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Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Issue #222

August 31, 2020

So good to have you back for my latest issue of *Uncommon Sense*. And if you are one of my 90 or so new subscribers, a hearty welcome to you!

Let's unpack this issue:

The **Self-Development** column will provide a good primer on the question of whether you should focus your energies on your weaknesses or your strengths. What I teach is not usually taught in most self-development circles.

The **Elephant in the Room** column makes a few troubling, unsettling predictions about where the current rioting is likely heading. Read it at your own risk; it is not for the faint of heart.

The **From Ara's Journal** column shares a recent experience I had involving allegations of racism. It's rather instructive, I think.

And not to be outdone, **The World of Words** column dishes up a nifty word which, if incorporated and used, will have you looking and sounding rather erudite. (Look it up).

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood



Self-Development

Honing Strengths

You are a person comprised of strengths and weaknesses.

Your weaknesses are of two types. Thought Leader Jack Zenger, whom I've known since 1974 (we both lived in Los Altos and attended the same Church) would describe these two types as the "rough-around-the-edges" variety, and the "fatal flaw" variety.

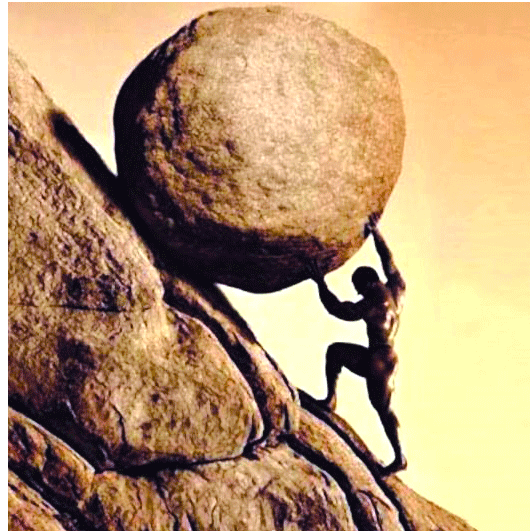
I'm not going to spend a lot of time discussing these two types of weaknesses, other than to say that their labels render them self-explanatory. Obviously, liabilities that fall in the

fatal flaw category must be addressed and nullified.

Yet far too many of us spend inordinate amounts of time trying to work on our shortcomings which fall in rough-around-the-edges realm. Perhaps that is a mistake.

I am a strong advocate of a very different approach to ongoing self-development. My experience has taught me that if we focus on our strengths, play to our strengths, and continually develop our strengths, we will experience better outcomes in the long run.

An example:



Let's imagine you are strong in the area of reading people and observing what is going on around you, noticing small, subtle details that others may have missed. Perhaps this strength of yours is most manifest when you are in a meeting but are not leading that meeting; someone else is. But because you are not leading that meeting, you are not doing much of the talking, and are taking on the role of a "silent partner" as it were. Yet in so doing, you pick up on many nuanced, passing comments or body language or other indicators that may be missed by the one leading the meeting. That puts you in an invaluable position to contribute to a private debrief of that meeting upon its conclusion.

Your observations of such subtleties could make you indispensable and irreplaceable in such organizations. And the better you refine such skills, the more profound will be your contributions as a keen observer. Your co-workers will see you in a very positive light.

The fact that you are inept with spreadsheets, or that you are not a gifted presenter, or that you have a messy desk, or that you are not a sharp dresser, or that you tend to be a few minutes late to events, will not detract from your overall value. Your boss may be annoyed at your weaknesses. But your boss will see your strength in such a positive light, that the value you bring to the table will outweigh your liabilities.

Thus, honing in on your strengths, and continually sharpening them, will put you in the realm of the indispensable.

Not a bad place to be.

The Elephant in the Room

A Horrifying Prediction

After seeing no end in sight to the nightly carnage taking place in Portland, Oregon, as well as in other large cities such as Minneapolis, Chicago, New York, Seattle, Baltimore, and in our nation's capital, where looting, mugging, rioting, attacking law enforcement officers, and burning down their own cities takes place with regularity, it is instructive to ponder what is coming next.

Radicalized groups such as Black Lives Matter, a group comprised of perhaps as many white people as black people, have done a fantastic job at hoodwinking a large part of the populace to believe the movement actually cares about black lives (which it doesn't) while being at the forefront of much of the looting taking place these days. They are joined by violent terrorist groups such as Antifa, which have adopted a False Flag name to pretend

they're against the very thing they themselves are – a violent gang of Fascists (whose members are, fortunately, comprised of mostly milk-toast girly men with an abundance of effeminate qualities that, absent the baseball bats and pepper spray they wield, couldn't punch out the average sixth grader if their scrawny lives depended on it.)

But I am going to make a prediction. Here it is:

Soon after the election, if not before, members of Black Lives Matter and/or Antifa will band together in groups of several hundred, and instead of shattering windows of high-end stores like Nordstrom late at night to do their looting, will simply barge through Nordstrom's front doors in broad daylight. Imagine 300 thugs executing a planned looting spree inside a Nordstrom at 11:00 AM, subduing any security guards that may be present, spraying shoppers in the face with pepper spray, knocking down senior citizens who rely on walkers and then kicking them mercilessly, taking hammers to the glass cases displaying jewelry and perfume, running into the back stockroom in the shoe department and carrying out boxes of \$400 shoes, producing wire cutters and severing the security wires of expensive leather jackets, beating up Nordstrom employees by the dozens, and then running out the front door, into waiting cars that were stolen, and fleeing in all directions – all within less than 5 minutes. And imagine this happening multiple times, both to the same stores after they have recovered, and to different stores they haven't yet hit. Imagine these hooligans eventually establishing ties with security personnel within such stores, and getting them to cooperate and aid the criminals in pulling off their heists.

Let's then dare to imagine something even more insidious.

Following the above mayhem taking place in broad daylight against established businesses, imagine a group of 700 "mostly peaceful protestors" as they like to be called, entering a secluded residential neighborhood with battering rams, guns, trucks, and other essentials, and, in a coordinated attack, simply start breaking down front doors of private residences in a synchronized fashion, terrorizing the men, women, and children who live there, smashing personal property as they see fit, stealing money, jewelry, and other items wantonly, loading stolen goods into the trucks waiting outside, and then taking off within 4 minutes to avoid the police. Of course, some of the thugs might get shot if the homeowners happen to have a loaded firearm nearby, but that would be seen as collateral damage by the looters, as the message they would send that no neighborhood is safe would have been successfully conveyed to other neighborhoods. Citizens would be gripped by fear and paranoia, wondering if the people they encounter in daily life are going to be a part of the next melee. Trust and goodwill would evaporate. Neighbors would become suspicious of neighbors. People would become withdrawn and aloof. A general malaise would calcify into the new normal.

I may be wrong – and I hope I am wrong – but this is what I predict awaits us in the days ahead unless decisive leadership at the local, state, and federal level decides to discontinue placating the thugs and begins the arduous process of dismantling them.

There is no question President Donald Trump has the temperament to carry out such decisive leadership; it's more of a question of whether he will choose to do so. And Joe Biden? He is currently at the mercy of the radicals; he will likely aid and abet them. If Mr. Biden becomes President, you can be certain the anarchy will continue unchecked, and even supported, by Democratic "leadership."

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

Want to Succeed at your Next Job Interview?

With the COVID-19 pandemic going into its 6th 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.

You may well benefit from my Special Report, [**Your Interview Roadmap**](#).



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.

Just ask D. Smith of Santa Clarita who bought my Interview Guide and successfully landed a job soon thereafter:

"I purchased Norwood's interview guide last month and it's amazing! He goes through the processes step-by-step and you end up with not only the skills that will get you that interview, but the strategies necessary to be confident so you succeed in your interviews resulting in you receiving job offers (yes, offers)."

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've done poorly in job interviews in the past, you can turn it around. The answers are there. Take action! [Click here to get started](#). You won't regret it!

From Ara's Journal

Racism: The Default Position

Allow me to share a recent experience. I will be talking about three characters in this story: the Driver, the Neighbor, and the Observer.

A fellow I know was driving at a rather high speed in a residential neighborhood to drop off a key. That was the Driver delivering a key to the Observer.



After the Driver dropped off said key to the Observer who was standing on the sidewalk waiting for him, the Driver whipped a fast U-Turn and was about to speed away again when another man who lived down the street – the Neighbor – blocked the Driver’s exit. This Neighbor forced the Driver to pull over, and then the Neighbor severely scolded the Driver, telling him that he had no right to be speeding in a residential neighborhood, as children are often playing in the street and there might have been a terrible accident. The Neighbor demanded to know where the Driver worked, and said he intended to call the Driver’s employer to report his reckless driving. After that, they went their separate ways.

I was the man to whom the key was delivered, and so I was a witness to everything that had transpired. I am the Observer in this story.

Later on that day, I had occasion to speak to the Driver. The Driver seemed very offended at the tongue-lashing he had received from the Neighbor. He said he felt it was harassment. He also said, “I never speed, anywhere or at any time.”

Knowing the Driver was, in fact, guilty of driving in a residential neighborhood at an excessive speed, I asked what he thought might have been the motivation of the Neighbor who confronted him.

He replied, “It was racism.”

I found that both fascinating and disturbing.

What do I make of such a response?

Two quick observations come to mind, both of which reveal something about human nature.

First, the lack of awareness (or denial) that the Driver was speeding. I can personally attest to the fact that he was going way above the speed limit in a residential area. For him to claim that he was not speeding and that he never is guilty of speeding can only mean that he is oblivious to his own behaviors, or perhaps that he is the type of person that cannot admit culpability. Neither option will bode well for this person over the long haul.

Second, the fact that he believes the Neighbor was motivated by racism is deeply troubling. The Neighbor said nothing of a racial nature. The driver is from the Middle East, has a light olive complexion, and was wearing a mask. It is doubtful the Neighbor got a clear look at the Driver when he first sped by. To call someone “racist” as your knee-jerk response, especially when there is zero evidence of racism, is to jump on a bandwagon that is currently being pedaled by our coastal elites that the country is systemically racist – a complete and total lie that is believed by large segments of the population. Even intelligent, decent people believe it, yet it is a greater hoax than the Russian Collusion hoax.

Thus, I hear a lot of people of color insisting that they, personally, have been repeatedly pulled over by police officers while driving, simply because their skin is not white. But I rarely ever hear an admission from such people that they were speeding at the time, or that they ran a red light, or blew through a stop sign, or their registration tag was expired, or that they were driving recklessly. It’s just so easy to chalk it up to racism – every time.

Claiming one’s misfortune is based on racism is a very popular thing to do. In fact, it’s faddish. It seeks to absolve the people making the charge from taking responsibility for their behavior. It provides an easy escape hatch so that one can adopt a victim-posture and divert the spotlight away from anything they may be guilty of, and redirect that

spotlight on to the person who has confronted problematic behavior, labeling that person a racist.

Actual racism (and it does exist in isolated pockets but is certainly not widespread) is one of the most despicable and deplorable characteristics a person can possess. Furthermore, a true racist is bereft of intelligence, for to judge a person negatively (or positively, for that matter) based on the color of that person's skin, is to exhibit a level of imbecility that almost no one can exceed. Skin color has nothing whatsoever to do with decency, indecency, value, worth, or anything else. Skin color is a thoroughly irrelevant factor when assessing someone's character. There are Caucasians, African-Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and people from every other racial or ethnic group that are absolute jerks, fools, criminals, or corrupt low-lives. There are Caucasians, African-Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and people from every other racial or ethnic group that are wonderful, fantastic, brilliant, saintly, wise, respectable, impressive, and awe-inspiring. The color of their skin has zero – absolutely zero – to do with their deficiencies or their virtues.

Many innocent people who do not have a racist bone in their bodies, are quite frightened of being falsely labeled a racist and thus they often cower before persons with bad motives and even worse conduct in order to avoid being so labeled. I, possessing not a hint of racism in my character, have no fears of being called a racist – not because I have never been called racist, and not because I never will be called racist, but because I simply don't care if someone falsely labels me a racist. When and if it happens, I simply laugh and tell them that only one of us is a racist and it's not me. I further point out to them that it is obvious that skin color matters to them, but it doesn't matter to me, and that, therefore, they are more aligned with the KKK who also think skin color matters, while I am more aligned with Martin Luther King who believed, as I do, that the color of one's skin is utterly unimportant.

I think it is safe to conclude that people who are quick to judge others as racist without clear evidence of racism are both weak and void of integrity.

The World of Words

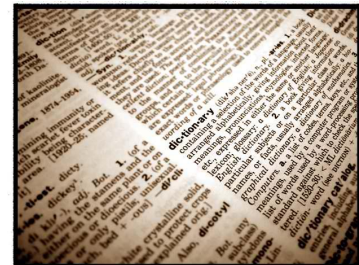
Elemental

Building Your Power of Expression

Elemental adj.

Pronunciation: ɛləmən(t)l

Meaning: There are several ways to understand this word. It could denote something that is primary or basic; something fundamental. In addition, when speaking of, say, an emotion, it could refer to the primitive and inescapable character of a force of nature.



Usage:

- *Let us focus on the elemental features from which all other structures are compounded.*
- *A thunderstorm is the elemental outcome of battling elemental forces.*

- *His urge for revenge was just too elemental to be ignored.*

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