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Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Let's end the first half of this year with a good read!

Goal Setting, a favorite theme of mine, is addressed in the **Self-Development** column. Don't miss it!

Since we covered James Madison in our previous issue, we will round out our exploration of our Six Great Men with a look at Alexander Hamilton in the **Elephant in the Room** column.

Curious about the path to true effectiveness? Scroll down to the **From Ara's Journal** for some insight.

The World of Words column delivers an important word for your verbal pallet.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood



Self-Development

Long Range Goal-Setting

Successful people are goal setters. That means they have aspirations with a time-horizon beyond the next 10 minutes. People who are largely unsuccessful, who lead lives void of meaning or purpose, rarely ponder desired futures beyond things of immediacy (e.g., what's on TV right now; where is the nearest place they can relieve themselves; what is in the refrigerator they can eat now, etc.) Such persons rarely make something of their lives.



Goal-setters, on the other hand, generally lead productive lives. They set out to accomplish things of significance, and while they may not succeed in accomplishing everything they aspire to, most of the time they do accomplish more – much more – than they would have had they not set goals on a consistent basis.

I mentioned time-horizons. Let's explore that a bit more. Time-horizons represent the reasonable span of time associated with the achievement of certain goals. They can range from a narrow span of time within a given day, say, one to three hours to a vast window of time, something along the line of several decades. Many for-profit businesses set goals that last a 3-month window – what they think of as a quarter (meaning a quarter of the year.) When a person has a "To-Do" list or a "Task List," they might be hoping to achieve the things on such a list within a day. Some goals may be such that they can be achieved within one month, such as losing a small amount of weight, perhaps 5 or 10 pounds or completing the reading of a book. Many people, myself among them, go to great pains to map out what they wish to accomplish each year. These yearly goals are usually quite significant, and they have the added benefit of bequeathing meaning and purpose to our lives.

It should be obvious that the more daunting a goal the longer the time horizon needed to achieve it. There is a direct correlation with the attainment of high achievement and the duration required to get there. Thus, becoming a candidate for President of the United States takes years of careful preparation, as does becoming an Olympic athlete.

I would suggest that forward-thinking people are generally more accomplished than others precisely because they reflect on a series of accomplishments of great significance that they are bent on achieving.

Allow me to draw upon my own experience as an illustration. I am now 63 years of age. Because I firmly believe that my greatest accomplishments lie ahead of me, I expect to live well past my 80s and at least into my 90s. That means I have about one-third of my life before me. I know I must make this last third of my life count. My best work must be done during this time-horizon. So what will I accomplish?

I am committed to authoring and publishing four books during this time. I know what the topics are. I am already well into the first of those four books. But I know these books will not be published quickly. Because I am very serious about making them of a very high quality, this will require a painstaking and methodical amount of effort on my part. It will take perhaps more than a decade to publish them all. But doing so will represent something of significance, and an important contribution to the world of ideas.

Other goals will involve travel, speaking engagements, client acquisition, and attaining various and sundry items on my bucket list.

My advice: continue to have micro-goals that can be attained in a day, or a week, more significant goals that may take a year, and certainly include goals of deep significance that may take several years or even a decade or more to accomplish. Doing so will give you a sense that the show must go on, which will prevent you from becoming complacent. More importantly, when you eventually sit in your rocking chair after you have arrived at an advanced age, you can bask in the satisfaction that your life here on this planet was laced with significance, that you lived according to your aspirations, that you achieved greatness while here.

Not a bad way to live. . .

Alexander Hamilton

We come to Alexander Hamilton, the youngest of the Six Great Men who were most responsible for the founding of this republic. We are not precisely certain as to the year of his birth, but I am going with the year 1757. We have scant information on his youth, other than he was born in the British West Indies. His father was James A. Hamilton and his mother was Rachel Faucette. Hamilton was almost totally silent about his parents, perhaps due the stigma associated with their relationship, as they were not legally married. In fact, his mother was often labeled a whore, although that was almost certainly an unfair and inaccurate slur.



Hamilton grew up to be rather bold and assertive. Many would describe him as ultra-confident, sometimes bombastic and confrontational. With that bombast came far-reaching brilliance. He was very prescient in the extreme. The great chief justice, John Marshall, was quoted as saying that Hamilton's "reach of thought was so far beyond [his own]" that by Hamilton's side he felt like a "schoolboy." Although not a strong politician, Hamilton was a nation builder and a strategic thinker who was truly in a class shared by almost no one else, the exceptions being Madison and Jefferson, and, to a lesser extent, Franklin and Adams. He was critical of the original Articles of Confederation, finding them "neither fit for war nor peace." In 1780, far in advance of anyone else, he had recommended a convention to remedy the articles. This led to the formation of the Constitution.

Hamilton was often accused of having an unhealthy affinity for England, from whom America had recently separated. And there is some truth to the charge. In 1789, Hamilton had said to British envoy George Beckwith: "I have always preferred a connection with you, to that of any other country. *We think in English*, and have a similarity of prejudices and of predilections."

As I have read thousands of pages of writings by and about Hamilton, there are two quotes of his I consider notable, both from 1780, and both which suggest a certain level of angst. The first was from a letter dated June 30th which he wrote to John Laurens. "Our countrymen have all the folly of the ass and all the passiveness of the sheep in their compositions. They are determined not to be free and they can neither be frightened, discouraged, nor persuaded to change their resolution." The second, even more morose, was another letter to John Laurens dated September 12th: "I hate Congress -- I hate the army -- I hate the world -- I hate myself. The whole is a mass of fools and knaves." He must have been having a tough day.

The legacy of Alexander Hamilton is profound. He co-authored *The Federalist Papers*; was George Washington's chief aid from 1779-81; served as Secretary of the Treasury; established the first Federal Bank; established the *New York Evening Post* newspaper, which is today the nation's longest running daily newspaper. In the world of jurisprudence, he helped define the nature of libel with his assertion that the truth of a claim was admissible on the part of a defendant. Even more importantly, we can credit Alexander Hamilton for the concept that a particular writing must be "false, defamatory, and malicious" in order to be held libelous, an assertion that has become a permanent feature of American law.

* * * * *

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

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* * * * *

"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 Effectiveness

"For every thousand hacking at the leaves of evil,

there is one striking at the root."
-- Henry David Thoreau



I have had many guitar instructors in my life, going back to circa 1972 when I studied with Bob Jensen who taught me rock guitar, and then Ron Jordan followed by Bill Snowden, both of whom taught me classical guitar. I even studied with jazz recording artist Tuck Andress (of Tuck and Patti fame) as well as studio guitarist Steve Erquiaga. At least one of my guitar instructors wasn't, technically, a guitarist, but trumpet player Randy Masters who was the front man for a Bay Area jazz sextet called Solar Plexus. Why did I study with him? Because he was an expert in a wide array of the rhythms of Latin and South America.

But one teacher I studied with, a neighbor of mine named David Linebarger, may have been my finest instructor ever. He was a true artist of the classical style who practiced for 5 hours a day; the guitar was his life.

On one occasion David told me that the oft-heard slogan "practice makes perfect" was pure fiction. He said: "Practice does not make perfect; instead, perfect practice makes perfect." He insisted that I pay careful attention to how I practiced the guitar. What he drilled into my head was that there are many ways to practice the guitar incorrectly, but only one way to practice any given exercise correctly.

I've often thought about those lessons I learned from David Linebarger. I see so many examples in life where such lessons also apply.

I've come to believe that whether its painting houses, playing golf, rowing a boat, or playing chess, there are undoubtedly many ways to do such things with mediocrity. Yet there is probably one way to do such things that triumph over the rest. Effectiveness is figuring out the methods or practices that give one the most leverage in accomplishing things of importance. The best sharpshooters in the world have figured it out. So have the best bowlers. And the best architects, surgeons, and professional speakers. Just being aware that some approaches are superior to others is enough to get one started on the road to discovery. That will lead to discussions with those who wield superior skill. And it will also lead to both observation of such experts as well as relentless trial and error – and practice – to gain the needed skills to flourish.

The legions out there flail away while flirting with ineffectiveness.

Intelligent people are committed to discovering the key to success and the root to superior accomplishment.

The World of Words

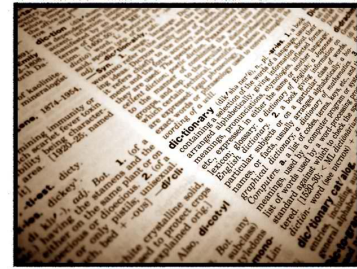
Collusion

Building Your Power of Expression

Collusin, n.

Pronunciation: kəllooZHən

Meaning: Collusion refers to clandestine or secret cooperation, similar to a conspiracy, especially in order to gain advantage over an opponent.



Usage:

- *The armed forces were working in collusion with drug traffickers.*
- *I sense there is some measure of collusion between the media and the Democratic Party*
- *Go away, now, as I want nothing to do with anything that so much as hints at collusion.*

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