

Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

[Quick Links](#)

[Ara's Web Site](#)
[Facebook Page](#)

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

[Click Here to Join!](#)

Issue #237

June 22, 2021

It's good to be back in the saddle once again.

The **Self-Development** column of this issue of *Uncommon Sense* will delve into the arena of decision making.

Founding Father James Madison is highlighted in the **Elephant in the Room** column.

Sometimes we just have to take a reprieve from it all, and I explore this in the column known as **From Ara's Journal**.

And finally, **The World of Words** column dishes up a powerfully picturesque word to add to your vocabulary.



OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood

Self-Development Principle-Based Decision-Making

I was approached by a colleague a few months ago. He was wrestling with a small conundrum. He had stopped going to the gym in March of 2020 due to the pandemic as his gym had closed. He was an avid weight-lifter, but also engaged in a variety of additional fitness activities

such as stretching, hitting the heavy bag, running on the treadmill, etc. Confined to his home for more than a year, he obtained a couple of dumbbells and had tried making do



with those. However, his workouts had become inconsistent. On the other hand, he was happy he wasn't being charged the monthly membership fees by his gym.

His gym had recently reopened. And he was torn. Should he go back to the gym? The upside was he would get a more rigorous and complete workout. The downside was he would have to pay those monthly membership fees. He asked for my opinion.

I did not give him my opinion.

Instead, I asked him some questions.

"Why did you join the gym in the first place?" He said he joined in order to get a more thorough, balanced workout. He was in the gym six days a week working on his chest on Mondays and Thursdays, his legs on Tuesday and Friday, and his arms on Wednesday and Saturday. He also ran on the treadmill, worked on his stomach muscles, and, as mentioned, hit the heavy bag. Not bad for a man in his mid-60s.

"That sounds like a rather impressive routine. It seems like you had been covering your bases well and staying in shape. How have your workouts been while doing it from your home?"

He admitted he was much stronger last year than he was at the present time.

"How much do you pay your gym in monthly fees" I asked.

"\$14.99 each month."

Surprised that he was paying such a low monthly rate, I asked: "So your conflict is between spending the \$14.99 but getting access to the equipment for the full workout vs. saving the \$14.99 and taking your chances with the limited workout at home which, as you said, has been inconsistent."

He agreed.

I then pointed out his decision depended on which he valued more: the \$14.99 or the rigorous workout. In other words, the principle of being frugal was competing with the principle of staying in great physical shape. As he weighed the pros and the cons of those two principles, he could readily see what mattered most to him. He chose to continue going to the gym. Others, with a different set of priorities, may have been justified in making a different decision.

But it was principles that governed the decision.

And it should be principles that govern our own decisions.

The Elephant in the Room

James Madison

We turn our attention to James Madison, a giant in the formation of our country, ironic given that he only stood 5 feet 4 inches tall in stocking feet and weighed a mere 100 pounds, which may explain why James was often shy and felt awkward being around women. Yet he managed to eventually marry, and his wife was also a very significant figure in the formation of our republic, as she was a powerful influence on his husband. Ever hear of Dolley Madison pastries? That was her name: Dolley Madison. When they married, James inherited a step-son. They had no other children.

In addition to the deep influence from his wife, James Madison received mentoring from various individuals, including Edmund Pendleton (a relative), Donald Robertson, a Scottish immigrant who was one of his very first teachers and “a man of extensive learning,” and an additional teacher named Thomas Martin who was a graduate from Nassau Hall of the College of New Jersey. We now call that august institution Princeton University. But perhaps Madison’s most distinguished mentor was his friend and confidant, Thomas Jefferson.



Madison’s temperament was curious. He was a bit on the reserved side. Some would describe him as having a rather wooden personality. The wife of his fellow Virginian Theodoric Bland called him “a gloomy, stiff creature.” Madison was not a good conversationalist; was not adept at small talk. Others would describe him as shy and indecisive. Although quiet, Madison was both intense and tireless. Yet in spite of all of this, Madison would sometimes poke fun at himself (something Jefferson would never do).

Madison may have been short in stature, but intellectually he was a towering genius, right up there with Jefferson and Hamilton. He was far more cerebral than, say, George Washington. Madison had a luminous and discriminating mind, and was learned in both Latin and Greek at an early age, plus he acquired a reading level of French. His genius shows itself in the dismantling of conventional wisdom and the creation of whole new concepts. This was truly a man in possession of a steady and patient genius.

Madison’s political philosophy went through various phases over time. He began as a Federalist (in harmony with the likes of Alexander Hamilton), but soon became a member of the Democratic-Republican party, aligning himself with his good friend Jefferson. On one occasion he wrote that the nation’s real friends are those who consistently opposed “a spirit of usurpation and monarchy” that seeks to “pervert the limited government of the Union into a government of unlimited discretion.” He is also credited with having authored what many consider to be the most consequential of the famous Federalist Papers (properly called, simply, *The Federalist*) – Number 10. Further, his political philosophy was captured succinctly in the following statement he made in a letter to James Monroe dated October 5, 1786:

“There is no maxim in my opinion which is more liable to be misapplied and which therefore more needs elucidation than the current one that the interest of the majority is the political standard of right and wrong.”

Madison remains an amazing figure in the founding of our republic. He was co-author of the *Federalist*, the primary author of the Constitution and Bill of Rights, the 4th President of the United States, and only one of two signers of the Constitution who went on to become President. One of Madison’s greatest services to America was his help in ensuring George Washington’s attendance at the Constitutional Convention. That act alone was crucial to the establishment of this country as the city on a hill it became.

* * * * *

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

Is Your Résumé Overdue For an Overhaul?

You may be gainfully employed, you may be unemployed, or you may (knowingly or unknowingly) be heading for a layoff. Having an impressive résumé can set you apart from the competition and position you for your next job.

Don't wait for the crisis. Get ahead of the game by whipping your résumé into shape now!

If you are in need of a quantum improvement of your résumé, you will benefit from my eBook, *Crafting a Winning Résumé*, which you can order by [clicking here](#).



Your résumé is your marketing brochure, and you do not get a second chance to make a first impression. Make an investment in yourself!

* * * * *

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

"I could not have gotten my first job without your expertise. Thank you so much! I learned that I had to reword and improve my résumé in order to be taken seriously in the workforce. I had been given tips from my professors in Health Science and other professionals but your advice was just what I needed. It took weeks of frustration waiting for interview calls when I happened to stumble across your website and discovered that I needed help. Your publication enlightened me with your knowledge on the wording and format needed to attract an employer. Furthermore, your booklet helped me recognize certain skills and work experience that I would have never considered important until you got me thinking about it. Thanks for a great product!" -- R. Espana, Valencia, California

From Ara's Journal

On Stepping Away

Astute readers will have noticed I stepped away from publishing *Uncommon Sense* for a couple of months -- the first time I have done that in a decade. There are times that we just have to step away. Perhaps we need to get away to gain some much needed perspective. Perhaps we just need a break or a rest period. Or a vacation.



Stepping away from the routines in our lives allows us to shake off the cobwebs that keep us stale. Stepping away also provides the onrush of new stimuli – observing alternative ways people do things, how they live their lives. This is healthy because it reminds us that we don't know everything. We operate within limited parameters. There is a richness in experiencing life from a new vantage point.

Sometimes we need to step away from certain relationships. That is sad, but true, and often necessary. I myself stepped away from a key relationship some months ago simply because it had become too toxic and was on the verge of bring great harm to me personally. In fact, as I think about it, I have done this recently with a number of key relationships. We have to guard ourselves from relationships that may not be all that healthy to us.

Stepping away may not necessarily be permanent. But it is often necessary – and it can involve countless dimensions of our lives both large and small. Whether it involve relationships, the foods we eat, the clothes we wear, our habits, the work we engage in, the music or the literature we expose ourselves to, the institutions we have an affiliation with, stepping away and moving in a different direction can often be highly beneficial.

But we can always step back and return to where we came from should we so choose.

The World of Words

Crucible

Building Your Power of Expression

Crucible, n.

Pronunciation: k̄r̄oosəb(ə)l



Meaning: While this word originally referred to a container (often made of metal or ceramic) used to melt other metals after being subjected to very high temperatures, I use this word in its more symbolic sense to refer to a severe trial someone is subjected to, which usually results in that person coming out of the trial more resilient and with greater strength and/or wisdom.

Usage:

- *Their relationship was forged in the crucible of war.*
 - *The crucible of the race is the six-mile incline up the rocky mountain.*
 - *I have never been more tried and tested in my life than when I experienced the crucible of her cross-examination.*
-

New subscribers, the Special Report "11 Ways to Beat the Odds" should be in your In-Box within 24 hours from the time you subscribed. If you have not received it, please communicate that to me via email (ara@aranorwood.com)

For more information on my work, follow me on Facebook (keyword "Leadership Development Systems") or via my website: www.aranorwood.com

Sincerely,

Ara Norwood
Leadership Development Systems

Visit our website



Leadership Development Systems | P. O. Box 801681, Santa Clarita, CA 91380-1681

[Unsubscribe {recipient's email}](#).

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by ara@aranorwood.com powered by



Try email marketing for free today!