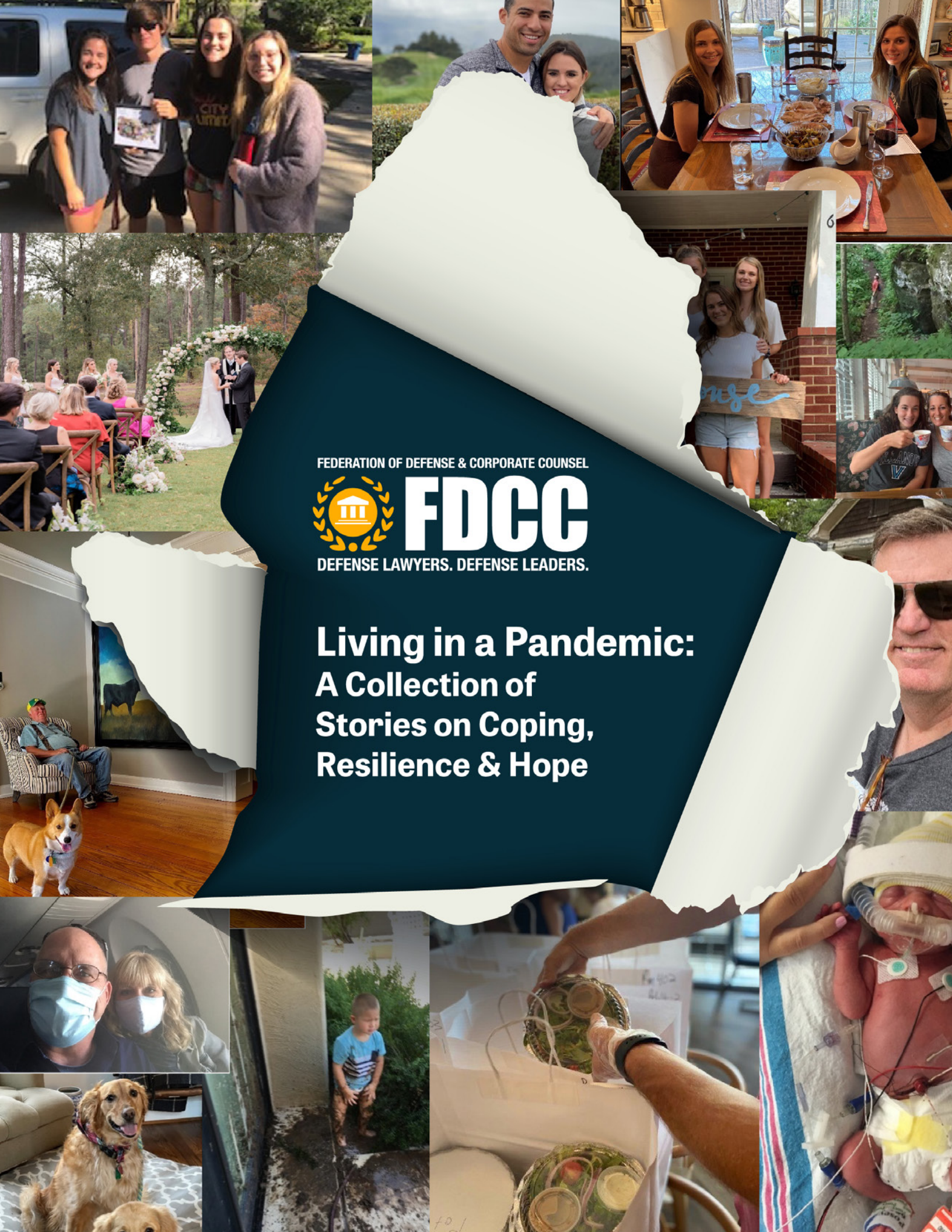

FEDERATION OF DEFENSE & CORPORATE COUNSEL

FDCC

DEFENSE LAWYERS. DEFENSE LEADERS.

Living in a Pandemic: A Collection of Stories on Coping, Resilience & Hope



This volume of "Living in a Pandemic: A Collection of Stories on Coping, Resilience & Hope," from the Federation of Defense & Corporate Counsel ("FDCC") is a collection of members' experiences during the pandemic and the spirit of hope and confidence we have for the times ahead. Each chapter will address a specific event in their lives that they went through. The purpose of the book is to share our experiences from the pandemic and what we've learned from them, and by extension what others can learn from their experiences going forward to help equip us for the future.

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President's Message



MICHAEL T. GLASCOTT
Goldberg Segalla
Buffalo, NY

The Federation of Defense & Corporate Counsel has served as the preeminent professional trade association of premier defense and senior corporate counsel and insurance industry professionals from across the United States and around the world since 1938. The FDCC exists to be the inspired community of vetted defense counsel, exceptional leaders and even better people.

In 2020, our members adapted to a new normal and, like the rest of the world, we found new ways to conduct our business in a professional manner, while staying connected to friends and family. As we emerge from the pandemic, our new normal will be defined by the lessons learned in 2020. This publication is dedicated to memorializing the experiences we shared during a period which will be analyzed and explored for years to come.

We pray for the continued good health of our members as we acknowledge the struggles we have experienced. We also hope you enjoy learning how others coped during a unique time in our history.

President Elect's Message



ROBERT L. CHRISTIE
Christie Law Group, PLLC
Seattle, WA

Who is your best client? Mine is the FDCC and its members. No other client provides me with the array of rewards and depth of satisfaction that comes from the time I invest in the FDCC. That has never been truer than in the last twelve months. In a time of unexpected challenge professionally and individually, I have experienced a new level of gratitude for my membership in the Federation and my service to the organization as one of your officers.

Fellowship and deep friendship are at our core. I took for granted that I would get to see my friends in person several times each year. Erin and I anticipated months of travel with Mike and Trish Glascott as FDCC ambassadors. What we experienced instead has been unique, humbling, enlightening, and powerful. We have participated in the lives of our members in profound ways. We have had more contact with more members in the last twelve months than I could have imagined. Working with my fellow officers and our executive team we have invented ways of staying connected and delivering value to our members in the virtual environment.

Mike Glascott declared early on in his Presidential year that the FDCC needed to "own the virtual space" and we have done that. Collectively we have shared hundreds of gatherings on Zoom—we have cooked together, read together, learned together, laughed together, and shed some tears together. We have advanced the goals of the strategic plan that Elizabeth Lorell led us to develop and adopt just two months before we locked down. We have had one of our most successful years of recruiting new members under the leadership of Casey Stansbury, Stacy Broman, Heidi Goebel, Bernie Heinze, and so many others.

We are coming out of this challenging period with gratitude for what we have experienced and anticipation for what comes next. The FDCC is in a strong position organizationally and financially as we celebrate our 85th year. Our members are engaged and connected. And we will be gathered together again this summer at the Greenbrier!

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your President Elect.

Introduction





FRANK RAMOS
Clarke Silverglate, P.A.
Miami, FL

KILE T. TURNER
Norman, Wood,
Kendrick & Turner
Birmingham, AL

Living in a Pandemic: A Collection of Stories on Coping, Resilience & Hope is a compilation of our members' stories about living through COVID-19. Just as we remember when Reagan was shot, when the Challenger exploded and when two planes flew into the Twin Towers, we remember when COVID-19 quickly spread and our lives changed, virtually overnight. The pandemic has affected us differently, but it has affected us all. This book addresses most of life's major events (and some minor ones), and chronicles the personal stories of how our members addressed them. The book is meant to record these life events as experienced through the prism of a pandemic and how we not only managed and survived, but overcame and thrived.

It was our pleasure and privilege to share our stories and read the stories of our members. We learned how strong, how resilient, how powerful and how much grit and perseverance our members have. We hope you enjoy the book as much as we did editing it, and we encourage you to share your pandemic stories, listen to others' stories and pass on your wisdom and knowledge from your pandemic experiences to others.

In this darkness I have found a bright and powerful light. Caroline provides perspective and a constant reminder of the wonders that life offers. Looking at her, you cannot help but see hope and possibility.

Caroline Rose Hinson (DOB – 9/10/2020)



J. SCOTT KREAMER
Baker Sterchi
Cowden & Rice LLC
Kansas City, MO

You know that opening scene in Lion King where Rafiki is standing on Pride Rock and presents Simba to the animal kingdom and they roar their approval - thanks to the Covid restrictions on who can enter into the hospital, we got to play that out in real life on September 10, 2020.

Pride Rock was the second floor of the Shawnee Mission Hospital Maternity Wing where Courtney was delivering her first child - our first grandchild. Susan and I gathered with others outside below her window waiting to cheer the newest addition. It was cold, it was raining and we did not care.

Then it happened.

Brandon (Dad) playing the role of Rafiki came to the window raising the new Simba for all to see. This is the part where the entire animal kingdom roars their approval. The problem with our real world re-creation of this scene was that between the rain and the tint on the windows we could not see if he was holding a boy or girl. To be



honest, we could not even tell if the person we were seeing was Brandon or if we were even looking at the right window.

Eventually Brandon came outside and told us that Caroline Rose Hinson entered this world.

When I first told colleagues I was going to be a grandfather, several responded with "Wow, I did not think you were old enough to be one." Reminders that our clock is ticking faster than we might want isn't necessarily the uplifting voice we want to hear. While standing outside in the rain waiting for Caroline's debut, it was not my age that occupied my thoughts.

Rather, it was a sense of purpose that was being fulfilled. I had the same feeling walking Courtney down the aisle a year earlier. My lasting contribution to the world is my three kids and now I was witnessing first-hand them having their own - a sort of passing of the baton to the next runner. I had accomplished something special that was going to last well beyond me.

The timing of Caroline's debut in the middle of a pandemic may on the surface seem to be unfortunate, but it was actually the perfect antidote to Covid.

How so? Covid has forced us to slow down. We are not traveling, going to meetings or going out to eat with friends. Rather, we are spending more time at home with family, more time with Caroline. As I hold her I cannot help but marvel at the miracle of life.

For me, the political strife surrounding the election and Covid stats seem inconsequential. Caroline has become the priority. Who has the time or desire to pay attention to the constant barrage of mudslinging by pundits and politicians when Caroline is holding my finger with her tiny hand. It is actually pretty amazing how much time I find myself spending just staring at her and wondering what the world has in store for her as she gets older. Will she be an athlete, a musician, a mother (or all the above)?

Of course, real world events do matter and the deaths caused by Covid have touched all of us. But in this darkness I have found a bright and powerful light. Caroline provides perspective and a constant reminder of the wonders that life offers. Looking at her, you cannot help but see hope and possibility.

Four months into my new role, I am still trying to find my grandfather legs. I do not even know what my name is going to be – it is down to two right now, Chief and Grandpa. Whatever my name is, I am pretty sure that I will fall into the spoiling type. My goal (if I'm lucky) will be to witness firsthand most of her own personal milestones.

Truth be told, 2020 will always be a very special year for me because it marked the beginning of a new generation. There is a sense of magic and joy seeing Courtney holding the baby that represents the family projecting far into the future.

This brings me back to Lion King and Simba being shown to all from Pride Rock, the song that is playing is "Circle of Life". I have never paid much attention to that song – except of course to the beginning when some guy belts out some way cool African lyrics that I seem to nail in the shower, but nowhere else. In writing this I actually listened to the lyrics and thought in a small way it captured how Caroline has helped carry us through the challenges we faced this year.

It's the circle of life
And it moves us all
Through despair and hope
Through faith and love
'Til we find our place
On the path unwinding
In the circle
The circle of life[1]

[1] Written by: Elton John, Tim Rice
Lyrics © Walt Disney Music Company



The next thing I see is a naked toddler rushing past me toward the back door with a miniature Australian shepherd hot on his heels. They are both covered in mud. Every crevice, every inch of hair, every paw is caked in wet, brown mud.

Dante's Tenth Circle



Alison R. Christian
Christian, Dichter
& Sluga, P.C.
Phoenix, AZ

It's 55 degrees outside on a Tuesday January afternoon in sunny Scottsdale. I look up to admire a cloud formation when I am struck in the back of the head with a Minnesota Twins t-shirt soaked in mud. It feels heavy and cold while it slips onto my shoulders. I haven't seen my hair stylist or worn anything other than yoga gear in nearly ten months, so my own vanity isn't a concern. The next thing I see is a naked toddler rushing past me toward the back door with a miniature Australian shepherd hot on his heels. They are both covered in mud. Every crevice, every inch of hair, every paw is caked in wet, brown mud. Before I can grab either of them by the ear, they breach the doorway and are gleefully romping around the recently cleaned carpets in the living room. Where in the world did they find mud? It hasn't rained in months, I wonder while my eyes scan the backyard perimeter for a puddle. Just as I start the mud hunt in earnest, my cell phone rings from my pants pocket. It is a client calling for a case update. The muddy mess will just have to wait...

This is a glimpse of what parenting is like during the pandemic. I have long believed that the correct ratio of children to adults is 1:3. You need an adult to keep the child alive, an adult to keep the adults alive, and another adult to work and earn a living for the whole group. The pandemic has made me believe that even this ratio is inadequate.



(Photo Credit Courtesy of Douglas Christian, author of the "Happy Fourth of July!" chapter, infra)

Tom and I decided to take our then two-year old son, Adam, out of full-time day care on March 13, 2020. The pace of news surrounding COVID-19 was starting to pick up and the numbers in Arizona were on the rise. Toddlers are not well-known for their ability to follow directions or keep things out of their mouths generally, and the safest thing to do seemed to be keep Adam home with us. We were both fortunate that we could continue working even though Arizona was shutting down. I can work anywhere, anytime; all I need is a reliable internet connection and my brain. Tom works in landscape design, outdoors away from people and creature comforts all day long. As a short-term solution, we both agreed to cut down our hours while we took turns watching Adam at home. I kept Adam alive from 8:00-1:00 while Tom worked, and Tom did the same from 1:00-6:00 while I worked. We tag-teamed mornings, evenings, and weekends. That lasted all of one month before I cried uncle. Or to be more precise, before I cried mom and dad.

I know there are parents who choose to be with their children full time and what I was doing is not unique. Watching my own child for several hours a day hardly seems like a monumental endeavor. I learned during maternity leave, though, that I absolutely love my job. In fact, I need it. There is nothing that beats the feeling of finding a perfect case citation, or drafting a winning motion, or backing a witness into a corner. Maybe I've been watching too much of the Queen's Gambit lately, but my job feels like an intricate chess match. And boy do I love knocking down those



kings. Stuck at home, I struggled to find the physical and emotional energy to be both a parent and a lawyer in the ways required of me. In truth, I utterly lacked fulfillment.

Adam is (and will be) an only child and deserves someone to pay attention to him, play with him, and nurture his development. My clients and firm deserve my best work and full attention as well. Given that most of my clients are on the east coast, the schedule Tom and I created quickly strained my ability to communicate effectively. Not to mention that any attempt at productivity from our guest room was thwarted by constant pop-ins from a toddler who can sniff me out from a hundred yards. With Arizona's temperature climbing to the hottest summer on record, Tom could not work in the sweltering afternoon sun either. We needed reinforcements. Working this way wasn't working.

After a strict two-week quarantine (from which we haven't emerged) we were able to join households with my parents. They graciously agreed to watch Adam in the mornings while I worked from their secluded upstairs office. Tom worked until 2:00 and then picked up Adam on his way home. I recognize this safety net is not available to everyone; not a day goes by I don't fall to my knees with gratitude. If it hadn't been for my parents' willingness to help out, someone would have needed to leave the workforce – an option I know over 800,000 women were forced to accept in 2020. If that happened, finances would not be the only element to suffer.

Even with help from my parents, there are days where Adam gets too much screen time. Or too much sugar. Or too little sleep. None of us is professionally trained in early childhood development and I keep reminding my mom to cut herself some slack. She and my dad already raised their three children and are agreeing, in their "golden years", to do it again. These are hard days for everyone. There are screams, tears, and "time-ins" where there used to be business suits, team meetings, and room service.

But, fortunately, we all take comfort in knowing that Adam is surrounded by people who love him and who are doing everything in their power to keep him safe. He may not be learning how to count to ten in Navajo (which he had been learning in day care), but he learned how to swim laps on his own, he has the most advanced vocabulary of any three-year-old I've ever known, and takes a picnic walk with his Pops every day. He wakes up from his nap to the soft snuggle of his mom's cheek, has family lunches around the kitchen table from my childhood, and gets to play outside... in the mud, of course. If this time in quarantine taught me anything about parenting it is this: don't sweat the small stuff and be grateful for the big stuff.

Challenges demand action. Action requires inspiration.
The more daunting the challenge, the further you have to reach for the inspiration that will catapult you forward.

Pressure Cooking



SEAN C. GRIFFIN
Dykema Gossett PLLC
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By January 2020, I had circled the dates for the Scottsdale Winter Meeting on my calendar. I planned to spend time lounging by the pools there, and I wanted to work my physique into a shape that belied my age. I figured that, if I got myself halfway to decent shape by March, then I could actually be in decent shape in time for the July Annual Meeting in Bermuda.

Getting in shape requires culinary sacrifices – especially after the damage that I inflicted on my body during the holiday season. My "no cookie left behind" policy wasn't going to cut it for Scottsdale. So out went the barbecue; in came broccoli. Instead of steaks, I ate sea bass. You get the idea.

Speaking of sea bass, I would regularly get whole fish from the supermarket, which put me halfway to a reasonably healthy dinner. I would oil up a few carrots, put them in a roasting pan with salt and pepper, and cook them at 450 for 20 minutes. Then, I would add a layer of sliced onions, lemons, and herbs, and the fish would go on top. If I were feeling sophisticated, I might add some chopped onions or some capers, and that would be dinner.

I'm not going to tell you that I was the pinnacle of fitness when I hit that Scottsdale pool. There are too many adverse witnesses; no one would sign my NDA. But I figured I had a few more months until Bermuda, when I really had to be in shape.

The good news is that I didn't have to worry about going to Bermuda. The bad news is . . . well, you know.

Cooking during a pandemic is like going to trial. Way before your trial date and/or dinner, you have to decide on your goal (summary judgment/defense verdict/pork). You have to figure out what you need to get there (testimony/documents/groceries), and you have to figure out how to get there (written discovery/depositions/Instacart). Especially nowadays, the key is to start early and use technology to help you.

For technology, I am a big fan of (1) the Instant Pot, and (2) sous vide cookers. An Instant Pot is an electric pressure cooker/rice cooker in which you can also sauté vegetables or brown meats. A sous vide cooker is basically a big stick that heats and circulates a container full of water to a precise temperature and keeps it there for as long as you like. Together, these are the written discovery/depositions of weeknight meal preparation.

Have I taken this analogy too far? Let's find out, as I describe how I made Pandemic Pork Loin Jambalaya on a random Tuesday last year.

After lunch, I stirred some butter, salt, and garlic powder into some white wine over heat until everything dissolved. I put this mixture into my flavor injector and used it to pump up a 2.5 pound pork loin (loin - not tenderloin). I put the loin into a Ziploc bag with whatever wine/butter mixture I couldn't get into the meat and sealed the bag. I put the bag in the fridge and went back to working on a letter to opposing counsel.

I took a break from the letter around 3:00, when I noticed that I'd used "however" in three consecutive sentences. I filled up a container with water, stuck my sous vide cooker into the water, and set it for 145 degrees. I went back to my letter.

The sous vide beeped right after I deployed a strategic "heretofore," from which I derived undue satisfaction. I put the Ziploc into the sous vide water and went back to spell check my letter. (I took out the "heretofore.")

During a late afternoon phone conference, I turned my Instant Pot to "sauté." I unmuted myself to make a point about Court of Federal Claims jurisdiction and poured a little oil in my Instant Pot. Then I re-muted myself, because I'm not an animal. I chopped up some onions, carrots, and bell peppers and threw them into the pot once the oil was hot. While they sautéed, I minced much more garlic than most people would have, and I cut up a few tomatoes – all of which went into the pot, along with some Cajun seasoning and a bay leaf. I rinsed off some rice from my pandemic stockpile and put that into the pot with some chicken stock, and I set my Instant Pot to "Rice."

Here's the beauty of this whole setup: I didn't have to worry about the pork overcooking, because the sous vide would keep it at the perfect eating temperature. I didn't have to worry about my rice burning, because the Instant Pot would cook it perfectly and keep it warm until we were ready to eat. I could spend the rest of the afternoon practicing law. When everyone was hungry, I took the pork out of the sous vide, cut it up into bite-sized pieces, and put the pieces into the Instant Pot. I added some peas straight from the freezer and gave everything a quick stir. Two minutes later, I called dinnertime.

In April, I felt like I had a decent handle on things.

By late May/early June, I realized how little of a handle I had on anything, as the world around me turned stupid and vicious. My pandemic-riddled brain took a good look and demanded comfort in the form of calories.

Definitions of comfort foods differ, but usually, you find comfort in what you ate when you were a kid. My grandmother made oxtails back in the day. Back then, oxtails were considered scraps, which made them well suited to the budget of a family that had made its way from Shreveport, Louisiana to Milwaukee, Wisconsin during the Great Migration.

Also back in the day, my mom worked weird hours at the post office, which meant that she often either had to (1) make and eat dinner right before she left for the night shift or (2) make dinner after she got home from work in the morning. As Midwesterners, we knew that chili + spaghetti is good eats. Mom would make a quick chili with ground beef and kidney beans, add some spaghetti to it, and that would be dinner. Sorry, Texans, but it was delicious.

One Sunday in June, my inherited predilection toward pasta with elaborate meat sauce combined with a craving for oxtail. Of course, I looked first to my Instant Pot, which always produces a good oxtail stew, but then I figured I had time for something more elaborate.

I made the tomato sauce first. I roasted some canned tomatoes, carrots, garlic, and capers in the oven, while I simmered the juice from the tomato can with herbs. Eventually, I threw everything together in the saucepan and hit it with my immersion blender. After I did the sauce, I browned some oxtails in our Dutch oven. After browning, I deglazed the pan with some cabernet, making sure to reserve a glass or two for quality control purposes. I added my tomato sauce and I threw the pan into a 300-degree oven for a few hours. While the oxtails were cooking, I made fresh flour-and-egg pasta noodles. Just before the oxtails were ready, I boiled the noodles for about a minute, then I added them to the pan with the oxtails. By then, the tomato-wine sauce had reduced substantially, and I basically had oxtail-tomato-pasta stew. Being from Wisconsin, I immediately added cheese.

Recently, I compared 2020 to being in one car accident after another, for 12 straight months. My car kept crashing in 2021, but I hope I'm at least rolling to a stop. Which means I'll have to get out, dust myself off, and figure out how to face the world again, and for various reasons, that poses a monumental challenge.

Challenges demand action. Action requires inspiration. The more daunting the challenge, the further you have to reach for the inspiration that will catapult you forward.

My grandfather was slim and strong the way men were supposed to look back in his day. He had good posture, and he moved with a slow, relaxed gait that seemed to assume that nothing on this earth would stand for long between him and his destination. When he was 12, his own father died, so he went out and got a construction job to support his mother and his 12 brothers and sisters. Since then, everyone – even the white people in Louisiana, in 1913 – called him "Man."

I remember two of his culinary activities: fermenting wine in his basement and cooking greens. I felt sufficiently inspired on the alcohol front, so I decided to pivot toward greens. They are reasonably easy to make, and they freeze well, so you can store them easily.

For 2021, I made vegetable soup. I sautéed onions, carrots, and celery in a stockpot. I cut up and threw in three zucchini that had been around for a while. I saw some shiitake mushrooms that were about to overstay their welcome, so I cut them up and added them. A couple of jalapenos in the fridge looked about to shuffle off their mortal coils, so they went in the pot. I poured in two cans of whole tomatoes and mashed them up. I added six cups of water, two cups of homemade chicken stock, Worcestershire sauce, and dried herbs. Then I added two bunches of kale. I had the heat on medium high, but the kale didn't really wilt. It kept its shape, and it didn't lose much of its color.

I got myself a bowl. My wife came downstairs and had some. My kids, who rarely care about vegetables, each got a bowl. The world still seemed like a difficult place. I ate a spoonful of soup. I started planning dinner.

Individuals have engaged in social distancing, staying at home, washing hands regularly, and disinfecting surfaces frequently. While these are common safeguards against the virus, adding exercise to your routine could be another line of defense.

A Fitness Journey In A Pandemic World



MARISA TRASATTI
Wilson Elser
Baltimore, MD

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced people to adjust to a new normal, and the impact on fitness is no exception. Individuals may find themselves working from home, thereby sitting for longer periods of time, or they could be caring for kids while schools are shut down – making it difficult to find the time to exercise. While exercise has always been essential to health, being active has become crucial during the pandemic. Benefits of regular exercise include immune-boosting benefits that help fight off infections, prevent weight gain, reduce stress and anxiety, and improve sleep. Taking the time to adjust to a new fitness routine and prioritizing regular physical activity is crucial to optimizing health and improving your general well-being. To quote the former No. 1 tennis champ, Billie Jean King, "Champions adjust."

A CHANGE IN EXERCISE HABITS

The pandemic has impacted more than just businesses and work life, it has affected health as well. During the first quarantine lockdown in 2020, a majority of people became less physically active. This change was a result of gyms closing down, gathering limitations, and general safety concerns. As the quarantine extended and people adjusted, there was a transition in how and when people exercised.





In a recent study conducted by researchers at University College London, researchers gathered anonymized data from approximately 5,400 app users to discover how their exercise habits changed during the phases of the pandemic. Predictably, almost everyone's exercise habits changed when the pandemic and lockdown first started. As restrictions eased, more people began exercising more often but it was individuals 65 and older who returned to their normal exercise habits or extended their exercise times. Researchers suggest that the older individuals were more motivated to work out because of greater concerns about their immune system.[1]

EXERCISE SHOULD BE RECOMMENDED LIKE SOCIAL DISTANCING

It has become common knowledge to implement health procedures and protect yourself from the coronavirus. Individuals have engaged in social distancing, staying at home, washing hands regularly, and disinfecting surfaces frequently. While these are common safeguards against the virus, adding exercise to your routine could be another line of defense.

[1] https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/07/well/move/pandemic-exercise-habits-study.html

Research conducted by Zhen Yan, a professor of cardiovascular medicine, has showed that exercise boosts the production of an antioxidant extracellular superoxide dismutase ("EcSOD").[2] The antioxidant protects against acute lung disease and ARDS, which is a known complication of COVID-19 patients. Adding exercise to your routine, at least 30 minutes a day, will reap the benefits. In addition to coronavirus protection, it is proven that regular physical activity boosts the immune system, and staying healthy during a pandemic is crucial. While it is not magical medicine, exercise has an overall benefit on health and should be added to one's daily routine.

ATHLETES TAKE PRECAUTIONS WHILE EXERCISING

Professional athletes and fitness enthusiasts alike are wearing face coverings when performing physical activities. The CDC has prepared a list of precautions to reduce risk while playing sports, including, wearing a mask at all times, disinfecting gear before and after use, choosing outdoor settings, and avoiding close contact with other people. At the start of the pandemic, athletes were concerned that wearing face coverings while running or performing physical activity would decrease oxygen levels and could be unsafe.

Dr. Matt Auxman, an orthopedic sports medicine doctor for Spectrum Health, has advised that there is no proof that masks decrease oxygen levels or affect performance.[3] Athletes who are concerned about safety should speak with their primary care physician to discuss the risks and benefits of wearing a mask while performing physical activity. However, athletes who are not comfortable wearing a mask should consider alternative sports such as golf, tennis, and swimming as masks are not required.

THE DOWNFALL OF BOX GYMS AND THE RISE OF BOUTIQUES

Box gyms are those that offer a gym area with free weights and cardio equipment along with group fitness classes; gyms such as 24 Hour Fitness, Equinox, YMCA, and local university gyms are included in the category. From a health perspective, during a pandemic, a gym is one of the worst places to exercise. Hot and sweaty environments, typically found in a gym, are breeding grounds for bacteria and fungi. Some gyms have pivoted to outdoor classes and virtual platforms to make ends meet, but for those gyms who did not have that option, shutdowns were inevitable.

Boutique gyms, such as Orangetheory, are typically viewed as small gyms that are able to offer a differentiated experience than those of a traditional box gym.

[1] https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/07/well/move/pandemic-exercise-habits-study.html

[2] https://www.businessinsider.com/exercise-may-help-prevent-a-deadly-coronavirus-complication-2020-4

[3] https://www.mlive.com/public-interest/2020/09/is-it-safe-for-athletes-to-wear-masks-while-exercising.html

Orangetheory was able to endure the pandemic, only having to permanently shut down two studios. The company was able to survive by practicing social distancing, wearing masks, cleaning in between classes, and providing smaller class sizes. Orangetheory also made the jump to virtual training, releasing OT Live, a virtual platform that allowed members to get real-time training from coaches who can see their workouts. The platform, first launched in Canada, will be released in California in the coming months. The quick adaption to pandemic restrictions has allowed the boutique gym to flourish while others have failed.

THE SURGE IN VIRTUAL PLATFORMS

As gyms were deemed unsafe at the start of a global pandemic, fitness enthusiasts turned toward new platforms to stay active. Virtual platforms and fitness apps have taken center stage as they feature a safer way to exercise. Fitness apps typically provide social features where members can encourage each other, share workout routines, and compare and compete with activities.

Strava, a social media app for athletes, has published stats showing women have led the charge in the large activity boom and numbers increase with the app. According to the review, the UK saw the largest increase in people logging their activities on Strava – community members shared more than a billion activities and nearly 400 million photos with each other.[4] Community members encouraged each other to stay active by way of virtual marathons to midway walks while working from home. The social aspect of the app has cultivated a community that will likely stick around post-pandemic.

CONCLUSION

Although times have changed and the new normal can appear daunting at times, fitness has endured and adapted. Taking proper precautions and researching the best way to stay active will ensure that fitness remains a top priority in these trying times.

[4] https://www.cyclingweekly.com/news/latest-news/strava-stats-reveal-pandemic-sparked-enormous-exercise-boom-and-huge-surge-in-number-of-women-using-the-app-486418

There's nothing like having your 4-year-old tell 100 of your colleagues to "Say excuse me before you start talking, Mommy," after being asked to give an update on an upcoming program.

Pandemic Parenting a 4-Year-Old



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Jude's fragile start to life informed our conservative approach to COVID and self-quarantining. Born 8 weeks early weighing 2 lbs. 10 oz., Jude spent his first 53 days in the NICU at Bryn Mawr Hospital, initially on breathing support. At 18 months, Jude was hospitalized for bronchiolitis and transferred from Bryn Mawr's ER to Nemours Children's PICU in Wilmington, DE during a snowstorm.

So when Jon and I returned from the Winter Meeting in Scottsdale and started learning more and more about this new coronavirus—lung complications, acute respiratory distress, ventilator dependency—We. Freaked. Out. Despite the fact that Jude is now a robust, thriving 4-year-old, the memory of your newborn baby struggling to breathe never leaves you. We flashed right back to the NICU, with its beeping machines and high flow nasal cannulas. Jude's early days shaped me as a mother, and that instant protective response has muscle memory. When you watch your child struggle to learn how to do things in the world that they were meant to have done in the womb, your heart aches in a way that's indescribable. I stood guard



"Gym class"—a DIY Peloton

A TYPICAL VIRTUAL DAY

4:30am	-	6:00am	Wake / workout / shower
6:00am	-	8:00am	Work
8:00am	-	9:00am	Jude wake / breakfast / tub / dress
9:00am	-	9:30am	Zoom class session #1 / reading and math
9:30am	-	10:00am	Homework
10:00am	-	11:00am	Work / send Jude to "gym class"
11:00am	-	11:30am	Zoom class session #2
11:30am	-	12:00pm	Work
12:00pm	-	12:30pm	Lunch
12:30pm	-	6:00pm	Work /Jon does 5:15pm Zoom speech therapy with Jude and cooks dinner
6:00pm	-	6:30pm	Dinner
6:30pm	-	8:00pm	Work / Jon cleans up the kitchen and does Jude's bedtime routine
8:00pm			Bedtime with Jude

at his Isolette, jumped at the sound of a cough or sneeze and scrubbed my hands and forearms so many times a day that they cracked and bled.

So when the severity of COVID-19 became clear, we reflexively jumped into hyper-protective mode: Hours spent wiping down groceries with Clorox wipes. Not leaving our house for weeks at a time. Having everything delivered—groceries, toilet paper, pantry staples. Not letting anyone in the house. Waking in the middle of the night to check on Jude.

The transition to pandemic life was not a graceful one. One day bled into the next as we juggled work, parenting and the obsessive wiping-down of every can of seltzer in the grocery delivery. The pace of the early lockdown days was not sustainable: Simultaneously working and parenting seven days a week, eating too much, drinking too much, not working out and barely sleeping. When I attempted to close my eyes at night, all the emotions that I buried throughout the day rose to the surface of my consciousness: Guilt over keeping Jude from his family and friends, but being too afraid to expose him to something that could attack his respiratory system. Guilt over sticking him in front of the TV again or leaving him to play by himself for hours on end so I could work. Anxiety over not working as many hours as I knew I should because it's literally impossible to work and parent full-time.



August 31, 2016



First ambulance ride

We adapted and eventually found our way, even if it wasn't always pretty. We added some healthy meals—vegetables and lean proteins—into the sea of comfort food—carbs, cheese, cream. I squeezed in early morning workouts over Zoom with the trainers from my gym. On the mornings I didn't, Jude and I would work out together during lunch.

As we settled into our new normal, we began to recognize how fortunate we were compared to so many others. Jon and I were luckier than most with our jobs. As a financial advisor recruiter, Jon worked from home full-time pre-COVID, and continued to do so without issue. I transitioned to being fully remote seamlessly—given my prior travel, court appearances and other meetings out of the office, I was already doing a fair amount of work at home and had a dedicated office space. Many of my clients had travel restrictions through their companies, and expected Zoom meetings and mediations, which were easily accomplished from home.

Jude, our only child, was used to entertaining himself for stretches of time, and old enough that he could have a snack or watch TV without hands-on supervision. Jon and I were largely able to juggle our work schedules and switch off with Jude, though some days were rockier than others. There's nothing like having your 4-year-old tell 100 of your colleagues to "Say excuse me before you start talking, Mommy," after being asked to give an update on an upcoming program. Fortunately, it was a Women in the Law meeting, and many could relate to the comedic pitfalls of Zooming from home - if anything, they were relieved it didn't happen to them!



My workout buddy

In June, we expanded our bubble to include my parents, my sister and her family. Our COVID crew - six adults, three kids and two dogs - hunkered down for the summer at my parents' beach house in Avalon, New Jersey. Each morning I walked five miles



Mission Control

on the beach with my husband and sister, soaking in some much needed Vitamin D. We ate healthier, slept better and laughed more. We had our family there to watch Jude while Jon and I worked upstairs in separate rooms, uninterrupted for the entire day. Jude had his two cousins to play with, and he was thrilled. They swam in the pool out back, went for walks and had some normalcy for the first time in months. It was truly idyllic. We knew this time was fleeting, as fall meant the return to isolation, so we met each day with presence and gratitude.

As September drew closer, the anxiety levels steadily creeped back up. Jude was starting at a new Montessori preschool, and the final week of summer was fraught with uncertainty. Every hour, we reassessed "the numbers"—the COVID infection rate, confirmed cases, any data available in and around Delaware County, Pennsylvania. We went back and forth over whether to pull him from school, hire a nanny or return to our pre-summer mayhem of working full-time and parenting full-time while Jude raised himself, with the help of Disney+ and Paw Patrol. Ultimately, we were comfortable with his school's health and safety plan, the small class size and the school's commitment to mask wearing, social distancing, disinfecting regularly

and keeping the children as safe as possible. Jude went back to school and stayed healthy, made new friends and learned new things.



First Day of School

We approached the holidays with an abundance of caution, choosing to keep Jude home for much of the season. While this brought a bit more chaos to our lives, I found myself oddly at peace with the ever-changing landscape of pandemic life. We typically host Thanksgiving, and I love entertaining. But I felt a profound calmness at the thought of watching the Philadelphia Thanksgiving Parade on TV, not cooking for days on end and spending the day at home with my little family. Maybe we'd order Chinese food? Maybe we'd stay in our pajamas all day? Who cares! Turns out, my mom wasn't so willing to let Thanksgiving traditions go by the wayside, and we had a traditional Thanksgiving dinner over Zoom. But I noticed a distinct shift in myself as I loosened my grip on expectations, and accepted each day as it came.

As I am sure is true for all of us, 2020 was a year that tested, challenged and pushed me to the edge of sanity. But it was also a time of intimacy, presence and gratitude. Life would have been so different if I were separated from my family, caring for elderly parents or standing by helplessly while a relative suffered the virus in isolation. The fact that we got so lucky—our health, family and finances still intact—has taught me to take nothing for granted. 2020 forced me to slow down and appreciate the beauty of every day.

Pre-pandemic life was life at full throttle. Everything was go-go-go. But lockdown life gave us the opportunity to just BE. Not going to restaurants meant cooking meals as a family. With no museums to visit, we discovered some beautiful trails right in our neighborhood that had previously gone unnoticed. Not running from gymnastics to music class meant time to up our arts and crafts game. Less commitments on our calendar meant less stress, less chaos and more of JUST US.

Being with Jude so intimately was like watching him grow up before my very eyes—

the opposite of what you might expect being with someone every day. You would expect to not see the small changes over time. But, to me, they were magnified. Over lunch, I learned about his friends at school, his dream last night, what he played that morning while I was working or any number of things that come across a 4-year-old's mind. When I took Jude to doctors' appointments, I was so impressed with how effortlessly he wore his mask, how mature he can be and how brave he is.
Doing speech therapy and occupational therapy at home via Zoom—typically done at school by the Delaware County Intermediate Unit—allowed me to see how his mind processes things, and how far he has come. One night, when I was getting Jude to come up for dinner, I found him in my office at my desk, typing away. "I can't come to dinner, Mom," he said. "I'm too busy working." I smiled, realizing that not only have I gained insight into his world, but he has a deeper understanding of mine.

The pandemic forever changed me—as a person, a mother, a wife, a lawyer. I strive to be mindful of the fact that my pandemic experience does not match the experience of so many others—those who have lost their jobs, their loved ones, their lives. I am more awake to the small but significant moments throughout the day; tiny details I missed when life moved at a faster pace. Most importantly, I am more cognizant of the suffering around me, and remember to treat myself and others with a bit more compassion, patience and grace.

My husband and I would work during the day and then join them on the dock in the afternoon. It was kind of like a vacation - with school and work mixed in. And we were certainly eating and drinking just like we were on vacation ... sunset happy hour every afternoon, lots of grilling, lots of baking.

Teens in Quarantine



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Quarantine with teens ... where to even start!??! To have a clear picture of what it was like living with my teens in quarantine, I have to give you a glimpse of our pre-COVID, pre-quarantine life.

I have 2 teen daughters, and before COVID, our lives were full of activity. My 15-year-old was a freshman in high school playing on a national volleyball team which required travel around the country. My 13-year-old was an 8th grader playing on a regional soccer team which seemed to be on a quest to see every small town in Georgia. They had homework, tests, and practices. They both had very active social lives. Add in two full-time working parents, and it was crazy busy!

It all come to an abrupt halt on March 11, 2020. The school sent an email saying that they were taking a 2-week "break" due to COVID. I sent my girls a text saying, "School's out for summer!" At the time, I had no idea how true those words would be. I had no idea they would not see the inside of their school buildings for almost a year.

From that point on, everything stopped. No volleyball. No soccer. No rushing around in the morning to get to school on time. No going out to dinner. No physically going

into an office. No traveling. Nothing. To be quite honest, it was a welcome change. We may not have realized it at the time, but we all needed a break from the hectic pace.

All of a sudden, we had lots of free time. We did puzzles and played games. We painted. We cleaned out closets. We watched movies. We baked cakes. We cooked good food. We drank wine (well, my husband and I drank wine ... not the girls!)

About 2 weeks in, my teens had had enough of the family fun! The constant refrain that I heard every single day was, "Can we go to lunch with friends?" "Can we go on a walk with friends?" "Can we see friends?" They figured that, as long as they were outside, it should be fine. At this point, some people were quarantining, but others were not. They could see kids together on social media, and they wanted to be a part of it. So there was a lot of FOMO (or fear of missing out) and lots of complaining about wanting to see friends. No one wanted any part of hanging with mom and dad, playing games, or organizing anymore!

After a couple of weeks of saying no, we decided that we would just get out of town and remove the temptation all together. The girls had spring break planned the first week in April, which of course, was canceled. So we decided to take off and go to our lake house instead. When we told the girls our plan, they were not happy. They seemed to think that COVID was going to disappear, and they were magically going to be able to see their friends. We dragged them anyway.

One week turned into 12 weeks. Once we got up there, we all started to realize that we were in this for the long haul. By this point, everyone else was actually in quarantine and their friends were not seeing each other. So they were pretty happy to be able to quarantine with a view of the lake.

My girls started virtual "school" after spring break. When I say "school," I mean that in the loosest sense of the world. None of us were prepared for virtual school when COVID hit, so everyone was doing the best they could. Their school day consisted of them sleeping until noon, and then doing a few hours of work before deciding to head out to the dock to lay out in the sun or ride around on jet skis. My husband and I would work during the day and then join them on the dock in the afternoon. It was kind of like a vacation - with school and work mixed in. And we were certainly eating and drinking just like we were on vacation ... sunset happy hour every afternoon, lots of grilling, lots of baking.

When my girls had had about enough of only my husband and me for company, we decided to have some close friends up to visit. They lived in Chicago and had been strictly quarantining, so we figured it would be safe. They came for the week of July 4th, and we had a blast. We headed home on July 6th, and my 13-year-old went to soccer practice that evening (the first practice back). Little did we know that we were about to shut down the entire soccer program for 2 weeks!

On Wednesday, July 8, my friend called to say that her 2 kids had tested positive for COVID. We hit panic and drove an hour north of Atlanta to get tested. After waiting in line for over an hour, we were told they were out of tests and sent home. So, we frantically looked for another test. At this point, it was virtually impossible to be tested in Atlanta as all the testing facilities were out of tests. We finally found one that we had to pay $150 each to take and went to be tested the next day. Sure enough, my girls and I were positive. Somehow my husband was spared. When I found out, I ordered 2 weeks of food on Instacart, and the minute it was delivered, we headed back to the lake and stayed there for another 2 weeks, leaving my husband home alone to hold down the fort.

My girls had hardly any symptoms, so they were able to enjoy the lake. I had flu-like symptoms for about a week and then felt better. We were re-tested on our way back into town and were negative! Although it is never fun to be sick, there was a sense of relief that our cases were mild, and in having the COVID diagnosis behind us.

My girls headed back to "school" in August, but it was still virtual. While they are not physically going to the school building, there was much more structure than there had been in the spring. They had to get up and actually attend classes every day via Zoom. But they could go to class in their PJs, and half the time are in their beds. (We made a deal that they could attend their elective classes from the bed as long as they had A's in all classes.)

Almost one year after they were given the 2-week "break" for COVID, my girls finally returned to in-person school on February 16. It could not have come soon enough. Just the previous day I walked into my 16-year old's room while she was in her virtual geometry class, and she was watching The Bachelor TV show on her phone! I am almost certain this wasn't part of the assigned curriculum. Clearly, they need to be in a real classroom!

Even with all the challenges, quarantine was a welcome respite for all of us. We had been running at full speed with school, work, sports, and other activities. We needed the break, but hadn't realized it. It was so nice to not have to go anywhere, to not have to be anywhere, to not have to worry about the everyday running around and deadlines.

Our life slowed down, and it was a welcome and needed change. Although there was so much lost during COVID, the quarantine time with my teens has ultimately been such a gift, and it really made us all grateful for the everyday things we take for granted. While I'm certainly ready for things to get back to normal, I think we will look back on this time as a bit of an adventure, and like all adventures, this had the good and bad ... but mostly good.

Instead of going to the office that morning as I had planned, I went to St. Louis. That impromptu road trip remains one of the few bright spots during the pandemic because it gave us the chance to bond over such a momentous event.

College During the Pandemic



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When I think back to my years as an undergraduate at the University of New Mexico, images of the good times that I had, and the friendships that I enjoyed are what first comes to mind. Attending sporting events, parties, and yes, maybe even a few hours at UNM's beautiful Zimmerman Library studying, are some of my favorite memories. However, for those students attending college during a pandemic, vastly different experiences are at the forefront.

Even though my own college days are further in the past than I would like to admit, I have been tasked with writing about the college experience during the pandemic. Perhaps I am somewhat uniquely qualified amongst the FDCC membership for this job because in March of 2020, I had four children in college. My wife Sara (who is also an attorney) and I are raising a blended family that includes my set of 20 year old triplets and my step-daughter that is one week older than the triplets. (Just to make sure we never retire, my wife and I had two more children...but the Turner family history is another topic for another day).



At the beginning of 2020, we celebrated that not only did our four older kids go off to college, but after their first semester – all four were allowed to return! The colleges they attend are as different and unique as each one of them have always been. Lexi attends the Univ. of Portland in Portland, OR; Abby - the Univ. of St. Louis; Grace is at Wellesley in Boston; and Kit (our only boy) chose the Univ. of North Alabama.

The first lesson the Pandemic has taught was just how quickly life can change. This is a truism that has been repeated for eons, but everyone over age three was reminded why the expression is always repeated by those that are older and wiser. However, the concept of abrupt change has never been more clearly in focus than by those in college. Within a matter of days, what we used to consider normal college life became one of rushing to pack up and move back home. There was the mad scramble of deciding what needed to be brought home, and finding storage locations for items too big to travel (such as the quintessential dorm room fridge), coupled with the sadness of saying goodbye to friends and leaving behind unfinished business.

While the younger generation always gets accused of being less responsible than the one before, I suspect that for these young people who experienced such sudden, and unexpected change, will produce adults that appreciate the moment and take less for granted than me and my peers did at the same age. I will never forget waking up on a Friday morning with an email from the administration at St. Louis University that Abby, who was home for spring break, had to pick a slot the next day to get her completely moved out of her dorm room for the remainder of the semester. Instead of going to the office that morning as I had planned, I went to St. Louis. That impromptu road trip remains one of the few bright spots during the pandemic because it gave us the chance to bond over such a momentous event. Ironically, I vividly recall thinking back in March of 2020 that we would really understand what is going on in the next two weeks, and wondered if it was going to be so bad that she would not be returning to school before the semester was over. Needless to say, our expectations were way off! But those early days of the pandemic forced college students to adapt and change expectations in ways that they could not have conceived of the previous week.

Abby did get to return to campus in the fall, with strict protocols and lots of anxiety. Quite frankly, I did not blame her. On the SLU parents' Facebook page, much like the entire country, there was quite a range of opinions about the seriousness of the pandemic and what should be done to prevent further spread of COVID.

The returning to campus after a summer away, seeing old friends and getting back into the rhythm of college life is a time honored tradition. This is especially true when one returns as a sophomore. College life is still relatively new, but without the nerves and the unknown facing the typical freshman. For my college kids, the return was filled with trepidation: would the schools stay open the entire semester; how could they safely eat in the cafeteria; would they get to see their friends or have to spend their weekends in their rooms by themselves?

While Abby, Grace, and Kit were able to go back to school, Lexi was not allowed to return to campus at the University of Portland. Ironically, Oregon and Alabama (where we live) have nearly the same size populations. However, Alabama has consistently reported three times the number of cases that have occurred in Oregon. Campuses in Alabama were wide-open, so while she could not return to school in Oregon, nearly all her friends at home were back at school. Lexi handled the news that she was not going to be returning to school in the fall of 2020 well, but it definitely stung. Because of the time difference, her classes were in the afternoon and evening, followed by late nights of homework, only to wake up the next day and repeat the same process over again. For a period of time, the isolation took a toll on her mental health. In truth, I was so focused on getting through each day myself, that I did not give her the support she needed. As parents, we cannot underestimate the disappointments and struggles of our college students who suddenly found themselves back at home, with no where to go and no one to go with.

Lexi is now back on campus in Portland and loving her college life that consists of school (mostly online from her single dorm room) and workouts with the rowing team. As she prepared to leave, she carried mixed emotions. Stuck at home with Mom and Dad (who expected her to do chores and earn her keep) was definitely not the college life of her dreams. Yet, there was an appreciation for the time we got to spend together without so many siblings around. And of course, there is still concern for COVID and whether school will stay open the entire semester.

Each one of my four college kids is different and unique, and their experience during the pandemic is equally different. For my son Kit, it changed his life in significant ways. Like every teenager that has ever played guitar, he had dreams of being a rock star one day. As a fall back plan -"just in case" he did not hit the bigtime, he decided he needed a college education. As a freshman at the Unv. of North Alabama, he was in two different bands and sporting a rock star look that made me wonder whatever happened to that little kid with a crew cut.

Needless to say, live music disappeared in 2020, and with it, so did his dreams of fame. After spending the summer working at a golf course (golf courses were considered an "essential" business in Alabama) he returned to school a little less certain about a career in music. As the COVID cases began to increase, his classes moved completely online. His apartment roommate was from nearby, and chose to move back home to save money. Suddenly, he was living completely by himself, and it took a toll on him mentally and academically. He struggled with the online classes and ultimately made the decision to withdraw before his already fragile GPA took a significant hit. Instead, he made the decision to enlist in the Army and as I write this, he is in his first week of boot camp at Fort Benning, Georgia.

My daughter Grace had the opposite experience at Wellesley. Wellesley decided to have freshman and sophomores on campus in the fall, with juniors and seniors back for the spring semester. Limiting the number of students on campus allowed each one to have her own room, as well as make social distancing more effective. I won't detail all the rules and procedures here, but suffice it to say that Wellesley had their act together. Students had to have a negative test to return to school, then were quarantined in a hotel rented out by Wellesley for three days and another negative test. Once on campus, everyone was tested twice per week. While the experience was different than her freshman year (no weekend trips to Boston), she still was able to have an enjoyable experience. She was even able to secure a dorm room that became available to sophomores and was allowed to return to campus for the spring semester.

College during COVID taught more than just academics. The experience impacted each of our four college kids in different and significant ways. However, like thousands of their peers throughout the country, they learned valuable life lessons:

- Life can change in an instant.
- Appreciate the moment.
- Make the most of what you have while you have it.
- Relationships matter.
- You must adapt to survive and succeed.

These are the lessons being learned on college campuses right now. And as a nation, as we deal with racial injustice and political turmoil that seemed to define our country in 2020, perhaps it is these lessons that will empower this younger generation to move the country forward in a way that my generation, who went to college in the 1980's, failed to do. The irony is that the pandemic leaves me more optimistic about the future than ever before. These students have seen their worlds completely change in a matter of days. They appreciate what they have and understand how precious a moment can be and how quickly it can disappear. More importantly, they have learned how to succeed and find their best during a difficult time. Better days are ahead!

We also learned some very important things about ourselves. I am a horrible barber and I will never again try to cut my husband's hair. Christina hates hearing us chew our food. My family pointed out how much different (i.e. older) I look when I don't color my roots for 5 months.

Family Matters



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Chester County, Pennsylvania shut down on March 16, 2020. Work and school went 'virtual', travel plans were cancelled, and courthouses and businesses were shuttered. Our oldest daughter, Elizabeth, was home from college for spring break never expecting she would be trapped at home with us until late May. Our youngest daughter, Christina, was suddenly facing the rest of 11th grade by Zoom. My practice came to a screeching halt overnight. Our house was full of frustrated (and somewhat anxious) women. My poor husband.

It was understandable that the kids were upset. Elizabeth enjoyed her freedom and independence at Pitt and was anxious to return when they abruptly closed the dorms and made her stay home. Christina was just a day away from getting her driver's license and finally getting her freedom when the test was cancelled with no new date in sight. The girls couldn't understand why they couldn't see their friends. My girls jokingly tell me I am a bit 'extra' and I admit that I can be, mainly about the big things like safety, curfew and the like. COVID made me a bit crazy at first because we didn't know who was most at risk for severe complications or worse. Kids





are walking petri dishes at any age, so there was definitely a concern about them bringing it home, so we kept them locked down completely. As a result, those first few weeks weren't pretty. There were many days I wondered how it was going to work.

Something had to give. We couldn't spend our days fighting over something we could not control. We all resorted to distraction. We started a puzzle. I finally read some of the books I'd stacked up. The girls started a workout plan. The spring semester passed by Zoom. We each settled into a routine that worked for us, but regardless of how we spent our days, we came together for dinner. Before quarantine, the girls would sometimes return to their rooms after dinner to watch TV or talk to friends, but something changed. They stuck around and they roped us into playing Monopoly and Clue. We played a lot of cards and rediscovered dominos. While we played games, we explored new music and playlists and Christina turned us all on to TikTok. What first felt like prison started to feel quite enjoyable. I refer to that time period as the "sweet spot" of quarantine. Each of us was content to be together, right where we were, with no worries about what we were missing, and grateful to be safe and sound.

We also learned some very important things about ourselves. I am a horrible barber and I will never again try to cut my husband's hair. Christina hates hearing us chew



our food. My family pointed out how much different (i.e. older) I look when I don't color my roots for 5 months. Despite hoarding bread flour and yeast, I will never have the energy to make bread from scratch, even during a lockdown. There is a lot to learn about survival from watching 10 seasons of the Walking Dead. And, the big family gatherings we host on holidays are far easier than a day full of Zoom calls with grandparents.

As a family, we've always been close. What struck me about quarantine was that we started to connect with our girls on a very different level. Suddenly, these little girls we raised (and admittedly spoiled a little bit) were all grown up and facing new obstacles, some of which we couldn't fix or explain. We talked through things like anger and disappointment over what we were all missing, the fear and anxiety about getting sick or getting our loved ones sick, and how we could emerge from this time improved in some way. Steve and I tried hard to instill in our kids a sense of resilience and optimism in the face of disappointment when they were little, but this was the first true test for both. I suppose these are things that can't be taught as much as experienced, and we were proud of how they dealt with the fallout from quarantine.

My kids weren't alone. Many of their friends and several cousins missed out on milestones like the end of senior year. They commiserated together and helped each other through it as best they could. I have no doubt this will all make them stronger in the end, but we struggled with how to explain that to them while it was happening.

Eventually, the draconian lock-down ended and Elizabeth immediately flew the coop to stay with a friend in Philadelphia for a while. Even though the city was still closed for business, she was back to living the life of a 20-year old and out from under our thumb. Christina finally got her license and started working. Eventually Elizabeth returned home again because as nice as freedom is, it is expensive, and without opportunities to work in Philadelphia, the grass was definitely greener at home.

Elizabeth returned to college in late July 2020 and is living happily ever after with her friends in an off-campus apartment. Usually by the time she leaves for college we are all ready, though I must admit it was hard to see her go this time. Christina has lost her senior year to Zoom, and is holding out hope for a prom, in-person graduation, and a 'normal' college experience in Fall 2021. To help her through this disappointing year and prepare us for the empty nest, we did what anyone would do - we added a new golden retriever puppy to the family. Nala is full of joy and energy and she is completely enamored with our 5-year old golden, Rocky. He is not as pleased to have her here as we are, but we know they will be buddies just as soon as she stops chewing on his ears.

This time in quarantine, though not what any of us wanted at first, turned out to be a gift. After Elizabeth left for college in 2018, we never expected to have both girls under our roof for an extended period of time again. After the initial shock wore off, we slowed down and took it in, knowing this was found time together. We'll likely never get it again. For my kids' sake, I hope that's true. We want them out in the world and living happily ever after. And Steve and I have no doubt we will enjoy the empty nest phase of our life knowing that is the case.

Our girls have both told us that they look back on quarantine fondly, and we do too. We went into quarantine running on all cylinders. Steve and I traveled most weeks and the girls were consumed with school commitments, sports, work and a busy social life. While I miss some of the travel and the in-person aspects of my practice, it felt good being together at home while it lasted. I was content knowing my family was together and we were safe and sound. Once they move out, we don't know that for sure, so all we can do is hope and pray they have what they need to thrive and that they don't forget about us. I like to think that each of us are emerging from the 2020 quarantine with a renewed sense of gratitude for family, our health and a willingness to focus on the things that really matter.

Strangely, the pandemic has enriched relationships in some ways. It has given those who are distanced physically a yearning to reach out and reconnect in new ways. I will confess that prior to the pandemic I had never heard of Zoom, except as a teeth whitener.

Celebrating Birthdays During The Pandemic



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Birthdays can be difficult even in the best of times. As the years pass, many of us would likely rather ignore them, or at least keep the celebrations low key. However, during 2020, the year of a pandemic, it seems we all needed a reason to rejoice another year around the sun, and hopefully, for most of us, good health. As Oprah Winfrey once said, "The more you praise and celebrate your life, the more there is in life to celebrate."

The pandemic altered our birthday celebrations in significant ways. Social distancing and avoidance of indoor gatherings prevent all the usual trappings of a birthday party. Thinking of years past, the simple tradition of blowing candles out on a birthday cake seems reckless today. Even those of us who never ascribed to be a germaphobe can't imagine eating a dirty piece of cake someone blew on. One hopes that these rituals will become normal again, but human behavior is interesting.

The fear-sensing part of our brain, the amygdala, controls much of our automatic impulses. Over the course of many months, we have been trained to respond to a

specific danger, an invisible virus associated with proximity to other people. It seems a challenge for those fears to subside. Will we be able to return to the old ways? I catch myself gasping in shock at scenes in movies of parties with people standing closely together, indoors, conversing, eating and drinking, while servers pass around cocktails and hors d'oeuvres on trays. Many of my happiest memories include such scenes, but now I can't imagine feeling comfortable so close to others or eating food from someone's tray. Those days seem so long ago.

Back then, we looked forward to gatherings with friends and loved ones for a special birthday. People traveled from near and far to honor the important day. It has been hard on those who have "celebrated" some milestone birthday in the age of COVID.

Social media has helped to spread the word within communities of alternative forms of festivities. An elderly aunt turned 94 this past summer, and her children and grand-children orchestrated a drive-by birthday party via Facebook. They invited family, church friends and others to pass by the house while she sat in a lawn chair in the front yard, wearing a "birthday girl" sash, feather boa and tiara. She was thrilled with the attention, but the lack of human connection was disheartening.

Some choose to announce a birthday with a yard sign. They include birthday wishes and décor reflecting an interest or hobby of the celebrant. Baseball gloves and soccer balls, or ballerina slippers and cheerleading pompons positioned on either side of the message sharing with the world passing by an impression of the special person.

Strangely, the pandemic has enriched relationships in some ways. It has given those who are distanced physically a yearning to reach out and reconnect in new ways. I will confess that prior to the pandemic I had never heard of Zoom, except as a teeth whitener. However, in the last year, it has become ubiquitous, even being used as a verb. With this technology, many have moved their parties online.

My best friend from childhood lives in another state. We typically call and send each other birthday cards (snail mail) on our special day. This year, she needed something more, so she organized a Zoom birthday with friends from all over the country and different aspects of her life– a childhood friend (me), college friends, work friends from multiple jobs spanning decades, and more recent friends, mostly parents of kids from her kids' school. In advance of the party, she sent everyone chocolates and little umbrellas with which to adorn our cocktails for the party. We played a virtual trivia game based on the birthday girls' likes and dislikes, to judge who knew her best. If not for some technical difficulties in the vote tallies, I would have won.

For my family's part, the pandemic birthday posed a real challenge. My husband and I have birthdays within one week of each other with our anniversary sandwiched evenly between. The second week of October typically includes enjoying a splurge

meal out and/or a long weekend trip. We've driven to Santa Fe, or, for a very special treat, spent the entire week city hopping in Europe, with our favorite city of Paris always in the mix. However, in 2020, with travel restrictions and limitations on restaurant dining, we had to set our expectations low.

Luckily, the weather on our anniversary was pleasant for mid-October, and our favorite French restaurant had open patio seating. We literally had the place to ourselves. The cool French waiter indulged us with an opportunity to practice our very poor French and pretend we weren't in Oklahoma. We ordered small plates of delicious food, drank wine and enjoyed bread which was the perfect combination of crusty and soft. We topped off the meal with crème brûlée and a box of fresh baked macaroons which rival any we've had in Paris. Other than wearing a mask when the waiter came by the table, it almost felt normal.

For our boys, their birthdays still represent milestones. Our oldest celebrated his last birthday at home before going to college. Our youngest entered his teen years. These are times you want to make memorable and special. That's not an easy task when you can't gather with friends and family.

Over the past couple of years, we have established a tradition of buying an assortment of cupcakes from a local coffee shop/bakery. As the place is a half-hour drive from our home, we don't get there often, and the cupcakes are truly a treat. This was one tradition we were able to carry on in the pandemic.

Our boys also enjoy a nice meal for their birthdays. We tried to recreate this tradition as well with take-out from a favorite sushi place, for our youngest, and a perfectly cooked filet for our oldest. Mom and Dad also celebrated by opening a nice bottle of wine, our go-to Napa cabernet.

While the special connections with extended family and friends has been lacking for birthdays and other celebrations during the pandemic, we have persevered and looked to other means, including technology, to recreate some of those experiences in a safe, socially distanced way. There is certainly a lot of pent-up demand to gather for a large party, linger over a good meal with a few close friends, or travel to a favorite destination. With the promise of the vaccines, and the potential normalcy they bring, many can expect to share their next birthday in a more traditional way. We will all be glad for that.



We gathered video messages from loved ones and coaches that couldn't celebrate the day with us in person, so that she would know they were with her. Our montage ranged from touching tributes to the blooper reel, and everything in between.

Graduation



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From the moment I was handed that beautiful little pink bundle, my mind reeled with images of all her big life events that I would celebrate as her mama. I envisioned that glorious playlist of first steps, school days, toothless grins, little toes in the sand on vacation, visits with Santa, sporting events, chasing boys, and high school graduation. Ah, Graduation!

Even though the rational brain knows that there is no end date to being a parent, Graduation Day in many ways becomes symbolic of a pseudo finish line. If we can get those precious little bundles to that goal post, to that big glorious day, we have somehow punched our ticket and accomplished the mission – the mission of raising an amazing little human. From those first moments, the eye is on the prize as we strive to guide these little creatures we are entrusted with to that magical day. We preach to study hard. Play all the sports. Join all the clubs. Eat all the veggies. Be kind. Do all the good things, so that one day, said bundle might flip that tassel and collect a diploma, flying into the next chapter as a contributing young adult.

I have two children. My daughter, a member of the high school Class of 2020, and her "little" brother (the tallest in our house), who will graduate high school in 2024. When the pandemic hit, we were fully immersed in all the ceremonial rites of passage of senior year. The announcements had been ordered, the deposit placed on the rustic party barn for the party, and a college had been selected. And then, the goal posts disappeared.

The first blow came days before we were scheduled to travel to her final national swim meet. We knew that the world around us was gradually shutting down, but it seemed beyond the realm of possibility that this championship meet would be vulnerable, too. When it cancelled, the hope and excitement of what could have been simply evaporated. There would be no fun in the sun with her teammates. My little pink bundle, not so little anymore and stalking that last great age group swim, wouldn't get it. It would have to wait.

The hits kept coming – cancelled banquets, celebrations, senior skip day, the prom (not the prom!)… all overlaid with an extreme sense of isolation due to the mandatory quarantine. Suddenly, our very active house - with practices and events and travel that kept us coming and going constantly – was still. Suddenly, we were all grounded. The realization set in that we were not going anywhere anytime soon – this pause would remain well into the summer, stealing from us the Holy Grail . . . . taking away Graduation. Graduation! I was devastated. Well, maybe that's a little dramatic. But, those that know me, know that I was devastated. (And, also, that I am dramatic.) It was so unfair to our Class of 2020, who had worked so hard, to be robbed of their big day.

As her would be graduation date approached, I had a revelation. In the midst of feeling so bad for my daughter, a longing for all the things she would miss – I realized that the longing was really my own. My girl was fine; the one feeling the loss was me. The pageantry of Graduation is for the parents – not those pink and blue bundles. While I can usually remember the inane details of the most insignificant events, I have absolutely no recollection of my own graduation day. I have a vague recollection of capturing a stolen moment in the processional with my bestie on a cheap 35mm camera; but I don't really remember the ceremony. I do not remember our valedictorian or the other speakers, walking the stage, receiving my diploma or even the iconic hat toss. I have no recall of feelings of pride or accomplishment. My call back of that momentous day all those years ago is only of a generic affinity for my friends and family, and of course, optimism and excitement for the adventures ahead, especially the graduation parties to follow.

My epiphany came after my girl repeatedly told me that it was fine; she was fine. She confided that she was more upset about missing her final swim meet and not being able to achieve the peaks that she had worked so hard to hit, the loss of the optimism of that future success. She really was unaffected by forfeiting the

traditional ceremony, the loss of the public reflection on past success. This stopped me in my tracks. The sense of loss over the ceremony was my own. I was the one that would miss seeing her walk the stage. I was the one that would not get to celebrate her accomplishments publicly. I was the one that wouldn't get to cry like a baby in the bleachers or shout my fool head off when her name was called and diploma delivered. I was robbed! I spent 17 ½ years trying to master this parenting challenge, with the aforesaid moments as my promised reward. Sure, there were a few other rewards along the way, but Graduation Day was the Publisher's Clearinghouse of paydays!

Armed with this recognition, I retooled. I refocused. I renewed. I recommitted to making sure that she, too, would have the lasting memories that matter most - those of intimate moments with friends and family celebrating and loving on her. We gathered video messages from loved ones and coaches that couldn't celebrate the day with us in person, so that she would know they were with her. Our montage ranged from touching tributes to the blooper reel, and everything in between. I feel so fortunate that my girl has given me much to be proud of, but I was moved most to hear the warm words of love and friendship from her peers. She is a good friend. She is a kind human. Although not mutually exclusive, I choose this recognition over a handshake with the principal.

Determined, our brave village of mamas pulled together to graduate our girls from the garage. Six fine young ladies that had shared four special years donned their graduation caps, cords and gowns and processed up the driveway to Pomp & Circumstance. As planned, I cried. On an inflatable movie screen set up in the garage, the girls and their masked and socially distanced immediate families watched a virtual ceremony aired by our school district. We cheered as photos of our six lovelies, replete with their honors, accomplishments and chosen colleges, bounced across the screen. As the principal called their names, our girls approached the corner of the garage where the bicycles hung, to receive a makeshift diploma from their dads, while their moms waited anxiously for the handshake and hug. As planned, I whooped my fool head off for all of them.

Thereafter, we drove our graduate to the school, where the red carpet had been rolled out, to receive her real diploma via some DIY contraption that resembled a pizza peel. Our loved ones were able to watch the blessed event online, something that wasn't available in years prior. A tribute to the wonderful community we live in, the next event was a Senior Send Off parade. I admit, the liability lawyer in me shuttered at the thought of gaggles of freshly graduated 17-19 year olds, piling into cars and driving around our neighborhood. What transpired, instead, was akin to a well-organized homecoming parade, with one or two seniors in each decorated vehicle, greeted by friends and neighbors that had set up in lawn chairs along the parade route. Reflecting on the festivities, this was by far the girls' favorite part of



Lexi and April Elkovitch

the day. They felt the love as they laughed and waved their way along the three mile route.

With no parties to run to, our last surprise for my girl was a mock prom at home. The best proms should always include the dashing boyfriend, the little brother, parents, grandparents and, of course, chocolate fondue. Always, the chocolate fondue.

From sun up to sun down, we spent the entire day celebrating my girl. I'd be lying if I said I wasn't exhausted when I hit the pillow that night. My tank was empty, but my heart was full. There was not a moment to think about what we may have missed.

In hindsight, our special celebration put the traditional Graduation Day to shame. We didn't have to get up at six o'clock in the morning, dragging the grandparents to the Convention Center, in the hopes of securing a decent seat. We didn't have to wait in the heat of the rafters for hours for the ceremony to start, only to be followed by hours of speeches and name reading and long lines in the parking garage. Instead, I was able to warmly focus on what mattered most – the special uniqueness and awesomeness that is my girl. Without the hidden blessings brought by the still of the pandemic, I undoubtedly would have been caught up in the hustle and bustle of our daily routine. I surely would have missed the opportunity to stop and focus on the joy of the day. Mr. Bueller was right – Life does move pretty fast. I'm so glad I stopped to look around and didn't miss it.

What? What about a wedding with 350+ people on April 4, 2020? We immediately contacted our wedding planner and began putting together a "Plan B." If this pandemic carries over into April, we need to examine a possible rescheduling date in May.

A Pandemic Wedding, Fifth Time's The Charm



ROBERT AND LIB FOSTER
Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP
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As 2019 drew to a close, there was excitement and anticipation in the air for the Foster family. Our oldest daughter, Burgess, was making the final preparations for her April 4, 2020 wedding day to her 10th grade high school sweetheart.

The last three months of 2019 were filled with endless love, fun and excitement with engagement parties, showers and final details for the wedding. The ceremony would be held in our family church, Eastminister Presbyterian Church, and officiated by our Senior Pastor who had a vital role in Burgess's spiritual development. The reception was to be held a few blocks away in downtown Columbia, S.C. at a historic mansion that had just been converted to a social venue. Our April 4, 2020 wedding would be the first function ever to be held at this venue. Approximately 25 vendors were



researched, selected and contracts executed. The "perfect wedding" was a mere 3 months, 4 days away! The planning, by the Bride and Mother-of-the-Bride, was impeccable.

As the calendar turned to 2020, last minute, fine-tuning for the wedding were under way. Both families attended the delicious food-tasting with the caterer to make our final menu selections. All beverages for the bar hand-selected including a wine tasting at our home. Flowers for the Church, decorations for the reception, you name it, were carefully selected.

Our youngest daughter, Marjorie Anne (Maid-of-Honor), planned a spectacular bachelorette weekend for February 13 – 16, 2020 in the Bahamas at the Baha Mar Resort for the soon-to-be Bride and 14 Bridesmaids. They had a memorable time, and with the wedding less than two months out, everyone was counting the days until the big day!

Then something strange and unpleasant started to happen. . .

While we were hearing reports of an unusual and dangerous virus outbreak in the northeast and west coast in large cities, we really did not think it would affect our lives in Columbia, S.C. Then on March 1, 2020, there was an outbreak of COVID-19 in a small city just forty-five minutes outside Columbia. Shortly thereafter, on March 15, 2020, the Governor of South Carolina issued an Order closing public schools and

urging all public gatherings be cancelled until March 31, 2020.



What? What about a wedding with 350+ people on April 4, 2020?

We immediately contacted our wedding planner and began putting together a "Plan B." If this pandemic carries over into April, we need to examine a possible rescheduling date in May. We checked with the key vendors and selected a weekend in May as Plan B. Within two days, we had a rescheduled wedding date of May 9, 2020, if need be. Surely, we thought, everything would calm down by May. Two weeks later, we realized May 9 might be too soon, so we picked a third date of May 29, 2020. A month later, reality set in and we began to realize the situation was much worse than originally thought, so we selected a fourth day during the summer months, July 11, 2020.

Planning a first wedding in normal times can be fun, but also extremely stressful, particularly for the Bride, Mother-of-the-Bride, and Mother-of-the-Groom. Having to reschedule four times does not even register on the "stress gauge." Not only did we not know when it would be safe to hold a wedding, but we had 25 vendors that we needed to schedule for the eventual wedding day. We need to invent a new word to measure that level of stress and anxiety!

Now that we had a little more time to think rationally, the two families met at our house on May 15 for dinner to discuss a realistic wedding day. At dinner, we would make a final decision on the wedding date. Someone raised the issue that July 11 in Columbia was mighty hot. Should we push it out further into the fall when the weather would be more friendly? We put it to a vote. A new date was selected – October 10, 2020. And this new date was selected with a "come hell or high water" amendment.

Back to the drawing board to re-book all the vendors. As it turned out, almost all the vendors were available because everyone else was postponing their Fall weddings. Only one vendor refused to cooperate – the downtown mansion reception venue. The owners advised us they were not re-booking any events "for the foreseeable future." Basically, they said their venue would not be available. We had to find a new reception venue.

Within a couple of weeks, we found a new reception venue. An old horse farm with a nice mansion at the end of the farm with large open grounds in the front and backyard. The only downside was the venue was about ten miles outside of Columbia and our church. Since our church was also still closed, we decided to move the



wedding ceremony to the backyard of the main house, and reception would be on the front yard.

Six weeks before the October wedding, we sent a second formal invitation to the same people who were originally invited highlighting the new venue and weekend plan changes and outlining all healthy and safety precautions we would be taking (we decided not to "uninvite" any guests, but fully expected a smaller number of people would self-regulate). The number of accepting guests dropped from 350+ to slightly over 150 people.

The entire event would now be outdoors to create a safer, open space with fresh air for all guests. Social distancing protocols were in place. The ceremony chairs were all spaced apart at an appropriate distance, and we had standing room on the large porch for guests who wanted to be even more careful. For the reception, we used a very large open-air sailcloth tent. Even though we knew the guest count would be less than the original April date, we prepared the size of the tent, dance



floor, etc. as if we would host 350+ guests. We added extra bars inside and outside the tent – ensuring there were no lines at the bar. We also set up several high-top tables outside of the tent for guests who did not feel comfortable gathering under the tent. Now all we needed was for the weather to cooperate. . .

The bride and groom arrived in town on October 3, 2020. The weather forecast looked promising. Then on October 4, news reports began talking about Hurricane Delta forming in the Gulf of Mexico. The Hurricane was now scheduled to hit the coast of Louisiana on Monday, October 5, and move in a northeast pattern. By Tuesday, October 6, it was predicted to be a tropical storm to hit South Carolina on October 9-10, specifically Columbia, S.C. What?

For once, the weatherman got the prediction correct. Tropical Storm Delta hit Columbia the morning of October 10. It was supposed to make its way through Columbia and clear out by around 3:00 pm. The wedding was scheduled to start at 6:00 pm. The weatherman was not correct with that prediction. By 5:00 pm, it was still pouring rain in Columbia. Remind you, everything was being held outside. Then, almost miraculously, the rain stopped at 5:45 pm. All the chairs for the ceremony

were quickly dried off. The clouds completely disappeared, and there was a cool breeze and the weather was almost perfect. The ceremony was delayed 15 minutes, starting at 6:15 pm. The rain stayed away after the clouds cleared. The reception started at 7:00 pm to a beautiful evening. After traditional first dances, welcome to all the guests, and toast to the Bride and Groom, the crowd of about 150 guests ate, drank, and danced the night away to celebrate that Burgess and John were "Finally Fowble" (a hash tag theme used through their engagement that had taken on a new meaning thanks to the pandemic).

Once their beautiful wedding ceremony commenced, there were no longer any thoughts of COVID-19 or Hurricane Delta. At 11:00 pm, the now-married couple rode off from the reception in a 1957 convertible Corvette driven by Senior Federal Judge Joe Anderson, a speaker at several FDCC conferences, to a show of fireworks!

After the wedding weekend, many of the out-of-town wedding party got COVID-19 tests just to be safe. All tests came back negative, and no guests reported contracting the virus during the weekend. So, as they say, All's Well That Ends Well!



When our offices closed, I moved to a 100% virtual law and mediation practice. As I built my Zoom skills I sometimes felt like Col. Mustard in a game of Clue trying to figure out: Who is with Miss Peacock in the Library? What is Miss Scarlett doing with a revolver? How did Professor Plum get into the Conservatory?

Flatten the Curve





H. MILLS AND CAROL ANNE GALLIVAN
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"Flatten the curve!", the cry of March, 2020, along with "pandemic", were shocking words for all of us. We had just come home from a wonderful meeting in Scottsdale with our FDCC Family, so isolating seemed somewhat doable. We hunkered down, literally staying in our house for weeks. We lived in complete isolation while constantly checking the Coronavirus statistics, hoping to see the infection plateau and the light at the end of the tunnel. It was soon obvious that the light at the end of the tunnel was the headlamp of the "COVID-19 Express". This runaway train was not slowing down and was horrifyingly picking up scores of passengers daily.

Our son, Henry, and his family lived just 3 miles away, but we stayed apart for fear of contracting the virus. Our two daughters, Anne Genevieve and Harriet and her family, were living in West Palm Beach, Florida, over 580 miles away. We could no longer travel to see them, which we had done monthly for the past ten years; therefore, we resorted to hours of family Facetimes and Zoom sessions to stay close. Almost all of our extended family lives in Greenville and we were used to seeing them often: at church, impromptu dinners and family gatherings. In addition, Carol Anne and I are the backup primary caregivers for her 89-year-old mother and my 97 year old

father. We knew we had to stay healthy so we could help them when needed, so for us, being isolated was a necessity.

The world we knew and loved had closed in around us. It reminded us of the old 1950s cartoons, when the commentator would say: "...and night fell," and the screen went dark. Our offices, churches, schools, favorite restaurants, travel plans, and personal access to family and friends had been shut down overnight, and the screen went dark.

When our offices closed, I moved to a 100% virtual law and mediation practice. As I built my Zoom skills I sometimes felt like Col. Mustard in a game of Clue trying to figure out: Who is with Miss Peacock in the Library? What is Miss Scarlett doing with a revolver? How did Professor Plum get into the Conservatory? This was quite a change after 45 years in the office and I dearly missed the camaraderie. However, this was nothing compared to the huge toll the pandemic has taken on our world, our country, our businesses, the administration of justice and the very fabric of our lives!

I currently serve as Chairman of the Board of St. Francis Catholic Hospital. This position has given me a rare insight into the incredible amount of stress this pandemic has placed upon our healthcare systems and workers. Indeed, they are the true heroes of this time and deserve every ounce of praise and love they have received. We are indebted to them; if you have a chance, pay it forward.

By late spring we were asking, how are we going to be able maintain our family closeness and have a reasonable chance of surviving the pandemic? Facetime calls and Zoom sessions were no longer enough for us. We had friends who were continuing to quarantine, not seeing their families, yet, somehow they were still getting COVID. It appeared that the method of transmission had a random factor that simply had no logical explanation. Carol Anne and I spent a considerable amount of time discerning the relative risks and rewards of resuming some physical contact with our children and grandchildren. We developed what I will call a QMAP or Quarantine Modification Action Plan. We consciously decided that rather than survive in total isolation, we were willing to take calculated risks to be with our beloved family. Basically, we were willing to play Russian Roulette with the virus in order to see them, for what if we contracted it anyway and died without having been with them for months? Fortunately, the weather had turned warm, so we began socially distancing with our family outside and enjoying dinners together at separate tables on the porch; however our circle remained tight. Being with our older parents was tricky, but we called them often, occasionally visited, while socially distancing, and dropped off food. My practice, defense bar, and community responsibilities continued totally virtual; we attended Mass virtually and avoided all public gatherings, including weddings and funerals of close friends.

In June, our daughters and family made a huge decision to move from West Palm Beach back to Greenville, enabling us to see each other in-person. Thankfully when planning family time, all three of our children have been incredibly vigilant about any potential exposure they or their children may have had. They have severely restricted their contacts and when necessary, they have been tested and self-quarantined until they deemed it safe to see us.

We chose to be together for our annual family beach trip, and spent the week of the 4th of July at Kiawah; however, before we started the vacation, our children decided to stay in a self-quarantine. We had 2 separate houses and spent most of our time outside, riding bikes, crabbing, fishing and playing on the beach. One of the houses had a pool so that made it easy to keep the grandchildren happy, busy and removed from other children. We either picked up supper or cooked for 13, which is always a memorable family affair. We were our own party! It proved to be a truly wonderful week for all of us, renewing our souls and love for each other at a time it was most needed.

As the summer progressed, everyone in our family remained well and we were able to spend the Labor Day weekend together at Lake Keowee. Again, we were isolated from the general public and enjoyed our time boating, fishing, swimming, tubing, wake surfing, watching sunsets and sharing wonderful family meals.

The start of the school year presented us with new challenges. The public schools in Greenville County were closed or operating virtually. Our children were concerned about the uncertainties associated with the limits of the school system schedule and class sizes, so our grandchildren were enrolled in our local smaller church school. They have been attending school full time and thus far have remained well. We agreed that being in school, if at all possible, was critical to their education and developmental wellbeing.

It was incredibly heartbreaking to hear our four-year-old granddaughter, Chandler, say, "I can't hug you because of the COVID!" What will be the long-term psychological impact of this pandemic on this generation of children? Carol Anne and I both remember the horror of polio and the relief that came with the Salk vaccine. Thankfully, the COVID vaccine is now being distributed, with the hope that it will soon bring the same relief to our world that the Salk vaccine brought in the 1950s.

Our fall began with begrudgingly adjusting to no family tailgating or Clemson Tiger football games in Death Valley. Then from a distance, we watched our masked grandchildren and friends trick or treating in their neighborhood.

Zoom meetings with family and friends, virtual cocktail hours and dinners became the now normal. We also gathered with a few of our dear friends for dinner in a field, seated in socially distanced lawn chairs; it was a huge treat just to be together.

We continued occasional dinners with our family. In the midst of a raging pandemic, we began planning for Thanksgiving and Christmas, the very essence of our most treasured family memories.

At Thanksgiving, we gathered with our children and grandchildren for not just a meal, but for a time of true thanksgiving for our blessings and health. Sadly, we didn't feel it advisable to include our parents, but visited with them privately and counted them among the best things in our lives. Carol Anne's mother and my dad have seen much greater trials in the Depression and WWII, and have instilled in us the courage to know that we can survive this with patience, purpose and a bit of good luck.

Christmas for the greater Gallivan Clan usually begins with a large party of parents, siblings, cousins, children and grandchildren. 2020 was the first time in my life that we were not together. We live with the hope that there will be more great times ahead at the extended Gallivan Clan Christmas Gala. We celebrated Christmas Day with our immediate family and I wouldn't take anything for that time with our children and grandchildren. I have had to answer some tough questions in my career but none tougher than, "Pappy what if Santa Claus catches COVID before he gets to our house?"

The New Year brings hope; the vaccine brings hope; the ties that bind family and friends bring hope; and our faith brings promises of better days to come. I have often said that I would rather be lucky than good, and perhaps it is just luck that we are COVID free thus far. We have had friends and extended family members who have caught COVID-19. A few have fallen victim to this insidious disease, but thankfully, most are fine. We pray for all who have been impacted by COVID-19 and for an end to this scourge.

Allow me to conclude with an entry taken from the diary of Etty Hillesum. She was young Jewish woman interned at Westerbrook. While she awaited transfer to Auschwitz, where she would die in 1943, she wrote,

"I often walk with a spring in my step along the barbed wire and then time and again it soars straight from my heart — I can't help it, that's just the way it is, like some elementary force — the feeling that life is glorious and magnificent, and that one day we shall be building a whole new world. Against every new outrage and every fresh horror we shall put up one more piece of love and goodness, drawing strength from within ourselves. We may suffer, but we must not succumb..."

We have not flattened the curve, but neither have we succumbed. Carol Anne and I know that "one more piece of love and goodness" from the Good Lord, our family, and our friends has given us "strength from within ourselves".

Under ordinary circumstances, all of us would have been too occupied with travel and with family to have time to spend on social media. But this year was different. Facebook was the place to be, and there is no question that our FDCC friends made our solo holiday celebrations way more festive and joyful.

Holiday Celebrations Under Covid: A Pleasant Surprise



JOHN C. TRIMBLE
Lewis Wagner, LLP
Indianapolis, IN

My wife, Ann, and I will have been married 40 years in 2021. In all those years, we have never celebrated a Christmas without our daughters. In 2020, we realized that a "Christmas celebration" could be challenging, but in late summer, we optimistically rented a house and booked direct flights to San Francisco for the month of December so that we could be with our daughters, their husbands, and their children.

Unfortunately, Thanksgiving brought a massive surge in Covid-19 infections, and our world shut down. The Friday after we celebrated Thanksgiving as a twosome, we received notification from the airline that our direct flights to San Francisco had been cancelled, and that we were re-routed on commuter planes through major airports. It was then that we and our daughters made the painful decision to cancel our Christmas plans and we would stay home.

What transpired next is the reason I am writing this chapter. After a few moments of angst and a few tears, Ann and I realized that Christmas could actually be a joyful



time if we adopted a frame of mind that we would enjoy it. We reflected on the fact that we had celebrated Easter, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, birthdays, and Thanksgiving alone, and, by golly, we could do it for Christmas!

With that in mind, we spent the weekend after Thanksgiving decorating our home for Christmas. Because we had planned to be gone for the month of December, we had not expected or planned to put up a Christmas tree or do much decorating. However, we ended up putting up a Christmas tree in the front window of our living room, and we put up a miniature Christmas tree in the window of our dining room where I have my temporary office. We had such zeal for decorating that our house has hardly ever been so well decorated for Christmas, and I am not sure that it ever will be again.

We had previously arranged for all of our Christmas presents to be sent to California, so the fact that we were staying home required some extra shopping so that we would have gifts under the tree for one another. We each jumped online, and for the month of December we had regular Amazon deliveries and enjoyed watching as we each put wrapped gifts under the tree for the other.

We also got excited in planning our Christmas day meal of standing rib roast with champagne and trimmings. I love to cook, but I had not prepared a Christmas dinner in many years. I enjoyed it so much that my kids now know that I will be helping with meals at their homes in future years.

All of us in 2020 became proficient in using the Zoom platform for calls and conferences. Zoom proved to be the connector that allowed us on Christmas morning to be present as our grandchildren awakened and opened their gifts under their Christmas trees in California. Later that day, we again celebrated Christmas cocktails and gatherings with our children and grandchildren via Zoom. It was hard not to be there to hug everyone, but our joy in celebrating the holidays was in no way diminished. (If anything, we took a small amount of pleasure in the fact that we did not have to clean up after the gathering!)

Zoom was not the only technology that helped make Christmas and other holidays joyful. We found that social media played a huge role in our happiness. Because so many of our friends were in the same boat as us, it seemed that everyone shared photos of decorations and appetizers and beverages and meals and desserts. Under ordinary circumstances, all of us would have been too occupied with travel and with family to have time to spend on social media. But this year was different. Facebook was the place to be, and there is no question that our FDCC friends made our solo holiday celebrations way more festive and joyful.

I feel sure that similar stories to our own played out in millions of households around the country this past year. If we learned anything, it was that we can be happy and we can celebrate even when conditions are not ideal. Ann and I will look back fondly at this Christmas as a time when we were able to spoil and celebrate one another and maintain a high level of happiness even while we were separated from our loved ones. I hope that we will keep this memory in mind if and when other times occur in our lives when our plans are disrupted.



Ashley and Michael should by now be married, with a September 16, 2020 wedding planned at Clint Eastwood's property at Tehama in Carmel Valley. When Michael asked me for Ashley's hand in marriage over Thanksgiving in 2018, his first words were: "I can't wait to be married to your daughter..." But wait he would.

Silver Linings



TODD A. ROBERTS
Ropers Majeski
Redwood City, CA

For defense attorneys, New Years Day represents not only new beginnings, but when our law practices reset to zero. But the reset could wait, January 1, 2020 reflected an opportunity that was unfathomable back in the day, 1983, when Debbie and I graduated from the University of Oregon—The Rose Bowl, the Granddaddy of Them All. A road trip to Pasadena, a last second Duck win over the Wisconsin Badgers, 28-27, and a truly magnificent start to the new year. We had good reason for optimism for the year to come.

Our daughter Ashley and future son-in-law Michael were engaged to be married on September 16, 2020, in Carmel Valley, CA; our son Ryan had returned to his high school teaching and coaching positions in Madrid, Spain; Emily, our baby, would finish her Junior year from Elon University in North Carolina (where they call it the third year); and Debbie and I were "empty nesters" with big plans. Three weeks later, the first American, in Washington State, was diagnosed as infected with the Coronavirus, after traveling to Wuhan, China, believed to be ground zero for the virus.



As press coverage of infection spread with time, my gut reaction in the earliest days was guided by experience and I was typically skeptical. After all, we had been warned of imminent disaster time and time again: Y2K, Ebola, SARS, bird flu, swine flu, and the impending ice age. In fact, when teaching at the FDCC Litigation Management College at Emory University in 2014, literally across the street from the Center for Disease Control, we shared our facility with infectious disease doctors from Africa who had traveled to the U.S. to learn more about Ebola. Yet we all survived, and with little effort.

Even by the time we traveled to Scottsdale for the 2020 Winter meeting, the risk of COVID-19 seemed remote and isolated to overseas. My focus was distracted, with trial looming in a wrongful death case the third Monday of March in San Francisco County---with a four-year old plaintiff. It seemed odd that conventions at the two neighboring properties to the Camelback Inn had cancelled their events during the same week, something we learned because our daughter Ashley had moved to Scottsdale a few years earlier to work in the destination management field with the Bell's daughter Rachel. Little could we have known that Scottsdale would be the last chance for us to gather as an organization and to share the fellowship with friends for over a year, and at this rate maybe two.

Two days after the Scottsdale meeting ended, I was on my last business flight of the year, to Birmingham, Alabama for one final deposition for my upcoming trial. It would also be my final inside-dining experience--with my local Alabama counsel and good friend, Kile Turner. I flew home, mask-less and ready, only to have the world

close down in two short weeks. The lock-down in California would be tight.

Our immediate future uncertain, we could only try to learn as much as possible to be safe and smart. How would the pandemic affect our business? How long would our offices be closed? What could we do to protect our elderly fathers, both in their mid-80's, and our children even though they were technically "adults" (but still on the family cell phone and medical plans)?

We would soon learn that through adversity, the Roberts have no reason to complain about anything, and much to be thankful for.

During the first two-week "flatten the curve" period, we hunkered down in our home in Carmel Valley, with Debbie's father, Eddie Dove, a former San Francisco 49er. What was supposed to be a few weeks, turned to months, but we were safe and isolated. More concerning was my own 85-year old father, Robert, who lived alone in my hometown of Cambridge, Ohio. He had recently sold his farm and moved to town, but needed to be outside doing something.

ASHLEY AND MICHAEL—WEDDING DELAYED

Ashley and Michael should by now be married, with a September 16, 2020 wedding planned at Clint Eastwood's property at Tehama in Carmel Valley. When Michael asked me for Ashley's hand in marriage over Thanksgiving in 2018, his first words were: "I can't wait to be married to your daughter..." But wait he would.



Trying to be conservative, the wedding was rescheduled with Tehama for June 19, 2021, but we learned in mid-February 2021 that the wedding would need to be postponed again if it was going to be held there. The wedding will happen on June 19th, but in our backyard instead.

Michael took a new job in late-January, 2020, having worked several years in medical device sales. His new company was the first to sell robots for use in hospital surgery rooms. The robots kill all viruses and bacteria by use of UV light in around five minutes. It is the only company whose devices

are certified by the FDA to kill the Covid virus. Good timing Michael- his annual quota was reached in his first six weeks on the job.

Ashley was furloughed and like everyone else in her company, was eventually laid off. She has since been hired by a company that organizes online events and is busy with her mother planning a wedding.

In the meantime, they adopted their first child Penelope, a beagle, who is a little spitfire training them for real parenthood. Ashley and Michael also bought their first home in a beautiful neighborhood in Scottsdale.

RYAN - LIVING ABROAD

Our son Ryan, now 24, moved to Spain to teach upon graduating from Denison University in 2018. For the 2019-2020 school year, Ryan was assigned to school in Madrid, which became a well-publicized hot spot for the virus in Europe. In addition to teaching high school English, technology, and other courses, he was hired as the Wide Receiver Coach for the Rivas Osos of the professional Liga Nacional de Fútbol Americano (LNFA).

Anxiety was high since little was known about the virus, and Ryan was on a different continent in a country with socialized medicine, but had no relationship with any medical doctor or clinic. Although he was young and healthy, the virus seemed indiscriminate and inconsistent, not affecting many much or any at all, while ravaging and killing others.

Even before the U.S., the schools in Spain were shuttered, leaving Ryan with the decision to stay or come home. The football season was also cancelled, and Ryan was able to leave the Province of Madrid the day before they sealed the border. After spending a few weeks in the U.K. with his girlfriend Nic's family, Ryan flew home on one of the last direct flights back to San Francisco.

Later he would be joined by both Ashley and Emily, and the empty nest was for several months a full and bustling house again. Our beagles Stella and Olivia were confused but happy. In truth, it will most likely be the last time we spend as a family time together for months on end. It was a blessing to see our children interact with each other and to beat them at cards and board games.

Ryan eventually returned to Madrid in September for the new school year, determined to finish what he had started. The schools had re-opened and he was re-hired by Rivas Osos as their offensive coordinator, responsible for installing a new offense. We would read about the second wave, and third wave, and Ryan confirmed the travel restrictions were real and well-enforced, but football gave him the exception he needed leave the province. The Osos are currently 3-1, and leading the league in total points scored per game at 39.Unable to return home for the holidays, Ryan spent the holidays with a small group of friends including six who had Christmas

dinner together. Within a few days, all six tested positive for Covid-19, with none becoming seriously ill and each of them quickly recovering. As an educator, Ryan will be a priority for the vaccine, but the wait time for some in Spain is around three years. In reality, he will most likely be vaccinated upon his return to the States for the wedding.

EMILY-ELON UNIVERSITY



Our youngest, Emily, attends Elon University in Elon, North Carolina and for the fall semester her third year studied abroad in Berlin, Germany and Cape Town, South Africa. Like most students, she was forced to return home after campus closed to in-person instruction in late March, 2020.

An excellent student majoring in Human Service and Psychology, she earned a reputation with her professors for insisting that her 8:30 a.m. classes be rescheduled until later in the day since it was 5:30 a.m. on the west coast and was unfair. Following closely on the heals of her success rescheduling classes, Emily somehow convinced her parents that not only did she need a car for her senior year, but that she needed for us to drive with her across country from California to North Carolina. So in mid-August, 2020, that is exactly what we did via the southern route through Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Tennessee. This is a road trip we will never forget, and Debbie's first chance to travel since Scottsdale.



Upon her return to campus in the fall, Emily was fortunate that most of her courses have returned to in-

person instruction. Even better, EmRob is living with her Full House gals, which have been a true blessing with a fun and safety conscious group of students. (Instagram: full_yloved) Emily graduates in May, 2021 and the following month will be the maid of honor in Ashley's and Michael's wedding.

One of her senior papers related to the psychology of jury selection. Speed dial Stuart Simon, who graciously helped her get started and pointed in the right direction. Emily's final semester includes an internship working with recovering alcoholics and addicts, which will also qualify her for the vaccine.

BOB ROBERTS--OHIO



My father Robert has lived in my hometown of Cambridge since my parents divorced when I was ten. Having spent most of my life since then on the west coast, it has not been easy to maintain a close and consistent relationship. That changed somewhat when Ryan decided to attend Denison University in Granville, Ohio and Debbie and I bought a retirement home there.

After he retired about 15 years ago, Dad ran Simmental cattle and grew alfalfa on his 100 acre farm between Cambridge and New Concord. His idea of relaxation was to put up hay and bushhog weeds. A few years ago, the farm became too much so he moved into town. We knew that being inside during the pandemic would drive him crazy, but he would have little choice if he wanted to remain safe. We sent him masks, food, and tried to help as much as we could from 2000 miles away.

But he was two steps ahead of us, deciding that he would travel to Granville four days a week, an hour each way, to work on our property. It gave him the chance to ride on our John Deere Gator with his beloved Corgi, Diva, and to stay busy outside. And for us stuck in California, it gave us peace of mind that he was safe and our property was being looked after. Instead of speaking occasionally, we spoke two, three, sometimes four times a week with a common cause.

On three occasions, starting in June, I was able to fly to Ohio, masked and shielded, to visit and work with him outside. Our relationship is stronger now than it has ever been. I have also learned never to underestimate the stamina of an 85 year-old farmer. By now, he has had both shots of the Moderna vaccine, with rural Ohio doing far better than Silicon Valley in that connection. Gratefully, Debbie's father has also been vaccinated with the first shot, with the second scheduled in a few weeks.



SILVER LININGS

As if the pandemic weren't challenging enough, we were forced to evacuate our home for ten days in September as the Carmel fire came within a ridgeline of our neighborhood, then inexplicably stopped. The pandemic has challenged us all, but the Roberts are acutely aware that we have been blessed beyond measure with no one in our extended family suffering serious illness or death as have so many. Our offices remain closed, but we have more than survived and adapted.

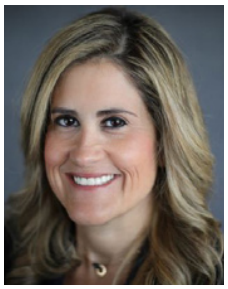


We mourn with those who have lost loved ones, students who have missed their junior and senior years, workers who have lost their jobs, and those who have struggled to make ends meet. The toll on our nation and the world is incalculable. But through it all, one thing I know for sure is that we are blessed and privileged to have been able to reunite as a family, to become closer to God, and to strengthen the bonds of our marriage.



Being asked to lead, especially during such a critical time for any company, was not something that I could turn down. Even more importantly, I was the first woman in the firm's history elected to its management committee, which meant the role went even beyond me, and had heightened meaning, especially for the women at the firm.

Office



CAROLINE J. BERDZIK
Goldberg Segalla
Princeton, NJ

2020 was a transformative year, to say the least. Perhaps what is most unusual is that it was probably the most difficult year I had personally, but it was very successfully professionally. In short, it was a year of juxtapositions, continuous challenges and unexpected twists and turns. However, what this year has taught me more than anything is that resilience and adaptability is most critical, especially when others are following your lead.

January got off to a rocky start when my 69 year old father had a steep decline with recently diagnosed Alzheimer's Disease/Lewy's Body Dementia. For the past eleven months, I had been taking my father to neurologists and other medical providers to try and figure out what was going on with him medically. Ten years prior my mother suffered a debilitating stroke at age 58 and my father stepped up to care for her. My father was hospitalized when I was enjoying a long MLK weekend with my family in Edinburgh, Scotland. The rest of the month of January 2020, I spent speaking with physicians trying to figure out what was going on with my father and spending time at the hospital daily between calls or in the evenings, since my mother could not get to the hospital. Eventually my father was transferred to a nursing home in a

declining condition on February 14, 2020. I got the call that day around 4pm that he was unresponsive and raced to the nursing home. When I got there he was coming around and I will never forget how he touched my cheek and looked at me, but no words came out. It was evident to me at that point in time that my father was going to pass away soon. I asked him to wait just one more day so that my brother and mother could go and see him.

My father, being the unselfish man he has always been, did exactly as I told him. I decided to return to the nursing home the next evening with my husband and when I arrived at the room, my father was actively dying. I made sure he was comfortable and calm and we stayed with him for a half hour. As I have learned through litigating nursing home cases, people generally do not die in front of their loved ones and he was struggling. I called the CNA and told her to please stay with him after I left as I did not want him to be alone. We left and I received the call from my mother almost 15 minutes later that he had passed away. The next few days I spent planning his service and making the arrangements. In hindsight, it was a blessing that he died when he did and we were able to celebrate his life. Even though an adult, the loss of a parent hits hard.

As is usual for me and one of my coping mechanisms, I threw myself into work and was gearing up for a busy year with business travel, work obligations, family celebrations and vacations. It was wonderful to see everyone at the FDCC meeting in March. There was chatter about COVID-19 and stocking up on hand sanitizer, but none of us really had any idea what to expect when we parted ways. When I boarded the flight home and saw people in masks and wearing gloves, I had a sinking feeling things were quickly about to change. Within days of returning from Arizona, things pretty much shut down in New Jersey and my clients' needs kicked into high gear.

My practice focuses on two primary areas-employment and labor and healthcare. I do a significant amount of work for nursing homes, in particular. Frankly, March and April were a blur. Every hour of every day, new and novel legal issues and difficult questions with no good answers were the norm. Some clients faced life and death situations, others were haunted by layoffs of employees and economic challenges. It felt like non-stop grieving with my clients and trying to work our way through something completely unprecedented health wise and economically, with no clear road map. In addition to my growing client needs, at this time my law firm leaned on me heavily as chair of our employment and labor section and an equity partner to provide thought leadership throughout the pandemic.

As lawyers we are naturally risk averse and here there was no blueprint or right answer to identifying and managing the risks. At this time, we were also moving to a fully remote environment and as a leader in the firm, I had to find ways to keep my colleagues motivated and their spirits up during the most difficult of times, knowing that each and every one was struggling in one way or another. We had

Zoom meetings, virtual happy hours, frequent phone calls and other ways to keep us connected; particularly as the days turned into weeks and the weeks turned into months. Sometimes the days felt like years, but yet time stood still and every day started to feel like Groundhog's Day.

On the home front, challenges continued to confront me. My husband had emergency surgery four years ago and as luck would have it on March 31, 2020 at the almost height of the pandemic in New Jersey, I had to drop my husband off at the local hospital emergency room with serious symptoms. Due to COVID-19 protocols, I could not enter the hospital. So I sent him off with a cell phone, a charger and his insurance card and prayed. It was a rough two days until the surgeon concluded that non-surgical interventions were not working and he needed surgery. All non-essential surgeries in the state had been cancelled due to COVID-19. All the while the work did not stop, the client needs accelerated and I had to make sure my 8th grader and now home from college junior were focused on their schooling and not worried about their father. Luckily, my husband's surgery was a success. I picked him up at the hospital several days later like I was driving through a McDonald's drive-thru. He mended at home and then lost his job less than two months later.

As guidance was developed rapidly, I put together some significant thought leadership with others and conducted many webinars in rapid speed to help clients and others navigate the ever changing and complex COVID-19 legal issues. I continued focusing on helping others, being a support to my colleagues and doing my best to lead by example. It was a difficult time for everyone and although I carried my own personal grief, I had to set that aside and stay focused.

Since I have a Type A personality like many lawyers, the most difficult part of the pandemic for me was the beginning, as things seemed to be spiraling out of control. I dug deeper and became more disciplined. As the weather improved, being outside lifted my spirits. I learned to be kind to myself as best I could and do little things to keep the motivation level high.

In late summer, I was nominated by my fellow equity partners and unanimously elected to our firm's management committee. It was humbling to say the least. I was told that my leadership and hard work during the pandemic did not go unnoticed. A part of me wondered how I would be able to successfully balance a significant commitment to the firm, in addition to my client and family commitments and obligations to other organizations in which I am involved.

However, being asked to lead, especially during such a critical time for any company, was not something that I could turn down. Even more importantly, I was the first woman in the firm's history elected to its management committee, which meant the role went even beyond me, and had heightened meaning, especially for the women at the firm. The notes and calls I received from both inside and outside of the firm

were so unbelievably kind. It made me step back for a moment and realize that whether I noticed it or not, while my head was down and I was grinding away, I made an impact on many people, by just doing what I love doing every day.

After this incredible privilege of being elected to the management committee, more professional accolades flowed and it was an embarrassment of riches. I was named a Top 20 Women in Law in New Jersey by the New Jersey Law Journal and one of the "Best Lawyers in America 2020" for Healthcare. In September 2019, I was the program chair for the DRI Nursing Home and Assisted Living conference which was a very fulfilling professional experience. I was awarded the 2020 DRI Albert Parnell Outstanding Seminar Chair Award for my efforts in the fall. I also had the opportunity to be featured on a podcast involving women and business development, which I very much enjoyed as well.

I continued sprinting the marathon known as 2020 straight through until the the end. The sprint has continued into the first quarter of this year.

As better days look to be on the horizon, I have had some time to self-reflect and process 2020, although not quite fully. I love my job despite its challenges and pressures and I enjoy helping people. One of the main reasons I became a lawyer was to be of service to others and due to the intellectual stimulation this job provides on a daily basis. This year was by far the most stimulating, stressful, but the most rewarding, challenging and difficult. However, it was also the most stressful. Despite all of his difficulties, my father had a quiet inner strength and never complained. He stepped up to care for my mother for 10 years after her life-altering stroke when on many days it was hard to take care of himself. He was able to provide for us growing up even, despite some significant hospitalizations and medication changes due to bi-polar disorder. He was a quiet warrior and selfless.

So as I reflect on this year and wonder how on earth I was able to juggle what I did, I realize I must have inherited some of the best qualities my father possessed. I like to think he gave me some of his strength this past year as my plate was overflowing. I carry him with me each and every day and I know that no matter what 2021 brings, I am ready.

Wearing hats on Friday forged a sense of connection in a time when we were all physically disconnected. The Friday hats created camaraderie and a little space for conversation about something so much lighter than the challenges we faced. For me, Hat Fridays triggered an evolution that became a small revolution.

In House



APRIL Y. BERMAN
Asurion
Nashville, TN

This is the story of a hat. More specifically, it is the story of how an in-house attorney learned that of all the figurative hats she has worn, the ones she literally wore to work made the greatest impact.

Anyone who knows me well is familiar with my penchant for hats—beanies, ball caps, cowboy hats, Panama hats, fedoras, cloches, wide-brimmed straw hats—show me a hat and, chances are, it will end up on my head. Close friends may tell you of a certain hat-buying spree that garnered six additions to my collection in the space of an afternoon. I have seriously considered whether the ability to wear a fascinator on the regular would justify a move to the U.K. I am predisposed to period pieces featuring bygone times when wearing a hat in daily life was a generally accepted practice. On weekends, or at the beach, chances are I will be wearing a hat. Hats are, after all, the ultimate utility accessory. They offer protection from the elements, block the sun's harshest rays, and hide bad hair days (or the indulgence of the snooze button one too many times).

Despite my considerable affinity for chapeaux, I drew the line at wearing one to work. Such a rule may seem perfectly reasonable to attorneys who work in traditional firm environments. But when the attorney observing that rule works in a tech company where "casual" dress is the norm (and by casual I mean a workplace in which flip flops are perfectly acceptable office attire) it's a curious line to draw. The COVID-19 pandemic changed that.

One moment I was reveling in my son's Leap Day Bar Mitzvah and a recuperative trip to Arizona with my FDCC friends, and the next I was grappling, personally and professionally, with a pandemic that upended the world. We had collectively gone to sleep one evening only to wake in a parallel, dystopic universe where things were simultaneously familiar and unrecognizable. Reflecting on those early days, I vividly remember what I did. I was a leader in a cross-functional core response team for my global technology company, which serves customers in multiple countries and in every U.S. state through a combination of in-home services, forward stocking locations, logistics centers, call centers, retail stores, and traditional offices.

We worked as a team to keep our business up and running when everything around us was shutting down—creating protocols to handle positive cases in our sites and in the field; defining a framework to enable quick analysis of the rapid fire closure orders that would otherwise prevent our teams from keeping our customers connected in a time when they were physically cut off from the world; and facilitating a shift to remote work for as much of our 20,000 employee workforce as possible in a matter of days. Our mission—to continue serving our customers while keeping our team members and our customers safe and healthy—challenged our ability to innovate, collaborate, and execute across a complex ecosystem. All that we accomplished was a testament to excellence in execution, commitment to collaboration, and clarity of purpose.

I cannot think about what we achieved without also summoning the emotions that swirled through those early days. Fear, anxiety, uncertainty, feeling overwhelmed by the speed and gravity of it all, and the exhaustion—exacerbated by my own illness. There was little sleep. Zoom calls were back to back and punctuated by an endless onslaught of Teams chats, emails, texts, and phone calls, each one seeking guidance, needing an answer, looking for direction, or pressing for insight into a future none of us had imagined possible that was changing by the minute. I didn't have time to set up a proper office. The kitchen became my remote war room—television on in the background so that I could track developments, phone attached to me, and a giant gaming monitor donated by my older son after watching me toggle between the multiple windows on my laptop.

In those days, I wore too many hats to count—legal counsel, business advisor, communications specialist, process engineer, project manager, leader, teammate, mom, wife, friend, daughter—the list goes on. As effective in-house counsel must,

I donned one hat after another, or simply piled them atop each other when time did not permit a swap. I was front and center, putting the crisis management skills that had been rocket fuel for my career to the test. I was in the flow. In the zone. Navigating the challenges as they arose. Marshalling the resources of our legal team to support our business partners. Encouraging that team to rally and come through for our business, even as we were grappling with the personal impacts of shutdowns, children home from school, and supply shortages.

Yet, in those moments, I was measuring my ability to "handle" it all by whether I was wearing a hat. Yes—you read that correctly. In those tumultuous early days, I was measuring myself not by the work I was doing, the leadership I was demonstrating, or the outcomes I was driving, but by whether I was keeping up appearances. Wearing a hat for Zoom and Teams calls that started at 7am and ended, if I was lucky, by 10pm was somehow my barometer for how well I was handling the challenge. Exhausted, and sick, I was beating myself up over wearing a ball cap in those early, hectic days.

Relief came from a place I least expected—my CEO. In one of our then daily 7:30am COVID response team calls, he took a moment to praise our supply chain team for instituting a practice of wearing hats on Fridays and declared Fridays to be company-wide hat days for however long the pandemic would last. We enthusiastically embraced Hat Fridays. (Who wouldn't when your CEO was encouraging you to do it and you were spending every Friday morning on a Zoom call with him?) Wearing hats on Friday forged a sense of connection in a time when we were all physically disconnected. The Friday hats created camaraderie and a little space for conversation about something so much lighter than the challenges we faced. For me, Hat Fridays triggered an evolution that became a small revolution.

As an endorsed activity, I took full advantage of Hat Fridays, even endeavoring to plan my Friday calendar to avoid meetings or evening obligations that would not be hat friendly. I looked forward to Hat Fridays—to that extra 15 minutes of sleep or time spent working out before the day started. With that little bit of permission from a leader I revere, my basis for self-criticism became a source of freedom. Before long, I was wearing a hat on other days of the week, and not just ball caps. I was wearing my favorite Panamas, fedoras, and glamorous beach hats—whatever hat suited my mood for the moment. And, nothing bad happened. No one took me less seriously or wrote me off. No one chastised me for looking unprofessional or taking a chance. No one challenged my authority or ridiculed me. Instead, the hats opened a door, both inside me and with others.

Little did I know that donning a hat would have an impact on how I interacted with others. As I grew braver in my millinery displays, I showed up for my team differently. As we moved past the early days of the pandemic into an uncomfortable but steady'ish state, I focused less on making it look easy and more on talking openly about the challenges we were facing, professionally and personally. I grew more

comfortable showing up as myself, even when myself was exhausted or sad or struggling with feeling isolated. I both talked about the hard things and admitted to my team that they are hard. I openly acknowledged the ups and downs—by turns comical and maddening—of juggling a demanding career and a family that needed me more than ever and in different ways than ever. I didn't panic when the dogs jumped in my lap or the kids showed up in the background of my camera. I modeled, not just an array of hats, but a growing comfort with imperfection. By looking a little less like I had everything dialed in, I created an environment where others felt less pressure to hide their struggles. They no longer panicked when a child cried or a dog barked. They stopped apologizing for how they looked on camera. They began to express fears and frustrations alongside wins and silver linings. They reached out when they needed extra support.

Something as simple as Hat Fridays made me a better leader. By being more authentic and vulnerable, I created space for others to be more authentic and vulnerable without fear of repercussions. In that space, a legal team that has been physically separated since March 2020 and will not be together again before November 2021, grew closer and became even stronger. In that space, attorneys who exist in a profession that attaches a heightened stigma to mental illness found the courage to take advantage of our company's remote therapy benefits and to talk about it with their peers. In that space, we have identified ways to better support each other through the other difficult challenges of 2020 and today. We forged deeper connections that will carry us through whatever 2021 and beyond holds. And it all started with a hat.

This crisis necessitated a shift in focus and a reorganization of priorities. Of critical importance was servicing our clients, which our lawyers continued to do without missing a beat.

Leadership Transition During A Pandemic



JODY E. BRIANDI
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As 2020 began, I was preparing to take over as managing partner of the firm where I had practiced law since 1997. This transition would mark only the third change of leadership in the firm's 43-year history. It was an important time for the firm and for me personally—and what we thought would be the focus of planning for the first half of 2020. I was thrilled to take on the position and had a vision of how the transition would go and what my first few months would look like. However, as 2020 progressed, and the pandemic started taking hold and ultimately taking over, it was quickly apparent that everything we had planned for would need to pivot.

Much planning and preparation had occurred up to this point and we were ready—at least we thought we were—for the passing of the torch. The transfer of our firm's leadership was set to take place this past May 1.

A successful change at the top of any organization requires a well-crafted plan, timeline, and rollout, and at Hurwitz & Fine, it was no different. We had a plan (spoiler

alert—even the best plans cannot account for every eventuality). Our planning began several years ago, when the firm's then managing partner expressed her desire to step back after having managed Hurwitz & Fine for more than 10 years. The firm's leadership team—which I had been a part of—had many discussions about what the future might look like. We eventually formed a transition committee, chose a candidate, created a timeline, worked on the rollout, and finalized the transition plan. In February (prior to the pandemic and two months before the official transition date), we successfully launched internal, client, and media messaging, were making final preparations for a launch party with clients at a beautiful museum in Buffalo and were ready for the May 1 transition.

Then the pandemic hit.

In less than two weeks in March, Hurwitz & Fine went from 100 percent on-site to 100 percent remote. All business travel, client events, and court appearances were canceled. Construction on a major office renovation project at our headquarters was halted. Most jarringly, our discussions about the leadership change were, almost overnight, replaced with COVID-19 planning.

On a personal level, I would be lying if I said I did not question whether the timing of the leadership change was right. Maybe it would be best to not rock the boat with so much discord in the world. I was immediately concerned about maintaining as much stability as possible at the firm during a tumultuous time and wondered if inserting a new firm president into the mix was the right decision. As I weighed this, I realized that one of the best ways to maintain stability is to stay the course. For me, that meant moving forward with firm plans to transition leadership on May 1st. Taking over the helm of a law firm our size in ordinary circumstances is daunting; taking over at the height of a pandemic was another thing altogether. I found the only way to take on this challenge was head on without quite literally looking back because this was unknown territory.

My first priority on May 1 was to find an effective way to assume the position of managing partner remotely (from my home where I also had three children distance learning, my husband also working remotely and two pets roaming around). This was, obviously, not part of the original plan. What would ordinarily have been an in-person office event now had to be handled from home through a computer screen and with e-mail. My goal was to offer stability, deliver a positive message, and offer reassurance—three critical attributes to navigating the economic, emotional, and health challenges the pandemic presented.

With 100 employees suddenly working in 100 different offices across multiple cities and regions, it became more important than ever to stay connected. Internally, pivoting from a traditional office environment to remote work was, surprisingly, near seamless, thanks to technology and teamwork. Video calls replaced office



pop-ins. We held weekly virtual group meetings and replaced our department lunch gatherings with ones in which employees shared photos of what they were cooking and ideas for takeout. We shared "team spirit" photos of our staff wearing blue for autism awareness month, enjoying the outdoors, pictures of pets, and celebrating holidays.

It quickly became clear that staying connected was paramount to our success. I began a Friday "State of the Firm" email encompassing staff recognition, company updates, and keeping everyone apprised of how the firm was handling the pandemic. This became part of the weekly routine. More than anything, maintaining connectivity with coworkers was at the forefront for the entire firm during the transition.

I immediately learned the advantage of being flexible and adapting. This crisis necessitated a shift in focus and a reorganization of priorities. Of critical importance was servicing our clients, which our lawyers continued to do without missing a beat. They became experts in Zoom depositions, attending virtual conferences, and publishing on social media. This seemed to be the easy part. The greater challenge was ensuring (as best I could) the well-being of our employees. I reconfigured my priorities during the first months in my new position, focusing on the firm's role in

promoting Safety & Wellness and Diversity & Inclusion through our firm committees of those names. With mental health problems and racial tension plaguing the country amid the pandemic, it was important to move our internal initiatives in these areas forward. Our committees met, revised their programs' mission and vision, and planned several companywide events intended to spark dialogue and help one another through this time.

Another lesson learned early on was that unexpected challenges could lead to opportunities for growth. Once the impact of COVID-19 became clear in mid-March, businesses of all kinds, including us, were looking for a path forward. As lawyers, we were fielding questions from clients daily about ever-changing laws, regulations, and best practices. As a firm, we brainstormed to develop a COVID-19 Resource Center and COVID-19 Legal Response Team, a multidisciplinary approach to providing legal services, advice, and counseling to clients. Like many firms, we found ways to pivot in response to the pandemic and provide meaningful content to our clients to help them during this time.

Almost everyone was caught off-guard by the speed with which the coronavirus moved through the country beginning in March. Businesses were forced to recalibrate quickly and make snap decisions, including mine. Over my first several months as managing partner, it became clear that finding creative solutions during a crisis requires forward thinking. Being able to adapt to a new situation is critical to leadership. As the pandemic wore on during the early months of my tenure as managing partner, my confidence as a leader grew. One positive result of the pandemic for our firm was that it required the new leadership team to take charge quickly and find footing. There was no honeymoon period.

Without question, assuming the position of managing partner at the start of a pandemic was less than perfect and did not follow the previously laid out plan. However, we still effectively navigated the transition. Looking back, it was not just the steps taken during the pandemic that were key to our success, but the firm's solid and longstanding foundation from which we were able to launch a new leader amidst a crisis.

It seems that when the breadth of knowledge needed to know when, how, and whether to communicate is high, reliance on technology to facilitate that communication becomes significantly more difficult.

A Job Change In The Time Of Covid



LON JOHNSON
Kemper Auto | Infinity Insurance Company
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The Fall of 2019 was a very exciting time. My wife and I welcomed our first child into the world, I had just been named partner at my Arizona law firm (which had just moved into a new office with modern, collaborative work space), and the oppressive Phoenix heat had finally receded. Little did I imagine that in just a few short months, the excitement of raising a daughter and meeting my new responsibilities as a young partner would be eclipsed by a sense of existential, pandemic-driven dread.

With that sense of dread came a renewed sense of focus on my family. After a few months of juggling my new duties in the time of COVID, I for the first time considered leaving the firm that had been my professional home for nearly a decade. This chapter is about my experience transitioning from firm life to corporate life in the midst of the catastrophe that was 2020.

In retrospect, making the move "in-house" seems almost counterintuitive. Most people at that time were hunkering down and avoiding major life interruptions, not

seeking them out. For all its challenges, however, the move was, and continues to be, a unique learning experience that has changed the way I think about my professional life.

In August of 2020, I joined Kemper's Birmingham, Alabama-based Claims Coverage Counsel team. When the Phoenix-based position within that team was first posted, the plan was for the new hire to fly out to Birmingham several times over the first few months to meet the team and get acclimated, and for the managing attorney to spend time in Phoenix shortly thereafter. Instead, I was shipped a laptop, a monitor, a phone, and was "up and running" from my living room/office within a few days. To this day, I have not met any of my colleagues in person. In fact, I've only seen Kemper's Phoenix office once, when I went in to pick up mail.

The fact that I was able to get set up so quickly is a testament to Kemper's commitment to keeping its employees safe. Last I checked, over 90% of its country-wide workforce remains working from home. But for all the impressive efforts made to streamline the hiring process by embracing technology and remote working, there are real differences between working with one's colleagues face to face and working "with" them from one's living room. More importantly, it is one thing to lose the personal interactions with those with whom you have already developed a rapport. It is quite another to develop that rapport over the phone.

The observation that corporate and firm cultures differ significantly is not groundbreaking. However, the difficulty of navigating a new environment while under the stresses of 2020 is unique, and it has caused me to grow a new appreciation for the significance of workplace culture generally.

My firm prided itself on its "open door" policy, even investing in workspace designed to foster collaboration. In pre-COVID days I spent the majority of my time working in "common" (i.e. more comfortable) areas, returning to my desk only for calls or meetings. If I needed to discuss an issue (or my colleagues wanted to discuss one with me), I was within earshot of at least four highly competent attorneys. The relationships I developed in that time made the transition to working from home in early 2020 much easier.

My work at Kemper also involves healthy collaboration with colleagues, but it is very different from the informal environment to which I had grown accustomed. When assisting a coworker with a legal issue in a company as large as Kemper, sometimes something as simple as whether to call a co-worker directly, as opposed to getting a call scheduled (the more polite approach) can require a bit of thought.

On more complex or significant matters, I may need to expand a discussion to include others. Knowing when that is necessary can be complicated, requiring detailed knowledge of corporate structure and the responsibilities of different departments,

and even the expertise of certain individuals within departments. It seems that when the breadth of knowledge needed to know when, how, and whether to communicate is high, reliance on technology to facilitate that communication becomes significantly more difficult.

If I were in Kemper's Phoenix offices in 2019, the culture of communicating within the company would have been an afterthought. By being forced to develop so many new professional relationships remotely, I have grown a new appreciation for certain less tangible aspects of professional communication.

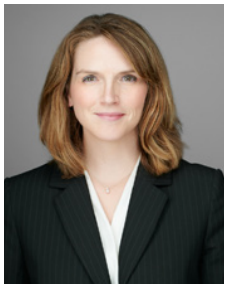
This chapter wouldn't be complete without a nod to certain other novel COVID-related challenges that made my transition significantly more difficult. Some of these challenges are almost cliché at this point, such as how to handle multiple competing video-conference calls when your spouse shares "office space," how to prevent an overly protective dog from aggressively interrupting an important call and/or my daughter's rigorously-imposed sleep schedule, or how to make sure a toddler is entertained and cared for without exposing the family to COVID. I now also have experience handling less common age-of-COVID challenges, such as what to do when your food delivery driver hops a curb and destroys the cable box supplying internet to you and your neighbors, or how to handle a close neighbor transitioning a home in an otherwise quiet neighborhood to a full-time VRBO party house.

Despite all the challenges we've faced, I am incredibly lucky that my professional life remains stable, and that I have the luxury of writing about the lessons learned from a recent job change. At the very least, I hope to be able to hold onto the lessons of 2020 when the world regains a sense of normalcy.



I now know the importance of prioritizing my own needs—even in the midst of constantly competing demands—because years prior I had suffered through the consequences of not doing so. In the early years of my law practice (and indeed for most of my life before that) I was saddled with over thinking, anxiety, and depression.

The Gift Of Desperation: How I Managed My Mental Health During A Pandemic



CLAIRE E. PARSONS
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Though the last year has certainly had its challenges, social distancing didn't keep me from having a pretty good year in 2020. I learned to serve my clients, several of whom were new to me, almost entirely from home. Though bored and frustrated at times, my daughters continued to thrive and learn. I even managed a few extras, like building my network on LinkedIn, publishing a book, earning a meditation teacher certificate, and launching a blog. How was this possible in such a mess of a year? It was possible because I prioritized my own happiness and mental health.

This is not something that comes to me naturally. I am not one of those people who is genetically predisposed to either happiness or calm. Instead, my serenity over the last year is the product of what meditation teacher and self-compassion expert, Christopher Germer, calls "the gift of desperation." I now know the importance of prioritizing my own needs—even in the midst of constantly competing demands—because years prior I had suffered through the consequences of not doing so. In the early years of my law practice (and indeed for most of my life before that) I was saddled with over thinking, anxiety, and depression. It came to a climax during a difficult first pregnancy and led ultimately to post-partum depression. My daughter and I fortunately survived that scary time and thrived after because I took it as the wakeup call that it was. In other words, I had fallen apart completely at an important point in my life, learned to put myself back together, and that process taught me a lot about what I needed to live a better, happier life.

As a result of this, when the emergency declarations came in March and everything started to shut down, I did not panic. No panic was necessary because I already knew what I had to do. I knew that it was imperative that I continue the disciplines I had already adopted to keep myself, my family, my clients, and my community steady, hopeful, and happy.

First, I knew that it was essential that I manage my own stress, monitor my tendency to worry and overthink, and be wary against isolation. The most critical way that I had learned to do this was establishing a regular meditation practice. Meditation helps me see when I am thinking, what I am thinking about, and examine how useful the thoughts are. That practice helped me, and helps me still, to drop the useless "what if" thoughts and defend against mental assaults of self-criticism. My proficiency with these strategies was well-established in March 2020, so I knew as soon as the lock down instructions came that maintaining my practice was critical. Like everyone else, I was scared and worried what would happen to my family, my firm, and my country. Each day, though, my meditation practice helped me accept and care for this fear and refocus my attention on the issues and challenges before me instead of succumbing to the rumination that would only make life harder.

Meditation helped with stress management too, of course, but I have found that stress is something that requires a whole toolbox rather than just a single tool to address. After my daughter's birth, I also realized another reason for my unhappiness: I had very few activities outside of work that I really enjoyed. Over time, I fixed that by reinvigorating my lifelong love of cooking, starting a writing habit by joining Ms. JD's Writer in Residence Program, and later resuming a fitness regimen after years of inactivity.

During the pandemic, these hobbies saved my life and helped my law practice. Writing was a daily amusement that helped me market my practice, network, and have a bit of fun, even if it was limited most days to 1300 characters in a LinkedIn post. Though I enjoyed working at home and adapted quickly to a remote practice, I also quickly learned that I needed other activities to give me a break from my computer. Cooking offered this, by providing the sensory stimulation and playfulness that staring at a screen all day lacked. It was a fun distraction for myself and my daughters as we explored local produce from our farm share and tried to approximate some of the dishes from The Great British Bake Off. And, since my steps during lockdown were usually limited to a few thousand a day, I was lucky to be able to ride mile after mile on the Peloton bike that I had fortuitously purchased in 2019 as a Christmas gift for my husband. In combination, these pastimes helped me add variety, fun, and health to my life that kept my stress levels manageable.

While meditation, exercise, and cooking are all things that can be done at home, social isolation presented a tougher challenge. So, you may wonder how I avoided loneliness? The truth is that I didn't. Like everyone else, there were times when I got lonely or just plain bored during the pandemic. Even as an introvert, I still missed the occasional big event, concert, or happy hour with my colleagues. It helped me substantially, however, to continually use the options available to me through technology. I regularly checked in with friends and family via text message and email. I reached out to them to complain or vent when I needed it or just to share a funny meme. I sought out any experiences I could offer to my girls at home, like watching the Nutcracker virtually or library story times over Facebook live, and in working to keep their spirits up, I kept up my own. And I tapped into online communities I had cultivated over the years, including those in MothersEsquire and my community on LinkedIn to share career milestones or funny stories, offer support, and get new ideas.

Of course, there were times when I fell away from all of this. There were days when I neglected to meditate or couldn't get motivated to exercise. Without a defined schedule, I often struggled to get to bed on time and I pray that I am never confronted with an accounting of the amount of snack food my children and I consumed over the last year. In addition, no matter how hard I tried, some weeks were just hard, like in November when I tried a virtual due process hearing over the course of

two weeks that was far more exhausting than I ever would have anticipated. Even though I repeatedly fell off my track, I always forgave myself, reflected on all that I was dealing with and living in, and I just went back to the things I knew worked for me. Each time, they helped me pull myself out of whatever rut I had worked myself into before it became a ravine I couldn't escape. Thus, my disciplines didn't just help me stay steady; they helped me restore steadiness on the occasions when I lost it. And the faith that I could be lost and then found again was as helpful in maintaining and restoring my calm as the disciplines themselves.

Rightfully so, there is a lot of attention being paid to the impact that the pandemic has had on our mental health. Even in a normal year, lawyers have so many challenges to maintaining mental and even physical health. Adverse conditions, sudden change, and historical events certainly compound these problems. Because bad times inevitably come to us all, it behooves us to develop and consistently return to practices to monitor and maintain our mental health. My practices, simple as they were, saved me this year and I am grateful for them. In truth, my personal experience with desperation in the past had given me gifts that helped me survive this trying time.

If you didn't have those practices in March, 2020 and have struggled during the pandemic, do not judge yourself harshly or compare yourself to anyone else. Give yourself what you need, give yourself time to heal, and then start paying attention to what feels healthy and good for you. After a while, you will develop a toolbox of strategies and disciplines that work to help you manage your own stress, monitor and maintain your mental health, and stay connected to your community. I know that this past year has been a struggle for most of us and we are still not out of the woods. After I lived through a very hard year of my own years ago, though, I was amazed how quickly and drastically things changed when I learned to make my own happiness a priority. Whatever 2021 brings us next, I hope that your happiness and mental health are priorities for you.

We hitched our bicycles to our SUV and went outside. We took downstate day trips. One such Saturday trip took us to Columbus, Ohio where we found ourselves cycling down Columbus' major thoroughfare, High Street, at noon. It was bereft of any vehicular traffic.

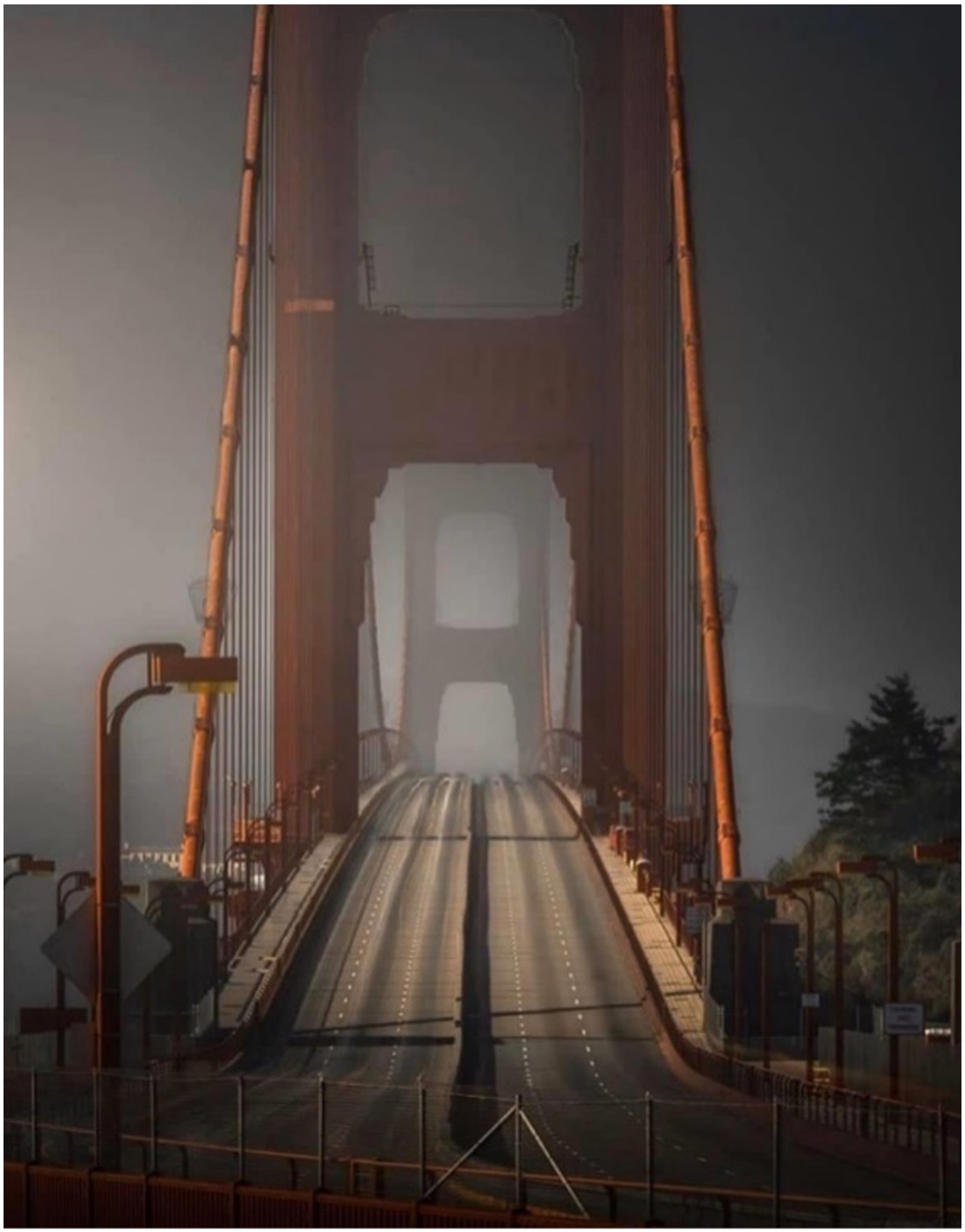
Travel In The Time Of Covid And Beyond



CRAIG A. MARVINNEY
Walter | Haverfield
Cleveland, OH

Stepping through the door, I patted the outside skin of the plane with my right hand as I always do, "Ok, let's get there safely." Once inside, it hit me. "Wow, smells like someone spilled a bottle of Windex or something." Shuffling down the aisle with the other passengers to our seats, my wife Paula, and I began to take our seats as normal. We grabbed the seat backs to squeeze in. My hand slipped. It was wet. Looking down, I realized the seat itself was too wet to sit on — sanitizer. The source of the 'Windex.'

This earliest experience of plane travel in the dawn of the Time of Covid came suddenly. Our FDCC 2020 Winter Meeting drew to a close the night before at the Scottsdale Camelback Inn & Resort, with hundreds of our members enjoying each other's company amongst a sumptuous outdoor barbecue during an evening embedded in country music, in futuristic star and moon watching through powerful telescopes guided by lasers into the sky contrasted with old west photography, a



beer-serving burro named Sofie, and the practice of medieval axe throwing deep into the evening. Paula and I co-chaired the meeting with a wonderful team of FDCC leadership around us. Throughout that first week of March, 2020, we shared our common FDCC bonds with hundreds of our members – shaking hands, hugging, laughing, eating, and drinking together during a rodeo, a spring-training baseball game, a Native American Art Fest, golf and hikes in the desert's winter warmth, a

flashmob singing from Freddie Mercury's Queen, all among many fantastic programs, speakers, and other southwest American experiences in Arizona's Paradise Valley.

Once the flight attendant delivered a towel to wipe our seats dry on the plane, we settled in for the flight home, hardly realizing the continent below was about to become at once both broader and narrower than the prior half-century or more. The day before, former FDCC President Dan Kohane flew to Washington, DC, only to find upon landing that the legal conference at which he was to speak was canceled as he was in the air. Two days earlier, the city of Austin, Texas, home to our FDCC 2019 Winter Meeting, shut down its famed South-By-Southwest Festival. It seemed odd, an overreaction perhaps? Canceling SXSW was huge.

As the desert below rose to the Rockies' snowy mountains, my flight returning from Phoenix only six weeks earlier from the FDCC Board Retreat came to mind. On that crowded flight, there were only two people wearing masks. It seemed quaint - an elderly fellow and a younger woman of apparent Asian background, both evidently anxious about this new virus, becoming universally known as Covid-19, the "Coronavirus", or "Covid" for short. I thought of those American cruise line passengers quarantined in a foreign port, enduring a fearsome time as the virus ravaged their Asian cruise. The United States for the moment seemed safe from what Europe and Asia were seeing. Was the United States' exposure delayed because our county recently closed its doors to travelers from Asia and then from Europe?

Less than a month earlier, I'd written a memo to the FDCC officers analyzing Covid, its spread and evident impact in Asia and Italy, evaluating its certain eventual spread to North America. The memo concluded the FDCC should proceed as scheduled with the Winter Meeting in Scottsdale. The analysis showed in all likelihood our members would be safe from Covid's impact during the meeting and while traveling home. Attendance at the meeting proved very strong. So now, weeks later, as our post-meeting flight cruised east, it looked like it all worked out.

Hours later we stepped off the plane in our hometown, Cleveland, returning to work for just a few days before events across the United States canceled in a cavalcade — games in the NBA, the NCAA basketball "March Madness", the NHL, MLB's Spring Training. Then whole seasons delayed. Entire sectors of the economy shut down and folks started working en masse from home. My office along with others across the nation restricted reimbursable business travel for any purpose without prior approval by the firm's highest authority. Partners were warned against any international travel at all. Travel seemed to simply disappear with the mid-March shutdowns across the nation, the continent, and the world.

In just a week or two, major travel industry companies — airlines, hoteliers, cruise lines — lost almost 50% or more of their value to investors. Different American states locked down, while others stayed open — sort of — and then the border between the

US and Canada shut down for the rest of the year. International travel withered as airlines cut back flights by over 95%. Cruise lines all but ceased operations throughout the world. Major hotels sent staffs home. Convention centers languished.

It hit home for us almost immediately as Paula's son's wedding set for March in Panama postponed for a year. Unlike most of the United States, real lockdowns actually occurred in Panama as the government began permitting only men to leave their homes on certain days and times, and only women to do so on other hours and days.

As advices from US government and public health authorities conflicted, separating fact from fiction, rumor from reality, editorial agendas from real news, became harder to discern. One thing became apparent — getting outside was healthier, better, and allowed for the freedom to move about so many of us had begun to crave. Hiking and cycling in parks, driving further to local or state parks we so often overlooked for "more exciting far off" places allowed Paula and me to travel locally, and experience life 'in our own backyard.'

The nation's people sought to work and connect with others from home. 'Essential workers' still worked, assuring America's infrastructure maintained the basics to keep critical aspects of America still moving. Paula and I waited in suspense as Ohio's Health Director issued her "Stay-at-Home" Order just before St. Patrick's Day, eager to read that Ohio declared the work of both real estate agents and attorneys "essential" and thus able to work. Yet others, in the travel, entertainment, and restaurant industries were crippled, unable to work. Almost completely shut down. As March bled into April, then May, some business and other critical air travel was maintained even so, but with considerable new viral safety rules in place.

Not able to sit still for long, we undertook our own risk analysis strategy on travel. We hitched our bicycles to our SUV and went outside. We took downstate day trips. One such Saturday trip took us to Columbus, Ohio where we found ourselves cycling down Columbus' major thoroughfare, High Street, at noon. It was bereft of any vehicular traffic. Astounded, we rode that empty road from Ohio State's campus to the state capitol building along the street's center line. It seemed right out of a post-apocalyptic movie. Still, vestiges of travel normalcy crept into our lives another week as my daughter drove home from a major east coast metro area without incident.

These travel successes "spoke" to us, pushing our envelope further. Seeing it looked safe if virus safety rules were followed, we opted to travel overnight to more distant lodging. Our governor opened up an extremely popular state park downstate, so local we'd never been to it, and we jumped on it, driving down to spend a number of days hiking and renting a cabin deep in the Appalachian woods. Paths and trails were marked "one way," which seemed very odd, but designed to maintain concentrated park visitors' social distance, even in that very rural area. To our surprise, that state

park was nearly empty. Access to everything was a breeze.



Paula's sons beckoned from Minnesota. So, we studied new Covid airline safety rules as summer 2020 settled in. We decided to fly. The airport was nearly empty and the plane, sparkling clean. But this time it was not sopping of sanitizer like that first flight at Covid's outset. The plane was comfortably spacious as on Delta, seats were left open for social distancing. Flight attendants assured masks were properly worn at all times other than eating/drinking. Sanitizer packs were handed to passengers on entering the plane, and again with in-flight snacks. Our rental car? Sopping wet from sanitizer....

Once in Minneapolis, our major chain hotel survived on 25% capacity on a good night. Most facilities were shut down, including the restaurants, meeting spaces, and bars. Downtown was almost empty. Some of the higher-end restaurants were open, so we easily found a table where a year earlier there would have been no way. Another new rule: the host took our phone number for contact tracing use in case of an unlikely problem.

Major events? A colleague and I took a spontaneous driving trip two hours to Pittsburgh to catch the Notre Dame at U. Pitt NCAA football game. Only 6,000 folks were allowed into the 65,000 capacity Heinze Field stadium, so tickets were very sparse. Fifteen minutes before game-time, we drove freely to some of the closest-in parking, and walked without delay right to our seats. Mask marshals assured fans wore masks at all times, threatening expulsion from the stadium to those who resisted. The massive stadium felt empty. Concession lines simply did not exist, but the food was fine! Afterward, we exited the stadium parking lot - no hitch, no delay, no traffic. Paula and I just had a similar experience with an NBA game; oddly empty, yet ridiculously easy.

International travel? Some folks are slipping away to do this too. Some, very close to us who themselves have recovered from Covid, succeeded. They are able to work remotely for a week or two at a time. Since they have quarantined, and live in a city that is all but requiring isolation and virtual quarantining, the idea of a quarantine is not daunting to them. They arranged their Covid tests appropriately, abided by all requisite international restrictions, and quarantined at home upon return. While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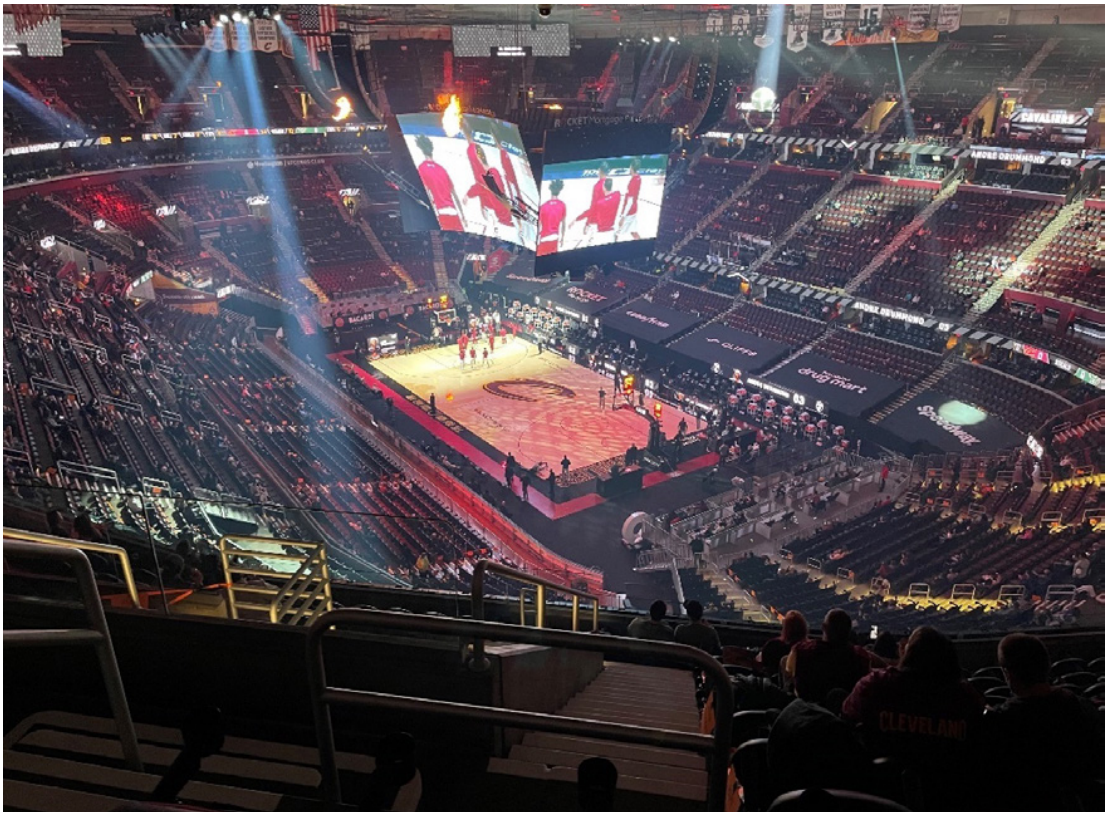
BUD LIGHT
Pepsi


CAVALIERS
drug mart
CLEVELAND

these restrictions are utterly burdensome to some folks, to others who love a good adventure and who have learned to navigate the risks of Covid, it can be a time to go to out-of-the-way places and gain some great experiences.

Earlier here, I noted at this Time of Covid's outset, our continent seemed both broader yet narrower than ever. With travel remaining seemingly restricted at the time of this writing, it does seem broader as very few readily travel across the country and distant travel seems an unlikely adventure. Still, computer-enabled meetings with their 'Brady-Bunch'-style gallery screens make it seem narrower as we "gather" more often than ever, from our distant seats. Despite this, the yearning for more inexorably pulls us outward.

Economic forecasters predict travel as we knew it before March 2020 will begin to uptick this summer of 2021, as vaccination rates increase. "Vaccine Passports" may arise. A Johns Hopkins Medical School professor in late February, 2021 optimistically cited among other things, credentialed Swedish research regarding human "T-cells", so called "Memory Cells", that proves a greater exposure and ability to fight the virus within the global environment - more than prior mere antibody count studies. He concludes with current vaccination rates this shows human "herd immunity" will result by April 2021.

Yet inertia in markets will persist. Many experts say economic decisions will delay corporate and firm reimbursements until well into 2022. Many travel industry investor analyst forecasters expect travel levels will not likely return to 2019 levels until 2023 or even 2024, especially in international markets.

Michael Jordan, the basketball great, once was sidelined by a serious bone fracture in his foot. As he regained his 'game,' doctors estimated his risk of bone refracture at 10%. Team doctors restricted his playing time. Mr. Jordan flipped that logic, reasoning that the doctors were really saying there was a 90% chance he'd be fine. Greater than 90% scores an "A" in most universities and high schools. His comeback came much sooner, for he was willing to assume that risk.

Ah, "Assumption of the Risk". That common law doctrine from our law school tort classes. Our lives always involve risk. Our individual choices, be they investments, outdoor activity, eating, cooking, playing, working — that is, living life — are rife with risk. Travel has always presented risk, risk that by 2019 minimized to a point where even the most anxious of us felt safe.

While it seems travel will "return", it is here now. Although a much different experience from "pre-Covid", it is still much the same. There is no "post-Covid" world in the reasonable future. Covid is now endemic. Many of the rules and changes now in place due to Covid will likely remain in some form or another. Although it appears

this is a time of greater risk and more rules, it is also a time when we can go places with no lines and minimal crowds.

One's mind begins to scream "Risk/Benefit Analysis." Absolutely. Risk is never zero. That has not been a greater truth than in this Time of Covid. Risk is relative. And life is for the living.

We must develop a visionary resilience going forward. Appropriate use of masks, sanitizers, and social distancing combined with 'being smart' provide us lessons from which we can benefit. One of those benefits, depending on our own risk tolerance, opens the doors to travel, adventure, and even coming together at a time where travel in many ways is easier and safer than ever. Today is ours. For the foreseeable future, travel and its consequent adventures and joys can be ours as well.



Social media let me communicate with lawyers and law students from around the world. A whole world of us going through a pandemic together, focusing on what makes us the same – our wants and needs, our fears and dreams, our worries and hopes. Though the pandemic isolated us, it paradoxically, brought us together.

Social Media



FRANK RAMOS
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Miami, FL

When the pandemic hit, I doubled down on phone usage - e-books, news, music, podcasts and yes, social media. I was active on Facebook and LinkedIn. I was also on Twitter and Instagram, but was a mere voyeur on those platforms, never posting, commenting or sharing. I had been posting daily on Facebook and LinkedIn since the summer of 2016, and when the pandemic hit, I started posting multiple times on both.

On Facebook, I have four categories of posts. First, I share a daily Christian devotional called Our Daily Bread. Second, I share humorous posts, often memes. Third, I share items about something cool my wife, Ana, or one of our boys, David (22) or Michael (19) is doing. And fourth, I share items about the practice and items I'm doing in the practice. When the pandemic hit, I started posting humorous posts several times a day both for my own sanity and mental health and for others' sanity and mental health. I went out of my way to search memes anywhere and everywhere on the internet – Someecards, Reddit, Twitter, Instagram, meme generators – and shared them regularly and often. Memes became my brand on Facebook. I often received

funny photos, images and articles via instant messages from friends on Facebook. I received text messages, voice mails, e-mails and other messages thanking me for taking the time to share what, to be perfectly honest, were silly posts – dad jokes, wry observations, bad puns, exploiting classic memes – for giving them a break from the stress and frustration COVID-19 imposed on all of us. It didn't seem like much – posting funny things on Facebook – but for some it was just enough, and that "just enough" was the "just enough" I needed to deal with the pandemic. Sometimes the best way to help yourself is to help others.

On LinkedIn, I have three categories of posts. First, I share tips for young lawyers and law firms on pretrial and trial practice, leadership, marketing, writing, public speaking, training, mentoring and diversity. Second, I share personal thoughts, ideas and experiences that I hope inspire and motivate young lawyers. Third, I share links to articles and books I've written, videos I've done or podcasts I've participated in. Before COVID, I was posting once a day on one of these topics. After COVID, I started posting several times a day, and many of my posts became COVID-centric, advising young lawyers how to manage COVID in their practices and lives and encouraging them through the stress, anxiety and even depression brought on by COVID. These posts led to a lot of calls, text messages and instant messages from young lawyers and law students struggling with and through the pandemic. Some couldn't find jobs. Some had been laid off from their jobs. Some wondered if they could land jobs. I didn't have many answers. I listened, made suggestions and empathized. Mostly, they were just looking for empathy.

Social media let me communicate with lawyers and law students from around the world. A whole world of us going through a pandemic together, focusing on what makes us the same – our wants and needs, our fears and dreams, our worries and hopes. Though the pandemic isolated us, it paradoxically, brought us together. We had this shared experience, and in some ways, in many ways actually, we went through it together and helped each other and supported one another through it.

Social media has its pros and cons. It can isolate us. It can marry us to our phones and laptops. It can make us believe others' lives are more glamorous, more exciting, more fun than ours. It takes our personal data, predicts what we want and then tries to sell us our fantasies. But there's a reason so many of us use it. It can serve us, and help us serve others. And so many of us came to rely upon social media during the pandemic to stay close with those online that we could no longer see in person. Yes, it's preferable to meet someone in person for coffee and talk and laugh and reminisce. But since we couldn't do that, social media provided us an alternative to love and laugh, to share and give, to cry and empathize.

Since some of you didn't follow me on Facebook, and weren't exposed to my humor, let me share with you the text of some of my posts and remember that the posts

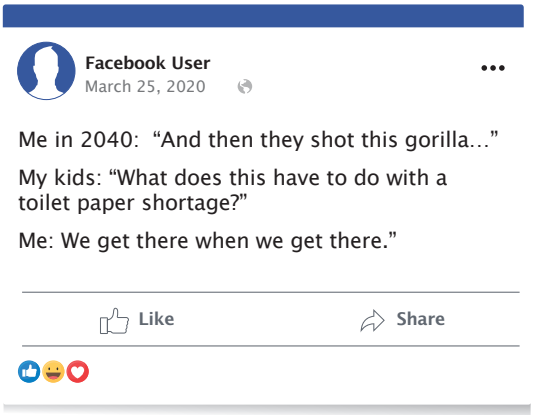
you share on social media, that encouraging word you send in a text, or a hello in an instant message may be exactly what someone else, whether across the street or across the world, needs.

FACEBOOK POSTS

I don't take credit for the following. These are memes copied and shared by myself (and many others) on various social media platforms during the pandemic...













Facebook User
April 8, 2020

Congratulations you successfully made it to April.

Welcome to Level 4 of Jumanji.

Like Share

Facebook User
April 9, 2020

2020
Written by Stephen King
Directed by Quentin Tarantino

Like Share

Facebook User
April 15, 2020

Me: Alright, time to go to bed.

Youtube: What your favorite pasta sauce says about you.

Me: Well well then, let's find out.

Like Share

Facebook User
April 15, 2020

I wonder if Target misses me too.

Like Share

Facebook User
April 21, 2020

I love seeing posters for lost cats.
Your cat isn't lost, man.
Cats don't get lost.
Your cat left you.

Like Share

Facebook User
April 22, 2020

Every time I finish a roll of toilet paper it feels like a petal falling off the enchanted rose in Beauty and the Beast.

Like Share

Facebook User
April 2, 2020

Dude: Hey my name is John Jacob Jinglehiemer Schmidt, what's your name?

Other dude: okay look, you're not going to believe this.

Like Share

Facebook User
April 3, 2020

Bet Marie Kondo is wishing she had more stuff in her house right about now.

Like Share

Facebook User
April 23, 2020

Quarantine has me writing emails like old-timey letters now

Dearest friend,

It's been at least a fortnight since we last spoke. Know that you have been on my mind as of late. I pray for a swift and successful reunion. Until then I hope you find peace in birdsong and moonlight.

Like Share

Facebook User
April 25, 2020

Odysseus: We now set out on our odyssey.
Sailor: [raising hand] what's an odyssey?
Odysseus: a long journey named after the only survivor.
Sailor: Oh Ok. Wait, What?

Like Share

Facebook User
April 26, 2020

Airlines sending me "we're in this together" emails…

Um where were you when my suitcase was 51.5 lbs?

Like Share

Facebook User
April 27, 2020

Interviewer: If there was a problem how would you resolve it?

Me: [nervously] Check out the hook and the DJ revolve it?

Like Share

Facebook User
April 28, 2020

I can't stop thinking about how scared all the little spring décor must be just sitting in the Target dollar spot all alone, in need of their forever home.

Like Share

Facebook User
May 1, 2020

Pretty wild how we used to eat cake after someone had just blown air from their mouth on it.

Like Share

Facebook User
May 7, 2020

Dolly Parton writing "I Will Always Love You:" and "Jolene" in the same day is mind blowing. It'd be like if DaVinci finished the Mona Lisa then turned around in the same day and wrote "Jolene."

Like Share



Facebook User
May 14, 2020

My wife and I laugh at how competitive we are. But I laugh more.

Like Share

Facebook User
May 15, 2020

Looking forward to Hallmark's holiday offering "A very COVID Christmas," when a big city lawyer and a country candle maker accidentally meet when they go to the wrong Zoom meeting.

Like Share

Facebook User
May 30, 2020

Me: I trained this chicken to talk
Her: Let's see
Chicken: Buck
Me: How much is 200 pennies?
Chicken: buck buck
Her: This is stupid
Me: It gets better
Chicken: It gets way better, Susan

Like Share

For opening statements I decided to don one of the court-provided clear face masks. It was made of a sheet of impermeable plastic with foam sides and elastic straps. This seemed like it would help the jurors see my sincerity, my smile, my passion. Instead, it allowed them to see a steamed up piece of plastic that kept sliding down my face and hear my labored attempts to move breath through the foam sides of the mask while trying to talk.

Reflections On A Pandemic Jury Trial



ANGELA BERANEK
BRANDT, LARSON KING
Larson King, LLP
Saint Paul, MN

The October 2020 trial date will never hold.
There is no way King County Washington can seat a jury in the middle of a pandemic.
What potential jurors will agree to show up?
Voir dire by Zoom? How is that even possible?
Something will happen and the trial date will not hold, but I'll book my plane ticket.

On September 30, 2020 as I boarded a plane to Seattle packed for trial, I still did not believe the trial would happen. The team arrived early to quarantine and get COVID tested. No one wanted to be the person to test positive and blow the whole thing up, much less be quarantined with the virus, alone in a hotel room hundreds of miles from home. The negative test results were met with relief and the reality that the trial was moving forward.

The first week of trial began with two hearings. One was held via Zoom, but the other was in person in the courthouse in Kent, Washington. The bustling courthouse was a little unsettling due to the number of people in the small hallway leading into the

atrium. Lawyers and parties and court staff in the security lines maintained some distance, but there simply wasn't room to be six feet apart. Inside the courtroom the witness testified from behind a clear barrier and the judge presided over the matter from inside a plexiglass cage while everyone wore masks.

The rest of the first week was used to pick the jury. In some ways, Zoom voir dire went smoother than anticipated. Due to the limited time for questioning each panel, much of the work occurred through an analysis of the lengthy questionnaire the court sent to prospective jurors via email. After the court made an initial hardship cut, the remaining jurors were divided into groups slated for three different Zoom panels. Through agreement, the parties participated from our respective workspaces rather than through laptop computers while masked in the courtroom. This allowed us to set up our space with large screens and good lighting. Because my co-counsel was assigned the voir dire questioning, I got to experience my first and possibly last time watching voir dire in one of my cases while wearing jeans and eating snacks.

One of the prospective jurors in the first panel was a man working in his tobacco store. His camera was propped up off to his side and we listened as he waited on customers at the counter. A couple sales transactions in, the judge grew tired of the distraction and released him. Surprisingly, most of the jurors who made it to a Zoom panel made little effort to be excused. One exception was a young man who advised us all that he was sleeping with a Starbucks barista who had recently developed COVID-like symptoms. When that didn't get him dismissed, he expressed his fear of taking public transportation. Still unsuccessful in being excused, it seemed he Googled "how to get out of jury duty" and reported that if he had to be on the jury he thought his unconscious bias would become his conscious bias and he couldn't be fair. That strategy worked and he was removed for cause. After three Zoom sessions spanning a day and a half, there were enough remaining in the venire to exercise strikes and seat sixteen jurors.

The "courtroom" was set up in one of the ballrooms at the Meydenbauer Center in Bellevue, Washington. The judge was perched on a dais off to one side of the room, flanked by the US and Washington state flags. Counsel and court staff sat at long tables shrouded in black linens. On the far back wall loomed an enormous screen, ready for demonstratives, exhibits, and the faces of remote witnesses. Sixteen chairs were spaced out in three rows in the back of the room, a post-it note on each indicating to the jurors which seat was reserved for their assigned juror number. There was essentially no additional room behind the jurors' chairs, but when anyone came into the courtroom, the judge's deputy jumped up and found an extra chair to wedge into a corner or a doorway. The court wanted to ensure that the trial gave the appearance of an open proceeding, even if the facilities made it difficult to seat spectators.

Court protocol required face coverings at all times. Live witnesses were allowed to

wear a face shield while seated at the small table turned makeshift witness stand, but lawyers had to wear masks even while speaking. For opening statements I decided to don one of the court-provided clear face masks. It was made of a sheet of impermeable plastic with foam sides and elastic straps. This seemed like it would help the jurors see my sincerity, my smile, my passion. Instead, it allowed them to see a steamed up piece of plastic that kept sliding down my face and hear my labored attempts to move breath through the foam sides of the mask while trying to talk. I quickly decided that being able to breathe was more important than having the jurors see the lower part of my face, so I wore a surgical mask for the rest of the trial.

Our team made a conscious decision to have all of the defense witnesses appear live. All but one of plaintiff's witnesses appeared via Zoom. Other than a few minor glitches, the court staff proficiently managed the Zoom witness appearance. The only problematic event occurred during the testimony of one of Plaintiff's experts. As soon as Plaintiff's counsel asked his objectionable question, the expert would launch into his objectionable answer. He either could not hear my objection or chose to ignore it. This required me to spend much of the direct examine in a half standing position, inches from the microphone, ready to quickly and loudly assert my objections to stop the expert's answer and drown out whatever he was trying to blurt out before the judge could give a ruling.

Back at the hotel, the team took COVID tests each week and worked in several large war rooms where we could spread out. After the first week, the fear of being the person who might infect the whole team began to subside and the dynamic morphed into an almost typical trial experience. We were brought back to reality on a Sunday evening a couple weeks into trial when we received an email from the court telling us that one of the jurors had COVID symptoms.

Oh no, have I been exposed?
Will we lose the jury?
Will we have to pause the trial until the juror gets her COVID test results?
Is this trial going to last into November?
Why didn't I vote before I left for trial?

The court had protocols in place for this very scenario. Without much fanfare, the juror was excused, along with one other juror who did not feel comfortable returning. We were told to report for trial the next morning. We later learned the juror's COVID test was negative and we made it to the end of trial with two alternate jurors to spare.

Although court was dark on Fridays, the team committed to staying in our bubble so no one traveled home on the weekends. A few weeks into trial my 11-year-old twin boys were texting me regularly to find out when I was coming home. Even my 14-year-old son was sending sad face emojis through Snapchat. My husband was a rock star through all of this, but the time away from home and the added stress of

COVID started to take a toll. On Friday October 30, 2020, before the jury completed its second day of deliberations, I decided to get on the last flight home. We didn't know if we'd get a verdict before the weekend. It had been a full thirty days since I left my family in Minnesota and, verdict or not, I was ready to go home. As it turned out, I received news of the defense verdict while riding solo in the rental car shuttle bus to the airport. My foot stomps and cheering startled the driver, but he got me to the terminal and kindly found me a cart to haul all my luggage inside.

That security line was short.
Why is the airport so empty on a Friday afternoon?
Oh, right....the global pandemic.

As I pulled out my hand sanitizer, I realized that a month long trial resulting in a defense verdict allowed me to forget about the virus, at least for a few short moments.

When I went to the drug store that afternoon, I had a shopping list of items I had never known existed: bed pan liners, dry shampoo gloves, etc. When mom's occupational and physical therapists came to the house the next day, they also spent time teaching us with the basics of patient care.

Caring For Aging Parents



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In the late spring of 2020, my husband and I learned that his father's "forgetfulness" was the result of the diagnoses we had feared; things were going to get worse, rather than better. His parents live about 400 miles from us, and we were struggling to figure out how to help them—especially during a pandemic.

I had been feeling grateful that my mother did not yet need extra help. She was healthy, independent, and quite active. So active that, on the morning of June 1, 2020, she climbed a ladder to change a light bulb on her front porch. Standing upon the bright yellow warning label on the top step of that ladder, she lost her balance and fell six feet to the concrete below. Thankfully, her neighbor heard the crash when the ladder toppled; he called 911 and then called me.

My father-in-law's diagnosis and my mother's fall launched our crash course in caring for aging parents.

I am a lawyer. As a lawyer, there are things that I do well. There is a corresponding

list, however, of less admirable traits. I am impatient and demanding of perfection. I am a bit of a know-it-all, and I am terrible at asking for help. Unfortunately, the traits that I have needed most in caring for our aging parents are notably absent from my list of natural talents.

But I have learned to ask more questions, and I have learned to admit when I am in over my head. Most importantly, I have learned to give myself a little more grace, and to create space in my life for what is really most important.

LESSON 1 – IT'S IMPORTANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW.

After the call from my mother's neighbor, I had been pacing the floor at home. The only contact from the hospital had been an early call inquiring about my mom's current medications; this was information I had never learned, as my mother always had been able to answer those questions for herself. The best I could do was "something for blood pressure. And maybe cholesterol."

I was annoyed with myself for that failure and frustrated that the virus had made it impossible to be with mom at the hospital when her nurse called again. She explained that none of mom's injuries required surgery; she had a broken pelvis, broken tailbone, and broken shoulder and arm. The nurse also explained that, because of the pandemic, the hospital didn't have room for a nonsurgical patient. My mom was far too injured to return to her own home, and I needed to make a decision: did I want to send her to a rehabilitation facility for her 8-week recovery, or have her transported to a private home for outpatient physical therapy?

At that moment, Arizona was leading the country in COVID-19 infection rates. I knew that in a rehab center, she would be alone and would not be permitted visitors. Since I hated the fact that she had been alone at the hospital since that morning, it felt like a simple decision. Without any additional information, I told the nurse to have my mother transported to my house.

In anticipation of mom's arrival the next day, I coordinated an afternoon of frenzied activity. We put fresh sheets on the bed in the guest room. We acquired a wheelchair and shower bench from a medical supply store. We picked up mom's pain prescriptions, purchased her favorite snacks for the pantry, and gathered some clothing from her house. I spent the evening with a glass of wine and a sense of satisfaction at completing the to-do list so efficiently.

But when the doorbell rang the next afternoon, mom was wheeled in on a gurney. She couldn't sit up, nor could she assist in any way as we lifted the sheet and transferred her to the bed. The transfer was harder than it should have been. It's hard enough to transfer an incapacitated adult to a hospital bed; it is significantly harder to maneuver around a queen-sized bed in a fully furnished bedroom.

I quickly realized that nothing I had done the day before had meaningfully prepared us to care for my mother. The fresh sheets were ridiculous--we needed to rent a hospital bed. The wheelchair and shower bench purchases had been naively optimistic—we were in bed pan and sponge bath territory. The snacks and comfort foods I had acquired were the exact opposite of what the doctor had ordered for a patient with a severe pelvic injury and the potential for opioid-induced constipation from her pain medication. Her needs were overwhelming, and I had no idea what I was doing.

LESSON 2 - LEARN FROM YOUR MISTAKES.

I was struggling to frame an intelligent Google search on how to solve this problem when a social worker from the hospital called to schedule mom's first outpatient therapy appointments. The poor woman had probably planned on making a five-minute call, but I grabbed the opportunity like the lifeline that it was. She spent an hour helping us understand some of the basics. When I went to the drug store that afternoon, I had a shopping list of items I had never known existed: bed pan liners, dry shampoo gloves, etc. When mom's occupational and physical therapists came to the house the next day, they also spent time teaching us with the basics of patient care.

Go figure – things got better once I had proper equipment and a little training. But my mother could have been spared some really uncomfortable moments if I had asked better questions of the nurse who asked me to decide where my mother would spend her recovery time. It was my responsibility to make a medical decision for her, and I arrogantly made that decision while laboring under the pretense that I knew what I was doing.

I won't make this mistake again. My mother had specialized needs that were entirely outside my wheelhouse, and I know that is going to continue. I have learned to ask a lot of questions, rather than acting on instinct, before helping with decisions about her care.

My willingness to act on impulse was not the only problem. I simply had not done enough to educate myself about the details of my mother's health or the reality of how she had been managing on her own before the fall. Although her pelvic fracture was unanticipated, the need for a trip to the emergency room should not have been. I knew that I might someday have to make a medical decision for my mother – I am the person who drafted the documents that say so. But I was not able to answer basic questions about her prescription medications.

Today, my husband and I are more active participants in our parent's health care. Our parents have given their physicians signed releases, and we've set up the online patient portals our parents had had no interest in. Just as attorneys have had to learn

to work remotely, doctors are offering more telehealth and video appointments than ever before; this has allowed us to participate in important appointments. We've purchased pill organizers with multiple compartments for each day, and set phone alarms to alert our parents when to take each medication. Most importantly, we've established ongoing dialogue with our parents' healthcare providers, subscribed to newsletters, and joined online forums designed to continue to educate us about how best to partner with our parents in meeting their healthcare needs.

LESSON 3– PATIENCE REALLY IS A VIRTUE.

My husband often remarks that patience is not one of my spiritual gifts. He is not wrong. But when implementing changes for our parents, I have learned that we need to go slowly.

While my mother was recovering in our home, we made frequent trips to her house to get things she needed and to assess the changes we would need to make to accommodate her new needs upon returning home. We learned that, although she was adept at hiding things in closets, drawers, and cupboards, she had been struggling to keep up with the house and manage certain tasks. We also learned that she had been storing a great deal of material left from her 40-year career as an elementary school teacher. The boxes were stacked in precariously-balanced towers that were an impressive accomplishment for a woman who is only 5 feet tall.

Several family members wanted to help, but some of us were far too quick to dictate solutions. In hindsight, I realize that we were upset with ourselves for not managing things earlier, and the emotion caused reactionary behavior that caused Mom to distrust and resent every change.

We had to take a big step back. My mother needed help, but she is an adult, and she wants to retain as much independence and autonomy as possible. In addition, as a mother, it is still her instinct to want to care for us. It is hard for her to accept that she is now the one who needs care, and even harder to have her kids being the people telling her what to do. We had to find the patience to go slowly and involve her in the problem-solving process.

For instance, my mom wanted to be able to drive again, and her doctors agreed that would be safe once her orthopedic injuries healed. But her need to use a cane meant that she would need more room to safely get into, out or, and around her car and we needed to eliminate anything that might cause her to trip. When we discussed the specific goal of giving her enough space to maneuver around her car in the garage, she agreed, but she wanted to be part of the process. Over a period of weeks, we helped her go through the boxes of books. She told stories from her years in the classroom; she read beloved stories to us; she had opportunities to send specific books to particular people and places. A month later, we had learned a lot about

the career she had loved, she had donated over 50 boxes of material to a teachers' co-op, and the garage is clean and safe. It was a painfully slow process, but that process allowed her to feel respected and it established trust. In the months since, we have been able to build from that foundation of trust to make larger changes and become a bigger part of her life and her health care.

Time spent caring for your parents may be frustrating, stressful, and even heartbreaking. But with patience, we also found endearing moments to offset the frustrations and to hold close to our hearts in the years when they're gone.

LESSON 4 – I CAN'T DO IT ALL.

Once my mother moved in with us, I was responsible for meeting her needs, overseeing her medication schedule, coordinating her in-home physical and occupational therapy appointments, and ensuring that her PT exercises were completed faithfully and correctly. These responsibilities were added to an already full plate of meeting client needs and helping run a law firm from my home in the middle of a pandemic. Despite the increasing stress, my daily mantra for the first week of my mother's recovery was "I'm Fine--Everything is Fine."

My oldest and closest friend, April, is an assistant professor at the University of Tennessee's College of Social Work. She also leads a team at Vanderbilt's Comprehensive Assessment Program for Professionals—a program that offers comprehensive psychological evaluation and recommendations for professionals experiencing mental health struggles. In addition to her professional understanding of the toll that stress can take on doctors and lawyers, she also has aging parents.

The day after mom's fall, April offered to fly to Phoenix and help. Her summer schedules at both UT and Vanderbilt were light, and the few classes she was teaching were being conducted via Zoom. But I declined her offer. I didn't want her to have to fly across the country and risk exposing herself to the virus, especially since I was still telling myself "I'm Fine--Everything is Fine."

One week later, my daughters called April to tell her that I was a liar, and that no matter how loudly or frequently I insisted that the situation was under control, it absolutely was not. The next time April called, I accepted her offer.

A few hours later, I sent her a text message:

"Fair warning: my house is a mess. I'm a mess. Everything is a mess."

Her response:

"That meets my expectations. I'm at the gate to board my flight from Nashville."

Her simple acceptance that it was OK that things were falling apart allowed me to

do something I hadn't let myself do all week: I sat down and cried. Full disclosure – I cried again as I typed them. The relief of finally letting go of my carefully constructed façade of competence and control remains one of my most vivid memories from that time.

With another set of hands in the house, things were much improved. I was able to tend to my own needs that had fallen by the wayside, such as sleep and showers. We again had groceries in the refrigerator and could eat meals that had not come from a drive-thru bag. And with April available to help meet mom's needs, I caught up on deadlines and kept my professional life on track.

In the months since April returned to her life in Nashville, we've had several discussions about "the Fall" and its impact on all of us. We have concluded that, without the pandemic, my mother would never have been able to recover in our home. My mom's doctors and therapists were unanimous in the opinion that her recovery was faster and better in our home than it would have been in a facility, because of the constant motivation and encouragement from family. But again, I am confident that she would not have had the luxury of that recovery if it had not been for the pandemic.

Before COVID-19, I averaged three out-of-towns trips per month. When in town, our usual routine is for my husband and I both to leave the house for work by about 6:30 am, and to return home by about 6:30 pm. This gives us only a handful of waking hours at home each day to prepare meals, take care of our dogs, and accomplish anything necessary to run the household.

This schedule obviously would not have left room for me to take responsibility for caring for an injured older patient. Even more significantly, I would not even have tried. If I had not already been working exclusively from home for two months before mom's fall, it would never have occurred to me that it was possible to do so.

There are myriad ways in which the virus has been terrible. But its timing, in conjunction with my mother's injury, gave me two critically important things that lawyers do not usually have: a flexible schedule and constant access to a mental health professional.

During the months when so many lawyers, judges and clients were working remotely, everyone was willing to give each other a little grace. With so many professionals working from home, we didn't mind seeing a little clutter in the background of our Zoom meetings. We became aware of one another as fellow human beings -- people who have families, pets, and sometimes a little chaos. After two months of working in this "new normal", I felt comfortable being candid about my mother's situation with my colleagues, my clients, and even opposing counsel. That honesty made it possible to request an extension when necessary, to explain why I was responding to a client's

email at 10:00 pm, or to go off the record for a moment if mom's physical therapist rang the doorbell in the middle of a Zoom deposition. In the past, I would have been reluctant to discuss a family emergency with opposing counsel, out of concern for "showing weakness." But the ability to be transparent about the situation and request flexibility when my mother's needs were most acute made it possible for me to meet her needs, as well as my clients', in a way that might have been impossible even a year before.

The pandemic gave me another much-needed piece of a puzzle that would otherwise have had a gaping hole: constant access to a mental health care professional.

I have jokingly referred to April as my "case worker" for years, but this June, she took on that role in a very real way. She sat on the back porch with me on several nights after my mother had gone to sleep and just let me talk. She stepped in on days when I'd hit my limit. She helped liaise with the entire team of professionals involved in my mother's care; she researched and located the best places to buy medical equipment as new needs emerged. And when it was time to assess the significant changes that needed to be made at my mother's house before her eventual return, April helped identify and implement improvements that mom talks about to this day, and she helped us shape the dialogue with my mother in ways that established trust, rather than resentment.

In short – her skills as a social worker and therapist made an unbearable situation more bearable.

LESSON 5 – WHEN THE PANDEMIC IS OVER, WE SHOULDN'T SETTLE FOR OUR OLD WAY OF DOING THINGS.

One of the most important lessons I have learned through these experiences is that either my career or my mother would have suffered in 2020 if I had not been able to surround myself with the right kind of help. As COVID-19 infection rates fall, vaccination numbers go up, and we begin to look forward to returning to life as usual, we don't have to leave behind the handful of positive things that have come from 2020.

I can't wait to be able to have our firm working together again, to get back into the courtroom, and to have the chance to attend conferences with colleagues whom I've missed for months. But my partners and I also are going to remember that briefs do not have to be drafted in an office or during traditional business hours; that meetings, depositions, hearings, and even trials can—when necessary—be conducted remotely; and that it is not always necessary to be at the office and away from home for twelve hours each day. With a little flexibility, we can all make it easier for our colleagues to continue to keep their practices intact while also meeting their families' needs and responding to emergencies. If the entire legal community can

maintain this willingness to exercise more flexibility, perhaps we might make it easier for women to succeed in this profession, lower divorce rates among attorneys, and remove at least some of the barriers in the professional world that so often set people with disabilities up for failure.

Professional flexibility, however, is only one of the things that made a difference for me while caring for aging parents during the pandemic. I have come to understand how a family crisis or health emergency could push some lawyers to the breaking point, but I also have learned that it doesn't have to be that way.

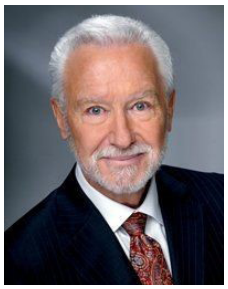
The legal community is slowly beginning to respond to the need to support lawyers' mental health. To date, however, most programs have focused on the need for substance abuse help. I wholeheartedly support those programs; substance abuse statistics within the profession compelled us to tackle that mental health issue first. But perhaps it is time to recognize that substance abuse help is only the first step, and that we should also be addressing our stress in other ways that might help preventing substance abuse.

Not all lawyers have ready access to the kind of support that I had in June and July—but we would improve the practice of law if they did. Lawyers lives would be improved immeasurably if large law firms and/or local bar organizations had licensed social workers like April on staff. Qualified, objective professionals who could provide mental health education, crisis intervention, sentinel event management, referrals to other services that a lawyer or family member might need, and other general support. All of us have seasons of our lives when we spend time dealing with personal or professional emergencies, but let's face it—we often are better at solving client problems than our own. Many problems could be addressed more quickly and more successfully if a qualified professional was available to help achieve the goal. Productivity and focus would increase, as would overall employee wellness, with this kind of assistance readily available.

The last twelve months tested the legal community in unprecedented ways, but it may also have revealed solutions to the weaknesses that we have previously refused to acknowledge. We owe it to ourselves to use the difficulties we faced in 2020 to find a better path forward for ourselves and our colleagues.

By the next morning, I was running a high fever and felt miserable. Joyce, my wife and hospital nurse of 45 years, watched me go from bad to worse overnight. She took me to a local hospital where I was loaded onto a gurney and wheeled into a temporarily constructed triage room. Family was not allowed in the hospital and I was fading in and out of consciousness.

Happy Fourth Of July!



DOUGLAS L. CHRISTIAN
Christian, Dichter
& Sluga, P.C.
Phoenix, AZ

Walking down the stairs from my "home office" study, I lost my balance and fell. Coffee flew every which way from my "World's Greatest Grandpa" coffee mug and I landed with a thud. Unfortunately, all of this under the watchful eyes of my wife and daughter who, I continue to believe, are just waiting for an excuse to ship me off to an old folk's home. "Oh, my God, are you okay Dad?" "I'm good, I just need to fix the edge of this step, I'll get to it soon." I knew better. I was light-headed, dizzy and a bit disoriented. My body ached badly enough that I had needed Tylenol each evening for a week or so to get some sleep. But I wasn't going to tell them that. So I limped from the bottom step with a smile.

It was the Fourth of July and our "bubble" (my wife and I, along with our daughter, Alison, son-in-law and grandson) were gathered for a backyard BBQ and fireworks display just the other side of Camelback Mountain (where, coincidentally, many FDCC Winter Meetings were held at the Camelback Inn during my 25 years as a member). As I hobbled outside, the setting sun pierced my skin like a hot knife. It's toasty in

Phoenix in July, but not that toasty. I was a little off, I told myself, but not enough off to leave the safety of my bubble and go "out there," even for medical attention. I got progressively worse. That week, I had gone from running 3 miles a day and weightlifting to having trouble getting out of bed for my obligatory four or five nightly trips to the bathroom. Something was wrong.

By the next morning, I was running a high fever and felt miserable. Joyce, my wife and hospital nurse of 45 years, watched me go from bad to worse overnight. She took me to a local hospital where I was loaded onto a gurney and wheeled into a temporarily constructed triage room. Family was not allowed in the hospital and I was fading in and out of consciousness. I recall that a physician briefly visited me, pronounced me with "presumptive COVID-19" stuck a swab up my nose and told me I was not sick enough to qualify for a "rapid result" test so I should go home and call back in 5 days for the results. A nurse's aide transferred me to a wheelchair and unceremoniously dumped me on the street corner, telling me I should probably call someone for a ride home.

It is noteworthy that, even though trained medical personnel in the hospital were not willing, figuratively or literally, to give me the time of day, my family was willing to risk their own lives to help me. I had been (presumptively) diagnosed with COVID-19 but they would not leave my side, taking shifts sitting next to me, just watching and waiting, without regard for their own health or their exposure to the deadly virus. I do not deserve them but am damn glad to have them.

Joyce was sufficiently worried that she asked Alison and my son, Matthew, to stay with us and help out, just in case. Good thing apparently. The night after I was summarily discharged from the hospital, during one of my several 71-year-old man trips to the bathroom, I had a seizure. I was told (no memory of it) that Alison was surreptitiously following behind me when I passed out. She caught my head just before it would have thumped on the tile floor like a cantaloupe. After that, things get a little foggy for me.

So as not to unnecessarily worry me, there was apparently quite a bit going on behind the scenes (out of my hearing and sight, such as they were) to save me. Hospitals were full and workers on the brink of exhaustion. "You can bring him in Mrs. Christian but there will be a considerable wait in the lobby before we can evaluate him." They had lost their capacity to heal, and their ability to feel. They could only act, and react, to situations as they arose in real time. If I died at home before my COVID test results came back, well, I was just one of many who would do so without notice or fanfare.

But...it so happens that my former brother-in-law, notwithstanding being my former brother-in-law, had the will and the capacity to heal. He saved my life. After being turned away from medical help, time and again, Joyce called him, sobbing and

gasping so hard that he could not really make out any words other than "Doug" and "dying." It so happens that he is the retired Chief of Staff at the best hospital in town and still had enough squeeze to get me one of the few remaining beds at the hospital and one of its very best neurologists to undertake my care.

By the time I arrived, I was floating in and out of consciousness (mostly out) and memory of my week's stay is episodic and poor. They did a rapid result COVID test when I arrived and, within minutes, I recall looking up at the nurse from the gurney in the hallway to learn that it was negative and I would be taken straight away to a non-COVID floor. From there, I can only describe my stay as one best experienced with a limited ability to perceive. I was poked, prodded, had needles stuck in my head, in my spine, in my arm, oxygen strapped to my face and was shoved in and out of MRI machines like a Christmas goose basting in the oven.

When I was visited by physicians, it was reminiscent of an alien abduction scene from a bad sci-fi movie. An unrecognizable being (physician) came in my room with a cadre of subordinate beings (residents), all draped in floor length gowns, wearing face shields, masks and gloves. They circled my bed, with only the physician allowed to talk, the residents simply observing me as one might observe a dolphin washed up on the beach that may, or may not, return to the sea. I knew who and where I was, and why I was there, but otherwise one moment in time evaporated into the next and night into day, without recognition or demarcation.

Tests and procedures were scheduled, and then delayed, because of high demand placed upon the facilities by COVID patients. I was too weak to feed myself and learned what it is like to be the object of care, rather than the subject of care. Nurses came in to feed me and answered their cell phones while shoving bites of broccoli into my mouth; "Hey, I'll hit you back. I've gotta feed this guy" without ever speaking directly to me or ever really looking at me. For the busy staff, I was a room number not a person. They were stretched to the breaking point.

Every hour, when my shift nurse came in to check my vitals, I asked, "What is my temperature now?" Several days into my stay one finally replied, "ninety-eight point four." My fever had subsided. It was several more days before I learned that I had viral encephalitis, origin unknown. Origin unknown because they could not perform the diagnostics soon enough to determine the etiology before my white blood cells Pac-Maned the bad bugs. Thankfully, I was never contagious (other than perhaps to a horse if I had equine encephalitis) and never put my family at risk of contracting my debilitating disease. Seasonably, my admitting physician and FOB (friend of brother-in-law) advised that my test results were surprisingly good and he anticipated a slow, but complete recovery. He turned to leave my room and move on to the next patient in the 98% full hospital when I asked, "Can I go home?"

He was hesitant; I was still very weak and would need constant attention for several weeks. I told him I just happened to have that constant attention available at home. A nurse wife, a doting daughter and a big strapping son to cart me around. I put on my most convincing lawyer face to plead my case. Then I whined and begged. He relented and I was released to the care of my family. It had been a week since they last saw me and when they arrived curbside to pick me up, they didn't recognize me. They thought I was an old lady waiting for a van to take her back to the nursing home. I had disheveled gray "COVID" hair and was wearing a hospital gown, sitting in a wheelchair. They, however, were a sight for sore eyes (and my ride home) so I waived them down, "Hey, it's me." They hid (reasonably well) their shock at my deteriorated condition and helped me into the car.

Once I got home, I was quite cautious and concerned (some, like my wife and daughter, might say obsessively so) about COVID and preserving our bubble. With a weakened immune system and some knowledge of what it must be like on "the other side" of the hospital in the COVID ward, I did not, and do not, wish to return. I'm blessed (and lucky). It has been six months and I am nearly fully recovered. The pace of my daily run is way off, but if that's my worst complaint after viral encephalitis, that ain't bad.

TAKEAWAYS

1) 2020 was a shit show.
2) Cherish your bubble. Not just when you are dying but every day. It would be nice if our bubbles were bigger and included lots of people we don't even know. But that hasn't happened in 6,000 years and isn't likely to happen today or tomorrow. So, cherish the one you have.
3) If you think you're anti-masker, I'm bigger than COVID, machismo is a harmless political statement, think again. You almost killed me.
4) There are people who lack compassion (like those who left me on the hospital street corner seriously ill) and people who have compassion in abundance (like my brother-in-law). In the time I have left, I will try to be more compassionate.
5) What happens to all the people whose brother-in-law was not Chief of Staff at the best hospital in town?

I know. I know. It sounds cliché. Love your family and let them know it.
But, to quote the great 80's hair-metal band, Cinderella:
"You don't know what you got 'til it's gone."

Lessons Learned From Death And Covid-19



ROBERT C. LOCKWOOD
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Love. Relationship. Communication.

These are the biggest lessons that I learned from the death of my older brother, Dr. Frank Lockwood. Frank was a 52-year-old family practice doctor in Atlanta and in good health with no comorbidities. Nevertheless, he died from COVID-related complications on August 5, 2020.

To learn my lessons, I had to experience Frank for more than 50 years. We were close in age but separated by almost everything else. I loved sports and hated school. Frank didn't have an athletic bone in his body and excelled in the classroom. I liked hair metal bands. Frank preferred the Pointer Sisters. I had a quick temper and Frank was a master of reading and influencing people. In my (admittedly biased) recollection, Frank's favorite childhood hobby was insulting and angering me – just for the fun of it. Suffice it to say that we did some horrific things to each other as kids that I doubt my parents ever knew about.

As we grew older, détente set in. I carried and nurtured the scars of our childhood, but I really think Frank moved on. More importantly, he tried. He welcomed my

wife, Julie, into our family and was an incredible uncle to my two sons. He and his husband, Bernie, opened their home to us whenever we were in Atlanta.

But, we were still different. While Frank was funny and flamboyant, he still annoyed the stew out of me on occasion. After about three days in close proximity, I would always need a break. So, there was a much-improved relationship, but we were not close.

Even so, he was family. I would happily provide him with legal advice whenever he needed it. And, that was the nature of our final communications with each other. He called me in early July to tell me that he contracted COVID from a patient. I provided some advice on pursuing a worker's compensation claim. Then, we exchanged two texts about the process shortly after he checked into the hospital.

That's it. The last time I talked to my brother was about filing a legal claim??? It's a huge regret and a tough lesson. Frank's death has really shaken me up. My father died in 2003 and my mom in 2016. Neither of those deaths impacted me nearly as severely as Frank's. I think that's because I now appreciate I loved this man and know that I should have done a better job of letting him – and me – know it. So, today, I try to preach the lesson of love.

I know. I know. It sounds cliché. Love your family and let them know it. But, to quote the great 80's hair-metal band, Cinderella: "You don't know what you got 'til it's gone." I'm not the only one who has strained relationships with family members. So, I encourage everybody I know to work at loving the people in your family who you might otherwise spurn. You really don't know when you are going to be left on your own.

And, the losses will hit you when you least expect it. Julie and I went camping in Virginia for a few days in September. We drove home through Chattanooga and passed multiple signs encouraging us to: "See Rock City!" As we talked, Julie disclosed that she's never visited Rock City, even though she's lived most of her life within two hours of that scenic wonder. That disclosure tickled a faint memory for me. I thought our family visited Rock City when I was four or five. Then, it dawned on me that I have nobody left who can confirm that memory. It's not very easy to make your way through Chattanooga traffic with tears rolling down your face.

So, focus on loving your family so that you don't cause interstate pileups. I think the way to work on loving your family is to emphasize relationship building and overlook slights, real or perceived. When Frank and Bernie would visit our house, he could instinctively find my most-expensive bottle of chardonnay. He would pop the cork and promptly drop an ice cube to cool that baby down. Infuriating. Maddening. Frank. Over the years, Bernie and I came to joke about this type of conduct. Frank didn't think about what he was doing. He wasn't mean-spirited. He was just Frank.

I really wish I had done a better job of understanding Frank's strengths and weaknesses – and my own. If I had, I think we could have developed a better relationship. So now, I'm trying to do better with my last shot. Thirteen years separate me and my younger brother, Chris. I am resolved to do better with my last familial relationship. Luckily, I've always been his idol (or so I tell myself). He also has three adorable young sons to whom my wife and I serve as pseudo-grandparents: "Oh, you want that laser tag?? Aunt Julie will get it for you!" We also practice law at the same firm and live less than a mile from each other. We already have a pretty good relationship and I am determined to maintain it. Hopefully, I don't screw it up this time.

The final lesson that I've learned from Frank's death is communication. I like to write and consider myself a pretty good writer. After Frank's death, I wrote a couple of essays on social media discussing hydroxychloroquine and the 6% myth (suggesting that only 6% of COVID-reported deaths were "really" COVID). I received some truly cruel replies to those essays, including one claiming that my brother was intentionally killed by his hospital for profit.

Yet, for some reason, those comments really didn't bother me. I realized that these people were either making statements without thinking about the pain they caused, or intentionally trying to cause pain. In either instance, nothing good would happen to me if I let loose with both barrels. Instead, I took some deep breaths and gave replies that essentially said: (1) you may be right; (2) I choose to believe differently, but appreciate your viewpoint; and, (3) what you said hurt me.

That third point is the tough one. But, it's also the most effective. In my opinion, very few people in this world want to intentionally hurt another human being. Yet, in this digital age, it is easy to hurt somebody with an insult sent by e-mail, text or social media. Believe it or not, people don't like reading that they might be a "socialist," "fascist," "libtard" or "deplorable." For me, the easiest response to pain is to return that pain one-hundred-fold. I suspect most people have the same reaction.

But, one of my best friends taught me that restraint and communication are usually a better response. Letting another person know that they've caused you pain opens their eyes to their words and the situation. It also leads to better communication. I'm not perfect. I still lose my temper. But, I'm trying to do a better job of letting people know when they hurt me. And, it works. After Frank's death, I have told several friends in COVID and non-COVID conversations that their words hurt. Those disclosures have invariably led to more-productive exchanges.

I haven't said anything here that is new or earth-shattering. Hopefully, my lessons can simply serve as a reminder for you, dear reader, to focus on loving your family, building your relationships with them and communicating sincerely with everybody in your life.



Personally, I have been gratified by just trying to do a good, albeit small, thing for others. The lessons that have been reinforced are that the act of giving is comforting; thinking of how one might effectively help another takes a person out of self and into community; and working with people who want to help others is heartening due to the sense of caring collaboration.

Serving The Community During The Pandemic



MARC H. HARWELL
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"The unselfish effort to bring cheer to others will be the beginning of a happier life for ourselves."

Helen Keller

Beginning in April 2020, my wife, Holly, and I had to quarantine for approximately four weeks. Though separated from family, friends, co-workers, etc., we had the company of each other and two spoiled cats. The isolation from everyone else provided time to consider the needs of others and highlighted the importance of community – our shared brotherhood and sisterhood.

On April 12, severe thunderstorms and at least one tornado with winds up to 120 mph ravaged the Chattanooga area and left at least 9 dead, 20 hospitalized, and dozens among dozens homeless due to the loss of around 150 buildings (50 were Alzheimer's patients at an assisted living facility).



I felt empathy for a group in our community that seemed to me to be among the loneliest and most isolated – victims of domestic violence and people without shelter due to the storms. Restaurants were struggling to survive the COVID-19 lockdowns and then slowdowns. Servers had experienced weeks without pay and the reward of a good day of work with friends and for patrons.

I wanted to help – to provide at least one thoughtful comfort per week to the victims and to those wonderful people who work to give the struggling room and food and protection day-in and day-out. I wanted to give a couple of exceptional local restaurants financial assistance through work during the loss and the stress of the pandemic.

I reached out to Partnership for Families, Children, and Adults, which is headed by a friend, Pam Ladd. The Partnership provides temporary shelter to victims of domestic violence and to people who have suffered the loss of shelter due to emergency

circumstances. I reached out to the owner of Il Primo and the Public House to determine whether professionally prepared meals by a local restaurateur might be provided each Friday night to the residents and the staff of the Partnership.

When I founded the Harwell Law Group, I published my commitment to donate to charity. Toward that commitment, the Harwell Law Group paid for the first two Friday night dinners beginning on May 8, 2020 and fed approximately 94 victims with delicious dinners from the regular menu of Il Primo. As of this January 29, 2021 article, we have funded the dinners in whole and in part a total of 10 times.

To try to sustain the gift for as long as possible during a pandemic of unknown length, I reached out in May 2020 to lawyers in Chattanooga who worked primarily for the defense and to lawyers who worked primarily for plaintiffs. Friends from both the plaintiff and from the defense bar were quick to respond and commit to a Friday night's dinner. Though often legal adversaries in the practice of law, the hearts of all were generous and kind.

Other members of the community that I called upon likewise responded, and the rest has become a rewarding assist in history – nothing great or compelling but welcomed. My friend, Nathan Lindley, who owns the two restaurants that have been helped, received the following note after one of the first Friday night dinners:

"I just wanted to let you know that I was blessed this evening with a meal from your restaurant. My son and I stay at a shelter in town for domestic violence victims, and we all received a meal from Il Primo this evening. It was very delicious. I don't know if it was directly from you or if someone else donated it, but either way many thanks! I love what you all are doing for the community and just wanted you to know that it is appreciated!! God bless!!"

She had attended high school many years ago with this restaurateur and was comforted with the food and by the thought that someone cared. He and his staff were touched.

At the time of this writing on January 29, 2021, the #FeedThePartnership campaign has provided delicious nourishment for 37 weeks, has fed 1,438 victims of domestic violence, and has contributed over $30,000 to two local restaurants.

Personally, I have been gratified by just trying to do a good, albeit small, thing for others. The lessons that have been reinforced are that the act of giving is comforting; thinking of how one might effectively help another takes a person out of self and into community; and working with people who want to help others is heartening due to the sense of caring collaboration.

I give grateful attribution to the following who have contributed thus far: Marcy & David Eason; Chambliss Law; Grant Konvalinka & Harrison; Patton Albertson & Miller;



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Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said: "Life's most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?" As we go forward through the stress of this pandemic and into the struggles that will surely follow us to the end of our days, my prayer is that we may work well together to overcome differences of opinion, differences of background, differences of socio-economic position, ... to find comfort and development with ALL through thoughtful devotion to one another.

May God bless us all and give us strength to rise above the struggles that present opportunities for growth and to express our love through giving especially during the most difficult times.

To paraphrase the joke that many an associate has made leading up to trial, we were only working half days - 12 hours (or more), but the exhilaration of meeting the challenge head on, protecting the company, and serving the customers during unprecedented circumstances made the days and weeks fly by.

Rebirth



JEFFERY KELSEY
FedEx Express
Memphis, TN

Who we are, and what we do.

The shipment of vaccines to help end the COVID-19 pandemic is among the most important work in the history of FedEx, and our team is focused on the safe and efficient delivery of these critical shipments. As we have said since the onset of the pandemic and our relief efforts, ***this is who we are and what we do****.*

Raj Subramaniam, president and chief operating officer, FedEx Corp.

FedEx entered 2020 with great confidence in its publicly announced strategic plans which included an aggressive e-commerce strategy, focus on international performance, and increased use of data from the more than 18 million packages that FedEx transports each day. No one could have predicted the unprecedented upheavals that 2020 would bring, but there were ominous signs on the horizon. In China, where FedEx Express operates a major hub for its international operations, the COVID-19 pandemic was already causing massive disruptions and shutdowns, and FedEx was working not only to safeguard its own employees in the region, but also to transport some of the first healthcare and personal protective equipment



into Wuhan when very few supplies were being moved into that area. From that initial outbreak, the world saw a cascade of stay-at-home orders and business shutdowns around the globe, and significant outbreaks of COVID-19 in every region of the United States. The ongoing crisis spawned the realization within FedEx that its nearly 50-year history of building a global transportation network uniquely qualified it to respond to the pandemic. That realization was summed up in a new corporate motto of determination and commitment - this is who we are, and what we do.

Time-definite express transportation of critical shipments is exactly what our FedEx Express network was built to do when it launched in 1973. Almost five decades later, we are proving true to our founding mission by delivering critical COVID-19 vaccines.

Richard Smith, Regional President of the Americas and Executive Vice President of Global Support, FedEx Express.

Planning for the eventual vaccine distribution began soon after the pandemic hit the U.S. As part of the transportation network for the federal government's Operation

Warp Speed, FedEx began preparing its biomedical distribution capabilities to accommodate transportation of a COVID-19 vaccine, as soon as it was approved for use. The FedEx network was well-positioned to handle vaccine shipments around the world with temperature-control solutions, near real-time monitoring capabilities and a dedicated healthcare team to support the express transportation of vaccines and bioscience shipments. Built over 47 years, the FedEx network consists of more than 5,000 facilities, 670 aircraft, 180,000 vehicles, and – most importantly – nearly 600,000 dedicated team members worldwide. FedEx Express has more than 90 cold chain facilities across five continents, which are critical to the safe and efficient shipment of vaccines and other lifesaving pharmaceuticals. To the extent vaccine shipments require the use of dry ice, FedEx Express safely transports approximately 500,000 dry ice shipments a month.

In March and April as the pandemic expanded exponentially in the U.S., the entire FedEx system was working overtime on a myriad of fronts to adapt its workforce to the new realities of shutdowns and business closures. As an essential business, FedEx continued its operations, keeping the world's healthcare, industrial, and at-home supply chains moving. Since that time, FedEx has continued to contribute to relief efforts on a scale that is almost difficult to fathom. For example, from February 2020 through the end of 2020, FedEx Express delivered more than 60 kilotons of personal protective equipment, including more than 2 billion masks, and more than 9,600 humanitarian aid shipments around the globe. *Who we are and what we do.*

The challenges of handling business shutdowns and delivering PPE were magnified by the increasing reliance by the public on the internet for ordering basic necessities. This explosive growth in ecommerce created package volumes in the FedEx network which were normally seen only during the peak shipping months leading up to the holidays. But because of its proactive planning for the growth of e-commerce, FedEx was also positioned to support its customers as people stayed home and shopped online. These strategies were indispensable in managing peak-like shipping volumes in the U.S. since March 2020. And the 2020 peak holiday season, dubbed "Shipathon," produced unprecedented volumes of packages in the FedEx network as retail business suffered through government-imposed shutdowns, and vast segments of the population ordered gifts online and had them delivered via FedEx.

As the pandemic raged on, the work within the FedEx legal department matched the frenetic pace of the operations. Attorneys worked feverishly to keep up with the daily pronouncements from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding masks, face coverings, close contacts, and quarantine protocols, and to put in place procedures to ensure that guidance was followed. Meanwhile, states and local health departments instituted their own protocols which required

real-time analysis and a torrent of communications from FedEx headquarters to thousands of FedEx locations throughout the country. The legal department was involved in all of it, working closely with the dedicated safety and human resource teams to keep track of any developments, and put in place ad hoc systems and procedures to ensure compliance. To paraphrase the joke that many an associate has made leading up to trial, we were only working half days – 12 hours (or more), but the exhilaration of meeting the challenge head on, protecting the company, and serving the customers during unprecedented circumstances made the days and weeks fly by.

Following the Food and Drug Administration's approval of Emergency Use Authorization for the first publicly available vaccines, FedEx Express began transport of the vaccines. After months of preparation and close planning with providers, distribution companies, healthcare companies, and federal and state officials, the first COVID-19 vaccines were prepared for movement to dosing centers in the U.S. FedEx worked closely with healthcare customers to prepare for additional vaccine shipments and transportation of critical vaccine-related supplies.

On December 14, 2020, at 5:53 a.m. EST, FedEx Express courier Christine Arigo delivered the first COVID-19 vaccine in the U.S. to Boston Medical Center in Massachusetts. FedEx continues to ship vaccines and critical medical supplies throughout the U.S. and Canada and is prepared to ship vaccines to more than 220 countries and territories for as long as necessary to help eradicate COVID-19. This operation is one of the top priorities for the FedEx enterprise.

That first delivery was preceded by months of rigorous planning across many teams, as well as the development of solutions and technologies built to handle the mass movement of vaccines through the network. FedEx's proprietary technology uses a lightweight, compact sensor to track vaccine shipments hundreds of times while inside the FedEx Express network. From there, FedEx systems bring together this near-real-time data and give the FedEx team the ability to spring into action and reroute if a disruption — like a snowstorm — occurs. FedEx's dedicated teams and technological advancements have positioned FedEx to step up to meet this moment.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic continues to plague the U.S. and the world, there is hope on the horizon as established vaccines continue to be distributed – 56 million in the U.S. as of this writing in late February 2021. New vaccines continue to be developed. FedEx has proven that its people and network are up to the challenges of transporting vaccines, keeping critical supply chains operating, meeting the increased demands for residential delivery, and delivering thousands of humanitarian aid shipments around the globe. This is who we are, and what we do.

Epilogue



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As we put the finishing touches on this book, the number of new COVID cases is down, and the number of people getting vaccinated is up. The weather is getting warmer, and with it a sense that the worst of this may be over. And yet, threats of new variants loom on the horizon and while plans are starting to be made, nobody knows for certain what the future holds. It is this uncertainty that has made this season so challenging and unlike anything ever experienced before. And yet, as the stories in this book show, even in difficult times, the spirit of the FDCC and the strength of its members remains strong.

Working with the authors to put these stories together has been an inspiration to us both and we are pleased to have a record of the resilience of our fellow members for future generations to know what we all went through during the pandemic. In good and bad ways, we were all affected by the experience and have come out on the other side with a richer appreciation for what it means to be a member of this great organization. We acknowledge the pain and loss experienced by so many, and celebrate the joys that occurred during this time as well. Through it all, the FDCC stood firm in its commitment to its members and has emerged as a stronger body than any time in its history.

Our hope and prayer is that in these pages, you are inspired, amused, and comforted. We cannot wait to see you again!



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