

Week 16 Common Sense

Day 2

Thomas Paine

During the Revolutionary War of 1776 when the United States won independence from Great Britain, a large group of American citizens were not convinced that it was in their best interests to fight against Great Britain. There were basically three groups: the zealots for freedom led by Washington, the English sympathizers who wanted the security they felt England offered them and a very large group of undecided individuals.

Thomas Paine was for independence. He wrote a detailed pamphlet explain why it was necessary to win independence. He titled the pamphlet "Common Sense". He laid out in simple layman's terms why it was critical that we fight and win the war.

Here are the 3 major points written in easily understood "common sense" language.

1. No person should be better than another person simply by birth. Rank and privilege must be based on performance not by birth. Following this reasoning, having a king was ludicrous and not a part of America and we should not bow to any man because of birth.
2. No government should assess taxes on the common people without the people having a say. England was taxing every day goods to pay for their war with France and yet the colonies were not allowed to have any representative in the English government.
3. No small island should make laws to rule a continent as large as America. England could not and would not understand the needs and concerns of America.

The preamble of "Common Sense" was read to the American force as they boarded the boats Christmas night to cross the Delaware River to attack the Hessians, foreign mercenaries paid by English troops in Trenton, New Jersey. This victory was the turning point in the war.

"These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands by it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly; it is dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as FREEDOM should not be highly rated."

Preamble to Common Sense Thomas Paine

Why do you think Thomas Paine entitled his pamphlet to the American people, Common Sense?

Our definition of common sense is "having knowledge of what would seem to be ordinary understanding."

Why do you think that the first step to having common sense might be to have knowledge?

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Day 3

Rotary Four Way Test

In 1932, Herbert Taylor was asked to take charge of a company facing bankruptcy. He created a 24-word test for his employees to follow in their business and professional lives that became the guide for the company. The survival of the company was credited to this simple philosophy. The Rotary Foundation, a non-profit corporation that promotes world understanding and peace through international educational and cultural exchange programs made this their motto in the 1940's.

First: "Is it the truth?"

Second: "Is it fair to all concerned?"

Third: "Will it build good will and friendships?"

Fourth: "Will it be beneficial to all concerned?"

If someone has "common sense", do you think they are truthful? Why?

Why do you think these 24 words have such a positive impact?

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Day 4

The Old Man and the New Car

A number of years ago, oil was discovered on property that belonged to an elderly man. All of his life, he had lived in poverty, but the discovery of oil allowed him to live as a wealthy man. One of the first things he did was buy himself a huge new automobile. He bought an Abraham Lincoln stovepipe hat, a tuxedo with a bow tie, and completed his outfit with a big cigar. Every day, he would drive into the hot, dusty little town that was nearby. He wanted to see everyone and be seen by everyone. He was a friendly old soul, so when riding through town he would turn all the way around and speak to folks. Interestingly enough, he never ran into anybody or over anything. The reason was simple. Directly in front of that big car, two horses were pulling it. Local mechanics said that nothing was wrong with the car. Inside the car were “hundreds of horses,” ready, willing and able to go, but the old man was using only the two on the outside. Many students make the mistake of looking outside to find two horsepower when they should look inside, where they have unlimited horsepower. Do not blame the product because it has been used improperly.

How many people use only what is on the outside?

Oliver Wendel Holmes said that many people die with their music still on the inside. What does that mean to you?

Week 16 – Common Sense

Day 5

Evaluate Your Week

We've been focused on "Common Sense" this week, how did you do? For every goal not met, explain what happened and what you can do differently next week to have success.

If you completed goals, what did you learn?

Write down in complete sentences, something that you learned about "Common Sense" this week.

Of the three stories, "Thomas Paine", "Rotary 4-Way Test", "Old Man with New Car", which had the greatest impact on you? Why?

Demonstration:

For each day of the week, give yourself either "+" if you demonstrated this quality or "-" if you did not.

M_____ T_____ W_____ Th_____ F_____ Sa_____ Su_____