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October 29, 2020

We've got a big election coming up next Tuesday! I hope this issue of Uncommon Sense provides some guidance and perspective.

The **Self-Development** column will remind you of the power of listening effectively, as well as the challenges that comes with not listening well.

The **Elephant in the Room** column explores an explosive scandal plaguing one of the two presidential candidates, and the even bigger scandal of the mainstream media trying to collude with the campaign to prevent We The People from knowing about it.

The **From Ara's Journal** column explores a very important ethical topic.

And with Halloween upon us, the **The World of Words** column delivers a very appropriate word for the occasion. . .

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood



Self-Development

Listener As Perceiver

About two years ago I had the privilege of meeting a fellow through a friend. We sat around and struck up a conversation. It turns out we both had an interest in college football, and even liked some of the same teams (University of Oregon, Florida State University, Boise State, TCU). He seemed to know a lot about those teams, as did I. We were able to recall specific games and regale each other with our recollection of minute details that took place in those matchups. It was an enjoyable exchange.

However, at various times in the conversation, I noticed he seemed to tune out. At various intervals I became conscious of the fact that he had checked out. I was aware that I wasn't dominating the conversation, and so I was certain it wasn't due to me over-

talking. Plus, I knew the subject matter interested him. When he spoke, it seemed he was engaged and somewhat animated. Yet there were times when I would chime in with a comment and he seemed to tune out, and stare off into space. It seemed I'd lost him momentarily.

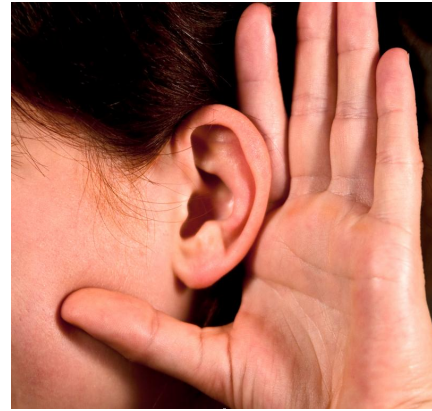
I've thought about this encounter a bit, and while I cannot be absolutely sure what to make of it, I think I know. I suspect he has a listening problem. And having seen this person communicate with one other person besides myself, I have noticed the same tendencies in his communication style

elsewhere. What I witnessed was his failure to perceive information that was being put out there. He missed details in the conversation, he failed to note nuances taking place. There were subtleties that got past him when he tuned out. He asked questions that had just been answered, to name one example. It made me curious about how this apparent tendency has impacted his life, his career, his relationships.

I came to realize that one of the many drawbacks of being a poor listener is the number of data-points one fails to take in. Since such a person is in the middle of a dynamic involving free-flowing information, a constant stream of back-and-forth, a non-listener puts himself at a disadvantage in that they fail to perceive – fail to receive – key information that is being sent to them. The outcome is a dearth of what would be valuable details that might have been put to good use.

Poor listening skills is akin to self-imposed isolation, being out of the loop, and unnecessarily sequestered. Finely honed listening skills enables one to capture both the direct and the understated, with the result being a larger reservoir of information. This larger store of information places you in a position to make better decisions and have a clearly understanding of the landscape you find yourself in.

The simplest way to become a better listener? Decide to. It's no more complicated than that.



The Elephant in the Room

The Slow, Lingerin g Stain of the Biden Candidacy

The Presidential election is mere days away. Joe Biden, a career politician, is hoping his third run for the presidency will hit pay-dirt. If it does, and if Mr. Biden actually follows through on the things he has claimed he will do, we are indeed going to be in for a "dark winter" (to borrow a phrase from the candidate himself).



Lingerin g over Mr. Biden is a matter [that needs to be answered](#), but probably won't be. It won't be answered because the mainstream media is deliberately shirkin g their duties and refusing to report on the matter, and neither Mr. Biden nor those around him are willing to honestly address the issue directly.

Here is what we do know thus far:

- Joe Biden has repeatedly claimed that he has “never spoken to my son [Hunter Biden] about his overseas business dealings.” This would also mean Joe Biden has never been directly involved in such dealings, neither while serving as Obama’s Vice President, nor as a U.S. Senator.
- In April 2019, Hunter Biden (who evidently was intoxicated at the time) dropped off his laptop computer to a shop in Delaware for repairs. Evidently forgetting where he had taken his computer, he never returned to pick it up.
- The repairman saw some things on the laptop that raised red flags. The computer ended up being turned over to the FBI in December 2019, but the repair shop owner made a copy of the hard drive which was given to Robert Castello, Rudi Giuliani’s personal lawyer. Were it not for that, we would have no knowledge of this scandal.
- Hunter Biden had no experience in the energy industry yet was being paid \$80,000 per month to serve on the board of Burisma, a Ukrainian energy company.
- The computer in question contained an email dated April 17, 2015 written by Vadyn Pozharskyi, an advisor to Burisma, thanking Hunter Biden for setting up a meeting with then Vice President Joe Biden. What is clear is that a meeting had been set up to take place in April 2017 in Washington DC between Vice President Joe Biden and Mr. Pozharskyi of Burisma, something Joe Biden himself denies, claiming it is Russian disinformation.
- The email message from Pozharskyi to Hunter Biden reads as follows: “Dear Hunter, thank you for inviting me to DC and giving an opportunity to meet your father and spent [sic] some time together. It’s really [sic] an honor and pleasure.”
- An earlier email from May 2014 indicates that Pozharskyi asked Hunter Biden for “advice on how you could use your influence” on Burisma’s behalf. We know that Joe Biden did use his influence to get a top Ukrainian prosecutor fired while that prosecutor was in the middle of a corruption investigation of Burisma. VP Biden bragged openly, during a 2018 speech to the Council on Foreign Relations, on having pressured the Ukrainian government to fire the prosecutor, and even went so far as to threaten the withholding of a billion dollars in foreign aid if Ukraine did not fire the prosecutor. That prosecutor was fired, Ukraine received the billion dollars, and the investigation into corruption at Burisma was thwarted.
- [The Biden campaign claimed](#) that there was nothing in Joe Biden’s “official schedule” that suggested a meeting with the Burisma agent ever took place. (The Biden campaign never addressed whether such a meeting might have appeared on Joe Biden’s “unofficial schedule.”
- On October 15th, the New York Post, one of America’s oldest newspapers (founded by Alexander Hamilton) reported on the story of the emails with the headline, “Smoking-gun email reveals how Hunter Biden introduced Ukrainian businessman to VP dad.”
- [Twitter blocked the story](#) from being shared on their platform. Twitter did this strictly for censorship reasons, and to help protect Joe Biden as he tries to win the Presidency. Twitter locked all user accounts who attempted to share the story. Twitter, in doing so, was turning the American ideal of a free press on its head for purely partisan reasons.
- CNN ignored the story altogether on that Wednesday, and the “Big Three” mainstream news broadcasts, ABC, NBC, and CBS, were completely silent about the story that day as well. NBC did mention the story the next day, but only to cast

doubt on the story's legitimacy. CBS discussed it for less than two minutes on Thursday. MSNBC mocked the story on Thursday. Both NPR and the Washington Post dismissed the story as unsubstantiated.

- The Biden campaign claimed that since Twitter censored the story, that act alone [proves the story is false](#). I'm not making this up.
- ABC's George Stephanopoulos interviewed Joe Biden during a town hall, yet [never once brought up](#) any of the allegations.
- Another email found on the laptop, written by Hunter Biden to one of his children, contains this disconcerting comment: "I love all of you. But I don't receive any respect, and that's fine, I guess – works for you, apparently. I hope you all can do what I did and pay for everything for this entire family for 30 years. It's really hard. But don't worry; unlike Pop, I won't make you give me half your salary." It is fair to surmise that "Pop" is Joe Biden and that Joe Biden had Hunter Biden turn over a substantial amount of Hunter's income to his father? On what grounds? An intra-family bribe? A quid pro quo of some kind? Does this not have "corruption" written all over it?
- In yet another stunning bit of correspondence, a text message written in May 2017 by one James Gillar to Toni Bobulinski (more on him below) outlined how the compensation of a deal with a Chinese energy firm would be dispensed to the key players. It reads as follows with my comments in brackets:

"At the moment there is a provisional agreement that the equity will be distributed as follows:

20 H [Hunter Biden]
20 RW [Rob Walker]
20 JG [James Gillar]
20 TB [Tony Bobulinski]
10 Jim [Jim Biden]
10 held by H for the big guy?" [Vice President Joe Biden]

Does this suggest Vice President Joe Biden subverted our nation's foreign policy in some way? Was the plan to have Hunter hold either \$10 million or 10% of the total equity of this deal for his father, whom everyone in the know acknowledges is "the big guy"?

- Speaking in the friendly environment of CNN, the Chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, Adam Schiff, who led the Democratic push to impeach President Trump, an effort that failed miserably, stated the following fiction: "We know that this whole smear on Joe Biden comes from the Kremlin. That's been clear for well over a year now that they've been pushing this false narrative about this vice president and his son."
- John Ratcliffe, the Director of National Intelligence, [refuted Adam Schiff's claims](#), and testified that the Hunter Biden laptop is "not part of some Russian disinformation campaign." A senior intelligence official backed up Ratcliffe's refutation of Adam Schiff's lie: "Ratcliffe is 100% correct. There is no intelligence at this time to support Chairman Schiff's statement that recent stories on Biden's foreign business dealings are part of a smart campaign that 'comes from the Kremlin.'"
- When Joe Biden was asked about the emails by a reporter, he replied that he had no response. That reporter was mercilessly attacked by the media for even asking the question. At a later event, where the media asked no question more relevant than what [flavor of milkshake did Joe Biden just purchase](#), while Mr. Biden was happy to answer such a question, another hapless reporter began to ask a question

that had something to do with the FBI. Mr. Biden waved the reporter off, turned his back on her, and walked away. And the other media supporters of Joe Biden at that event, the ones who were more interested in milkshake flavors, giggled at the supposed foolishness of this woman reporter who dared ask a serious question. It was high school all over again.

- Tony Bobulinski, a business partner of Hunter Biden's, has come forward and claimed, without equivocation, that Joe Biden was deeply involved, while Vice President, in Hunter Biden's business dealings overseas. Bobulinski claimed he personally held two separate meetings with Joe Biden about their possible joint venture with a Chinese Energy firm. When Bobulinski, who was shocked at Joe Biden's involvement, asked the Vice President's brother, Jim Biden, how they could justify taking such huge political risks by involving the VP, Jim Biden responded: "Plausible deniability."
- [Tony Bobulinski](#) testified that he was told in no uncertain terms that Joe Biden's name was never to be utilized in any printed correspondence: "On numerous occasions, it was made clear to me that Joe Biden's involvement was not to be mentioned in writing but only face-to-face. In fact, I was advised . . . that Hunter and Jim Biden were paranoid about keeping Joe Biden's involvement secret."
- On Wednesday October 8th, Joe Biden met with reporters for a Q&A session. Not one single reporter asked one single question about this scandal. Clearly, there is collusion among the news media to protect Joe Biden from this scandal. The media is complicit in the scandal.
- Tucker Carlson from Fox News has been one of the lone voices reporting on this story. His producers in New York had, as of Monday October 26th, possession of a trove of additional emails re. the Joe Biden scandal. Those producers overnighted a package of Biden-related emails (very incriminating emails) to Tucker Carlson who was in Los Angeles at the time. The package was set to arrive to Mr. Carlson on Tuesday October 27th. But they never arrived. They were either sent via Federal Express or UPS. Tucker Carlson received word from the shipping carrier on Tuesday morning of this week that the envelope containing the documents had arrived at their sorting facility in Los Angeles, but that the envelope had been opened and the documents themselves were missing. [Someone stole the documents](#) to hide evidence that would be harmful to Joe Biden. Perhaps it was a renegade employee of the shipping company who handled the package, and, seeing it addressed to the conservative commentator Tucker Carlson, decided to break the law and remove whatever was inside in an effort to hinder the production of the Tucker Carlson show. Or perhaps the documents were intercepted by a professional "fixer" for the Biden campaign. Either way, it is clear that someone does not want those documents to see the light of day.

Will enough detail about this explosive story reach enough people before the election? Hard to say. I am thinking it is doubtful, given the almost total complicity of the media (apart from Fox News) to keep the story away from the public.

But if Joe Biden is elected President, that will only mean two things:

- 1) We the people elected perhaps a man who is the most corrupt individual to ever hold the office of the president.
- 2) We will see at a minimum four long and painful years of systematic destruction and mutilation of America as we know it.

And we will be getting what we deserve.

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

Want to Succeed at your Next Job Interview?

Shameless Plug

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

On Congruence

Truthfully, I have serious misgivings about writing this, because it may be mistaken for virtue-signaling, the common practice of certain people to try to appear virtuous in a very public way: "Hey, look at me! Look at what a fine human being I am!" That sort of thing. I

find that nauseating. So at the risk of appearing to be guilty of that same tendency, a tendency I loathe, I proceed.

Foremost among my values is truth. The very word truth is, to me, the single most important word in the English language. I place it above other extremely important words, such as love, holy, goodness, and priesthood.



While for me, the value of truth encompasses honesty and integrity, being a truth-teller and a person of probity, it also encompasses notions involving striving to understand the truths of life, of existence, of nature, of God, and other lofty, high-minded concepts.

Having said that, I have discovered that when you adopt a core value such as truth, or any other core value, you will be tested. I myself was tested recently.

I had gone into a retail store, Guitar Center, to purchase 3 identical cables. They were to replace a damaged cable my bandmate and I had been using for a few years to connect our Bose PA System to our mixer, (a mixer is a sound board that controls the output of our microphones and other instruments.) I was purchasing 3 just to have two additional cables on hand as backups.

I remember thinking, vaguely, at the time the cashier rung me up that the total price, a little over \$50, seemed pleasantly, even surprisingly, less than I was expecting. But when he handed me the receipt, my mind was on something else, so I threw the receipt in the bag and left the store, got in my car, and went home.

After I got home, I happened to be looking at the receipt, and it was then that I noticed the receipt listed the quantity of cables as 2, not 3. I looked in the bag again and confirmed there were 3 brand new cables. I quickly realized the sales clerk had, inexplicably, entered the incorrect number of cables being purchased. I figured it was an innocent typo.

But what to do?

That's when all the justifications began flooding my mind, temptations from without, trying to influence my inner will:

- "Finders-Keepers."
- "Hey, you did nothing wrong."
- "It's not that much money; it's not like Guitar Center will go under."
- "Why should you have to endure the headache of driving back there; your time is valuable."
- "I'm not the one that made the mistake. I made a good-faith effort. Why should I now have to deal with this headache?"

But of course, all of those justifications are illegitimate. They are based on a lie. They are rooted in a dark inclination we all seem to have that comes from the laws of the jungle, not the laws of righteousness. I knew that if I simply kept the one cable I had not paid for, I would have eroded my character. And while it highly unlikely that no one would have become aware of my ethical lapse had I kept it, deep down inside I would have known. And I would have had to face the fact that, although I was not responsible for causing the mishap, I would have been responsible for perpetuating the mishap. I would have lost self-respect because I would have, by my inaction, engaged in an act of personal betrayal. I would have failed to live my own, self-chosen values. I would have

been a fraud. All of that was simply not worth my maintaining possession of that one cable.

So I made a return trip to Guitar Center and informed them of the mishap. I paid for that third cable. I must have spent about \$25 to keep that extra cable, but I actually kept something of far greater value – my own integrity.

Now, do I walk around thinking I am better than others? Not at all. I know I am a flawed man on many levels. Like the rest of us, I hold ideals that I fail to live up to. But not on this occasion. Goodness was done on this occasion, and it spoke volumes to the staff at Guitar Center, who seemed to be highly impressed, not at me perhaps, but at act of integrity.

Will I always behave this way? That answer will be manifest moment to moment, day by day, as opportunities to demonstrate congruence between my stated principles and my actualized principles are presented. Hopefully, such acts of congruence will, over time, become habitual, second nature (or, better, first nature).

The World of Words

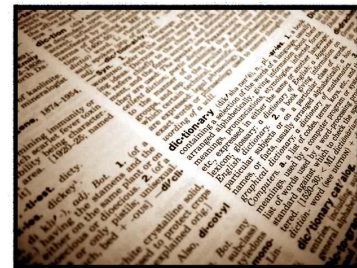
Craven

Building Your Power of Expression

Craven, adj.

Pronunciation: krāvən

Meaning: Some people are inappropriately cowardly. They do not know how to exhibit bravery. They are weaklings, sissies, pure milquetoast. We could say they have craven dispositions.



Usage:

- *He displayed a craven abdication of his moral duty.*
- *His cravenly actions brought shame upon his family name.*
- *Panic slowly crossed his craven countenance.*

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