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Issue #239

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It pleases me to no end to get you this issue of *Uncommon Sense*.

I begin by offering you a short note on the value of participating in organized sports in the **Self-Development** column. You'll want to read that.

But you will especially want to read my rather lengthy piece on the dangers the press (think Media) poses to society in the **Elephant in the Room** column.

But I just now finished writing what I believe is an inspired item. It just flowed freely from my heart without much effort, so it is raw and spontaneous and real. If you read nothing else in this issue, read and ponder the item in **From Ara's Journal**.

The World of Words column closes this issue with a wonderful contribution to your ever-expanding vocabulary.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood



Self-Development

Participating in Sports

What are sports? And how are sports distinct from athletics?

Those are questions I have pondered. They may not seem like important questions. And admittedly, they are not in the category of the "Great Questions" or what Hugh Nibley referred to as the "Terrible Questions" (along the lines of "Is this life all there is?" or "How did God come to be God?" or "Why is our reality reality, and not something else?"). Even so, I like to make such distinctions to make sense of the world around me. As it turns out, there is a subtle distinction between sports and athletics, and here it is: when we speak of

sports, we are speaking of an organized, competitive game, where a score determines the winner. When we are speaking of athletics, that is a broader term that not only includes sports, but can also include non-competitive physical activity involving fitness, movement, stamina, and skill, which may or may not be formally organized.



Thus, if I join a soccer league and play in a competitive soccer match against another team, it is organized, there is a time frame we play within, there are points accounted for, there are rules; that is an example of a sport. And yes, it is athletic in nature. But if I go into a gym by myself and lift weights or do other fitness exercises to get in better physical condition, that is not a sport. There is no particular time imposed, as I can exercise for as long or as short as I wish. There are no points being monitored, as there is no outside opponent I am competing against. There is no formal referee. There is no winner or loser. It's not a game. It is an athletic endeavor, but it's not a competitive sport.

Having said all of that, I believe there is great value in participating in sports. Not just as a spectator, but as an actual participant. And age need not be a factor. Granted, a person of advanced age, say, over 70, is not likely to play rugby, but there are sports that are not too strenuous. Golf, tennis, bowling, badminton, even horseshoes could qualify. In my 50s, I competed in martial arts tournaments and I was always the oldest person there; even now in my 60s I am still very open to competing, even though it is almost unimaginable my opponents would be over 40. In fact, most would be in their 30s – young enough to be my son.

Participating in sports, regardless of your age, will bring a dimension to your life that is very valuable. Whether you are involved in a sport that includes a lot of teamwork, such as basketball, or whether the sport is more individual in nature, such as archery, participating in sports will bring much satisfaction to your life and will aid in your overall physical and mental health. You'll enjoy greater happiness by participating in sports, and even when you fail to perform to your expectations, you will feel motivated to try again. Thus, participating in sports is an archetype for life, representing one of nature's templates. The challenge of competition reflects the challenge all of us face in life.

My recommendation is that you go to Google and type in the following search terms: "list of all sports." From there select a sport you wish to participate in. It can be something you participated in many years ago, perhaps track and field, or it can be something you are entirely unfamiliar with, perhaps fencing. Then do what you have to do to start. You can start small, and make it a part of your lifestyle. If you do that, you will likely find you are pleased you did. If, on the other hand, it doesn't seem to be meeting your needs, swap out one sport for a different one.

Doing this will add a missing dimension to your life and will bring you untold benefits.

The Elephant in the Room

The Enemy of the People

Back on August 5, 2019, then President Donald Trump put forth the following opinion on his Twitter feed: "The press is doing everything within their power to fight the magnificence of the phrase, MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN! They can't stand the fact that

this Administration has done more than virtually any other Administration in its first 2yrs. They are truly the ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE!"

This is not the first time the President had made such a charge.

In fact, in response to earlier claims by the President of a similar nature, the U.S. Senate got involved and unanimously passed a resolution claiming that in their view, the press was not the enemy of the people. Here is how the resolution read in part:



"Resolved, that the Senate affirms that the press is not the enemy of the people; reaffirms the vital and indispensable role that the free press serves to inform the electorate, uncover the truth, act as a check on the inherent power of the government, further national discourse and debate, and otherwise advance the most basic and cherished democratic norms and freedoms of the United States; and condemns the attacks on the institution of the free press and views efforts to systematically undermine the credibility of the press as an attack on the democratic institutions of the United States...."

The resolution was loaded with disingenuousness. I will address why later in this article. I will go on record stating that President Trump is correct: the press today is the enemy of the people, in spite of the Senate Resolution. In fact, as I will demonstrate, the conflict between President Trump's condemnation of the Press and the Senate's affirmation of the press provides a classic example of two opposing entities talking past each other and failing to understand each other. The question, therefore, becomes one of *In what sense is the press the enemy of the people and in what sense is the press the bulwark of our democracy as the Senate affirmed?*

I. In What Sense Is the Press the Enemy of the People?

Let's approach this question with a different question: *What is the purpose of the Press? Or, asked another way, What is the job of the Press?*

The answer is very simple: It is the province of the press to report the news. That's it. Not spin the news. Not give favor to a point of view that the reporter himself supports. Not allow one's bias to present a narrative favored by the media outlet publishing the news piece. And not bury stories that puts a reporter's favored politician or cause in a bad light.

What does our press do currently? They present Left-wing propaganda. They openly lie. They hide news that does not put Left-wing causes or activists in a positive light.

Reporters are allowed to have viewpoints. A reporter is allowed to belong to a political party. And a reporter is free to personally hold the opposition political party in contempt. But what a reporter cannot do is present news stories in a way that shows favoritism towards that reporter's party affiliation, or that is malicious and unfair to that reporter's opposing political party. Thus, to use one random example, if a reporter personally believes that gay marriage is a worthy idea, that reporter must not write a story that "sells" us on the supposed virtues of gay marriage, while at the same time making villains of opponents of gay marriage (unless there is clear evidence that such opponents have said or done villainous things), and all the while leaving out details that make gay activists look savage and cruel. Yet that is precisely what today's reporters on the Left do. And almost all journalists are on the Left – most of them on the hard Left.

Let's consider an analogous situation to make my point crystal clear. Consider the world of medicine. A rite of passage for newly minted physicians in Western Civilization is to take an oath that deals with medical ethics. It's called the Hippocratic Oath, and it obligates a

doctor to honor certain things without equivocation. These things include patient confidentiality and the obligation to do all he or she can to bring healing and care to sick or injured persons whom they are privileged to practice medicine on. But what if an American doctor who loves his country were to be assigned an injured patient who is an Islamic terrorist who had attacked America? In my fictitious scenario, the doctor has taken an oath to do all he or she can do to provide sound medical practices on the Islamic terrorist – even if that terrorist had brought great personal harm to a member of that doctor’s family. That doctor is under covenant to do so, due to the Hippocratic Oath the doctor has pledged obedience to. The doctor must put his or her personal feelings aside, regardless of how strong they are, and practice medicine objectively, regardless of his or her personal feelings towards the patient. Likewise, the Leftist reporter or editor must put her own Left-wing proclivities aside, regardless of how strong they are, and report the news objectively, regardless of her personal feelings towards conservative views.

I acknowledge that I have made some rather serious allegations against the press. Thus, the burden is on me to produce evidence to back up my claims. I will now provide that evidence. However, it goes without saying that if I can produce evidence of consistent and wide-spread media bias, then that can only mean one thing: the press (and I use that term broadly to include not only newspapers, but also network and cable television news, radio such as NPR, magazines such as Time, and other types of media) is not doing their job of objectively reporting the news. They are instead, misleading the people, deliberately, to embrace the biases of individual members of the press. And if the press is misleading the people, they are every bit the enemy “of the people” as is the doctor an enemy “of an individual patient” if the doctor will not practice medicine objectively and honestly towards that patient. Just as the doctor in such circumstances would not be doing his or her job, the Press is not doing its job if it consistently skews the facts of a given story to support, in this case, a Left-wing narrative.

As for evidence of journalist maleficence, consider the following examples:

Example 1: Re. a tragic episode in Charlottesville in August 2017 where protestors clashed about whether it was appropriate to tear down statues and other monuments of Confederate soldiers from the Civil War era, and where a neo-Nazi killed a woman protester, President Trump never referred to the neo-Nazi’s when he said there were fine people on both sides of the debate. Yet CNN and the rest of the news media claimed that is precisely what he said. Not only did President Trump not say what virtually all of the press and the mainstream media claimed he said, the President, at the time of his remarks, even said, so there would be no misunderstanding, that he was *not* speaking of the neo-Nazi’s or the Skin Heads, etc. But it didn’t matter. [The Press lied, deliberately](#), and have never once walked back that lie or made a correction. The Press presented a lie as the truth about a sensitive matter involving the President of the United States and did so for strictly partisan reasons. That’s being an enemy of the people.

Example 2: When the CoronaVirus struck the United States in the Spring of 2020, President Trump referred to it as the China Virus. The mainstream media went apoplectic, calling Trump a racist, delusional, and a conspiracy theorist. The media wholly discounted the notion that Covid-19 could have possibly come from a lab in Wuhan, China as President Trump claimed. The idea was mocked and ridiculed. Fast forward to the summer of 2021 and the evidence suggests that President Trump was right all along, and that at the very least, the notion is not worthy of mockery. So why was it mocked for more than a year? Because Donald Trump claimed the virus came from a lab in Wuhan, China, and that alone was enough for the media to claim such a thing was not possible. Why was it not possible? Because Donald Trump said it was likely. Thus, rather than do honest investigative journalism, the media, plagued by Trump Derangement Syndrome, lied to the public for more than a year until their lie was no longer sustainable. ABC News Anchor Jonathan Karl [was forced to reluctantly admit](#) the obvious: “Some things may be true even if Donald Trump said them.” Again, as in Example 1 above, the Press lied to the American people and did so for strictly partisan reasons. That is being an enemy of the people.

Example 3: Author Michael Knowles recently published a book on censorship titled *Speechless: Controlling Words, Controlling Minds*. Since this book is critical of a social movement of canceling conservative voices, something the *New York Times* approves of, the book did not make it on to the *New York Times* list of best sellers the week of June 22nd, even though it was the number one selling non-fiction book for *Publisher's Weekly* that week. The *New York Times* hates conservative voices and so it [lied to its readership](#) and cancelled a best-selling book on cancel culture. That is what is known as "Fake News" and its rampant at the *New York Times*. Since the *New York Times* has a moral obligation to report the truth on which books sell the most, the *New York Times* violated its oath of fair reporting. That is another example of being an enemy of the people.

Now, these three examples I have provided could be amplified to 30, 300, or 3000 depending on how far back we go. I could give examples of how the press has lied – blatantly so – in many other instances. I could also share examples of where the Press has focused on the vacuous, asking questions about whether President Biden is going to have a cat in the White House, or what his favorite flavor of ice cream is, rather than pressing him on the Border Crisis, or on Hunter Biden's laptop, or who the anonymous buyers are who are paying exorbitant amounts of money for Hunter Biden's paintings that any drunk bar hopper could churn out. The Press, the Media, have been thoroughly drenched in dishonest reporting for quite some time.

II. In What Sense Is the Press the Bulwark of Democracy?

Back to the Senate Resolution claiming the press is not the enemy of the people I cited above. I said it was disingenuous. Here's why:

The early part of that resolution stated some truths. For example, the press is, indeed, intended to assume "the vital and indispensable role . . . to inform the electorate, uncover the truth, act as a check on the inherent power of the government, further national discourse and debate, and otherwise advance the most basic and cherished democratic norms and freedoms of the United States." But that is its intention. That is not current reality. That is a *prescriptive* statement, not a *descriptive* one. As such, it is a valid statement of what the press is supposed to be about. It is not at all a statement of what the press today is about.

The resolution went on to condemn "the attacks on the institution of the free press and views efforts to systematically undermine the credibility of the press as an attack on the democratic institutions of the United States..." But if the press is not informing the electorate, or uncovering the truth, or acting as a check on the inherent power of the government, or furthering national discourse and debate, what then? Is no one allowed to hold the press accountable when they stray from their mandate? Is attacking a corrupt press an attack on the democratic institutions of the United States? How? The phony resolution never addresses such a question. Instead, it begins with a false premise, that the press is doing its job with virtue and integrity. Nothing could be further from the truth. President Trump was correct. The press is corrupt, and that corruption spills over into the Senate resolution.

It is true that the press is supposed to be adhering to exacting standards of unbiased and objective journalism. But do members of the press see themselves as living up to this standard? No. Many times, they openly admit they are biased crusaders who are promoting a cause – a Left-wing cause. Nikole Hannah-Jones is a *New York Times* reporter who was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for her phony and incompetent 1619 Project (an act which forever sullied the value and meaning of a Pulitzer Prize). She recently gave lip service to the ideals of traditional news reporting: "...Our methods of reporting have to be objective. We have to try to be fair and accurate." And in the very next breath [she negated everything](#) she just said with this: "And I don't know how you can be fair and

accurate if you pretend publicly that you have no feelings about something that you clearly do." But I will grant her this: she does accurately describe what is happening in journalism today – it is Left-wing activism. It is not news reporting.

An anonymous White House reporter [recently confessed](#) that Democrats actually expect – and receive – favorable coverage from the Press: "Democrats de facto expect you to be on their side and are horrified when you hold them to account as you would any other administration."

Activist-Journalist Lauren Wolfe, who was a frequent freelance editor at the *New York Times*, [came right out and said](#) what everyone already knows: "I'm a Biased Journalist and I'm Okay With That." She went on to plead for her own aberrant views with this line: "Journalists shouldn't have to disguise or suppress their views." Get that? We don't get the news. We get the views of radicalized Leftists posing as journalists.

And what about when the press makes a completely wrong decision in giving a platform to disingenuous crackpots who are open Trump-Haters? Michael Avenatti was a regular on all of the Left-Wing news sites (meaning he was not a regular on Fox News but was very visible everywhere else). After Avenatti fell from grace, were the members of the media at all reflective? Were they able, at any level, to acknowledge their part in giving airtime to a jackass? CBS News Correspondent Jamie Wax [would only concede the following](#): "Maybe we went about covering him the wrong way." You think?

A final thought: I recently approached a colleague of mine on the college campus where I teach, urging him to hold a panel wherein he and I would debate the question of whether the press is an enemy of the people, something he strenuously denies. While he is a very bright man and a capable debater, he would not debate me on this question. He gave every excuse imaginable as to why he would not do so, but I believe he and I both know the real reason: because it is patently transparent that the press today is the enemy of the people. Until people have the courage to face the music and acknowledge this fact, we are going to be saddled indefinitely with a corrupt press.

* * * * *

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

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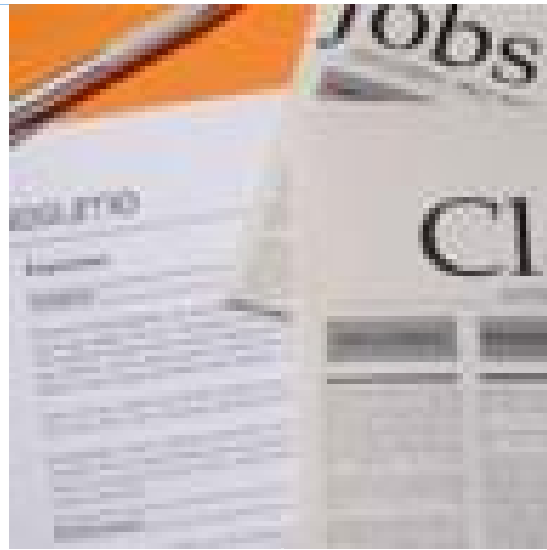
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From Ara's Journal

Life is crap. Or is it?

I think it was Benjamin Franklin who said that the only things you can count on are death and taxes.

His wry wit aside, I think I can add one more item to that short list: We can also count on heartache. Problems. Disappointments. Tragedy. Sorrow. Loss. All of these words I have selected are meant to be synonyms for the same thing: Life is going to hand us setbacks. And it does so all the time.



- Have you ever lost a family member or dear friend or associate to death, be it by disease, a crime, or a tragic accident?
- Have you yourself ever suffered from a terrible injury or an unfortunate turn in your physical or mental health?
- Have you ever fallen in love and then been spurned? Have you ever wanted a goal very badly, only to fall short?
- Have you ever lost something? Or someone?
- Have you ever simply felt sad at the direction the country, or the world, seems to be going?
- Have you ever felt alone? Have you ever felt no one really knows the deep inner battles with which you wrestle every waking hour?

Life can indeed be very difficult. And I would venture to say that all of are going to experience the darker, bleaker side of life.

But while everything above is true, it's not the whole picture.

As I tap into my memory, I am reminded of the many joys of life.

- The encountering of an innocent young child, whose purity of heart is enough to melt my own.
- The hearing of some of the most amazing music ever composed, whether in the classical, jazz, or pop genre.
- The tasting of food that is beyond exquisite.
- The experiencing that thrill of victory in accomplishing something meaningful, and difficult.
- The receiving of real, heartfelt love, whether through word, touch, or even a gaze.
- The emotional rush that comes from real mirth.
- The watching someone you love overcome a problem or accomplish something great.

These things, too, are part of life's experience.

We must never allow the former things I described to rob us of the memory of the latter.

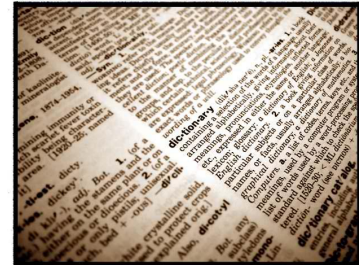
The World of Words

Pejorative

Building Your Power of Expression

Pejorative, adj., n.

Pronunciation: pəj'ôrədɪv



Meaning: As an adjective, the act of expressing contempt or disapproval would be an example of a pejorative way of expressing oneself, such as "Permissiveness is used almost always as a pejorative term." However, I tend to favor the word as a noun, as in the examples below.

Usage:

- *Most of what he said was inflammatory and filled with pejoratives.*

- *Leave out the pejoratives and the insults; go with honey, not vinegar.*
- *I think your book is rather thin, and I don't use that term as a pejorative.*

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