

Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Happy Valentine's Day to you!

We continue our discussion of effective goal-setting in the ***Self-Development*** column. Read it, and act on it.

A Bombshell report came out showing that Hillary Clinton orchestrated the entire FAKE NEWS Russia Collusion nonsense, yet the mainstream media is deliberately ignoring the story. Check out ***The Elephant in the Room*** column for details.

The ***From Ara's Journal*** column explores the relationship between our impulses and our behavior.

And ***The World of Words*** column provides, yet again, another useful word to aid you on your journey to upgrade the power of your expression.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood



Self-Development

The 4 Phases of Goal-Setting, Part 3

Phase III - Engagement

Try to imagine a football game being played where there is no scoreboard.

The competing teams may score points through a touchdown, a field goal, a safety, or a PAT, but it would be difficult for both the teams and the spectators to keep track of who was winning and who was losing. Scoreboards make the game exciting. Without a scoreboard, the game becomes boring if not confusing.

This applies to goal-setting as well. The goal is to achieve a certain outcome. But if you are not clear on where you stand at any given moment with regard to your output, you

are missing out on an important element of motivation. The anecdote to this is to set up a scoreboard. A scoreboard broadcasts to all who are watching how the teams are performing. And when teams see how they are performing, they tend to perform at a higher level.



This principle became clear to me my senior year in high school. I was on the wrestling team all 4 years I attended my high school, lettering on the JV team my freshman year, and earning a starting spot on the Varsity team my sophomore year. By the time I was a junior, I had earned a reputation for being a solid contributor to the team, and earned All-League Honors that year. By my senior year, I was a very seasoned athlete by high school standards (which, frankly, isn't saying much). But I was also somewhat complacent. I knew I was good at my craft, and that caused me to coast at times when the team was practicing.

On one particular occasion, my coach, Casey Griffin, who was a very tough task-master, had us pair up and practice take-downs on our partner. The idea was Person A (which was me) would attempt to score a take-down on Person B (my teammate, Doug Nickerson). Coach Griffin wanted to see how many take-downs we would achieve in a 45-second window. Once Person A successfully scored a takedown on Person B (who was trying to evade being taken down), we would stop the action, jump to our feet, and start again. Normally I would have coasted during such a contest. But it just so happened that Coach Griffin walked right over to me and Doug and stared right at me the entire 45 seconds this drill took place. Obviously, I put everything into high gear because I was being scrutinized. I not only wanted to impress Coach Griffin with my technique and my aggressiveness, but I also wanted to avoid his wrath, which could be quite fierce as I discovered first hand on more than one occasion.

It was in that moment that I realized when athletes are being paid attention to, when their performance is being evaluated, they tend to perform at a higher level.

That is what a scoreboard does. It allows the goal-setter to see his or her performance regularly, and this enables the goal-setter to stay engaged.

It is important to note that when a scoreboard is being utilized, it should be concise. While there are perhaps a large number of categories that could be measured, it is best to keep things simple, and only focus on the metrics that really matter. Too much data can be overwhelming. After all, if you consider the scoreboard used in a football game, you realize it only measures the essentials: the score, the quarter, how many time outs each team has, how much time is on the clock, the down and how many yards to go for a first down, and what yard line the ball is currently on. That's about all people need to know to gauge how things are going. The team that is behind knows by how much they are behind, and whether the situation is hopeless (i.e., if they are losing 72 to 0) or if they have a fighting chance at taking the lead (i.e., if they are down 10 to 7).

When it comes to using a scoreboard for your Grand Goal, the scoreboard should clearly illustrate where you are currently, where you need to be currently, and where you have to be in order to attain your Grand Goal. Also, the scoreboard should not only illustrate the Grand Goal you are seeking, but also the lead measures that take you to that Grand Goal.

There are no right or wrong ways to structure the look and feel of your scoreboard. If you are pursuing a Grand Goal as part of a team effort, the entire team should be involved in designing the scoreboard. And once the scoreboard is designed, evaluate it using these questions:

- Is the scoreboard complete? (Is there a full explanation of the Grand Goal and the Lead Measures?)
- Is the scoreboard compelling? (Does every graph display the actual and the target results?)
- Is the scoreboard simple? (Can you tell at a glance if you are winning or losing?)
- Is the scoreboard visible? (Is it placed where everyone can see it easily?)
- Is the scoreboard updatable? (Does it contain elements that make it a unique expression of our team?)

If you can answer affirmatively to each of those questions, your scoreboard is where it needs to be.

But even with a scoreboard in place, there is one more matter that needs to be addressed. That is the matter of accountability. Stay tuned till the next issue of *Uncommon Sense* for a discussion on that!

The Elephant in the Room

The Russia-Collusion Hoax and the FAKE NEWS Mainstream Media

Having studied presidential elections, it is hard to come up with a more egregious example of media malfeasance than the 2016 election where Donald Trump ran against Hillary Clinton. Although Mr. Trump was victorious in that election, there were a lot of dark and dishonest things going on in the background. For example, in October 2016, the FBI sought and received a FISA probable cause order from the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court that authorized them to spy on an American citizen named Carter Page who had worked with the Trump campaign. This request was totally bogus and without merit and had the FISA court adequately evaluated the FBI's request, they would have denied such a request.



Later on a made-up "dossier" larded with utter, total nonsense made the rounds in an effort to smear Donald Trump.

The mainstream media piled on, with outlets like NPR, CNN MSNBC, the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, ABC, NBC, CBS, and other outlier publications such as *The Atlantic*, *Rolling Stone*, and online sources such as the *Huffington Post* – essentially, everyone in the media except Fox News, assured the public with all sorts of misleading poppycock that Trump colluded with Russia. I recall attending a panel discussion on the topic at the college where I teach. Every single one of those panelists insisted that the Mueller Investigation proved without a doubt that Trump colluded with Russia. Even when I spoke directly to some of those panelists afterwards and provided concrete evidence that blew holes in their assumptions, it made no difference. Evidence did not matter to them; all that mattered was supporting a narrative. At all costs.

Unfortunately for the mainstream media and other Leftist politicians such as Adam Schiff, the truth is [starting to come out](#), thanks to the pit bull-like efforts of Special Counsel John Durham. It turns out that Hillary Clinton and her 2016 presidential campaign made up the entire notion of Trump colluding with Russia. The evidence now points to the Clinton

campaign paying techies to infiltrate servers belonging to Trump Tower and to the White House after Trump was in office. The reason they did this was to establish a made-up, totally fictitious narrative linking Trump with Russian collusion. It was a complete and total lie, and one that Hillary Clinton herself supported.

What is both fascinating and predictable about this story is that, other than a few right-leaning news outlets (Fox News, Washington Times, New York Post), no mainstream media outlets are reporting on these new bombshell developments. None. As I type this, CNN's website has an anti-Donald Trump story about his taxes, but nothing on this explosive development. MSNBC is utterly silent. ABC News appears to know nothing of the story. The same is true with the rest of the mainstream media.

Why is the mainstream media resolutely silent on this news story?

Because the media was complicit in the fabricated nonsense. My guess is they have looked at the landscape and have decided that it's best not to say a word. We should not be surprised if Google, Twitter, and Facebook all combine to prevent the story from being discussed on social media.

Bottom line: The Trump-Russia Collusion story was a myth, a hoax of epic proportions, and both Hillary Clinton and the mainstream media, along with Adam Schiff and other proponents of the hoax, all stand guilty of the utmost deception.

* * * * *

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

Trader Joe Pistachios -- Try them!

Shameless Plug

Every so often I discover a product or a service that is so fabulous, I can't help but share it with a wider audience.

A family member turned me on to this absolutely addicting Pistachios sold exclusively at Trader Joe's. While Trader Joe's sells a variety of pistachios, look for the Trader Joe's branded bag that says "Salt and Pepper" on it. Then prepare to spend some time gorging on them. If you don't like food with a bit of of spice, then these aren't for you. But otherwise, you're sure to love them. I myself easily can go through half a bag in one sitting. Just make sure you don't have to do any multi-tasking when you consume them, because your hands are going to need to be washed when you're finished eating them, and you won't want to touch anything (phone, computer keyboard, etc) before you wash your hands.



But they are worth it! Trust me: they are delicious. But have something to drink handy, as you may need to wet your pallet at some point.

You can thank me later.

On Overcoming Our Impulses

A friend reached out to me recently. A deeply religious woman who is devoted to the biblical principles of chastity and virtue, she confided in me that her now young adult daughter claims to believe she is bi-sexual and therefore has no place in their church, a church that teaches sexual expression is meant to be reserved between a man and a woman after marriage. This woman wanted my advice. Here is what I said:



When someone tells me they now think they are something different than what they seemed to be in the past, I get a little curious, perhaps even a bit suspicious. While most people feel compelled to just accept what is being said at face value, I tend to go deeper than that. I tend to question. Is this a matter of nature or a matter of nurture? By nurture, I am referring to whether someone has attempted to steer her in that direction for whatever reason. Has someone applied undue influence on her to get her to think this is her true self? Or, does she actually, and without outside influence, really feel drawn to both sexes?

Either way, she would do well to come to grips with the distinction between impulses and standards. Every one of us has impulses. Some are harmful, perhaps even sinful. Others are more benign. She needs to realize that just because she has an impulse, that by itself does not legitimize it. True spiritual development is about facing up to our impulses and, insofar as they take us out of harmony with the will of God, we must curb them, struggle with them, repent of them when we fall short, and get back up and turn towards Christ.

She claims she now believes she is bi-sexual. Here is why I am not overly troubled by that: In your faith tradition, God forbids same-sex activity, and since her being with a man would not be forcing her to do something she really don't want to do (as would be the case with, say, a lesbian), she can enjoy sex with a man – and in God's plan of happiness, that sex can happen only after marriage.

Should we automatically succumb to our inclinations? Does having an impulse automatically legitimize that impulse? Isn't true spiritual development about overcoming our baser instincts and aligning them with the Transcendent?

What about the man who has impulses to have sex with every single attractive woman that walks by? Should he act on those impulses?

What about the man who is prone to gamble away his life's savings, leaving his family destitute?

What about the man who is attracted to pornography?

What about the arsonist, or the kleptomaniac? What about the father or mother who's short temper leads him or her to physically abuse his or her children? What about the woman who is driven to drink or use narcotics? What about the person who is so fascinated by tattoos that she can't control her impulses, and ends up covering her entire body with tattoos?

Should these people follow their instincts?

I believe all of us would be better off if we attempted to subordinate our impulses to our values.

Still, when all is said and done, just remember she is your daughter. And I know you love your daughter. But does your daughter know that? Love should continually be showered upon her, all the while you maintain your standards of right and wrong.

That is what I said to my friend.

I recognize there are many out there who would have very strong negative reactions to my advice. Some might be outraged and get hysterical in their denunciations. That merely points to an entirely different matter altogether, perhaps a subject to address another time.

Suffice it to say the outraged seem to forget that this represents my world-view, not their world-view. It's as if the outraged feel that I am not entitled to my opinion, but only to their opinion. Such is life. Those who feel my opinion has no place in polite society also have an opinion, one I do not share. I am comfortable with their being outraged. Yet that doesn't alter my opinion one whit.

The World of Words

Facetious

Building Your Power of Expression

Facetious, adj.

Pronunciation: fəʃēSHəs



Meaning: Treating serious issues with deliberate (and sometimes inappropriate) humor; being flippant. The adverb is *facetiously*. The noun would be *facetiousness*.

Usage:

- *Please don't take her so seriously; she was being facetious.*
- *I apologize for my earlier facetious remark; I was trying to be humorous.*
- *Dispense with the facetiousness; I need a serious answer!*

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