jefferson: A statue of our third President located at Hofstra University in Long Island, has been deemed unworthy of standing near the Student Center, because black students "feel pain" when they see it. Why not just relocate such hurt students to a Safe Space on campus? Or better, why not educate these students about who Thomas Jefferson was, what he accomplished, and what he stood for? Now there's a radical idea. But because Hofstra's Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, a radical by the name of Cornell Craig, believes the statue causes trauma, the statue has to go. It will be relocated to a place where fewer people will see it. This is thought to be a way to soothe the frayed nerves of some of its students. But Hofstra University is not alone in their disdain for Thomas Jefferson. New York City Council Members demand a statue of the author of the Declaration of Independence be removed from City Hall. A statue of Jefferson located in downtown Decatur, Georgia [has been removed](#) from the old courthouse where it stood. A reporter named Dan Whisenhunt actually wrote a news piece calling Jefferson a rapist, offering no evidence or analysis. Petitions are being tossed about at the University of Missouri to remove a Jefferson statue. And radicals in Portland, Oregon have violently vandalized and torn down a statue of Jefferson that stood in front of Jefferson High School, using an ax and ropes. These are violent radicals who seemed to relish taking an ax to Thomas Jefferson, the man who penned the document that provided liberty and independence in America.

George Washington: In Portland Oregon, radical Leftists destroyed a statue of George Washington, placing a burning American Flag over its face, and then smashing it to the ground. An inscription that read "BLM" for the Black Lives Matter movement was spray painted on the statue. The radicals [ran like cowards](#) when the police showed up. They were not man enough to stand up for their convictions.

Abraham Lincoln: It's hard to believe that the rabble consider Abraham Lincoln to be a racist, but such is the level of incompetence and ignorance that permeates the radicalized Left in America today – *up is down, in is out, good is evil*, etc. In Washington DC, there is an Emancipation Memorial. For the unaware, emancipation refers to bringing freedom to slaves. But to the brainwashed Left, the memorial is dehumanizing to blacks. Go figure. So the radicals [wish to tear down](#) something that actually memorializes elevating formerly black slaves.

The emboldened radicals of the Left do not limit themselves to defacing the statues of Americas leaders. They also do many other destructive things, including rioting and looting, silencing conservative voices, striving to defund the police, providing cover for other radicalized groups such as Black Lives Matter and Antifa, and even go so far as to seize portions of America's cities as happened recently in Seattle. I may be writing more about such matters soon, but I will close with an observation.

Most normal, decent people (that excludes the Left) understand the dangerous and deadly proclivities of radicalized Islamic terrorist groups like ISIS and the Taliban. Along with brutalizing, raping, torturing, and murdering many innocent men, women, and children, ISIS and Taliban radicals made it a point to destroy monuments. For instance, Taliban radicals destroyed some monumental statues of Gautama Buddha carved into the side of a cliff in the Bamyan valley in central Afghanistan that date to the sixth century. In the Iraqi city of Mosul, ISIS radicals used sledgehammers and drills to destroy cherished historical artifacts and statues dating from 7th century BC located in a museum there. Nazi's did the same thing during their reign of terror beginning in 1933 in Western Europe.

It seems to me that evil has a tendency to succumb to the impulse to destroy artifacts. Why do they do this? Because destroying monuments destroys history, and when you destroy history (which is to destroy truth about the past) you replace history with false history – false narratives. When this happens, you control the present and the future as well.

That is what the Left is doing. Right now. This moment. They are erasing history. They are destroying our monuments and they are largely getting away with it. They are waging open war on the Founding Fathers. They are demonstrating the poverty of their character by attacking the Great Emancipator, Abraham Lincoln, and calling him a racist. Their aim is to destroy America as we know it and replace it with a totalitarian state where liberty is quashed, rights are dissolved, free market capitalism is replaced with tyrannical socialism, and where God is replaced with Government.

Will we let them?

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

Shameless Plug

Norwood Spoke on the Founding Fathers

My speaking schedule of late has found me before quite a number of audiences delivering a lecture on the Founding Fathers. People genuinely seem to feel a need to know more about their lives, given the fact that anti-American anarchists on our soil are busy disparaging their fine names. My speech, titled Six Great Men, gives an overview of the lives of these six:

- Benjamin Franklin
- George Washington
- John Adams
- Thomas Jefferson
- James Madison
- Alexander Hamilton



After my most recent presentation given just this past Tuesday, the meeting planner who booked me wrote me the following note:

"Good morning, Ara. Thanks for your excellent program yesterday. I learned more from you about the Founding Fathers in 30 minutes than I have in 70 years of history classes! Great job. Jay"

If your organization could benefit from a stirring speech on our Founding Fathers, drop me a line: ara@aranorwood.com

From Ara's Journal

On Stupid Questions

I have heard many a teacher, professor, speaker, seminar leader, and facilitator say "There is no such thing as a stupid question."

Are they correct?

I'm not sure. But I do know this much: the reason they say there is no such thing as a stupid question is not because it is a self-evident truth that there is no such thing as a stupid question. They say it because they are trying to disarm their audiences of the fear of saying something that might sound foolish. They are hoping they will get audience participation. They are hoping that, in the case of a presentation that includes a Q&A segment, there will be questions that are raised rather than stony silence. Therefore, there is a bit of disingenuousness in their pronouncements that there is no such thing as a stupid question.

My distrust in their pronouncements notwithstanding, I wish to think through the assertion. Has it been proven that "stupid questions" do not exist? Not to my knowledge. What would constitute a stupid question? Certainly questions are among the most powerful intellectual tools we possess. Certainly all of the great inventions and advancements that have contributed to the ascent of man have come about because of a question someone posed, wrestled with, and eventually answered. However, not all questions are created equal. Some questions are more elegant than others. Some questions are more on target or more relevant than others. There are times in life when we are asking the wrong question, and then pursuing the answer to the wrong question.



It thus follows that if some questions are better than others, then there are questions that fail to rise to a level of brilliance or elegance or profundity. But can such questions sink to the level of the stupid? The dumb? The foolish? And if so, what makes them so benighted?

My hunch – and it's merely a hunch – is that there are questions that we sometimes pose which could have easily been answered had we been more mindful of our resources. In other words, we may on occasion ask a person a question that did not need to be asked because the answer to said question was very accessible and right in front of us. Perhaps a small amount of effort would have easily turned up the answer. In such instances, it's not that the question itself is dumb on its face; it's that our reaching out to someone else and posing the question to them betrayed our intellectual laziness or our failure to exercise resourcefulness. In such cases, it's not necessarily that the question itself was stupid, but our asking it of someone else when we could have dug up the answer quite easily suggests a character flaw on our part.

Even so, I have to come back to the pointed fact that some questions are not as valuable as other questions. Stupid? I remain unsure about that. But worthless, or weak, or off-target? Certainly there are questions that could be labeled thus.

The World of Words

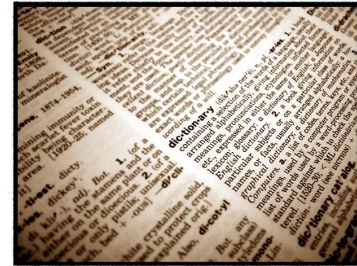
Impervious

Building Your Power of Expression

Impervious adj.

Pronunciation: impərvēəs

Meaning: This word refers to people (or things) that are not affected by some sort of input.



Usage:

- *This new military tank can withstand anything short of a nuclear blast. It is impervious to large-scale ordinance, bazookas, or mines.*
- *Don't even try to reason with her; she is impervious to rational thought or evidence, no matter how compelling.*
- *He worked nonstop, apparently impervious to the heat.*

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