

# Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Issue #223

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Welcome to your latest dose of *Uncommon Sense*! While the world seems to be in turmoil, the steady hand of certainty and wisdom awaits you in this issue.

Here's what is in store for you:

The **Self-Development** column gives you a quick pep talk about your own credibility.

The **Elephant in the Room** column considers the most recent turmoil taking place with respect to the Supreme Court vacancy, as well as its connection to the upcoming Presidential election.

The **From Ara's Journal** column considers what it means to be an adult.

The **World of Words** column provides yet another nifty gem from the vast English language which is sure to make you appear rather smart.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood



## Self-Development

### The Fragility of Credibility

In thinking about New York City's World Trade Center with its twin towers, I am reminded that plans to build it were first announced in January 1964. The towers were completed a decade later, in 1973, at a cost of over \$900 million – triple its initial cost estimates. Yet on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, radicalized Muslim terrorists succeeded in destroying both buildings, with the south tower, which was hit second, collapsing in a mere 56 minutes, while the north tower, the first to be hit, took an hour and 42 minutes before it imploded.

Ten years to raise; mere minutes to raze.

Our personal credibility is much like structures such as skyscrapers, great bridges, or even priceless works of art (think Sistine Chapel). It takes a long time to establish it, but it can be torn down rather quickly.

How to build credibility, you ask? Here are some quick thoughts:



- Make promises and keep them.
- Commit to deadlines, and then exceed such commitments, delivering what you promised a littler earlier than expected.
- Don't make excuses or play the blame game; accept responsibility and own your contributions for any mishaps.
- Sound intelligent and speak intelligently; choose your words carefully; and build your vocabulary so you can express yourself with elegance.
- Be well-read, so you can contribute wise and cutting-edge concepts and information into the conversations you participate in. You need to be informed about a lot of things.
- Show integrity and decency in all of your interactions by admitting your mistakes, and by being scrupulously honest. If you are given the equivalent of "too much change" after a transaction, return the excess immediately.

How to erode credibility? Here are things to avoid:

- Be complainer, not a solution-provider.
- Treat people badly, so that you are often being complained about.
- Be late on deadlines, and make excuses for why you are late, blaming others in the process.
- Be disorganized, thus failing to show up for meetings you should have attended, or show up for such meetings unprepared.
- Avoid planning time, that way you can come across disjointed and unorganized in thought-process.
- Be a drama-queen; stir things up. Annoy people. Be problem-oriented, not solution-oriented.
- Don't read much; that way you can stagnate and have little to contribute that is fresh, inventive, or insightful.

Remember, building credibility takes time. It doesn't happen overnight.

And losing credibility takes almost no time. It can happen in an instant.

**The Elephant in the Room**

# The Supreme Court: What's At Stake?

With the recent passing of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the predictable happened: Leftist Democrats all went a little crazy. Why? Because they have done the requisite calculus and understand what's at stake. Leftists want America to be something it was never designed to be – a smoldering inferno of noxious socialism and, after that, communism. Because President Trump now has the power and the right to fill the vacancy with a conservative constitutionalist, thus tilting the high court farther away from radicalism and closer to what the Founding Fathers envisioned, this has Leftist Progressive frothing at the mouth in fear. And thus, Leftist Dems are out busy threatening to burn down Congress, assault any Trump supporters, pack the court, and essentially throw a full-scale temper tantrum, complete with screams, gnashing of teeth, and even a girlish pout to boot.



And these stories, which are in the news as I write this, are not merely anecdotal. I myself was accosted just two days ago by one Richard Bailey of Santa Clarita, on a friend's Facebook page. Mr. Bailey, who happens to be black and who suffers from Trump Derangement Syndrome, verbally assaulted me for having white skin, thus revealing his racism. Next, he declared my deceased father, a man about whom he knows nothing, both a child molester and a racist, imagining his barbs would somehow hurt my feelings. Then, Mr. Bailey proffered the idea that I, along with all Trump supporters, should be rounded up and shot to death. He denied this would be murder, but rather, would be a case of justifiable execution. Lovely. Of course, the moment a law enforcement officer responded to his threats and warned him of possible legal consequences, Mr. Bailey immediately back-pedaled.

But why all the furor? What is at the core of such unbridled fury?

It really all boils down to this: ***America is the result of the wisdom and the vision of the Founding Fathers.*** These Founding Fathers include many patriots, but most notably George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, and James Madison. These six great men used their ingenuity and a lot of blood, sweat, and tears, to not only go to war with Great Britain, and ultimately to defeat them, but to also put together a newly forged country with what is now the oldest living Constitution of any country on earth, and to create a land of opportunity based on certain lofty principles – liberty, self-reliance, limited government, unity, no state religion while respecting Christianity and other religions, entrepreneurship, and similar virtues.

Democrats today who fancy themselves as "Progressives" wish to "progress away from" the wisdom and vision of the Founders. The Leftist Progressives who have hi-jacked the Democratic Party loathe the Founding Fathers. These Democrats today truly believe they wield far more wisdom than any of the Founding Fathers, therefore, they are not shy about repudiating and castigating the Founders. Democrats today *must* do this, for their so-called progressive ideas are in complete disagreement with what the Founders stood for. Today's Democrats are, frankly, un-American.

We are basically entering a second Civil War. Perhaps it could be thought of as an attempt by the Democrats to undue the results of the Revolutionary War. They want nothing to do with what the Founders envisioned.

It's really no more complicated than this. A vote for Donald Trump is a vote to preserve the nation in the same sense that Abraham Lincoln fought to preserve the nation. A vote

for Joe Biden (and Kamala Harris, who would very likely invoke the 25<sup>th</sup> Amendment early in Biden's first term, thus making her President) is a vote for chaos, anarchy, and an overthrow of everything America as stood for.

I'll make the choice even more stark: a vote for Donald Trump is a vote for America. A vote for Joe Biden is a vote against America as we know it.

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

## **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.

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!

# On Becoming an Adult

My phone rang. I vaguely recognized the number, so I answered it.

The voice on the other end was of a woman in her early 30s I hadn't heard from in quite a while. A former student, and someone whom I had mentored, she had gone on to do some pretty great things last time we had talked, which had been a few years ago.



Our pattern in past conversations was to exchange pleasantries, engage in some small talk, and then get down to business with a serious conversation, usually based on a profound question she asked. This time was no different. She soon came to her question: "Professor Norwood, how does one become an adult?"

When I am asked a question due to someone's curiosity or their need for guidance, there are times where I have a ready answer because I have already thought through their question; there are other times where I may not have the answer ready, but I know enough about the variables involved that I can comb through my mind and compose a relevant answer rather quickly; and there are other times where I really have to think about it deeply, having never given much thought to the topic.

This third scenario was the one I found myself in.

How does one become an adult?

Because I am not thinking about this question in a legal sense, it's not a matter of age. I know 14-year-olds who are much closer to adulthood than some 44-year-olds. Adulthood brings with it a certain level of maturity. Beyond that, adulthood involves a measure of looking outside oneself and considering the needs of others in addition to considering one's own needs. Thinking in terms of the greater good is intertwined with being an adult. Adolescents and teenagers are generally self-absorbed, conscious only of their whims, needs, and impulses. They often start the process of becoming adults when they get married, as they now have the needs of another person to consider. They further the process of becoming adults when they have children. Over time, and through trial and error, maturity tends to set in and cause a mellowing to take place. This further leads one towards adulthood.

I well remember a model given to us by the late Stephen R. Covey, my first boss out of college. Covey talked in terms of maturity falling along the lines of a continuum, where we begin in a state of dependency, then move into a state of independency. But Covey believed the road to maturity did not end there. Because we do not live in isolation, but in an environment of interconnectedness, we move from independence to interdependence. That, Covey insisted, is the highest manifestation of maturity. I believe that dovetails nicely with the notion of adulthood.

Adulthood is no stranger to sacrifice. Thus, adults often exercise the discipline required to sacrifice certain pleasures of today so that they may better enjoy a satisfying tomorrow. Thus, they spend less than they earn, they invest some of their money for the future, and they curb their urges to acquire lavish but unnecessary perks. They invest in their children even at the expense of their own needs, and they take the long view, considering long-term consequences and not merely immediate concerns.

Being an adult, in the end, is about exercising self-control and discipline over one's passions.

## The World of Words

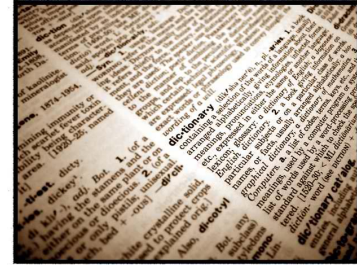
# Insularity

### Building Your Power of Expression

**Insularity**, n.

**Pronunciation:** ɪns(y)əlerədē

**Meaning:** Think of people who are largely ignorant of things outside of their own immediate experience. They don't know about other people, other cultures, other ways of thinking. . . We could say such people are insulated. Alternatively, we could say such people suffer from a certain level of insularity.



### Usage:

- *His complete and utter ignorance of the distinctions between the music of Northern India and Southern India betrayed his British insularity.*
- *The level of insularity with this group is shocking; these people no absolutely nothing about any sort of way of life outside their little island.*
- *Your urge to see the world indicates your desires to break open the shackles of your own insularity.*

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