

# Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

[Quick Links](#)

[Ara's Web Site](#)

[Facebook Page](#)

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

Click Here to Join!

Issue #262

June 30, 2022

We say goodbye to the month of June and officially enter the second half of the year starting tomorrow. And *Uncommon Sense* will be there for you all year long.

Let's unpack this issue:

You will find, in the ***Self-Development*** column, that playfulness is a good thing. Read it to find out why.



***The Elephant in the Room*** column weighs in on the recent Supreme Court decision to overturn the 1973 law known as Roe vs. Wade. Read my take on this important matter and see if you agree with my thinking (or disagree -- and if so, drop me a line and explain your own thinking. I would be very interested in hearing you out.)

The ***From Ara's Journal*** column contains a brief sketch on the importance of being real.

Want to sound intelligent? Then read ***The World of Words*** column, incorporate the word into your vocabulary, and use it today. And tomorrow. With different audiences. You'll make a good impression.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood

### A Serious Talk on Playfulness

I was walking into the cafeteria of a Fortune 500 business. I saw three women, all of them administrative assistants to various senior-level executives, having what looked like an *ad hoc* huddle. They were



standing by the fruit, which included containers of apples, kiwis, and bananas. I slightly knew all three of them, having met them a few days earlier and had had some interaction with all three of them. One of them, whom I will call Jennifer, held a banana in her right hand. I said hello to them as I walked by, and they all returned a greeting. But Jennifer's greeting was unique: she held the banana to her ear as if it were a phone and said "Hello?" as if we were on a phone call together. I laughed, as did the other two Admins.

What Jennifer was doing was being playful. And a little zany. And that fits with her personality – she has a reputation for being a very effective admin but also for being playful, funny, and unpredictable.

Years ago I worked for a well-funded start up located in Santa Monica, California, located in the Los Angeles area. It had all of the trappings of a typical Silicon Valley firm, including a game room where employees could go in the afternoon and play foosball, pool, chess, ping-pong, and other similar games. They even met every other Friday afternoon in that same room for a Happy Hour. During the morning hours of that day, someone would walk throughout the entire facility where any and all employees might be stationed, and take their drink order for that afternoon so the employees could be accommodated with the drink of their choice. Although I always ordered Perrier sparkling water, people could order champagne, beer, wine, cocktails, scotch, or whatever they might be in the mood for. During those gatherings, many people would both drink and play the various games that were available. Others socialized, conversing with their fellow team members or with employees from a different department far removed from their own. What the company was

trying to do with such fixtures was inject an element of play into the culture.

Some people are opposed to any sort of “play” in the workplace. I once met an HR Business Partner, KW, who was grouped with me at a team-building outing. I was new to the team but, due to my title, was the most senior person in my group of four employees. (Additional groups of 4 employees each were scattered around the restaurant we were in to take part in a team building game designed to help us experience some playfulness, as well as get to know each other). We were given a list of question each of us were to answer, which dealt with various preference we had, or past experiences we had had, etc. Since I was most senior in my group, I took it upon me to initiate the exercise. I turned to the person sitting across from me, KW, and asked her the first question, which she answered albeit it with some trepidation. We went round-robin which means I was the last to answer that question. Then I read the second question we had been provided, and nodded to KW to go ahead and answer it. She immediately became defensive and a little bitter and said she didn’t want to answer any of the remaining questions, that she shouldn’t have to answer them, and that rather than carry out the activity we had been asked to participate in, KW just wanted to chat informally with the other two participants about work-related matters. She later informed me that she does not like to talk about non-work matters at work.

KW seems to not allow for much playfulness in her life, especially in professional settings. My guess is that she feels playfulness brings out a certain vulnerability in people. And that’s true. When you play, you let your guard down, so to speak, and forego your usual professional demeanor for a more open and relaxed one. This can be unsettling to some people. But unless you work with a group of professional backstabbers, being playful can bring a team together and can be enjoyable on so many levels. Playfulness reminds us of what it was like to be a kid. Kids love to play! It brings so much satisfaction to young lives. And it can bring so much satisfaction to our lives.

It doesn’t have to be limited to work settings. Playfulness can happen in almost any arena in our lives. It could be appropriate in virtually any setting, except, perhaps, at a funeral.

Playfulness taps into a part of our being that needs attention, at least every once in a while. Without playfulness, we become stuffy and stodgy. Without it, life becomes a bit stilted and less pleasant. Playfulness brings a certain wholeness to our lives, making

us more fun to be around. It can also release untapped dimensions of our being that play to our strengths, enable our creative element, and bring about a certain level of satisfaction.

Embrace playfulness. In the right arenas and in the right doses it can enhance your life in myriad ways.

## The Elephant in the Room

### *Revising Roe vs. Wade*



*"I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life..." (Deuteronomy 30:19)*

Abortion.

That one word evokes very strong feelings in most. Few people have no opinion on the topic. Many flock to one of two sides – the **Pro-Choice** side or the **Pro-Life** side.

The Pro-Choice camp insists abortion should be law. They feel a combination of fear and fury that the U.S. Supreme Court recently overturned Roe vs. Wade. This group feels that women must have autonomy and have control over their own bodies. So adamant are the Pro-Choice folks, that some of them go so far as to feel justified in inflicting violence on their opponents, be they imagined or real. Many of their spokespersons openly claim the Supreme Court has lost its very legitimacy for coming to a legal conclusion they don't agree with. Some have targeted Justice Clarence Thomas specifically, while

others have branded the six “conservative” Justices traitors to the country. In one rant, Congresswoman Cori Bush (D-Mo) claimed the decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* was “extremist, racist, classist, and bigoted.” These people repeat the mantra that access to abortion represents a woman’s right to choose. (Note that they *never* articulate in any detail what that choice involves). Pro-Choice Advocates claim that without unlimited access to abortion, women will die (an ironic viewpoint considering that with abortion, someone actually does die, and it’s not the woman). And the most radical of the Pro-Choice advocates claim that one can kill the unborn all the way into the 9<sup>th</sup> month, even the day before birth would take place. These people claim that men are not permitted to weigh in on the matter. In fact, they claim that if one does not unconditionally accept their viewpoint without reservations, that person is an enemy that must be slandered, decimated, and humiliated mercilessly.

The other camp is the Pro-Life group. They feel there is more to the equation to consider. They look at the fact that when an abortion happens, someone is dismembered and killed – that someone being the most innocent of our species: a baby. Pro-Life advocates notice that Pro-Choice people avert their attention away from the reality that a real “person” is involved – *a baby*. This factor, that an actual human being is involved (albeit it an unborn human being) causes Pro-Life advocates to proceed with caution, and to advocate for the baby. Once there are brain waves and a heartbeat, and especially once there is viability in the fetus, it strikes discerning people as indisputable that a baby, a living human being, is involved here. The difference between a baby who is out of the womb versus a baby who is still in the womb is a matter of location, and little more. Pro-Life advocates usually have no misgivings about allowing for abortion in very rare situations: in the case of rape, incest, severe deformities in the fetus, or that the mother’s life is in jeopardy. But should a mother’s rights at self-determination not take into account that with abortion, that mother is killing her own baby – killing a person? Cannot adoption be a viable option for an unwanted pregnancy? As for the argument that women should have autonomy over their own bodies, the unborn baby is not the mother’s body; it is inside of the mother’s body. While women should have autonomy over their own bodies, with pregnancy things become complicated because who is going to advocate for the body of the baby?

And this is the central point of disagreement between the two camps: ***Is the thing being aborted a person, a baby?*** No, says the Pro-Choice camp; yes says the Pro-Life camp.



Now, the thing being aborted either is or is not a baby.

To the Pro-Choice group, what is being aborted is not a baby, not a human, not even alive. It's just a pimple. It is no more than a glob of cells, an inconvenient and unwanted blob of mucus. It's a thing, all right.

To the Pro-Life group, they look at the "thing" being aborted and note that there is an embryonic entity that resembles nascent life. They see brain waves. They see a heartbeat. They see eyes and ears, fingers and toes. They see movement. And they know that at some point, that "thing" will come out of the womb and take its first breath and then start to cry. They know that "thing" is human. It is a baby. It is life. And it is innocent.

*That "thing" is worthy of our highest energies in providing it protection.* It is not an unwanted piece of trash or an undesired source of inconvenience. Some family is out there wanting to love that precious "thing".

That is what the conflict is about. One side does not see life but favors death. The other side sees life and wishes to protect that life.

\* \* \* \* \*

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

---

## **From Ara's Journal**

### On Being Real



*"If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer."*

*Let him step to the music which he hears,  
however measured or far away."*

Henry David Thoreau

Peer pressure. Conformity. Not rocking the boat. Blending in. Not making waves. Being popular. Embracing convention. Fitting in. Running with the pack.

These things start in elementary school, become quite apparent in middle school, become even more pronounced in high school.

Then they continue on into college. They are still manifest in adulthood, throughout one's career or private life.

Why is that? What are we afraid of?

Ourselves.

The vast majority of people are bent on trying to fit in and not making waves. Somewhat akin to Japanese culture which says "The nail that stands up gets hammered down," suggesting that conformity and uniformity are cultural norms that are sacrosanct in certain circles.

As life continues on, I am more aware than ever that we are all wired so differently. Sometimes we find we have been in social circles we no longer wish to be in. (And, truth be told, others may deem we are no longer suitable for the social circles occupied by others – and that is OK).

If we find we have people in our social orbit for whom we no longer feel well-suited, we should march in a different direction. The same is true with the organizations we work for: I have been fired by some organizations, and I have fired some organizations (meaning, I have chosen to leave their employ). I have fired some friends and have been fired by some friends.

And I believe the same holds for our habits. When we find we have certain habits that are bringing us harm, we should fire those habits – we should march to the beat of a new set of habits.

This is very powerful stuff! The notion that we can direct our lives, and the notion that "our world" can be structured according to our deepest aspirations, is very heady, and very hopeful. If true, (which it

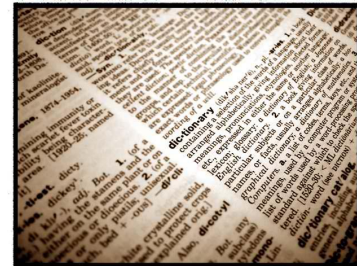
is), it means that our lives can move towards greater fulfillment, perhaps incrementally, perhaps in a single quantum leap.

I am going to start putting more effort into listening to the drummer who lays out the rhythmic cadence that makes most sense to me.

## The World of Words

### Ersatz

#### Building Your Power of Expression



**Ersatz**, adj.

**Pronunciation:** ər-zäts, ər-shäts

**Meaning:** Can you imagine a man going out and buying a Rolex watch from a questionable source, only to discover later on that he got tricked into spending a lot of money on a cheap, inauthentic imitation of the real deal?

Or maybe a person goes out and purchases a 1967 Stingray that was once owned by Mike Love of the Beach Boys, only it wasn't?

Or try this: Have you ever seen a somewhat famous actress in a court of law, testifying under oath concerning misdeeds that were allegedly done to her by a famous actor, and while on the witness stand the woman starts crying, only there are no actual tears coming down her cheeks?

In each example above the word *ersatz* comes to mind. Ersatz refers to something inauthentic. Think of it as a cheap imitation of something else.

Finally, just remember that anything artificial, from collagen lips (or other modifications to the body), to a fake apology, to the pretentiousness of a recent Yale graduate who uses big words but couldn't explain their meaning if his life depended on it, all are a manifestation of something that could be described as ersatz.

**Usage:**



- *During her cross-examination she displayed what could only be termed ersatz emotion.*
- *The thieves who stole the painting tried to be clever by replacing it with an ersatz version.*
- *She tried to make an ersatz version of the pizza without using gluten.*

---

New subscribers, the Special Report "11 Ways to Beat the Odds" should be in your In-Box within 24 hours from the time you subscribed. If you have not received it, please communicate that to me via email ([ara@aranorwood.com](mailto:ara@aranorwood.com))

For more information on my work, follow me on Facebook (keyword "Leadership Development Systems") or via my website:  
[www.aranorwood.com](http://www.aranorwood.com)

Sincerely,

Ara Norwood  
Leadership Development Systems

[Visit our website](#)



Leadership Development Systems | P. O. Box 801681, Santa Clarita, CA 91380-1681

[Unsubscribe \[ara@aranorwood.com\]\(mailto:ara@aranorwood.com\)](#)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by [ara@aranorwood.com](mailto:ara@aranorwood.com) powered by



Try email marketing for free today!