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Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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The first Presidential Debate is behind us (thank heavens), and it is time to dive into your new issue of *Uncommon Sense*.

The **Self-Development** column opens up about a great source of personal development for you.

This issue's **Elephant in the Room** column reviews a number of examples of societal decay taking place during the month of September before our very eyes. Individually, they are worrisome. Taken together, they are deeply unsettling.

The **From Ara's Journal** column explores the topic of silence.

And in the **The World of Words** column we deliver yet another amazingly significant word that is sure to boost your vocabulary and your credibility.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood



Self-Development

Gleaning Value from Others

Great ideas are all around us. New insights abound. We just have to be open to them.

I have a great friend, RB. He is well-read, articulate, and animated. He's got loads of energy and is very sharp. One time he told me about a book by Daniel Kahneman. The book is titled *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. It is a roughly 500 page triumph of brilliance! I am a better, more informed person because of it.

Here is an excerpt from it. See if it speaks to you in any way.



HOW TO WRITE A PERSUASIVE MESSAGE

Suppose you must write a message that you want the recipients to believe. Of course, your message will be true, but that is not necessarily enough for people to believe that it is true. It is entirely legitimate for you to enlist cognitive ease to work in your favor, and studies of *truth illusions* provide specific suggestions that may help you achieve this goal.

The general principle is that anything you can do to reduce cognitive strain will help, so you should first maximize legibility. Compare these two statements.

Adolf Hitler was born in 1892.

Adolf Hitler was born in 1887.

Both are false (Hitler was born in 1889), but experiments have shown that the first is more likely to be believed. More advice: if your message is to be printed, use high-quality paper to maximize the contrast between characters and their background. If you use color, you are more likely to be believed if your text is printed in bright blue or red than in middling shades of green, yellow, or pale blue.

How do you know that a statement is true? If it is strongly linked by logic or association to other beliefs or preferences you hold, or comes from a source you trust and like, you will feel a sense of cognitive ease.

That is just one short snippet. But there is a lot of content in there that could prove valuable. Furthermore, the book itself is bursting at the seams with value. Here is another such excerpt:

Suppose that you need to hire a sales representative for your firm. If you are serious about hiring the best possible person for the job, this is what you should do. First, select a few traits that are prerequisites for success in this position (technical proficiency, engaging personality, reliability, and so on). Don't overdo it – six dimensions is a good number. The traits you choose should be as independent as possible from each other, and you should feel that you can assess them reliably by asking a few factual questions. Next, make a list of those questions for each trait and think about how you will score it, say on a 1 – 5 scale. You should have an idea of what you will call “very weak” or “very strong.”

These preparations should take you half an hour or so, a small investment that can make a significant difference in the quality of the people you hire. To avoid halo effects, you must collect the information on one trait at a time, scoring each before you move on to the next one. Do not skip around. To evaluate each candidate, add up the six scores. . . . Firmly resolve that you will hire the candidate whose final score is the highest, even if there is another one whom you like better. A vast amount of research offers a promise: you are much more likely to find the best candidate if you use this procedure than if you do what people normally do in such situations, which is to go into the interview unprepared and to make choices by an overall intuitive judgment such as “I looked into his eyes and liked what I saw.”

So now I've got a second wonderful gem from a great mind that can be of much value to me in my work. And I owe a great deal of debt to my friend, RB, for alerting me to Daniel Kahneman's writings.

What about you?

What great books have impacted your life? Can you share them with others, or at least, recommend them?

And what about the bright people in your life? Can you ask them to recommend a great book to you that has impacted them? If so, add those books to your reading list. Read

them, learn from them, and implement their ideas. Doing so will put you on a permanent path of growth, development, and accomplishment.

The Elephant in the Room Where Things Stand At The Moment

The month of September was instructive in that it displayed a panoply of cultural and political rot sweeping across the fruited plains. Let's review the pathological spectacle that was September.



Media Bias and Fake News

- MSNBC's Joy Reid made the claim that BLM doesn't riot, then she turned around and [blamed the rioting](#) on Donald Trump.
- CNN's Jim Sciutto made the claim that President Trump never told Vladimir Putin to refrain from meddling in our elections. Yet video tape [shows otherwise](#). And there was never a correction or a retraction.
- CNN's Chris Cuomo was [caught on tape](#) instructing a future interviewee what to say when the interview would later take place.
- The *New York Times* [falsely claimed](#) that AG William Barr asked prosecutors to consider criminal charges against the mayor of Seattle.
- Media bias continued to be aired, when [the media fawned](#) all over Kamala Harris wearing Timberland boots, while mocking and criticizing First Lady Melania Trump for wearing the same boots earlier.
- And, of course, the *New York Times*, which produces a podcast called "Caliphate" featured a Canadian man who claimed to be an ISIS terrorist and who provided detailed and grizzly accounts of his murderous escapades. But, as if often the case with the *New York Times*, the entire story [was a fabrication](#).

Radicalization of our Universities

- Nicholas Meriwether, a professor at **Shawnee State University** in Ohio teaches political philosophy. A male student who imagines he is actually a female approached Professor Meriwether and demanded the professor address the student by female pronouns. The professor refused, but did agree to address this student by his given name and avoid the use of pronouns altogether. This was unacceptable to the student who threatened to have [the professor fired](#). The professor has been formally reprimanded by the administration.
- **Vanderbilt University** gave students a quiz with a question that suggested the U.S. Constitution was designed to [perpetuate white supremacy](#).
- A **USC** business Professor, Greg Patton, was [relieved of his teaching duties](#). His crime? Saying a Chinese word that sounds similar to a racial slur.

- Both faculty and students at **Cornell University** demanded that the university no longer admit students based on merit, but [based on color](#) (i.e., they want black students admitted, regardless of whether they are qualified; if they are black, then their skin color qualifies them to be admitted.) This is the new racism by the American Left.
- The **University of Chicago**'s English Department's graduate school announced that it will [only accept applicants](#) who are interested in working with and in Black Studies. What this has to do with an advanced degree in English remains unclear.
- **Princeton University** President Christopher L. Eisgruber [engaged in extreme pandering](#) by claiming racism is embedded in the very fabric of the university over which he presides, and he lamented that the university has only one black studies program, presumably meaning he thinks there should be multiple black studies programs offered.
- At **Northwestern Law School**, a Dean who spoke at a [diversity event](#) began by saying: "I'm Jim Speta and I am a racist!" (Kind of reminds one of an AA meeting.) Another Northwestern official at that same event, Emily Mullin, topped that by saying: "I am a racist and a guardian of white supremacy. I will work to do better."
- **Bellarmino University** President Susan Donovan, in the wake of a legal verdict following a police shooting of a woman named Breonna Taylor, cancelled classes for more than a day and essentially told all of the white students at the university that [they were racists](#), claiming that they need to face up to their part in the systemic racism that exists within the campus community.

The "I Hate America" Crowd

- Washington DC officials are trying to figure out how to cancel some of our nation's most treasured monuments, including the Washington Monument. Why? Because DC officials think such [monuments promote racism](#). Why else?
- Nikole Hannah-Jones, the founder of the 1619 Project at the *New York Times*, [claimed she was not](#) anti-American, and then in the next breath she said "Also, I don't think we're an exceptional nation. I think that's ludicrous for any nation to make that claim, and we certainly cannot make that claim. We're a nation founded on genocide, and chattel slavery, and classism, and gender discrimination. We're not [exceptional.]"

BLM and Leftist Racism

- Professor Jessica Krug, a George Washington professor who teaches Black History and believes in Black Supremacy, is a white woman who has [always claimed](#) to be a black woman. She finally confessed her sin, even though it is obvious she is a kook. Yet she's not alone. It turns out there are [quite a few](#) white women on the Left that loathe the color of their own skin so deeply that they have taken to falsely claiming they themselves are, in fact, black women (even though they are white women).
- A Louisville police officer was [fired from her job](#) for posting her personal (and unfavorable) opinion about BLM and Antifa.
- The BLM thugs [vandalized](#) Elvis Presley's home, Graceland, to the tune of \$150,000. Nationwide, their so-called "peaceful protests" have [resulted in damage](#) to personal property and businesses to the tune of somewhere between \$1B and \$2B.

- NPR interviewed a woman named Vicky Osterweil who opined that the notion of property is "[derived through whiteness](#) and black oppression." (Ms. Osterweil is white). The NPR interviewer never challenged her at all, suggesting they gave tacit agreement to such notions.
- Of course, none of this prevented a BLM leader from [siphoning off donations](#) – to the tune of \$200,000 – for his own personal expenses.

The Lockdown

- Nancy Pelosi insists people need to wear masks, yet she is [caught not wearing one](#) when getting her hair done in San Francisco. What does she do when she gets caught in her hypocrisy? Claims she is the victim.
- Meanwhile, it was discovered that the lockdown may be based on [doctored information](#), as news surfaced that thousands of people in North Carolina were falsely diagnosed with Coronavirus.

Leftist Lawlessness

- An employee at a Target Store in Indianapolis claimed to have [poured bleach](#) into the drink of a police officer.
- An employee at a Popeye's chicken restaurant in Texas [spit in the food](#) of a police officer.
- DA Diane Becton of Contra Costa County urged prosecutors to [consider the "needs"](#) of the looters when they are charged. In other words, don't punish them. Let them loot. They need the stuff.
- After two police officers were shot while sitting in their patrol car, and then taken to a hospital, the radicalized anarchists [stormed the hospital's ER](#) with shouts that all police must die, and a city councilman from Lynwood [spoke approvingly](#) of the shootings against the police officers.
- It got to the point that whenever a police shooting occurred of a black criminal, even when that criminal was lunging at police with a knife in an attempt to kill them, there were no shortages of rioters who feel that police are [never justified](#) in shooting a criminal, even when their lives are in danger.
- The very thought that Ruth Bader Ginsburg might be replaced before the election caused many on the Left to [threaten arson](#) on the U.S. Capital.

The Cancel Culture

- Facebook [regularly shut down](#) conservative speech.
- Twitter applied one standard of acceptability to President Trump and a different, more [favorable standard](#) to Joe Biden.
- Facebook also [censored a conservative media report](#) involving an interview with a world-renowned Chinese virologist who claimed that China intentionally released COVID-19 into the general population.
- The Columbia Marching Band engaged in a new level of Cancel Culture: they [cancelled themselves](#). In an act of supreme self-loathing, they claimed they themselves were racist (among other things) and needed to be cancelled because of it.

Russian Collusion

- Although Democrats insist that President Trump is a Russian asset, it is actually the [Dems who collude](#) with the Russians. A Russian troll-farm that meddled in the 2016 election has hired a bunch of Democrats to do their bidding in the current election.
- While Joe Biden and the Democrats have spent much energy around claiming President Trump is a Russian asset, Mr. Biden's son, Hunter, appears to have been spending enormous sums of money on Russian entities that are [involved in sex trafficking](#), prostitution, and the like.

Trump Derangement Syndrome

- A Virginia shipyard worker was [fired from his job](#) for wearing a hat that supported the President.
- A Left-wing publication that traffics in Trump-Hatred [published a falsehood](#) claiming the President insulted World War I soldiers, calling them losers.
- After President Trump was nominated to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, the radical Leftist magazine *The Atlantic* claimed the Nobel Peace Prize was so tainted by the nomination that the prize [should be disbanded](#) altogether.
- After President Trump secured an historic peace agreement between Israel and other Middle Eastern countries, this seminal accomplishment was [largely ignored](#) by the Left-wing media.
- Actress Debra Messing tweeted out a bevy of [anti-Trump messages](#), calling the President a rapist and a pedophile.
- Jennifer Mosher, a professor at Marshall University, said she hoped President Trump's supporters [would all die](#) of Coronavirus.
- Michael Reinoehl, an Antifa thug, chased down and murdered, in cold blood, a President Trump supporter. And a history professor at the University of Rhode Island, Erik Loomis, claimed the [murder was justified](#) because the murderer killed a "fascist."
- And here's the topper: one woman, a lawyer, is so enraged that President Trump might succeed in naming a new Supreme Court Justice, that she has [become a Satanist](#). To her, that seems to be the proper course of action. Desperate times call for desperate measures.

For those who admire the chaos spawned by Leftists and so-called Progressives, this was a great month for societal decay. For those who cherish America, traditional values, and patriotism, one can only hope that "We the people" will step up and vote accordingly in November.

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

The Sound of Silence

I'm in a band, Dawn of Ascension. We are a performing duo comprised of Venessa Woolley on vocals and myself on guitar. We have a good thing going and enjoy performing for audiences. One of our cover songs is titled "The Sound of Silence." It was written by Paul Simon, one of the truly great and prolific popular song writers of our time.



In thinking about the meaning of that song, I am struck by the very notion of silence. The irony is that silence is the absence of sound. But I would suggest that silence is one of the many sound "choices" would could embrace.

I am mindful of the fact that when I turn on the radio in my car, I am subjecting myself to someone else's agenda, whether it be a news station, a music station, a sports station, or a talk show. I can't control the content. But I can control my environment and select the programming I want, or I can choose no programming – I can opt for silence.

Sometimes – in fact, many times – I prefer silence. That's my agenda. And there is tranquility therein. There is peace. There is stillness.

And sometimes, there are revelatory breakthroughs. . .

That's an agenda I can live with.

The World of Words

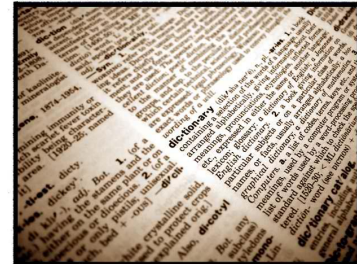
Perfunctory

Building Your Power of Expression

Perfunctory, adj.

Pronunciation: pərfəNG(k)t(ə)rē

Meaning: Think an action or gesture carried out with a minimum of effort or reflection.



Usage:

- *As they passed each other, they spoke not a word, but each gave a perfunctory nod.*
- *He dropped a perfunctory kiss on her cheek and left.*
- *Based on my severe illness, I was shocked that that the doctor only gave me a perfunctory examination.*

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