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Welcome back to another round of *Uncommon Sense*. And a BIG WELCOME to the many new subscribers! Let me unpack this issue:

The ***Self-Development*** column gives you some value on a topic that may bore you, but you ignore it at your peril. Trust me on that.

The Elephant in the Room column shines a spotlight on an issue I've been meaning to address for some time: the crazy fad involving one's pronouns.

The ***From Ara's Journal*** column raises an issue about our inability to converse with one another in meaningful ways. Check it out and see if you can relate to what I am talking about.

The World of Words column delivers yet again: a dandy of a word you can use in many situations.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood



Self-Development

Notes on Diet

Building on my theme in the previous issue of *Uncommon Sense*, where I discussed nutritional supplements, I want to focus on a related matter that's even more fundamental: your diet. When I say the word "diet," I am not talking about the act of trying to lose weight by eating less (as you might expect if we were discussing Weight Watchers, The Keto Diet, or Intermittent Fasting). Instead, I am speaking generically about our food intake – the specific foods we consume.



Unfortunately, we live in a world that is doing what it can to feed us crap. And many of us – most of us, in fact – fall prey to the terrible things that await us in the grocery store, supermarket, convenience store, and fast food restaurant.

The effects of this destructive system can be seen all around us. Walk into the nearest WalMart and glance at the people wandering around. Note how many of them are overweight. (By the way, just because a person has a lean appearance does not necessarily suggest they are healthy; but people who are visibly overweight clearly have some health issues happening, and their food intake is a likely culprit).

Your body is a machine. So treat it like one. Give it the attention it needs so it will function in optimal ways. Would you pour formaldehyde in your automobile's gas tank? No one in their right mind would. So why do we stuff our faces with foods that do us far more harm than good?

Folks, I love tacos from Jack in the Box, Del Taco, and Taco Bell. They all taste great. But consuming them comes with a price, as there is so much harmful oil soaking in that food. That oil gets into your stomach. It gets digested. It clogs your arteries. Fried Chicken is no different. Same with bacon. Salami is even worse. And I love all of those foods. But my body does not. And neither does yours.

Do you drink sugary sodas like Coke, Sprite, Mt. Dew, and Squirt? Stop it! I know they taste great. I love them, too. But they are like formaldehyde in your gas tank.

What about salt? Not all salt is bad, but most of it is quite unhealthy for you. So here is the truth about salt. Refined salt, which is found in most processed food, is bad for you. Such salt often contains anti-caking agents which can cause an increase in blood pressure and damage to your kidneys. The good news is that unrefined sea salt is actually healthy for you. Always check the labels of even products labeled "sea salt" – it must say "unrefined." An excellent product in this regard is [Colima Sea Salt from Ava Jane's Kitchen](#). Last I checked it is not sold in retail stores, only online, but it sells out quickly. An alternative to salt would be [Penzey's Spices](#) which enhance the flavors of many foods without using actual salt. They are sold in places like Sprouts, Trader Joe's, Whole Foods, etc.

Let me get off the bad stuff and address the positive.

Focus on vegetables. I did not say eat only vegetables. And I did not say become a vegetarian. If you are a vegetarian, and if that is working for you, great. But my message is this: whatever you are eating, try to include a lot of vegetables with it. Steamed is a great choice. Grilled is also good. Raw is fantastic. I just finished eating a bunch of fresh, raw red cabbage. (Don't know why it's called red; it looks purple to me. But I digress. . .) Try eating oatmeal for breakfast. Sure, you can add some fruit to it, especially berries. And try adding a spoonful of flaxseed to it. It will do you a world of good.

Try some fresh fish for dinner. Very healthy for you. Try slicing some avocado into your next salad. That would be a very smart and healthy move. Try adding some nuts (other than peanuts) to your diet. They are fun to snack on and most nuts are healthy for you.

Here's the thing: you may be rolling your eyes while reading this column. You may think you won't like the taste of these foods. You may think your body won't get used to it. Trust me, it will. Your body will adjust and adapt. And you will find that you come to enjoy healthier food if you stick with it for, say, 3 months consistently. And you don't have to be perfect. But any back-sliding should be kept to a minimum.

Do that for 3 months and you will be far healthier than you have been in a long time. Stick with it and you will very likely live a long and healthy life.

The Elephant in the Room

What's With Pronouns?

Fads come and go. Some are harmless. Some are destructive. And some are downright hairbrained.

Putting your preferred pronouns next to your name, in writing, falls in the latter category.

Today I saw the familiar sight on LinkedIn of a former student of mine announcing a new promotion she had received. Next to her name, she put in parentheses "She/Her".



I should hasten to add that this young lady looks about as feminine as it is possible for a young lady to look.

Clearly, I have failed to teach this young lady to think clearly. Two possible things are at work here.

First, it may well be that she has simply jumped on a bandwagon without really thinking it through. The same sort of non-thought often accompanies other fads, such as getting one's body tattooed. Or putting an abundance of facial piercings into one's visage – the nose, the cheeks, the chin, the head, the lip. . . Everyone seems to be doing it these days.

Second, and more insidious, is the unspoken message behind stating your pronouns are "She/Her" when it's obvious you are a female. The message being conveyed is this: "You may look at me and see a female, but I may not be a female, and so it is up to me to confirm to you I am a female. I may actually be a male even though I have the exact anatomy of a female -- the voice, the uterus, breasts that can lactate, an ability to be pregnant, the XX chromosomal structure. But none of that reality matters, because I am redefining reality. I am creating a new reality – a reality that denies science and denies common sense. A reality that takes a minuscule number of people with some sort of gender abnormality (in the area of 0.0003%) and makes that the new norm – not only pretending it is 40% of the population, but making that abnormality the preferred state of being."

Now, it is highly doubtful that my former student has ever consciously processed the second approach listed in the previous paragraph. Instead, a fad has started, thanks to some radicalized, out of touch activists with a lot of time on their hands, and my student mindlessly bought into their agenda without even realizing it. She is not alone.

So when you see women who are obviously female posting their preferred pronouns as "she/her" or men doing the equivalent thing, just recognize that you are either dealing with someone who is a strong and desperate supporter of the trans-movement, or you are encountering someone who doesn't think clearly, but is instead, an automaton who follows the fad of the moment.

* * * * *

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

Shameless Plug

Norwood Delivers New Speech

Last week it was my pleasure to deliver a keynote speech to a service organization. This is the third time they had booked to speak. My topic all three times was titled "Six Great Men" and was about our nation's Founding Fathers. My first appearance to this audience took place in 2015 and took a broad approach, providing interesting tidbits about their birth, education, temperament, and political philosophy. My second appearance in 2019 focused on the topic of slavery, and how the Founders really felt about that ignominious institution. For this third appearance, I uncovered the Founders' view on God, Religion, and Christianity.



The speech was a big hit. In fact, word has gotten out and I've already been booked to deliver that same speech another to a sister-organization of the first group later this week.

If your organization could benefit from a patriotic presentation on our Founding Fathers, one which bolsters confidence in their wisdom, reach out to me. I'll hit it out of the park on your behalf.

From Ara's Journal

"How Was Your Weekend?"

I am a professional eavesdropper. I enjoy overhearing conversations. I find I learn some things when I engage in that enterprise.



One of the things that has become apparent to me as a result of my recent eavesdropping escapades is that people seem to be reluctant to engage with other people on a deeper level. Many people seem to not want the spotlight on themselves, especially as it relates to their personal life.

Thus, in many an office setting, on a Monday morning, I will hear the following dialogue take place:

Person A: "How was your weekend?"

Person B: "Fine. How was yours?"

Person A: "It was good. Too short."

Person B: "I know what you mean. See you at the ten o'clock meeting."

Person A: "Right."

That's the long version. Remove the last two lines for the usual version.

In the example above, which is in no way fictional, I wonder how serious Person A was about hearing what Person B did over the weekend. Was he sincerely interested, or was the question posed with the hope that Person A would then get to share what he did over the weekend? I also wonder how Person A really felt about getting a one-word answer from Person B. Was he relieved? Was he miffed? Did he not care one way or the other? Did he even notice Person B's evasion? Or does he consider it the new normal to receive such a clipped answer?

Are we losing the art of conversation?

And if so, what does that say about us as people?

Food for thought. . .

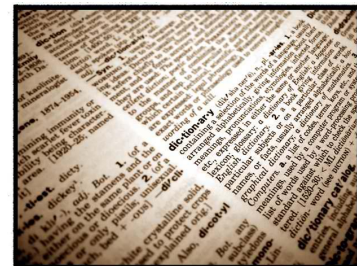
The World of Words

Balkanize

Building Your Power of Expression

Balkanize, v

Pronunciation: bôlkəņīz



Meaning: To balkanize is to divide a region, perhaps a country, into smaller, mutually hostile states. The term came from the name of the Balkan Peninsula, which was divided into several small nations in the early 20th century. The fragmentation of a larger region into a cluster of smaller regions often has the new nations hostile towards each other.

Usage:

- *His meddling is an attempt to intellectually balkanize the Republican party into warring factions.*

- *Let's not encourage secessionism, lest the resulting balkanization render us weaker than before.*
- *Education itself has been balkanized and may never recover.*

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