



Raising the Bar

The newsletter of the
Young Lawyers Committee

7/1/2020

Volume 16, Issue 6

Looking for
**Targeted
Contacts?**



Hit the Bullseye with **dri™**

Contact Laurie Mokry at lmokry@dri.org or 312.698.6259

Committee Leadership



Chair
Shannon M. Nessler
Hanson Bridgett LLP
San Francisco, CA



Vice Chair
Stephanie M. Wurdock
Sturgill Turner Barker & Moloney
Lexington, KY

Second Vice Chair



Catherine Ava Kopiec
Rogers Townsend & Thomas PC
Columbia, SC

Editors



Natalie Baker
Medical Research Consultants
Houston, TX



Darin M. Williams
Laner Muchin, Ltd.
Chicago, IL



Co Editors
Ashlyn M. Capote
Goldberg Segalla LLP
Buffalo, NY



Carmen Weite
Friedman Dazzio Zulanis & Bowling PC
Birmingham, AL

[Click here to view entire Leadership](#)

In This Issue

Feature Articles

The Future Engagement Committee..... 2

Strange Times, Unexpected Allies

What Young Lawyers Can Learn from the Collaboration of
Plaintiffs' and Defense Lawyers' Organizations Dealing with
COVID-19 3

Article of Note

Cultivating Effective Communication While Working
Remotely 5

Leadership Note

The Chair's Corner
The Struggle Is Real..... 7

DRI Young Lawyers Member Spotlight

Allison Griffith..... 8

Membership Minute

Membership Remains Strong Despite Challenges 9

Timeout for Wellness

Tips for Staying Sane in the Pandemic..... 10

Have Good News to Share?

Have Good News to Share?..... 11

**We've been prepping
for your next case
for 50 years.**

SEA™

Know.

**ENGINEERING, INVESTIGATION
AND ANALYSIS SINCE 1970.**

Feature Articles

The Future Engagement Committee

By Baxter Drennon



"All good things must come to an end." –Geoffrey Chaucer

As you probably know, membership in the Young Lawyers Committee (YLC) is limited to those with less than 10 years of experience practicing law. If you are like me and on the cusp of experiencing out of the YLC, you may be wondering about the future of your DRI involvement. I assure you that your time of networking events, professional development, and great CLE is not over. In fact, it is just beginning. If you are wondering what that looks like or how to continue your involvement in DRI, the Future Engagement Committee is here to help young lawyers transition into active engagement in another substantive law committee.

How does the Future Engagement Committee help young lawyers get involved in another substantive law committee? Each substantive law committee—e.g., Products Liability, Construction, Medical Liability—has its own subcommittee or person that is responsible for young lawyer engagement. This subcommittee or person is charged with identifying engagement opportunities in the committee and helping young lawyers become actively engaged in the committee. On the YLC side, the Future

Engagement Committee helps connect young lawyers with other substantive committees and provides support along the way. These opportunities range from an immediate spot on a steering committee to helping out with marketing and membership efforts. There are also a number of opportunities to be published or to give a presentation.

If you have been practicing for 7-10 years and are on the verge of "experiencing" out of the Young Lawyers Committee, the Future Engagement Committee would love to help you get involved in another of DRI's substantive law committees. Feel free to reach out to me.

Baxter Drennon is an experienced litigation attorney having served as lead counsel in hundreds of cases and as trial counsel in over a dozen cases. Since 2010, Baxter has been actively involved with DRI, serving as the Chair of the Young Lawyers Committee in 2018-2019 and was elected to the DRI Board of Directors in 2019. Since 2013, Baxter has been annually named a "Rising Star" in litigation by Mid-South Super Lawyers. Baxter can be reached at bdrennon@wlj.com or (501) 212-1299.



**DRI Members
get a .25%
rate discount
on student
loan refi.**

[See Your Rates](#)

Subject to eligibility



Member
FDIC

Strange Times, Unexpected Allies

What Young Lawyers Can Learn from the Collaboration of Plaintiffs' and Defense Lawyers' Organizations Dealing with COVID-19

By Olivia Amlung



In the uncertain and everchanging times we currently face, it is important now more than ever to find innovative ways to expedite and simplify the practice of law. COVID-19 has forced legal professionals from their old (and mostly outdated) ways, revolutionizing the way we take depositions, have hearings, and litigate in general. Many have implemented virtual platforms into their daily practice, using Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and similar products for videoconferencing and mass file sharing software. Others have gone so far as to transition entirely to online file storage via the Cloud, minimizing the need for physical files.

And yet, each of these technological advances are useless without the mutual use of patience, collaboration, and civility amongst all parties involved in a case.

Showing Civility in an Adverse Environment

As trial attorneys, we are all bred with a competitive spirit and are not shy to the adverse nature of our profession. But this does not mean we are incapable of being patient with one another and working together to effectively litigate a case.

Rude and uncivil behavior is, unfortunately, sometimes employed as strategy by attorneys who feel it is necessary to zealously represent their clients. These tactics are often used even if it means creating unwarranted delays, undermining or frustrating opposing counsel, or exhibiting insulting or threatening behavior. Sometimes, quite frankly, these strategies work. These types of behaviors are, however, certainly not necessary for effective advocacy. And, more importantly, these tactics are incredibly unhelpful in the era of COVID-19 law practice.

With courts across the nation closed or recently opened in a limited capacity, many are desperately trying to play catch-up. Already over-burdened court dockets are jam-packed with both civil and criminal parties trying to have their motions heard and/or cases tried. Tensions across the board are high. So, during these difficult and changing times, we encourage you to practice these common ways to show civility:

- **Pick and choose your battles.** Of course, no one ever wants to be disrespected, ignored, or taken advantage of. This does not mean, however, that you have to take issue every time something relatively minor comes up. If opposing counsel needs an extra week to respond to your motion, consider agreeing to it. If opposing counsel chooses to engage in unprofessional commentary, take the high road. If it does not materially affect your representation of your client, think twice before choosing to fight with opposing counsel.
- **Try to resolve issues on your own.** Following along the theme of picking and choosing your battles, be sure to first try and resolve those battles you do pick on your own. With courts backlogged from months of COVID-19 related closures, think twice before filing a Motion to Compel or Motion for Sanctions. Even if you ultimately cannot resolve it on your own, the court will at least appreciate your efforts.
- **Be mindful of others' experience and proficiency (or lack thereof) with new technology.** Just because you were able to pick up on Zoom with ease does not mean everyone else is in the same boat. As frustrating as it may be, understand that everyone is doing the best they can. Be polite and sympathetic to the newness of everything and offer to help when you can (and when appropriate).
- **Be flexible.** Surely, most of us would prefer an in-person deposition or mediation to one conducted via videoconferencing. However, we need to be open to alternatives in the interest of health and safety, and to cooperate with opposing counsel while working through the logistics of virtually litigating a case. Be open to trying new methods of practice and platforms—you may even be surprised at your experience!

Attorneys who treat one another with respect and in good faith often better represent their clients. Research shows that, most of the time, businesspeople who work amicably with others, even without the expectation of receiving the same treatment in return, often get the best results. Adam Grant, [In the Company of Givers and Takers](#), Harvard Business Review (April 2013), So, we encourage

you to be mindful of these practices in trying to work with opposing counsel to effectively litigate your case. Times are hard, and there is no need for our actions to make things even harder.

In short, it is important to remember that getting along with opposing counsel does not mean you are providing a disservice to your client. Even in an adverse environment, we can treat one another with respect. By working together, and in the continued spirit of professionalism, collegiality, civility and cooperation, we can successfully navigate these uncharted waters and satisfy our mutual objective of zealous representation of our clients.

State-Wide Initiatives to Instill Patience, Collaboration, and Civility in COVID-19 Law Practice

In the spirit of collaboration, many defense and plaintiffs' bar associations across the nation are joining forces to help attorneys navigate the changing practice of law during these difficult times. A joint statement from the Kentucky Defense Council and Kentucky Justice Association, the state's respective defense and plaintiffs' bar associations, nicely sums up the objective of such collaboration:

Mutual cooperation in these extraordinary times will not only benefit our clients but will help our justice system operate more smoothly once we are beyond the present challenge. Moreover, by working together we can represent to the courts that we did our part to help support the judicial system and the integrity of the process.

The Virginia Association of Defense Attorneys and the Virginia Trial Lawyers Association issued a similar joint statement, encouraging the use of remote technology and cooperation.

The Big Picture

Now, this is not to say we should help our opponents litigate their cases, or that we should refrain from aggressively defending our clients. We will all still be filing motions to dismiss and/or for summary judgment when appropriate. Instead, we are simply hoping to accomplish our objectives in a civil manner. There is no reason we cannot satisfy our duties to our clients while making the process efficient for everyone.

Leadership is about adjusting strategy to fit the needs of the group based on changed circumstances and being willing to accept the responsibility for the risk that change creates. Being open during these trying times can allow a dialogue and more opportunities for progress. Sometimes, assuming good faith from your competitors can help you see the ways in which they are your allies. But the most important thing is that by working together to achieve a resolution, we not only make the process more efficient, but we also advance the best interests of our clients.

Olivia F. Amlung is an associate at Adams, Stepner, Woltermann & Dusing, PLLC in Covington, Kentucky. She is a member of the firm's Government Practice and Civil Litigation practice groups, primarily focusing on claims involving government defense, government general counsel work, school and special education law, business litigation, and a variety of other civil litigation matters. Olivia is an active member of various legal organizations, such as the KBA, NKBA, KDC, and DRI. She is passionate about the community's youth, and actively volunteers with multiple leadership programs focusing on the professional and personal development of local high school students. Olivia is a life-long resident of Boone County, Kentucky, where she currently lives with her husband, Justin, and their two dogs, Votto and Larkin. Olivia can be reached at OAmlung@aswdlaw.com.

Article of Note

Cultivating Effective Communication While Working Remotely

By Melissa Harly Rose



It is an understatement to say that much has changed in these past few months because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Not only is there the constant worry about our health and the health of our loved ones, but one of the more significant challenges for those of us in the legal industry has been the forced transition into remote work. Even the most technologically adept law firms and individuals have faced considerable struggles in learning how to maintain their productivity and morale during this trying time.

Personally, I have found that the most difficult part of the “work from home” transition has been adjusting to the lack of in-person communication with my coworkers. Not only do I miss the daily social interactions with my colleagues, but I sometimes find myself at a loss when I can no longer just pop my head into a coworker’s office whenever I have a question or want to bounce an idea off her.

So, when collaboration is such a vital component to a team’s success, what do we do when in-person communication is not possible?

The authors of the Harvard Business Review article *How to Collaborate Effectively If Your Team Is Remote* posit that “remote teams have to find new and better ways to operate” rather than rely on the same norms of communication we use when working in an office environment. Erica Dhawan & Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic, [How to Collaborate Effectively If Your Team Is Remote](#), Harvard Business Review (February 27, 2018).

The authors lay out three kinds of distance that arise in remote collaboration: (1) “physical” distance, which is distance in place and time, (2) “operational” distance, which encompasses differences in team size, bandwidth, and skill levels, and (3) “affinity” distance, which is distance in values, trust, and interdependency. Because we cannot reduce the physical or operational distance when working remotely, the authors argue that we should focus on reducing “affinity distance” to drive our team’s productivity.

The article outlines a few “best practices” that remote teams can master to help reduce affinity distance and boost performance.

Less Is Not Always More

First, the authors point out that, in an effort to be efficient, many of us might “conflate brief communications and clear communications” and mistakenly assume that a short message is always better than a long one. Although not every email needs to be a novel, when our sole focus of communication is brevity, not only do our colleagues end up wasting their time trying to interpret our message, but we end up wasting more of our time having to go back and explain what we meant.

This is exactly the case in the opening scene of Season 8, Episode 2 of NBC’s *The Office*, “The Incentive.” In this episode, in an attempt to save time, affable accountant Kevin Malone decided to halve the amount of words he uses when speaking because, as he puts it, “why waste time say lot word when few word do trick?” When his coworkers questioned this tactic, the following conversation ensued:

Andy: Kevin, I appreciate what you’re trying to do.

Kevin: Thank.

Andy: Here, we have a word code, the same way we have a dress code. And what we’re talking about is...basically the speech equivalent... to just wearing underpants. Sometimes words, you no need use...but need need for talk talk.

Kevin: But save time. More success.

Jim: Does it save time though? ‘Cause we’ve been here for about an hour.

Kevin: No me fault.

Pam: Kevin, at most you’re saving a microscopic amount of time.

Kevin: Many small time make big time.

Andy: What are you gonna do with all this time?

Kevin: See world.

Pam: Kevin, you cannot possibly save enough time to see the world.

Jim: K, Kevin, are you saying, “See the world”? or “Sea World?”

Kevin: See world. Oceans. Fish. Jump. China.

Jim: No, see? Right there, that’s the problem with your method. Because I still don’t know if you’re saying, “Sea

World” or “see the world,” and it’s taking a lot of time to explain it.

Although this example is a clear exaggeration—and not one any of us are likely to encounter in our own lives—it highlights the importance of investing the time “to communicate with the intention of being ultra-clear, no matter the medium.”

But Too Much Communication Can Be Overwhelming

While we should not shy away from sending detailed messages to our coworkers when needed, that does not mean we should overwhelm them with the *quantity* of our communications. When communicating with our team, we must “[c]hoose [our] digital volume wisely” and not “bombard” our coworkers with messages.

Because we no longer have the immediate access to our coworkers that we are used to, this might be a difficult urge to resist. If you are working on an important project, it might feel necessary to follow up with an email, a text, and a phone call because you really need that answer *right now*. However, the article’s authors point out that this may be an abuse of your coworkers’ access points, as well as “a relentless and uncomfortable form of harassment,” because each message creates different time demands on the receiver.

Therefore, to combat this problem, your team should take the time to explicitly discuss each person’s preferred means of communication and let each other know when you are or are not available. If each teammate makes a commitment to being responsive during those times and through their preferred means, then it will be easier for everyone to resist the urge to bombard one another with duplicative and pestering communications.

Take Concentrated Efforts to Maintain an Office Culture

Lastly, the article advises that remote teams should make significant efforts to “[c]reate intentional space for celebration” in order to maintain an office culture. Just because we no longer see our coworkers every day does not mean we can neglect the development of these social relationships. In fact, it is especially crucial that we maintain these connections now, when many of us are experiencing heightened anxiety, stress, and loneliness due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Accordingly, employers should continue to celebrate the significant life moments of their employees, such as birthdays, promotions, and marriages, and should dedicate time to creating new firm- or team-wide rituals that will help shorten the “affinity distance” created by working remotely. Of course, virtual happy hours or coffee breaks cannot replace the daily in-person social interactions we all miss and crave right now, but “[c]reating virtual spaces and rituals for celebrations and socializing can strengthen relationships and lay the foundation for future collaboration.”

Although it might be a while before it feels like “business as usual” again, the solution to maintaining effective communication during this time lies in “understanding the new rules of engagement” and “in building a communication skill set that reflects the demands of our digitally-driven age.”

Melissa Harly Rose is an associate in the warranty and products liability group at Wilson Turner Kosmo LLP in San Diego, California. Melissa serves as Vice-Chair of DRI Young Lawyers Committee, Women in the Law Subcommittee. She can be reached at mrose@wilsonturnerkosmo.com.

Leadership Note

The Chair's Corner

The Struggle Is Real

By Stephanie M. Wurdock



RESILIENCE: The ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change.

Y'all, I'm going to be honest. I have had a hard time finding the motivation to write this month's column.

At this point I've been on "lockdown" for ten weeks and I am starting to sink into that "things will never get better" mindset. I am fortunate to still be working and to have a great spouse and doggo with whom to spend my quarantine. I am thankful that we are all staying healthy. I am trying to focus on the positives and search for the proverbial "light at the end of the tunnel." And on most days I do a pretty good job of that. But, on many days I struggle. I suspect many of you are struggling, too.

So this month, instead of giving you "leadership" advice, I am going to talk about how we survive this thing with our sanity intact. We are going to talk about how to build resilience. I've scoured the internet to find some simple tools I think we can all put into practice today that will help us bounce back quicker once this pandemic is over. I share these with you in the hopes that they improve your mindset, provide some clarity, and give you some hope.

1. **Get connected.** Building strong, positive relationships with loved ones can provide needed support and acceptance in both good times and bad. A pandemic can be a hard time to forge new relationships, but it's a great time to work on the relationships we already have. With that extra time you now have from not showering and commuting to work, place a brief call to a friend, co-worker, or family member. Try to steer the conversation away from COVID-19, and instead ask about what shows they are watching, what books they are reading, what YouTube workouts they have discovered. Keep it light. Try to laugh. Make plans for the future.
2. **Accept that change is a part of life.** The other day I broke down crying and when my husband asked me what was wrong, all I could say was "life

isn't going the way I expected it to right now."

An unavoidable fact of life is that things often do not go according to plan. Things change, and sometimes they can really go off the rails. Your plans and expectations have to change as well. Accepting circumstances that cannot be changed helps you focus on circumstances that you can alter. So instead of lamenting the plans you've had to abandon, focus your energy on your new plans.

3. **Use experience to plan for the future.** You have already coped with hardships. You have already made it through rough times and survived bad days. Reflect on what those experiences taught you. How did they change you for the better? What have you already discovered or learned during this challenging period? How will you use what you've learned to improve your post-COVID life? Start making a plan now.
4. **Take care of yourself.** Tend to your own needs and feelings. Include physical activity in your daily routine. Get plenty of sleep. Eat a healthy diet. Practice stress management and relaxation techniques, such as yoga, meditation, guided imagery, deep breathing, or prayer. Strive for 30 minutes of "me" time every day.
5. **Keep it in perspective.** Try to consider the current stressful situation in a broader context, and keep a long-term perspective. At times, this feels like the end of the world. But when I take a deep breath and really think about it, I know it's not. We will get through this. We will go back to work. We will go back to the gym and the store and the spa. We will get to spend time with our friends and family. We will smile, we will laugh, we will celebrate things again.

For those of you who want to read more about beefing up your "resilience muscles," there are tons of books on this subject. I haven't actually read any of the following, but they have great reviews on Goodreads:

- *Rising Strong* – Brene Brown
- *Man's Search for Meaning* – Viktor E. Frankl
- *When Things Fall Apart: Heart Advice for Difficult Times* – Pema Chödrön
- *The Resilience Factor: Seven Keys to Finding Your Inner Strength and Overcoming Life's Hurdles* – Karen Reivich & Andrew Shatte
- *The Micro Resilience Book* – Bonnie St. John and Allen P. Haines
- *Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life* – Martin E.P. Seligman

And of course, there is always therapy. If you know me, you know I am a huge proponent of therapy. It is a wonderful way to work through your struggles, fears, and anxieties. There is no shame in going to therapy, especially in a time like this when we are *all* struggling to find our footing.

And finally, remember this: You are not alone. Your fears and anxieties are valid. But you will be okay. Just keep putting one foot in front of the other. And if you need someone to chat with, shoot me an email: swurdock@sturgillturner.com.

“Life doesn’t get easier or more forgiving, we get stronger and more resilient.”

–Steve Maraboli, *Life, the Truth, and Being Free*

Stephanie M. Wurdock is a member with Sturgill, Turner, Barker & Moloney, PLLC, in Lexington, Kentucky. Stephanie is a healthcare litigator, working with healthcare providers, insurers, and risk managers to defend claims of medical malpractice, wrongful death, and nursing home negligence. She is the Vice Chair of the Young Lawyers Committee.

DRI Young Lawyers Member Spotlight

Allison Griffith



What DRI committees (other than Young Lawyers) are you most interested in, and why?

Women in the Law. I think it’s important to have a strong network of women to look to for guidance and a unique perspective, especially in the practice of law.

What is your favorite part about being a lawyer?

Every day brings a new challenge. I’m always surprised at where my practice brings me.

When you are not practicing law, what do you enjoy doing?

I love hiking with my dog, taking Megaformer Pilates classes, and traveling when I can.

What is the greatest sporting event you’ve ever been to?

The 2018 College Football National Championship in Atlanta. No other event comes close. I still get goosebumps every time I watch the 2nd and 26 touchdown clip. Roll Tide!

If someone is visiting your city, where is it essential that they go to eat?

Highlands Bar & Grill!

Allison Griffith is an attorney with Friedman, Dazzio, Zulanis & Bowling, P.C. in Birmingham, Alabama, a litigation firm representing businesses and individuals in both complex litigation matters and business transactions. Allison is a native of San Diego, California and earned her law degree from the University of Alabama School of Law. Allison can be reached at agriffith@friedman-lawyers.com.

Membership Minute

Membership Remains Strong Despite Challenges

By Thomas H. Wyatt



On behalf of the DRI Young Lawyers Membership Subcommittee, I want to extend a sincere thank you to everyone for making a great effort during our initial recruitment push in 2020 before the COVID-19 crisis affected us all.

As of May 2020, Young Lawyers subcommittee members recruited 22 members this year alone, an amount that represented 42 percent of our overall goal of 53 new members for the year. We honestly could not have done this without you, so please accept our sincere gratitude for communicating the benefits of DRI membership to your friends, coworkers, and colleagues.

I know that all of you shared our heartbreak to learn that our Young Lawyers Seminar was cancelled. The DRI Young Lawyers Seminar Planning Subcommittee works tirelessly each year to present an excellent program of speakers, activities, and events to ensure that you get the very most out of your DRI membership. Even though the Seminar will not be held this year, DRI still has a great collection of CLE events that are being hosted online to fill the gap. Many of the events are focused on the current issues facing businesses, law firms, and individuals as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and prepare to emerge from lockdowns and stay-at-home orders. I learned early in my pre-law sales career that the representatives who were the most visible to their clients in times of crisis—the ones who checked in and did not hide—became the representatives who were the most trusted by their clients when the crisis ended.

We would encourage you to take advantage of the online CLE events that DRI is hosting so you can be ahead of the curve and advise your clients of the legal matters that have emerged, and could emerge, in these unprecedented times. If you feel inclined (or, perhaps, if you do not want

to attend an online CLE event alone), consider sending an invitation to someone you know so they can attend, too. DRI's online CLE events are a great resource that come free with your membership, and they are a great recruiting tool, as well.

We hope that the current events have not discouraged anyone from joining DRI who otherwise would have, so let us know if you have someone in mind who wants to join DRI Young Lawyers but has not made the ask. Furthermore, you can still qualify for benefits and rewards for your recruitment efforts, so do not be afraid to tag us in to help you.

We are all in this together, and we will emerge from it stronger than we were before. I wish good health and good fortune to you, your families, and your friends. Stay safe.

Thomas H. Wyatt is a member of Quattlebaum, Grooms & Tull PLLC in Little Rock, Arkansas. Tom's practice specializes in commercial litigation and property litigation. Tom provides a cost-effective, trial-focused approach to cases involving breach of contract, class actions, condemnation, landlord-tenant disputes, and products liability. Tom has practiced before the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Arkansas, the Arkansas Court of Appeals, and as local counsel on behalf of national companies in numerous circuit courts in the State of Arkansas. Tom can be reached by telephone at (501) 379-1730 or by email at twyatt@qgtlaw.com.

Tips for Staying Sane in the Pandemic

By Amber Eklof



Maintaining our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health as lawyers can be tough. Doing the same during a pandemic while working from home, simultaneously playing the role of provider, caregiver, teacher, and/or partner/spouse/roommate/friend can feel impossible. I consider myself to be relatively healthy in each of these areas, and generally aware of my well-being and how to manage my “wellness.” However, these unforeseen circumstances have *still* tested my limits, health, sanity, and coping mechanisms. To that end, this month I wanted to share a few practices that I have implemented in my home and that have been discussed at my firm coming off of Lawyer Well-Being Week (yes it’s a real thing, and it was May 4-8). The National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being established a website (<https://lawyerwellbeing.net/lawyer-well-being-week/>), which includes resources for wellness in all respects, and with suggested wellness activities and resources that are useful now and in the future.

I do not pretend to have all, or any of the answers, but my hope is that there is some idea, activity, release, or resource that you take away to help make any part of this bizarre new world just a little bit easier.

Create your own schedule. To the extent possible, I find it helpful to maintain work hours during time periods when I am most productive. I used to get up early to work out before going into the office, but since I have no commute and my wardrobe is largely irrelevant, now I get up early and tackle emails or put in a few hours, and do a mid-morning workout or “lunch break,” run outside. Unless you have a specific deadline, or your work is dependent on someone else’s schedule, put in the hours and get the work done during the time period in which you feel most productive, and take a break in the off times.

Establish a routine. Having some structure to your day will help you feel grounded and keep you moving forward, even when you do not know what the next step is. Examine your pre-pandemic schedule, and remove your commute and your typical errands, and then find the things that you used to do each day and incorporate them into your new routine. I get up, drink a glass of water, stretch for a few minutes to get the blood flowing, and I make coffee. Because I do not like staring at a screen to catch up with

friends after staring at my screen for work all day, I try to do at least one social distanced walk or workout with a friend in the morning each week, or I plan ahead and incorporate it into my lunch. It gives me some semblance of normalcy and helps set the tone for a positive, or at least less stressful day.

Do one activity to de-stress/for yourself each day. For me, physically moving, or at least getting some fresh air outside is the best way to release stress. Even on days when I feel down, lost, or like I just don’t want to do anything, I put on my music or podcast of choice and get outside and move. I do this even if I don’t want to, because I know I will feel better after. Whether you chose to run, walk, do yoga, read, color, watch TV, meditate, play games or complete a puzzle, find something to do each day that gives you an outlet.

Be flexible. Something that worked for you on Tuesday might not work on Wednesday or the following week. Allow yourself to change things up to get through the task, project, day, week, or moment at hand. This might include changing your workspace, changing your eating habits, getting creative with a new recipe, painting a wall, rearranging your living space, or simply switching up your routine.

Create goal activities to which you can look forward. I have become obsessed with puzzling given how much time we are spending inside. Many puzzles have been backordered, so in my house we order two at a time so we can have a second one to start while waiting for the next batch to ship. I use the puzzle as a mental break from work, time to have coffee, zone out, and focus on something other than work and the things we cannot do currently. Puzzle time is a reward for a solid workday, or a few solid work hours, and gives me a little something to look forward to when I hit a mini goal—yes, puzzling can also involve wine. Both Galison.com and Barnes and Noble have relatively inexpensive but cool puzzles in all sizes with free delivery. My coffee table also includes coloring books and pens, off-brand Jenga, and playing cards.

Setting up Zoom calls, phone calls, and virtual game nights, or signing up for one through DRI YL can also provide much needed social events to help get through the workday.

Be forgiving. There is no right or wrong way to get through this (assuming all safety protocols are followed here). It is OKAY to be sad, angry, or lethargic one day, and energetic, happy, or motivated the next. Not every day needs to be something—sometimes it is enough to just be.

Conclusion

Take any or all of the above with a grain of salt. If something works for you, keep doing it! If nothing above helps, feel free to ignore it. If you have tips you want to share,

please post on our Communities Board. Be well and stay safe!

Amber Eklof is a Senior Counsel in the San Francisco office of Gordon Rees Scully Mansukhani, LLP, who focuses on labor and employment litigation. Her practice includes defending individuals and employers in all phases of litigation including discrimination, harassment, wrongful termination, retaliation and whistleblower claims, and alleged wage and hour violations. Amber is chair of the Wellness Subcommittee and can be reached at aeklof@grsm.com.

Have Good News to Share?

Have Good News to Share?

Have you or one of your fellow young lawyers recently received an honor, a promotion, or a defense win? Do you have any announcements for DRI Young Lawyers? Please contact the Editors, **Darin M. Williams** (dwilliams@laner-muchin.com), **Natalie Baker** (nbaker@mrchouston.com), **Ashlyn Capote** (acapote@goldbergsegalla.com), **Carmen Weite** (cweite@friedman-lawyers.com)!