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Issue #244

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Wonderful to have your attention for another dose of *Uncommon Sense*.

Leadership is an elusive concept. But it does have a starting point that most would-be leaders miss. You'll see what I mean in the **Self-Development** column.

Issue #243, which came out earlier this month, had a piece on America itself being under attack by the Leftists who are systematically removing the American Flag from classrooms, and other similar antics. Well, it turns out the Left is doing something considerably more insidious than that. They are coming for our children. Read about it in the **Elephant in the Room** column.

In terms of my professional life, I consider myself, first and foremost, a teacher. I have some things to say about that in the **From Ara's Journal** column.

The World of Words column comes through yet again with a wonderfully expressive word designed to make you a powerhouse word-smith. Feast on it. And use it. Today!

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood

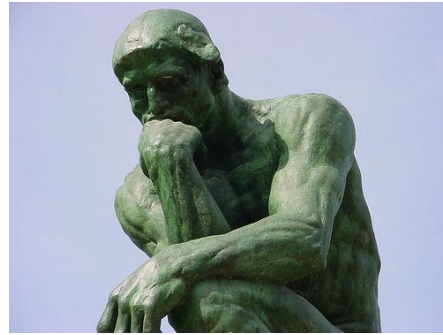


Self-Development

The First Deadly Sin of Leadership: A Failure To Think

A deeper dive into the origins of leadership reveals that it is the thinking process that begins the act of leadership. Our brain is a peculiar and mysterious organ capable of awesome power. The very notion of thinking, of mental calculation and reflection, is rife with potentialities for new growth, new direction, and new accomplishment. Yet very few of us take the time to do so with any regularity.

Part of the problem is know-how. We just don't understand how to go about thinking effectively, and explaining the process, as I am attempting to do with this very column, is no easy task. Another problem is that the nature of our daily life at this time in history is larded with busyness and activity that keeps us distracted. And some of us are just too mentally exhausted to give much thought to the topic of thought.



Even so, our brains are repositories of memories and data, facts and inputs, associations and connections. This hodgepodge of neural soup fires off thoughts and possibilities from time to time, and if we slow down and deeply reflect, we may come up with constructs that point towards a potential future we wish to bring to reality. The very act of my writing this column, and my selecting the words and phrases and sentences and paragraphs that make up this column, is the result of thinking – thinking about thinking. Meta-thinking, as it were.

But in the context of leadership, thinking can result in far more than a column on leadership. Thinking can win a war, put a man on the moon, compose a symphony, launch a revolutionary product, create a breakthrough in eradicating a disease, or revolutionize a society.

The act of beginning the leadership process is based on an overt decision – a decision to think, to reflect, to ruminate, to contemplate. These are the things a leader does. In so doing, the thought process leads to the formulation of aspirations. Thinking sharpens such aspirations into a clear path to be pursued. And then the work begins.

In the next issue of *Uncommon Sense* I will dig deeper into a peculiar line of mental activity the thinking process spawns. In the meantime, I encourage you to carve out scheduled time for yourself to just think for a period of time. It matters less, at least initially, what you think about. More important is that you start to get into the habit of consciously engaging in the thinking process during planned, scheduled intervals.

The Elephant in the Room

Leftist Dems and the Sexualization of Children

"Children are the living message we send to a time we will not see. From a biological point of view it is inconceivable that any culture will forget that it needs to reproduce itself. But it is quite possible for a culture to exist without a social idea of children."

-- Neil Postman

"But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

-- Jesus Christ (Matthew 18:6)



Children represent a unique subset of the human species. Their innocence must be protected. There is no wiggle room on this. A population that fails to protect the innocence of their children is a population that is doomed for destruction. That is why crimes against children are so heinous.

Of all the things the Left ruins, the innocence of children stands at the top of the heap as the most perplexing and the most wicked.

Fortunately, not everyone on the Left is guilty of such grave depravity. And if we look hard enough, we can probably find certain psychopaths scattered among the population who vote for Conservative causes who are also guilty of such horrid crimes.

However, a certain segment of the Left seems predisposed to making it their mission to destroy the innocence of children. Here is a recent example:

At Fairfax High School, located in Fairfax, Virginia, the school's library included two books, *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison, and *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe, in their collection. These books were available not only to high school students, but to Junior High School students as young as age 11. So what is wrong with the books? Let's start with *Lawn Boy*.

When one reads the description of this novel, one might wonder what the fuss is all about. Here is how Amazon describes the book:

For Mike Muñoz, a young Chicano living in Washington State, life has been a whole lot of waiting for something to happen. Not too many years out of high school and still doing menial work - and just fired from his latest gig as a lawn boy on a landscaping crew - he knows that he's got to be the one to shake things up if he's ever going to change his life. But how?

In this funny, angry, touching, and ultimately deeply inspiring novel, best-selling author Jonathan Evison takes the reader into the heart and mind of a young man on a journey to discover himself, a search to find the secret to achieving the American dream of happiness and prosperity. That's the birthright for all Americans, isn't it? If so, then what is Mike Muñoz's problem? Though he tries time and again to get his foot on the first rung of that ladder to success, he can't seem to get a break. But then things start to change for Mike, and after a raucous, jarring, and challenging trip, he finds he can finally see the future and his place in it. And it's looking really good.

Lawn Boy is an important, entertaining, and completely winning novel about social class distinctions, about overcoming cultural discrimination, and about standing up for oneself.

Sounds harmless, right? Unfortunately, the above description is completely phony. The book is actually a ruse to rob children of their innocence by exposing them to pedophilia.

To give you a sense of the book's lack of merit, here is what people who read the book had to say about it in their reviews:

- At first I was interested, thinking it might be a good story. The more I read I became disgusted with the vulgarity. I suppose it's real life but I got tired of it. I finished the story but wish I had never started it.
- Are you kidding me? This book is sickening and NOT AT ALL for children or adults even! Unless you think children should read sexually explicit (R-rated) content and curse words? I'm at a loss. Shame on this author for writing this for this age group. How disgusting!

- Cannot believe Amazon is supporting such disgusting trash!
- Pedophile book. Should be banned.
- Page 91 discusses sexual content between children and depicts it with a casual normalization. It's absolutely appalling.
- I only made it about 40 pages in before I returned for a refund. The language is so unnecessary to the story and even in the few pages I did read, the main character is annoying and unlikable.
- For those who dislike the use of numerous cuss words, pass on this book. I quit reading after a short time, as I was weary of the frequent, vulgar language. It seemed to be a good story but I could not finish it.

Interestingly, the vast majority of reviews on Amazon actually had high praise for the book, which tells you that a lot of people on the Left who read the book had no qualms whatsoever with pedophilia. More on this below.

The other book, *Gender Queer: A Memoir*, had these reviews on Amazon:

- Bought this book after my teen requested it. I researched it, but couldn't find any content to view. Purchased it & got a disturbing surprise. Very graphic "comic" style book about one person's sexual experiences. I'm 49, it left images I understood, but didn't want to see. Not recommended. Returned quickly for refund.
- So disgusting! If you like porn then you'll like this book! Stop sexualizing our teens with your pornography!!! They are children and CHILDREN DON'T NEED TO SEE THESE GRAPHIC IMAGES!
- This book should be burned. And yes consider me closed minded. I'm ok with that.
- This book is pornography, pure and simple. This book can be found in public libraries in the teen section which is disgusting. Parents who let their children read this must also be alright with their kids looking at porn. Immorality being promoted as "wokeness".
- The images and language in this book have no place on a bookshelf or anywhere near children, which is the target audience for this book. It shows oral sex, homosexual sex, etc. Please do not think this is teaching material. It is intended for grooming.
- Disgusting and not suitable for children.
- This is indoctrination.
- Absolutely disgusting! This books is not appropriate for kids. Only a SERIOUSLY CONFUSED person would write such a book!
- ZERO STARS!! Distribution of pornography to minors is illegal, yet this is in the teen section of the public library. The drawings depict minor children in oral sex acts & sale advertisements of sex toys. How does anyone think that this is OK?!?!?
- Sick.
- What is in this book is child pornography and should be removed right away. Absolutely disgusting and inappropriate.
- Deserves zero stars; this is disgusting and NOT for young readers and needs to be pulled from schools.
- Minors depicted in sex acts. This book is for grooming young people to be victims of pedophilia.
- I disliked the book. I used it to start a fire.

(Note: there was one review that made explicit reference to a portion of the book that was so utterly gross and perverse, I cannot even quote it here. It is simply too depraved to share.)

Yet, once again, many, perhaps most, of the reviewers raved about the book. These are almost without exception, LGBTQIA+ advocates and activists who are all on the Left and who think pedophilia is a wonderful thing. I suspect that these positive reviewers are part of an organized campaign to try to drown out the voices that are critical of the book. The fact that any human being could provide positive feedback on the book at all tells you all you need to know about the reviewer – the reviewer is a demented pervert.

Back to Fairfax High School, I am pleased to report that Stacy Langton, a mother of six children who's two oldest kids attend Fairfax High School [confronted the school board](#) during a recent meeting and read excerpts from both books. While the school board members tried to silence her, she got the message out and, due to the added pressure from other parents who attended that school board meeting, the two books have been pulled from the school library.

However, it is important to realize something: the books were there in the library. We do not know how many young people got exposed to the filth contained in those two books. Yet the questions remain: Who initially placed the order for such filth to be in the library in the first place? And, once the books arrived, who actually took the time to place the books on the shelf so kids could become sullied? Clearly there is either massive incompetence at the school, or there is very evil intent.

Lest one assume that what happened at Fairfax High School is a one-off aberration, I turn your attention to the Richfield School District in Minnesota. There, LGBTQIA+ activists from an outfit called Advocates for Youth (which partners with Planned Parenthood) managed [a hostile takeover](#) of their sex-ed curriculum. The program, called the 3Rs (which does not stand for Reading, wRiting, and aRithmetic, but instead stands for Rights, Respect, and, ironically, Responsibility) is aimed at children as young as Kindergarten. In other words, it's aimed at children as young as 5 years old. And what are they trying to do with children so young? Sexualize them. They have content about anal sex for children as young as Kindergarten. They force children to role play gay and queer roles and scenarios about seeking sexual escapades between allegedly gay children, as if gay 6-year-olds are planning their next tryst. They teach Kindergarten-aged children to refer to girls as "people with a vulva" -- a clear attack on the very notion of gender. And the program instructs teachers to immediately confront any child who has a problem pretending he or she is gay in a role-play situation by reminding them that homophobic comments will not be tolerated. In other words, the child must behave as if he or she is perfectly comfortable pretending he or she is gay and sexually active, regardless of how that innocent child actually feels. It is a program to humiliate, shame, and brainwash children, as well as desensitize them. It is a program to rob our children of their innocence. And school administrators from the Richfield School District have opened their doors to these activists and allowed such filth into their schools.

As Spencer Lindquist, who serves as Chief of Staff of the California College Republicans has recently and [perceptively stated it](#): "Those who have a creepy obsession with involving children in their sexual tastes, and use any avenue at their disposal to do so, either have a direct sexual interest in children or want to run cover for those who do. The left has a pedophilia problem, and it's only getting worse."

Back in July, the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus [taunted the rest of us](#) with a song about their plans for our children, which included the following lyrics:

"You think that we'll corrupt your kids, if our agenda goes unchecked. Funny, just this once, you're correct."

And this:

"We'll convert your children. Someone's gotta teach them not to hate. We're coming for them. We're coming for your children. We're coming for them. We're coming for them. We're coming for your children."

These gay propagandists claim they were merely joking. Turns out they were dead serious.

* * * * *

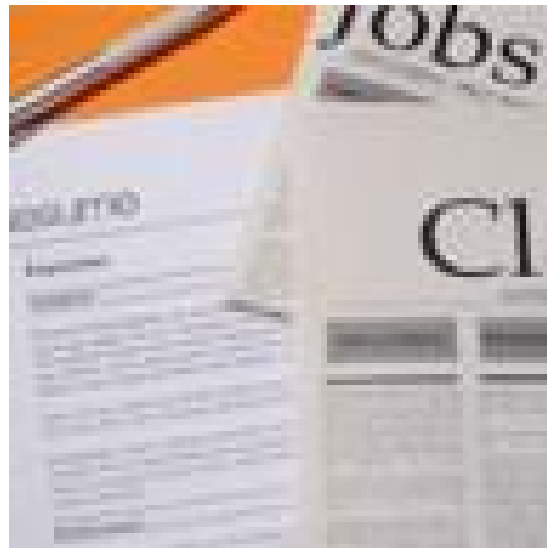
And that, my friends, is the latest elephant in the room.

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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

A Passion for Teaching

*"The purpose of education is not to fill a bucket.
The purpose of education is to light a fire."*

-- William Butler Yeats



There have been great teachers over the course of history. But they have been few and far between.

The stand-outs include Marva Collins who launched the Westside Preparatory School in Chicago. Ann Sullivan is another great teacher, whose lone student, Helen Keller, was brought out of darkness and into a world of light over the course of their nearly 50-year relationship. Ralph Waldo Emerson is probably near the top of the list as well. Aristotle is surely on the list, given his considerable output of original thought and his manner of presenting it. Of course, Jesus Christ has to top the list. His parables alone, not to mention the sheer power of his convictions, seemed to hit a bulls-eye every time he uttered a thought. And I would say this even if I could not affirm His divine sonship (which I can and do).

I consider all of them Master Teachers and I aspire to be such myself. Even though I have a long road ahead of me to ever approach such standing, being a master teacher remains my lodestar.

But why do we teachers teach? Why do we choose that particular vocation? Is it, as goes the humorous and dismissive jab, because we can't "do"? ("If you can't do, you teach.")

That may be true for some, but it's not true for either myself or for other very talented teachers I have encountered in my life.

For one thing, I teach because when I teach, I learn. I not only learn from my students from time to time, but I also learn a topic deeper when I have to teach it. Therefore, teaching satisfies my need to learn and discover. I cannot teach a subject unless I have studied it and mastered it at a deeper level.

I also teach for a very different reason. I teach to make the world a better place.

And I'm serious when I say that. We teachers are, in a way, the guardians of the universe of knowledge. Visualize an hourglass with lots of grains of sand in the top half, and lots of people hungry to learn in the bottom half. Now, with that image before you, visualize a teacher perched right in between the top half and the bottom half of that hourglass. That teacher is ensconced at the mid-way point, that narrow passageway where the sand (or the knowledge) is to pass through. It is the teacher who decides which grains of sand will make their way down the hourglass to the learners below.

Thus, it is the teacher who is in a position to turbo-charge the minds and the intellect of the students he is privileged to teach. Those students will go on with the capability of doing great things, be it building a bridge, or analyzing the world economy, or playing a musical instrument, or eventually finding a cure for Lupus. It is teachers who play the role of *catalyst* to prevent the world from descending into a second Dark Ages. It is teachers

who, indirectly, bring about positive change in the world. They do so by enabling and equipping their students to acquire the knowledge and the know-how to make their mark in the world.

Although teachers should be paid much more than they usually are, I would teach for free if there was no money in the budget to pay me.

Teaching is a sacred calling.

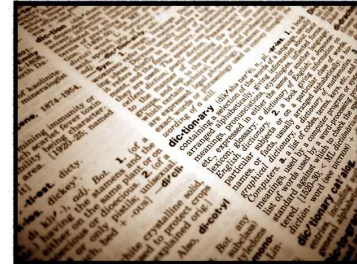
The World of Words

Swathed

Building Your Power of Expression

Swath(ed), v.

Pronunciation: swāTH (ed)



Meaning: When something is said to be swathed, it is wrapped in several layers of material.

Usage:

- *His hands were swathed in bandages.*
- *The Abrahamic papyri discovered in Egypt have often been found swathed with the bodies of mummies.*
- *Swatched in the powerful silk of the funnel web spider, the dragonfly could do no more than wait to die.*

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