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Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

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Great to have you back for another round of *Uncommon Sense*!

Want to learn how to come across as more agreeable? Then check out the ***Self-Development*** column.

Do you worry our country is going in the wrong direction? I sure do. And I discuss what to do about it in ***The Elephant in the Room*** column.

Do you want to become more capable and more competent? Of course you do! So be sure to read and digest what I wrote in the ***From Ara's Journal*** column.

Finally, read ***The World of Words*** column to add to your ever-growing and vast vocabulary.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood



Self-Development

Being Chameleonic

Recently I was on the phone with LG. She's been a close friend ever since I first met her while living in Chicago. That was more than 40 years ago. Following my departure from Chicago in April 1982, (exactly 40 years ago) I have probably only seen her in person a handful of times. We spent some time on the phone early this morning catching up. During the closing minutes of that phone call, she commented on what great friends we are, even after 40 years. And she noted that we have never once argued – about anything.

What she said is true. I cannot recall a single instance in those 40+ years where we have ever had an argument or even a slight disagreement – even though I am well aware that were we to look for points of divergence, we may well find them.

How is that possible? I have other friends just as close to me as LG is, and while we have never been disagreeable with each other, there have been occasions where we have disagreed about this or that issue.

As I think about this question, I realized something. And it has to do with a lizard known as the *Furcifer Pardalis*. You may know it by the name of a chameleon. Actually, there are many species of chameleons, but one thing most chameleons have in common is an ability to adapt to their environment by changing their color and even visual patterns in order to blend in to their surroundings. Chameleons do this both to get within close range of their prey, but also for the purpose of avoiding becoming prey to something else. You may even have trouble spotting the chameleon in the photo that accompanies this column.



I realized that with LG, and with so many others with whom I enjoy warm relationships, I instinctively become. . . *chameleonic*. I adapt and adjust my communication style and way of being when interacting with LG and to others as well. And when I do this, inevitably there is a certain degree of bonding, and of camaraderie. Perhaps this is due to something that was articulated by Tony Robbins, namely that "People who are like each other tend to like each other," (and, conversely, people who are not like each other tend to not like each other).

So what, precisely, do I do when I am being chameleonic? I try to match and mirror various things about the person I am engaging with. For instance, I might mirror their enthusiasm level. If they are animated, I am spirited. If they are understated, I tend to be subdued. If they are giddy with laughter, I veer towards being a bit on the jolly side as well.

There are other things one might mirror, such as gestures, language, posture, eye contact, and many other communication elements.

And lest you worry that by being chameleonic you are somehow being phony, do not worry. You know where your limits are and where to draw the line. I wouldn't light up a cigarette if the person I was speaking with was smoking, nor would I drink anything alcoholic if they were imbibing. Nor would I use profanity just so I could mirror the language of the other person. But remember my 40-year friendship with LG. While I have been chameleonic with her, I have never been inauthentic with her. Thus, there is a range of possibilities with your authentic self, so don't get hung up about whether you are being true to your self when you are interacting with others. Unless it violates your clearly stated values, go with it.

Do this and you will build relationships in a positive way faster than you ever thought possible.

No More Uncontested Slam Dunks

The United States is under attack from within. Let's review just a few of the recent indicators. And then let's talk about what we can do about it.

First, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation had a very dangerous thug in their custody. His name was **Smiley Martin**, and he had been locked up for charges including corporal injury, and also assault likely to cause great bodily injury. He was very violent towards

females in particular. The Parole Board wanted to [release him early](#) from his 10-year prison sentence because Mr. Martin is black and members of the Parole Board, being "woke," believe that incarcerating a black man is racist, regardless of the crimes he may have committed. But clear-thinking prosecutors fought against that idea, claiming Mr. Martin "clearly has little regard for human life and the law." So the Parole Board bided their time, and then released him in February. He had served less than half of his 10-year prison sentence, in spite of the fact that the DA warned them that Smiley Martin posed "a significant, unreasonable risk of safety to the community." And what did Smiley Martin do upon being released? He went out and got an automatic weapon (i.e., a machine gun) and, along with others, murdered 3 women and 3 men in Sacramento, injuring many more innocent people. I'm sure there are members of the Parole Board who are smiling at this development, and are probably wondering how they might get Smiley Martin released a second time so he can commit additional murders.



The First United Church located in a Chicago suburb decided not to live up to its name and instead strive for disunity. The pastor there, **John Edgerton**, said earlier this month that the church would [abstain from "whiteness"](#) – an irony since the pastor himself is Caucasian. (Is he going to dismiss himself from the Church?) He also said that during their "worship services throughout Lent, we will not be using any music or liturgy written or composed by white people." The man is a racist who is forcing his own brand of racism onto his congregation.

Also earlier this month, led by city council member **Jacob Rostovsky**, Palm Springs decided it had some extra money to burn, so they are offering any person who claims they are either transgender or nonbinary to come forward and such persons will receive, [with no strings attached](#), \$900 each month from the city government. They don't have to earn the money. They don't even have to prove they are transgender or nonbinary. Just tell city officials you are trans or non-binary and you get the money. (Personally, I think all 48,000 residents there should make that claim; I'm sure Palm Springs would love to fork over \$43.2 million a month in a show of bald virtue signaling).

Finally, the culture war became a battle between the LGBT community and the state of Florida. And the Disney Corporation [foolishly stepped in it](#). Here's the short of it:

Florida created a new bill called "Parental Rights in Education." The bill reads as follows:

"Classroom instruction by school personnel or third parties on sexual orientation or gender identity may not occur in kindergarten through grade 3 or in a manner that is not age-appropriate or developmentally appropriate for students in accordance with state standards."

And who found that objectionable? The LGBT radicals. Why? Because they believe that children as young as 5 years old (and younger, as it turns out) should be indoctrinated as early as possible to be sexualized but only in a perverse way. The LGBT radicals want 5-year-olds to go to school, not to learn how to read, but to question their own gender, and then to renounce it. That is what the LGBT radicals have come to believe is the purpose of a school. [So they lied](#) and called the new Florida law the "Don't Say Gay" bill.

Because Florida is the home to Disney World, some of the LGBT radicals made a lot of noise to Disney executives. Given that courage (not to mention wisdom or common sense) is in short supply with corporate executives who cannot see past next quarter's earnings, Disney executives instantly capitulated and got into a fight with Florida's Governor DeSantis, who, along with the Florida State Senate, [has now repealed](#) the Reedy Creek Improvement District. This is an old law that had given Disney special tax benefits and also allowed them carte blanche self-governance. That is now gone, and Disney will pay a high price for being "woke."

What the Disney vs. Florida battle has made clear is that we American patriots, we conservatives (i.e., those who wish to conserve the wisdom of the Founding Fathers) need to step up and punch back with everything we've got:

- The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation needs to have each one of its leaders who were responsible for letting a murderous thug out of jail to commit more murder held accountable. The leaders who let the killer out of jail need to be shamed, humiliated, terminated from employment, and sued.
- Every single decent parishioner at The First United Church needs to renounce their membership and find a new church to attend, and the Pastor needs to be fired and probably excommunicated.
- Every politician in Palm Springs who voted to pay people to be transgender and nonbinary needs to be recalled and badgered relentlessly at every opportunity.
- And all decent people everywhere need to boycott Disney World and Disneyland, along with any and all Disney products and services, including their cruise line, their retail stores, their movies, and any other company they own.

These are serious, unprecedented times. The only way to save our country from its impending downfall is to have the courage to be bold, be virtuous, and to strike back decisively against any and all organizations and individuals that bring harm to our great country.

* * * * *

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

Norwood Snags Big Contract

Shameless Plug

I am excited to announce I have landed a big, 3-year contract with a major Fortune 500 company! I will be offering a variety of programs to a wide array of audiences around the important subjects of leadership, critical thinking, self-management, and other similar topics.

This is going to cause a great deal of changes in my own life, but I am up to the challenge and am looking forward to serving this client and all my other clients as well.

If your firm could benefit from a strong facilitator and thought-leader, please reach out to me and let's see if I can help.



From Ara's Journal

On Understanding

"We shall not cease from exploration. And the end of our exploring will be to arrive at the place where we began, and to know the place for the first time."

T. S. Eliot



There have been times in my life when I have read a book and benefited from having read it. Afterwards I have gone about my business, living my life more deliberately and more successfully from having read the book. I feel I know more. I feel I have gleaned wisdom from brighter lights who have gone before me. I feel enriched.

But then something peculiar will happen.

Many months will elapse. Sometimes even many years. And then I happen upon the book again and read it a second time. And the lights seem to go on as if for the first time. I read passages I had read the first time around, but now they speak to me in ways they had not earlier.

The same thing phenomenon can happen when I see a movie for the second time. If the movie had some level of complexity, or if the theme or the script had some subtle nuance to it, I might have missed its significance the first time I saw the movie, but catch the message the second time I experience it.

Furthermore, I find the same thing often occurs when I have to perform a complex technological operation, or meet with a client, or cook a special meal, or perform a song on the guitar. My first efforts at almost anything are usually acceptable, but it is in my repeated efforts that things start to click.

The lesson: Depth of understanding comes with repeated forays into the thing in question.

Eliot was right all along. . .

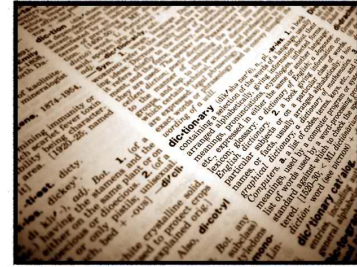
The World of Words

Jaundiced

Building Your Power of Expression

Jaundiced, adj.

Pronunciation: jôndəst



Meaning: While the word *jaundice* originally referred to a medical condition involving a yellowing of the skin brought about by liver disease, the word can also refer to some level of envy, resentment, or even outright bitterness. I employ the latter usage here, in the past tense.

Usage:

- *Forgive me if I view all politicians with a jaundiced eye.*
- *Try not to allow your skepticism to result in a jaundiced view of the whole operation.*
- *Please do not mistake my line of questioning to be a manifestation of a jaundiced outlook on my part; nothing could be further from the truth.*

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