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Issue #267

September 14, 2022

The weather is on the cusp of cooling, school is back in session, and another dose of *Uncommon Sense* is before your eyes.

Check out the ***Self-Development*** column for a quick read on something pragmatic.

I take a different approach with ***The Elephant in the Room*** column by NOT commenting on a specific news story, but instead just sharing an observation. Read it and see if you agree with my take.

Grief is a natural part of life. We will all experience it. The ***From Ara's Journal*** column makes a point along these lines.

There is a great new word in ***The World of Words*** column that you simply must add to your growing vocabulary. Use it today in a sentence.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood



**Self-Development**

Photographic Breadcrumbs

I used to work for a very accomplished entrepreneur named TK. He was smart, tenacious, and affable – a real fun and funny guy. I haven't interacted with TK for some years now, but I will never forget



him. One thing about TK I recall was when he told me (and other members of the team) that when we waste time, it is usually due to searching for things we have misplaced. I have found his assertion to be largely correct.

I have misplaced a whole host of things during my lifetime: books, notes, keys, other objects, and even cars.

Cars, you ask?

Yes, cars.

When I would travel to or from a big city, either domestically or internationally, I would on occasion forget not only where I parked the car (whether it was my own car or a rental) but sometimes, in an unfamiliar city, I would forget how to even begin to retrace my steps back to my car.

Not any more.

With the advent of smart phones, and the ease they bring to taking photos, I now have an obvious solution.

For example: recently I had to catch a flight out of my local big city airport, an airport I am unfamiliar with due to my having recently relocated here. As soon as I parked the car in the airport parking garage, I got out and took a photo of the back of my car and I made sure the parking space number, which was painted on the ground behind it, was visible in the photo. Then I took a photo of the nearest pillar which had a section number on it, along with a letter. Next I took a photo of the nearest elevator, making sure I included whatever Floor or Section numbering was associated with it. As soon as I got off the elevator, I took a few steps away, then turned back and took a

photo of that same elevator, also capturing some of the shops surrounding it and making sure I knew which floor I was now on.

My purpose in doing all of this was to leave a set of photographic breadcrumbs so that once I returned to my city, I could retrace my steps by reviewing the photos in reverse order. And it worked, magnificently. I didn't have to try to clutter my attention by trying to remember everything. I didn't have to tax my brain and wonder if I had guess correctly. Instead, I just reviewed my photos in reverse order and everything fell into place. Like breadcrumbs.

Some of you reading this column may already do something along these lines. If so, kudos to you!

But for those of you who do not employ a technique such as this, now is your chance to implement a new habit. Doing so will save you lots of time and lots of stress. It's so easy to do and it makes finding your way back to your car effortless, whether you parked at an airport, or a stadium, or a foreign and unfamiliar city. So do it.

You're welcome.

## The Elephant in the Room

### Two Distinct American Values

*"Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country."*

John F. Kennedy



It is not human nature to want to be **independent** and **responsible**. That is understandable in very young people -- children want to be taken care of and have things handed to them. But as we mature, we presumably would want to stand on our own two feet and be responsible for ourselves.

It is in this sense that the Left is more aligned with human nature than is the Right. The Right (i.e., Conservatives) overcome human nature as they mature. They get jobs and work hard. They get married and start families. They earn money and provide for their families. They buy homes and pay their mortgages each month. If they took out student loans, they work hard to make sure they are

responsible enough to pay back the institutions that gave them the loans.

The Left, who calls themselves "Progressives," are anything but. . . They remain as little children in some respects. They want the government to pay their student loans for them (and our current government has granted them that wish recently). Many want to live in their parents' basements and play video games. Most don't want to start a family because that would entail being responsible and having to sacrifice. They relish government intervention in every aspect of their lives. Thus, they are willing to trade in their independence so long as government takes care of them.

But none of that is American.

America became America precisely due to the notion of independence. Our founding document, the Declaration of Independence, put us on track to become a free nation rather than a collection of British colonies. It was hard work and involved a lot of sacrifice, yet the results were magnificent! We became a "shining city on a hill" and the greatest and most powerful nation in world history. But it required an independent backbone and a commitment to personal responsibility.

So the next time you see people whining about why the government isn't doing something for them to make their lives more comfortable and cozy, just remind them that they are not acting like Americans. They are acting like spoiled children.

\* \* \* \* \*

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

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## **Shameless Plug**

### Six Great Men Speech Happens Friday

This Friday, September 16th, it will be my great honor to deliver a keynote speech on our Founding Fathers. My speech, Six Great Men, will examine their views about God, religion, and Christianity.

While many people with a secular bent would like to fashion the Founding Fathers after their own secular proclivities, claiming they

were not in any sense Christian or religious, and labeling them Deists, as if to be a Deist was akin to being a non-believer, I set the record straight and demonstrate from the first-hand writings and speeches of the Founding Fathers that all of them believed in the divine, in an afterlife, and in the power of Christianity.



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**

### **The Burden of Grief**

What happens when a person is facing a personal tragedy?

More to the point, what happens when the person facing the tragedy informs people about it?



I suppose different people who hear about the tragedies that others are going through vary in their response. Almost all will respond with kindness and words of support. Many will tell you they will keep you in their thoughts and prayers, and some of them actually will pray for you. Some will feel awkward and uncomfortable. Some won't really know what to do or what to say or how to react.

I suspect, though I could be wrong, that it really is somewhat of a burden on others when they hear about the tragedies one is going through. And they often feel helpless because they don't know what to do. It's often the case that there isn't much they can do, except offer words of encouragement, and offer prayers.

In my experience, the most impactful thing a person can do when they see someone struggling with a personal tragedy is to approach the person who is suffering and to look them in the eye, and to let

them know that you are there for that person. To assure that person that they are not alone; that they can turn to you for comfort, or company, or solace at any time, to give them assurances that you know of their struggles and are willing to encourage them not to give up hope. This does not negate the suffering that comes with tragedy. But it does make it a bit more possible to endure.

In my faith-community, we have an extra-biblical scriptural passage (this one from The Book of Mormon) we often turn to in such moments. The passage is about the importance of being baptized, but we often turn to it to focus on the divine imperative of showing compassion to others. It's an oft-quoted passage, a portion of which I share below:

*" . . . And now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light; Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times, . . . what have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord?" (Mosiah 18:9-10).*

Words such as those remind me that I need to be ready at all times to render comfort to those who struggle. And in any given person's circle, there is always someone who is struggling with some sort of heartache, pain, or loss.

I just need to keep my eyes open.

I am profoundly grateful to those who have expressed love or concern during my own bouts with tragedy. Their expressions of sympathy are remembered, and they have given me a measure of solace. Would that I can one day do the same for them when the time comes.

Because we are all in this together.

## The World of Words

### Restorative

#### **Building Your Power of Expression**

**Restorative**, adj.

**Pronunciation:** rəstôrədɪv



**Meaning:** This adjective, (which can also be used as a noun in some cases), refers to anything that has the ability to restore health and well-being.

**Usage:**

- *She discovered the restorative power of long walks.*
- *I try to take a nap every Sunday afternoon for the restorative rejuvenation it provides.*
- *I prefer this brand of bottled water due to the restorative presence of electrolytes that are infused in it.*

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