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Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Issue #221

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I welcome you to my latest issue of *Uncommon Sense*.

First, a warm Birthday wish to my dear friends, Dave Young and Dorita Hamer!

The **Self-Development** column explores an enormously important area of our own development that we ought to pay more attention to.

This issue's **Elephant in the Room** column discusses the significant date of June 15th, 2015. You'll understand when you read it.

The **From Ara's Journal** column contains my musings on posturing.

And of course, **The World of Words** column delivers once again a fantastic word to add to your ever-expanding vocabulary.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood



## Self-Development

### Poise

There are various attributes that deeply impress me about people. A sense of humor. An ability to get things done. Decency. Magnanimity. Class. Thoughtfulness. Intellect. Charm.

But one attribute I wish to focus on here is something that I don't see often enough. And that is the attribute we call *poise*.

What does it mean to have poise?

When I think of people with poise, I think of people who maintain their composure in the heat of the moment. I think of people who maintain their dignity in the face of being

mocked or attacked. I think of people who maintain a sense of self-control in the heat of the battle. When an individual is unflappable in situations where most others would come unglued and fly off the handle in tense situations, we could say that person has poise.

I'll give you a great example involving two very different men – both of whom I have high regard for: Bill O'Reilly and George Will.



For many years I was a regular viewer of a Fox News program called The O'Reilly Factor. Although I was put off by Mr. O'Reilly's regular habit of talking over his guests, putting that aside, I considered him both entertaining, informative, and smart. I got a lot out of his programs.

By contrast, George Will had been a Washington fixture for many decades as both a writer and as a political commentator. I was not so familiar with George Will at the time involving the example I'm about to reference, but I did understand he was a man of steep erudition.

So my ears perked up when I found out George Will would be [making an appearance](#) on The O'Reilly Factor, albeit it remotely. This was in early November 2015. The back story was that Bill O'Reilly had recently published a book called *Killing Reagan*. George Will was of the opinion that the book was harmful to the Reagan legacy, and he had published an OpEd in the *Washington Post* articulating such a position. O'Reilly was offended and went after George Will, quite strongly, on his show. Now, O'Reilly can be quite aggressive at times, and he didn't hold back with George Will. While O'Reilly never yelled, per se, he did ask a lot of incriminating questions of Mr. Will, he pushed hard, he interrupted quite a bit, and sounded like a prosecuting attorney. But I have to give credit where credit is due. George Will kept his cool, even though it was apparent that Mr. Will was on the ropes most of the time. And O'Reilly did not censor himself in the pejorative category, calling George Will "a hack." It wasn't a good showing for George Will that night. But Will did remain poised for the duration. I credit him for that.

The thing that is so impressive about poise is that people who have it possess an inordinate amount of self-awareness and self-control. Usually we see poise being displayed when there is enormous stress coming at us, whether we are being verbally assaulted as was the case with George Will, or whether we are under pressure in other ways. The ability to stay composed in the heat of enormous pressure, or sudden news of a disquieting nature, or other such scenarios, is a thing to behold. And it commands the respect and awe of those around us.

I don't pretend to know if it is something that people are born with, or if it's something they develop over time. Perhaps it's not a matter of either/or, but of both/and. Either way, developing poise isn't something that gets developed on its own. It's something that evolves in the refining fires of life.

## **The Elephant in the Room**

### **June 15th, 2015: The Last Day of Normalcy**

One common characteristic of Republican presidents is that they are routinely pilloried the entire time they are in office. This is not the case with Democrat presidents. The press fawned all over Barack Obama, routinely throwing him softball questions during interviews. By contrast, Nixon was hated by the press, and I'm not even talking about

Watergate. Reagan was treated with derision, mocked for his age, and called an amiable dunce. George W. Bush was despised by the media and mocked as just plain stupid as well as a liar and a murderer ("Bush lied; people died.")

It's no surprise that Donald Trump is perhaps the most polarizing U.S. President post-Lincoln.

However, Donald Trump's treatment by the coastal elites and the media, as well as by Hollywood, University professors, and much of the Washington establishment may well be unprecedented.

But where is this animus coming from? Do people really loathe Donald Trump that much? Is Donald Trump really in the same camp as Adolf Hitler, Jeffrey Dahmer, and Charles Manson? Judging from the kind of coverage he gets from the likes of CNN, MSNBC, the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Atlantic, and pretty much the rest of the mainstream media, one would think Donald Trump, whom roughly half the country elected, was Public Enemy Number 1. If an alien from outer space were to observe the political landscape in the United States for a few days, it would be understandable if said alien was perplexed how a man so fiercely despised could possibly have been elected president.



But it wasn't always this way.

June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015, the day Donald Trump announced his candidacy for President, the day he spoke of Mexicans crossing our border illegally, became a turning point, not only in Mr. Trump's life but also in terms of political life in general. For it is June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015 that a large segment of the country lost its collective mind.

But think back to one day earlier, June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Donald Trump had not made it public he would run for office, nor had he publicly spoken of what he stood for. Thus, the waters were calmer that day, and every day prior. Donald Trump was seen, prior to June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015, as an interesting and entertaining television figure and astute businessman and real estate tycoon. That is all. People didn't, generally speaking, hate him on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015. But only when the Leftists in this country realized, as they did on June 16<sup>th</sup>, that Donald Trump wasn't siding with their vision of America did the Left go absolutely berserk, and they haven't let up since.

Thus, CNN's president, Jeff Zucker, a man who can only think in Left-wing terms, decided Trump is the great enemy and must be destroyed. That is why CNN cannot report on Fire Department personnel rescuing a kitten stuck in a tree without somehow disparaging Mr. Trump. I mean, I'm not certain CNN couldn't even present a weather report without somehow denigrating Mr. Trump. Everything by the mainstream media is seen through an "I Hate Trump" filter, and they report accordingly, looking both ridiculous and pathetic in the process.

But know this: it really isn't Donald Trump they find revolting. Trump is merely a symptom for something much larger and more grandiose. What the Left hates is America, America's founding, and America's values. Since Donald Trump has attempted to stand up for American values in a forceful and decisive way, and coupled with the fact that Donald Trump is wholly unintimidated by the mainstream media, the media has gone completely bonkers in their unbridled hostilities towards Donald Trump.

Thus, we can look at June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015 as the last day of normalcy where politics is concerned. Starting on June 16<sup>th</sup>, when Donald Trump let the country know that he stood firmly with America and its values, the Left entered into the world of the insane

which has led to a long train of shenanigans including claims that Trump is a Russian asset, impeachment, and other equally foolish nonsense.

We may never see another president in my lifetime with the courage, the grit, the confidence, and the drive of Donald Trump. While President Trump is far from perfect and does have many evident flaws, he is a force to be reckoned with and has put on quite the display of bravura and showmanship combined with unrelenting focus and accomplishment. Whether he leaves office this next November or 4 years later, I think we will realize that his departure will have revealed a performance of a magnitude that will not be matched by future presidents for many years to come.

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

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## **Shameless Plug** **Want to Succeed at your Next Job Interview?**

With the COVID-19 pandemic going into its 6<sup>th</sup> month, many people have become displaced in their jobs. You may have lost your job, or perhaps you may be vulnerable to losing your job in the near future.

While you will be scrambling to start interviewing with prospective employers, it may have been some time since your last interview, and you may be rusty.

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Let's face it: if you hired me to coach you through the process of an effective interview, the fee would run into the hundreds of dollars. And spending hundreds of dollars when you are unemployed (or about to become unemployed) is a difficult thing to do. I wrote this Special Report so that for less than \$100, **in fact, less than \$50**, you would have access to the golden nuggets that, if followed, would greatly put the odds in your favor that you'll perform brilliantly at your next interview. And every interview after that.

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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.)

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## From Ara's Journal

### The Great Pretenders

Some months ago I had an opportunity to attend a special dinner featuring [Dennis Prager](#). For those of you who don't know Dennis, he is an LA-based radio talk-show host, author, and thought-leader. I think there must have been around 50 people in attendance. The seating was in the shape of one large square, and so we were all seated around the outer perimeter of that square, which filled the room we were in. A sumptuous meal was served, and we had an opportunity to get acquainted with each other prior to Dennis making some after-dinner remarks.



All of us present had at least one thing in common: we either had some sort of relationship with Dennis Prager, or we were big fans or supporters in some way.

I recall an elderly gentleman sitting to my immediate left, and Dennis was seated about 5 places to my right, along with his wife, Sue. I turned to the elderly gentleman and introduced myself. We exchanged pleasantries, and he asked me how I knew Dennis and whether Dennis knew me personally. I explained that while I have interacted with Dennis over the years, I wasn't entirely certain whether Dennis would say he knew who I was, although I have a stronger mutual familiarity with his producer, Allen Estrin. I told him that I am a big admirer of Dennis and his work, that I had been privileged to have been in his studio on a couple of occasions over the years simply to observe him in action (not as an on-air guest), and that I show his [PragerU](#) videos in my college courses I teach.

I then asked the gentleman how he knew Dennis. He replied that he's known Dennis for many decades, that their relationship goes back to the 1980s, and he recounted how they first met. I was left with the distinct impression that this man, who appeared to be well-connected to the Jewish Community in Los Angeles, had a deeply intimate and close friendship with Dennis.

When Dennis spoke, he began by asking each of us present to introduce ourselves and to share how it is we came to be present at tonight's dinner. Since Dennis had the person to his right begin, the gentleman to my left introduced himself just prior to my doing so. I was expecting the sound of his voice to cause Dennis to acknowledge the presence of his old friend. But as it turned out, when the man next to me spoke and introduced himself, it was clear that he did not know Dennis personally, but only knew *of* him. It was evident that Dennis did not know the man at all.

I got to thinking about that. How was it that the man to my left would have led me to the distinct understanding that he and Dennis were life-long pals when in fact they did not really know each other in a personal way?

I was left with the realization that there are people in this world who like to impress others with their supposed associations, when, in fact, such associations are overstated. What was telling in this case is that the circumstances were such that I was able to clearly discern what had been conveyed to me was not quite factual, but was meant to impress.

Posturing such as this happens all the time. We often name-drop. We exaggerate. We position ourselves in order to paint ourselves in a particular light. Of course, when the truth manifests itself, we end up looking silly if we've overstated things. This man did not need to try to impress me. I would have been impressed enough to know that he was a fan of Dennis Prager. That alone would have told me much about this man, and I would have admired him for it.

Even when the things being said are 100% factual, the deeper need to be seen as being connected to important people can reveal an insecurity. I myself have mentioned, in certain conversations, that I am "friends" with Suzanne Ciani, the grammy-nominated recording artist, pianist, and pioneer of electronic music. I've mentioned on occasion that we've dined together, we've attended a concert together, I've been a guest in her home, and I was to be her official biographer. Was all of that really necessary? Few people I've shared those things with had ever so much as heard of her.

I suppose the One association that really matters is the one we have with Jesus. And *that* is a name worth dropping. Often.

## The World of Words

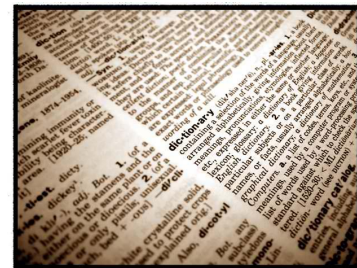
### Panoply

#### Building Your Power of Expression

**Panoply** n.

**Pronunciation:** 'panəplē

**Meaning:** Whenever you come across someone who has a rather impressive collection of something (e.g., expensive wrist watches, fine pens, comic books, a vast library) you could refer to that collection as a panoply. The word also refers to any magnificent or impressive array or display. It originally referred to ceremonial attire.



#### Usage:

- *I believe, based on the life he led, that he is entitled to the full panoply of a military funeral.*
- *It was a most splendid display, featuring all the panoply of Western religious liturgy.*
- *I was both stunned and amused by the retort she delivered, which encompassed a deliciously inventive panoply of insults.*

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