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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ALFN | VOL. 6 ISSUE 2



{How to grow in 2021 and the future}



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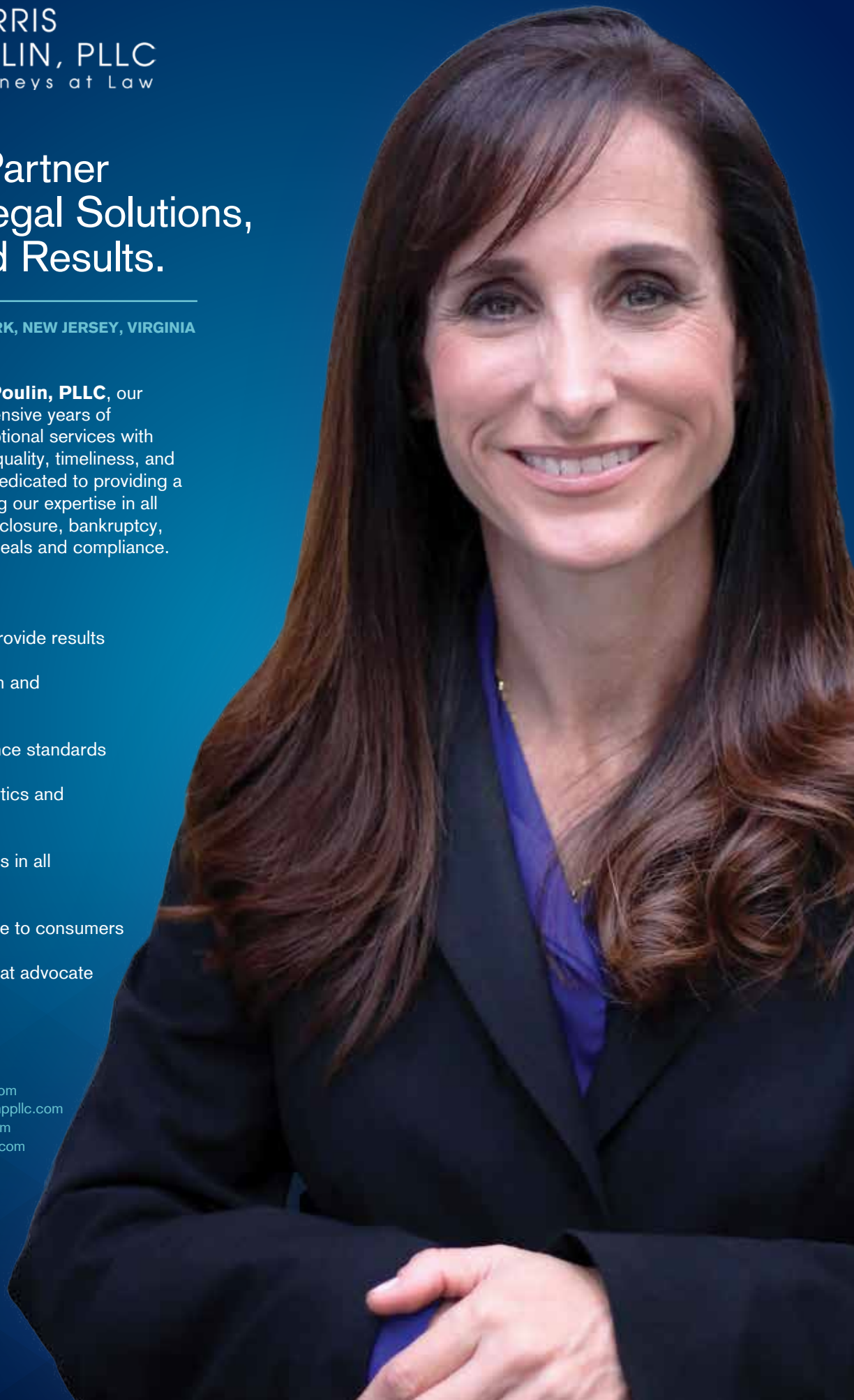
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Letter from the Editor

It has officially been longer than a full year since COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic. But — tell that to the flowers, sunshine, and rain showers that are right around the corner. Spring! Sweet, sweet spring! Sometimes these days, while I am walking around the neighborhood with my dog, Pierre, I can almost forget about our current state of affairs. April showers bring May flowers, right? Does anything else matter right now besides that?

And then I get back home, and reality sinks in. Yes, we are still living in a pandemic. Yes, the moratoriums are still ongoing. But — you know what? Spring is here, and with it, comes ideas of hope and new beginnings. So right now, let's choose that to be our focus!

In this edition, we are going to tap into that mindset of **Spring Planting**. What are we doing now to plant seeds for a brighter, more beautiful future?

To this end, we have an article from Michelle Garcia Gilbert on the law and gardening. What similarities do these two subjects have? Read on to find out! Susan Page then brings us an incredible original poem, titled "Bloom Where You Are Planted." We thank Susan for sharing such a creative and beautiful piece.

We also have tips on your spring cleaning routine from Julia Keys — I cannot wait to follow along with her method to get my deep cleaning on! Speaking of spring cleaning, Jacqueline Comeau takes a different spin — how we can "spring clean" our minds. Sonia Buck also provides us ten tips on time and productivity that are fantastic ways to get the best utility and happiness out of your time. Time is precious, so let's use it wisely!

Next, we have a reflection piece by Natalie Grigg on how 2020 changed her — from her own health and fitness journey, to helping others with the same. She also includes some tips from the mat that I can't wait to incorporate into my life. We also have an article from Anna Spacone on change — but we're not talking about change from a vending machine!

Up next, we have our recurring pieces. This edition's Ten Things to Know About article is about Zooey Deschanel — whose personality reminds me of spring, and who is doing more for the global environment than you probably know. We also have a wonderful interview with Beth Northrop-Day by Sally Garrison, in our WILLing Participants series, which includes some recommendations on movies and TV shows for your quarantine pleasure!



We also have one of our fan favorites, Tell Me Something Good, by Maggie Garden, where you can read about positive things that have happened to and as a result of our industry family. Finally, we have a new recurring piece, called "What's Your Passion," intended for new authors each time to write about their biggest personal passion. If you are new to writing, or new to writing for WILLED, this piece is for you! The first of this series is written by Alicia Wood, and I will forewarn you- you will laugh out loud.

I hope you enjoy these articles as much as I did while reading them. They made me laugh and brought me happiness, hope, and joy — just like spring months do! **W**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jillian H. Wilson". The script is fluid and cursive.

JILLIAN H. WILSON, ESQ.

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Tell Me *Something Good*

BY: MAGGIE GARDEN, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING
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IN A WORLD that often seems so uncertain and where the only constant is change, the ALFN WILled Editorial Committee wanted to celebrate the people in our industry who are keeping things positive and spreading good vibes in the world by highlighting their efforts in this WILled Column called: **"Tell Me Something Good."** If you or anyone you know in the industry is up to **Something Good**, we want to know about it and acknowledge it in an upcoming edition of WILled. Please send a brief write up with the name of the person you are nominating and what they've been up to. It could be fundraising efforts, or a recent promotion or accomplishment. Please submit your information to: srosen@alfn.org and mgarden@bmpc-law.com.



TOO CUTE FOR WORDS

Joanne Ricardo celebrates her baby turning 6 months old!



A LITTLE BLACK DRESS FOR A BIG CAUSE

Jillian Wilson started as a new member of the Junior League of Little Rock (JLLR) in 2020. For over 100 years, the Junior League of Little Rock has worked to improve their community through providing volunteers, funding and leadership support. They are committed to developing the potential of women and improving their community. This Spring, Jillian participated in their Little Black Dress Initiative (LBDI). The challenge was for members to wear the same black dress for five consecutive days to start conversations and raise awareness of poverty in Pulaski County, Arkansas. By wearing a button that read, "Ask Me About My Dress", they invite conversations about the struggles facing many hardworking families in Arkansas who can't make ends meet. With the help of Jillian, the JLLR was able to raise \$19,665.



HELPING BRING HUMANS AND AUSTRALIAN SHEPHERDS TOGETHER

Since adopting her furbaby Durango in 2010, Jennifer Dlugolecki of Firefly Legal has helped bring other Aussies in need to new homes by volunteering with Australian Shepherds Furever (ASF). Jenn has processed over 20 adoption applications, temporarily fostered 4 dogs, and has helped transport a number of other dogs to better living environments. Jenn even recently introduced an industry friend to the ASF who picked up their new best friend last week.



“It breaks my heart when I find out that another dog has been surrendered or when I learn about the living conditions from which some of these dogs are being rescued. These dogs are living creatures. All they are looking for is a human to give them the love they need and deserve. In my opinion, ASF is different from other rescue groups because they aim to match dogs with the appropriate humans based on their behavior and personalities. Just because someone has owned a dog in the past doesn’t necessarily mean that they will get the dog they think is cute on the website. A number of conversations are had with the applicant as well as their references to make sure they have the right type of experience and can provide the dog a happy home.”



MAKING HEALTHY MOVES

While faced with the obstacles and challenges of life during a pandemic, Ky Nguyen of Freedom Mortgage found a way to make herself stronger, on the inside and out. Ky explains: “When I first started working out, I didn’t enjoy it all. I dreaded it because I felt defeated every time I left my trainer. I started coming up with excuses to cancel on him and was on the verge of just quitting. But I realized quitting was not an option, I just had to figure out how to make it work for me. I started seeing my trainer 2x a week and committed myself to going to the gym 2-3x a week. And that’s when I started to see and feel the progress. I feel stronger and more confident in myself than I ever have.” In addition to inspiring herself as she continues to get stronger in her fitness routine, Ky is inspiring her friends and colleagues to do the same. Her journey has inspired others to make positive changes to their health and wellness.



EXCITING MOVES AT SKLH

Megan Vogt was recently promoted to Supervising Attorney at Schiller, Knapp, Lefkowitz & Hertz, LLP (SKLH). Megan has quietly and diligently done exceptional work for the last 4+ years with the firm. Megan always has a smile on her face and a friendly greeting or recipe to share, never asking for recognition or praise. SKLH Partner Ryan Hertz, however, believes Megan deserves all the recognition and praise and says the firm appreciates her and all she does.



Colleen Bradt was recently promoted to Operations Manager at SKLH overseeing New Jersey Foreclosure, Vermont Foreclosure, Pennsylvania Foreclosure as well as the Payoff & Reinstatement Departments. Ryan Hertz describes Colleen as, “a super-woman and excels at every task put in front of her without breaking a sweat. Colleen epitomizes loyalty and perseverance and we couldn’t be prouder of her accomplishments!”

GIVING HOPE AND GIVING BACK

“Affinity Gives Back,” a team at Affinity Consulting Group that works on putting together charitable and service projects for their employees has teamed with Stars of Hope (<http://starsofhopeusa.org>), an organization that makes a difference in our communities through art and messages of hope for local hospitals firehouses, nursing homes, etc. The Affinity team joined a fun, interactive Zoom call to decorate their stars together. Stars of Hope is in the process of taking those stars





to create vinyl banners to be delivered on our behalf to The James Cancer Hospital in Columbus, Ohio and Blue Ridge Cancer Care in Roanoke, Virginia. These two cancer centers are caring for two of their own Affinity employees, so it feels really good to bring this message of appreciation and hope to everyone at those centers.



STEPPING IN AND STEPPING UP FOR ANIMALS IN NEED

During Lauren Koenig's off-time from being the Government/MI Claims master at Mr. Cooper, Lauren runs a non-profit farm that rescues farm animals from dire situations. HodgePodge Farms is an animal rescue, rehabilitation and sanctuary located in Argyle, TX. Their mission is to step in and step up for animals in need, wherever and whenever they can. Currently they house horses, goats, sheep, pigs, dogs and cats. Not only does Lauren manage the non-profit but she is hands-on with all the animals, feeding, training and taking care of all their medical needs. She has a huge heart and a passion for helping those who can't help themselves. You can learn more about HodgePodge and all the wonderful things they do to support animals in need by following their Facebook page at <https://m.facebook.com/HodgePodgeFarmRescue/>



MAKING MUSIC AN ART OF HIS OWN

Art Morris always thought of himself as a lawyer first and a singer second. That all changed at the age of 77 years old after a golf cart accident left him in search of a new hobby. In July 2020, while out on the course, Art flipped the golf cart he was driving. Being an avid golfer, his broken leg and elbow left him unable to play the game he loved so much. With plenty of free time and under doctor's orders to take it easy, Art took time to reflect. What was once a hobby would soon become a passion that would open Art up to a whole new world.

A long-time and esteemed member of the default services industry, Art formed Morris Schneider Prior in the late 1980s, which he went on to sell in the early aughts. Around the time of the sale, he lost his beloved wife, Hilda Morris, to lung cancer. In fact, it was with Hilda that Art first got his taste for performing. One night, at a local comedy club, Hilda insisted that Art go on stage to sing. Despite the club owner's attempts to throw Art off his game for some laughs, Art managed to entertain - which should be of no surprise to anyone who knows him. That wasn't the only time his late wife would encourage his singing. In fact, they both were part of the Bosom Buddy Top Hat Review, a group of 10 breast cancer survivors who sang and danced throughout the Southeast for hospitals and events. While the women sang and danced, Art always sang a solo at the performances. Art recalls that time fondly saying, "It makes you realize what life is truly about."

In 2012, Art finally retired, or so he thought. After a brief time, he was back in the game with McMichael Taylor Gray- intent on making it a premier default services firm. When he wasn't working, he was golfing, and sometimes both at the same time. However, he still felt the call to sing. For many years, Art sang at events and weddings on occasion when local country clubs reached out to him. Those events were really his only opportunities to sing until recently. One morning during his recovery, Art found himself singing and humming around the house. His significant other, Amber Del Piano, overheard and went running to him. Floored by Art's natural ability,



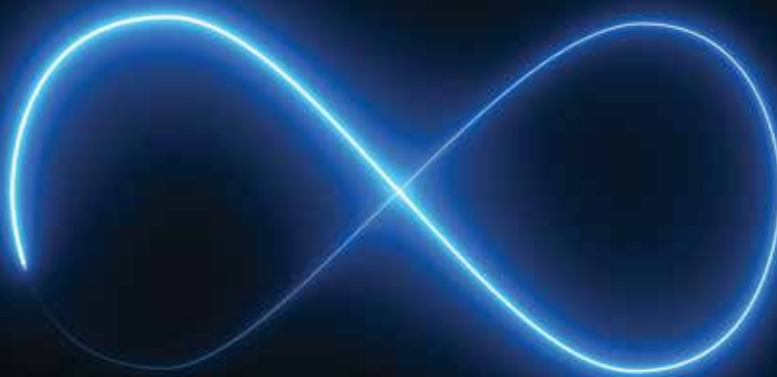
Amber encouraged him to pursue singing in a more serious fashion. She felt that operatic singing was his calling, in the style of Andrea Bocelli. That's when Art reached out to Eva Lukkenon Sullivan, a well-known, Atlanta-area opera singer and vocal coach.

For the next few months, Art poured himself into the study of music, working on his craft and developing his niche. It was Art's producer, Brad Cox, a young and rising producer in the music industry, who encouraged Art to focus on crooning much like Franki Valli, Frank Sinatra, and Nat King Cole. It was within those first few months that Art found himself in a recording studio for the first time to sing a Christmas song to send out to McMichael Taylor's Gray's clients. That was only the beginning. Art officially has the bug and has gone on to record covers of "You Don't Know Me," "You'll Never Walk Alone," and "My Way." Across various platforms, Art has reached listeners in 78 different countries and racked up over 25,000 streams, with hundreds of new streams each day. Not too shabby for a 77-year-old newcomer. Not too shabby for anyone, really.

His next cover, "I've Got You Under My Skin" features Grammy award nominated Mindi Abair, a respected jazz saxophonist who has toured with the likes of Aerosmith. Art's next performance will be this summer in Tuscany, at an event hosted by Andrea Bocelli's foundation. He has been asked to perform a song in Italian in front of Mr. Bocelli and other notables. His performance will be good practice as Art also plans to record "Ole Sole Mio" in Italian. If this all sounds like a dream, that's because it is- it's Art's dream. He goes on to say, "Life without dreams is no life at all. You must dream... At 77 why should I stop dreaming?" May we all take a page out of Art Morris's book and keep on dreaming.

You can follow Art on his journey on Instagram @artmorrismusic, on Spotify, and on YouTube. 

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10 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT *Zoey Deschanel*

BY JILLIAN H. WILSON, ESQ., PARTNER, WILSON &
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Zoey Deschanel is known primarily as an actress with a great, dry sense of humor, in shows like my personal favorites — *New Girl* and *Elf*. What is less known about her, however, is her work to encourage sustainability and improve our global environment, and her steadfastness in remaining her true self, regardless of what others think. Fitting with our theme of Spring Planting, I wanted to share ten things you should know about Zoey Deschanel that might inspire you to plant a seed, and be authentically you, this year!



— 1 —

Zoey Deschanel was born on January 17, 1980 and began her film career in 1999 in the movie, *Mumford*.¹

— 2 —

Zoey Deschanel became interested in the “roots” of the food she ordered at restaurants when she was pregnant with her first child. She was very surprised when she learned many restaurants did not know about the origins of the food they were serving.²

— 3 —

As a result of this, Deschanel co-founded a company named Lettuce Grow, a garden system that can fit on a small balcony, in a small backyard, or even inside, where customers can grow their own produce.³

— 4 —

Her motto with regard to food is: “Know it or grow it.”⁴

— 5 —

The company sends customers seedlings after the customer has selected their location and preferences, to ensure customers are planting what they will enjoy and what will thrive in their environment.⁵

— 6 —

Deschanel’s company also donates portable gardening systems to schools in need through Whole Kids Foundation and homeless shelters in Los Angeles.⁶

— 7 —

On being classified as “too girly” by critics: “I think you can still be girly and maintain your power. The fact that you associate being girly with being non-threatening, that is ... I mean, I can’t think of a more blatant example of playing into exactly the thing that we’re trying to fight against. I can’t be girly? Why do I need to be defined aesthetically by someone else’s perceptions of what makes me seem like someone who should be taken seriously? I’m going to wear whatever I want to wear, because I’m expressing myself, and I deserve that right. And I like the way that looks. You’re not demeaning yourself by acting girly. I think the fact that people are associating being girly with weakness, *that* needs to be examined. Not me dressing girly. I don’t think that undermines my power at all.”⁷

— 8 —

Deschanel expresses herself musically, along with her talents as an actress. She is a member of the duo band She & Him since 2008, where she sings and plays the piano and ukulele. She also performed in a jazz cabaret act in 2001. Additionally, she is credited with writing and singing numerous tracks in movies and shows.⁸

— 9 —

Deschanel’s thoughts on combatting loneliness: “Always the aim for me is making people feel like they are not alone. That’s just the greatest feeling.”⁹

— 10 —

And finally, Deschanel’s thoughts on being a successful woman: “It’s not about women acting like men, it’s about women acting like women and being successful.”¹⁰ **W**

1 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zoey_Deschanel

2 <https://www.housebeautiful.com/lifestyle/gardening/a29357105/zoey-deschanel-portable-gardens-lettuce-grow/>

3 *Id.*

4 <https://www.latimes.com/home/la-hm-ga-attn-with-zoey-deschanel-20190614-story.html>

5 <https://www.housebeautiful.com/lifestyle/gardening/a29357105/zoey-deschanel-portable-gardens-lettuce-grow/>

6 *Id.*

7 https://www.vulture.com/2011/09/zoey_deschanel_new_girl_inter.html

8 *Id.*

9 https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/zoey_deschanel_418155

10 <https://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/beauty/zoey-deschanel-the-chameleon-20131105-2wz6h.html>



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TEN TIPS ON TIME AND PRODUCTIVITY



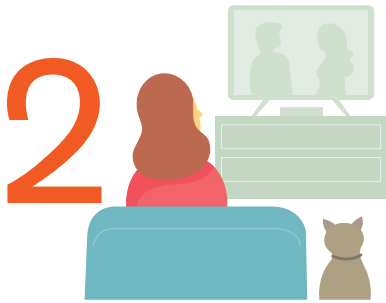
BY SONIA J. BUCK, ESQ., BROCK & SCOTT, PLLC,
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AS ABRAHAM LINCOLN famously said, “the leading rule for the lawyer ... is diligence. Leave nothing for tomorrow which can be done today.” Most lawyers would never sleep, heeding such advice. But the drastic changes of the last year may have some of us struggling to maintain the level of diligence necessary for setting and achieving new goals. Here are ten tips mindful of the value and use of time.



LIMIT SOCIAL MEDIA.

Have an allotted time for social media. My limit is 10 minutes before work to send birthday wishes and scroll my newsfeed. Keep newsfeeds uncluttered by “unfollowing” duplicative pages to focus on more meaningful connections. Periodically review and “unsubscribe” to mailing lists, blogs, and groups that are redundant or no longer relevant.



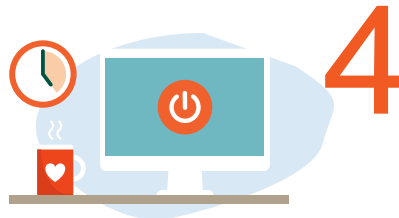
LIMIT TELEVISION.

Set time limits or rules to manage your screen routine. Try not to spend too much time watching things you have already seen. True, re-watching our favorite sitcoms and movies, when we already know the outcome and how it is going to make us feel, can be good for the soul. But much of what we watch provides only minimal value as compared to the investment of time.

3

MULTITASK.

If you do watch those re-runs, you can keep them in the background while you clean, cook, edit, or exercise. When faced with a task that requires focus, multitasking may prove a distraction. But, if you are simply wasting time, do something else too. During quarantine, I re-watched Friends episodes in Spanish. Because I know the plot and the dialogue by heart, I know the English translations, brushing up on my Spanish skills while having a good laugh and a sense of nostalgia.



DESIGNATE A PRODUCTIVITY HOUR EACH DAY.

Different people have different “peak performance” times. Whether you are a morning person or a night owl, schedule an hour each day to work on a project or a goal. If you maintain a designated time to focus, daily productivity will become second nature.

5



ASK FOR HELP.

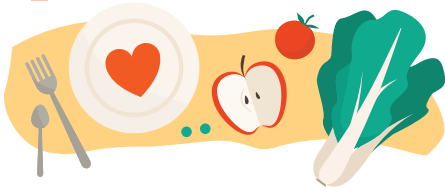
As women in legal leadership roles, we run the risk of doing everything ourselves so that it is “done right.” This is not a sustainable model for wellness or success. Asking for help when needed can improve relationships among spouses, families, partners, and co-workers. Sharing responsibilities at work and at home can foster healthy environments of cooperation and productivity.

6

PAY FOR CERTAIN SERVICES.

Identify, from a time/cost/value/happiness analysis, what tasks you should delegate. Handling everything on your own may save money and allow you to maintain control; however, if you can afford to hire assistance with those things you really dread, you can use the extra time to focus on being productive.

7



READY TO GO MEALS.

To avoid unhealthy convenience food and spending money to save time, prepare make-ahead meals. There are many “meal-in-a-box” delivery companies that became popular during the pandemic. These might be helpful if you are extremely busy, or if you live in an area without easy access to daily fresh food. But, if you can put together a “meal kit” on your own, you achieve the same benefit for less money.

8



COMBINE BUSINESS WITH PLEASURE.

Multitasking applies to relationships too. Be mindful of people you can visit while

traveling. When a business opportunity brought me to Chicago, I reached out to friends in the area who met me for a glass of wine. It was the highlight of the trip. When I travel to various courts throughout the state, I see if a friend in that area can have lunch. Keeping your friends top of mind will result in opportunities for connection scattered amongst a busy schedule that would not otherwise allow for much socializing.

9



BLEND YOUR FRIENDS.

It can be fun when your work friends are introduced to your lifelong friends, or when your high school friends get to know your college or law school friends. Think about what group of friends would mix well with another group. As we return to a world without Covid-19 restrictions, consider hosting events that will bring your friends together. You may not have to divide your Saturdays among different social settings.

10

BOOKS ON TAPE.

Barack Obama’s memoir is over 700 pages, making it a good pick for a listen rather than a read. When traveling, listen to books on tape for entertainment, or to increase your knowledge in your profession, add skills, gain new perspectives, or learn a new language. The subject matter is limitless, and listening frees your hands and eyes for other tasks.



Time is a valuable commodity. As we begin to emerge from a year of isolation and uncertainty, a mindfulness of time utilization can promote productivity as well as personal and professional growth. Make the most out of every minute of every day — whatever “most” means to you. **W**



Bloom

WHERE YOU ARE PLANTED

BY SUSAN G. PAGE, INVOICING SUPERVISOR
MACKIE WOLF ZIENTZ & MANN, P.C. | SPAGE@MWZMLAW.COM

One thing we all may have learned over the past year,
is just how quickly things can disappear.

From jobs to lives, many people suffered,
but the **strength** of so many was also discovered.

No matter the obstacles you may face,
there's always room to grow in this place.

The garden of our lives needs care as well,
as we plant seeds to inspire, can anyone even tell?

Time is such a precious gift that we can never get back.
In the next year and those after, we have to stay on track.

When at times we may feel like we've been a bit stranded,
Take the time to grow, and bloom where you are planted. **W**



CHANGE IS INEVITABLE

BY ANNA Z. SPACONE, ESQ.
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What a crazy year it has been for us all. I don't want to trigger anyone, but if you could do one of those visual word clouds of my brain in 2020, the words showing largest would be: Fear, uncertainty, sadness, moratorium, and stir-crazy. I don't think I need to tell you why.

H



OWEVER, I have been around long enough to know that the changes that happen in response to challenging times are often very important and long-lasting, and this goes for any aspect of life. One of my favorite concepts for managing anxiety and stress in the face of change is the “circle of control.” Google says that the idea comes from Stephen Covey’s *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, which is admittedly still on my library list, but I’ve heard many iterations of it over the years. It’s a simple concept: You are in the center of three rings. Everything you spend your time and mental energy on is within the rings. The ring immediately around you includes the things that you have complete control over, like your actions, behavior, and words. These things are your responsibility. The next ring includes what you can influence through your relationships and networks. The outer ring is for all the things that no matter how much you worry or think about them, you have no control over them whatsoever.

Many of us spend way too much headspace in that outer ring, when we need to center ourselves in the inner two rings in order to be effective. I personally cannot control the world-wide pandemic, or our federal or state governments’ reaction and restrictions, but I decide my own actions within those limitations, and as a leader in my firm, I can influence how we meet these challenges. I can also control how I respond to those around me who are going through similar trials and tribulations, or having a completely different experience than I am. It’s never been more important to listen, exercise empathy, and be supportive.

Our industry is always constantly changing because the technology, laws, and the needs of our clients are constantly changing. That being said, 2020 was certainly a doozy, and we are still not yet on the other side of it. One simple example: When I was a new attorney over a decade ago, I easily spent 60% of my working hours traveling to settlement conferences and motion appearances all over New York State—there were months that my mileage reimbursement was higher than my paycheck. Having a car, a driver’s license, and a suit were absolutely mandatory for that job. Fast forward to today, where I have not physically traveled to Court — not even once—in the past year. Virtual appearances have been the norm, and will continue to be across most of New York, perhaps even after the pandemic recedes. Attorneys now need a good internet connection, a quiet space, strong communication skills, and a flexible mindset.

We can choose to hang out in the outer ring and waste time being annoyed about the changes we’ve had no control over. Or, we can embrace the changes and take the time we used to use finding parking downtown to refocus our energies, refresh our mental approach, and be what our employees and clients need us to be as the post-COVID era dawns.

We all want to emerge this spring in a position of strength and health, both personally and professionally, so let’s focus our energy on what we can control and influence. Let’s focus on making the changes that will have positive, lasting ramifications. Let’s all build legacies. I want my brain word cloud for 2021 to scream: Hope, confidence, renewal, progress, and joy! Don’t be a vending machine, let the change flow. ■

LEANING ON YOUR PASSIONS



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I HAD AN IDEA ONCE. To be clear, I've had ideas more than once, but for the purpose of this article, we'll just leave it as 'I had an idea once'. An idea that individuals might be more willing to pen articles for ALFN publications if they could write about things in their personal lives they're passionate about. So, imagine my non-shock and the expletives that formed at the tip of my tongue when Susan Rosen asked me on a conference call to write the first of these types of articles. All I could do was put myself on mute, bring those expletives to very real life, unmute, and say 'yes, I can do that'. All with a smile on my face because, ya know, multi-talented.



That idea led me here. Sitting at my computer at 4:30 in the morning, trying to regurgitate the thoughts swirling in my mind onto paper before they leave my conscious brain never to be heard from again.

There are several people, places, things and activities in my life that I'm passionate about. Obviously, I love my hubby and family — blood and non-blood family members alike. I love the ocean. Sometimes, I love to shop (shoes and handbags are my jam). I'm a nut about reading/audio books and I love to hike. For this article, though, I'll focus on two of my greatest

passions — my dogs and my wine.

For those of you that don't know me, I have nine dogs. Before you judge, I have 7 acres, so the dog-to-acreage ratio is a little less than one. Makes perfect sense, am I right? Anyway, some of my fur-babies are adopted, some are not. Some are more 'mature' and a little less tolerant (like their Mama) some are younger and livelier. What do they have in common? They have a dog-mom that absolutely loves and adores them.

For every one of my fur-babies, I have approximately 8 bottles of wine. Because that's how moms and

dog-moms rock it. I have never consumed 8 bottles of wine in one day/sitting but that's all I'll acknowledge in writing. Anyway, I have red wine, white wine and even some sparkling wine and champagne. Just like my dogs, I have wines that are more mature and some that are younger with more 'spunk'. And just like my dogs, I adore the hell out of my wine.

Hey, I'm not laughing...

My dogs and my wine make me very happy. I enjoy getting to know their personalities, their quirks, what they do well (or pair well with) and what characteristics they have that make them uniquely 'them'. They each enhance my life in their own way. It's rewarding to give them an environment in which they'll thrive and be appreciated. In return, they're there for me at the end of a long day — or dare say, in the middle of a long day — and are quite content in my content-ness.

Whenever I'm sad or angry, both are there to help calm me and gain some perspective. Since working from home has become my new norm, I can spot one of my fur-babies or a bottle of wine almost anytime I look around — they're part of my view most of my day. And since my hubby works nights and is in bed during the day, both act as a 'sounding board' when I'm having a particularly frustrating day and trying to figure out the best way to inform someone of their ability to go somewhere, preferably somewhere similar to 'well'. Except way hotter. From what I hear, anyway.

Alas, it's not all rainbows and butterflies. Both dogs (or puppies, as they're called in their kryptonite form) and wine alike have wreaked havoc in days past. Dogs/puppies are a lot like toddlers: if they're quiet and/or out of sight for too long, there's a better than great chance they're up to no good. I've learned this lesson the hard way. More than once. With each dog. What can I say? I'm stubborn that way. I will say this: I'll take the work of an errant puppy all day over the dreaded wine-hangover. From what I've heard (insert avoiding eyes here), a wine-hangover is like a normal hang-over but to the power of 10. Channeling my inner Forest Gump, that's all I'll say about that.

My dogs don't judge me, most definitely not for having too much wine. And my wine doesn't care that I'm so far past the dog version of the crazy cat lady that I may be in danger of lapping her. For the second time. Both indulge me in times of crisis and give me a heaping dose of reality when I've got my head too far in the clouds.

In a world where we can sometimes drown in the day-to-day hassle of our industry, it's sometimes difficult to remember the many blessings we have in our life. I hope that, at the very least, this article encourages you to stop and smile at those blessings, regardless of the shape in which they are presented. **W**

IN A WORLD WHERE WE CAN SOMETIMES DROWN IN THE DAY-TO-DAY HASSLE OF OUR INDUSTRY, IT'S SOMETIMES DIFFICULT TO REMEMBER THE MANY BLESSINGS WE HAVE IN OUR LIFE. I HOPE THAT, AT THE VERY LEAST, THIS ARTICLE ENCOURAGES YOU TO STOP AND SMILE AT THOSE BLESSINGS, REGARDLESS OF THE SHAPE IN WHICH THEY ARE PRESENTED.

A woman with long dark hair is sleeping peacefully in a bed. She is wearing a light blue tank top and is covered by a blue duvet. Her hands are clasped near her face. The room is dimly lit, with a soft blue glow emanating from the bedding.

HOW 2020 CHANGED ME

BY NATALIE GRIGG, ESQ., PARTNER
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A YEAR AGO, when the COVID-19 pandemic was declared, I never thought I would be sitting here still subject to mask restrictions, quarantine requirements, and other regulations that limit the number of people in one space. I look back now and recall how we moved forward in 30-day increments at the time, thinking that 30 days from a day, we would be back to normal. I have no doubt others did the same, and we all look back on how wrong we were. But thinking back to when this started, it became about survival and how to make it through each day, week, and month. Early on, I read an article about the Stockdale Paradox, which gave me hope that if I could just shift my mindset, that it would make those days, weeks, and months easier. And so it began.

I have been using a gratitude practice with my daughter from the time she was young. We used to talk each night before bed about three things we were grateful for, because, as I used to say, “even on the worst day, there is always at least one thing you can find to be grateful for.” Over the years, this practice stayed with me, but I went a step further by posting my notes on Facebook. I did this for only a short time publicly, and each time, tried to come up with something specific, like the time I still had bangs after I singed my hair lighting the grill (true story — there are pictures), or expounding on an observation of beauty to

remind myself that life does go on. While I did not post this entire past year on Facebook, my mantra at night always started with being thankful that we were healthy and safe, and I continued noticing not only what I was grateful for but also what brought me joy. Fast forward to March 2021, and I saw Gratitude Log- Day One come up in my Facebook memories. It wasn't until I reposted it and saw the comments about how my posts helped others in those early days that I realized I had any impact on others.

With the uncertainty of COVID and the ever-changing landscape in the mortgage servicing industry, I of-



TIPS FROM THE MAT

- 🧘 Establish boundaries
- 🧘 Accept your current situation without judgment
- 🧘 Have an attitude of gratitude
- 🧘 Remember your wins of the day
- 🧘 Be peaceful, patient, and present
- 🧘 Take time to breathe
- 🧘 Find an exercise that brings you joy
- 🧘 Connect with others (even virtually)
- 🧘 Fuel your body and your soul
- 🧘 Rest
- 🧘 Try a new activity
- 🧘 Positive Affirmations

ten described living through 2020 as being the juggler in a circus act and someone decided to throw in flaming pins. Change came often, and undoubtedly with little to no warning. For a Type-A personality (or Type AAA as my husband refers to it), it is of no surprise when I say I tend to like having everything within my control. But the COVID-19 pandemic allowed anything but. It taught me to recognize what was within my sphere of control and what was beyond it, so that I could focus not only on myself but my family, my daughter, and my team at work. I witnessed so many around me suffering, struggling to deal with the new lifestyle that had been forced upon us. But what could one person do during a time when we couldn't even be in the same room as other people?

So I focused on what I could control. I started with my eating habits, which had quickly deteriorated as the need to eat comfort food took over. They say in college you put on the Freshman Fifteen, well I had put on the COVID Twenty. As I revamped my eating habits, my sleep hygiene was next. Seven hours of sleep? I hadn't seen that in years. But, at a time when you can't go out and even sit with a neighbor in the summer, why not try it? So I did. The results I noticed just from those two changes were remarkable. I hired a Wellness Coach, who was my daily cheerleader, and as the pounds came off and I felt remarkably more energetic, I knew I was on the right track.

Working with my Wellness Coach inspired me to push forward with even more changes. I began practicing yoga again, something I had stopped doing, and eventually signed up for a 200 Hour Yoga Teacher Training. I began meditating and practicing mindfulness. I have since finished my yoga training, along with a Reiki Certification. I'm in the process of completing my own Wellness Coaching course.

Along the way, the more I did, the better I have felt. The better I have felt, the more I wanted to do. I now have a list of different courses to sign up for in various wellness categories, and my Type A personality has the deadlines set. All of which has brought me pure joy during a time when it was hard for many to see the light.

But still, I wanted more. I felt called to do more.

Some people measure purpose by attainable, measured goals. 2020 taught me to measure purpose differently. I joined the Health and Wellness Committee for our local Bar Association. I spoke not only about resiliency, mindfulness, and the power of a positive mindset, but also on the struggles of having a middle school child at home so that others could hear that they were not alone. I sent articles about how to best work remotely to my team. I started using my yoga training to start a program with the Bar Association for Self-Care Saturday and still teach every other weekend. For me, 2020 wasn't just about finding change in myself, it was about helping others to find a way, too. **W**

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LAW AND GARDENING

BY MICHELLE GARCIA GILBERT, ESQ.
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Professionals utilize many activities to de-stress and to escape the office, even if the office now is at home. For example, sports, reading, acting, painting, rock climbing, and gardening come to mind as ways to relax and unwind.



In fact, creative activities outside of work improves job performance, as studies indicate. Activities outside work provide restorative effects, allowing employees to recharge and in theory re-engage upon return to work. Additionally, these activities facilitate creative solutions at the office, and may have deeper impact on work performance than originally thought.

Findings reported in the Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology suggest that creative activity improves job function in addition to traditional rejuvenation effects. The people in the Journal's studies determined how to define their creative activities, including everything from writing stories to playing video games, but reflecting the very personal choices of activities used to de-stress. The participants saw their choices in terms of self-expression, and shared how they saw the impact of these choices on their job performance, and then their fellow employees shared their observations of the impact on the participants' choices.

One notable point of the Journal's studies revolved around choices made by the employees, and not forced by the employer. In fact, employees welcomed support of extra-curricular activities by their employers, to a certain degree. Employers can encourage employees to into work, like sponsor a cake baking contest or allow personal artwork to decorate individual spaces. See, generally, *Benefiting from creative activity: The positive relationships between creative activity, recovery experiences, and performance-related outcomes. Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 2014.

Another example of allowing personal creativity at work might be setting up a garden on the grounds or indoors. Preparing and maintaining a garden are analogous to preparing and maintaining a career in law. Thomas Jefferson stated: "No occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth, and no culture comparable to that of the garden." See, <https://www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/famous-jefferson-quotes>.



The upkeep of a garden, and a law practice, must be an ongoing, perpetual culture commitment, because, to complete Mr. Jefferson's quote: **"But though an old man, I am but a young gardener."**

WHAT DO A GARDENER AND AN ATTORNEY HAVE IN COMMON?

First, both need plans before the activity begins. Foundations for both require thoughtful preparation and time to cultivate, including the type of plants to grow, and the type of practice to pursue. Plans can be long term and short term, and of course can be adjusted and changed over time.

Next, soil is the foundation of a garden, similar to education, training, and experience being the foundation of an attorney. Planting in poor soil, or soil inadequate for a particular type of plant guarantees failure. Plants not only need the correct soil but need the correct amount of water, fertilizer, lighting and so on. An attorney and law practice require requisite knowledge, research, forms, support staff, technology, and so forth. Gardens and law practices will not survive and thrive without the proper foundations.

Ancillary to the proper foundation is the selection of plants, analogous to the types of cases an attorney chooses to handle. For example, leguminous plants (beans, peas, and other legumes) don't grow well by plants in the onion family, like garlic, chives, and leeks, or in the cabbage family, like broccoli, cauliflower, and kale. While threshold law may lead to many cases for a lawyer, taking every case that comes through the door more often leads to conflicts of interest and law. For example, default attorneys should not represent homeowners and condominium associations and borrowers. Thoughtful focus on which types of plants to grow and/or which types of cases to accept leads to more efficient and successful work.

Third, once your plants are planted, a garden requires proper maintenance on a regular schedule. For example, watering, weeding, and pruning at the right times improves production and the longevity of a garden. Similarly, case, time management and communication tools maintain and streamline client onboarding, maintenance, retention and repeat business.

Finally, don't put new mulch over old mulch. Gardens suffocate under layers and layers of mulch, so old mulch should be removed and replaced with new, to protect plants and allow proper irrigation. The practice of law constantly changes, so attorneys take continuing education courses, attend webinars, review current research, legislation, and news releases, in an effort to clear out the old mulch. The upkeep of a garden, and a law practice, must be an ongoing, perpetual culture commitment, because, to complete Mr. Jefferson's quote: "But though an old man, I am but a young gardener." Let us all be young gardeners, be it in an actual garden, or in the gardens of our professions. **W**



Spring Cleaning

**IT'S NOT JUST FOR
CLOSETS ANYMORE!**

BY JACQUELINE COMEAU
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Spring has finally arrived!

As a lifetime resident of the Northeast, I have always found Spring to be a special season. Bleak, gray skies give way to desperately needed sunshine, leafless trees sprout buds, spring flowers begin to emerge, and the winter silence is filled with the sounds of chirping baby birds. Our senses are awakened by the renewal of life, energized growth, and vibrant color.

While Spring typically symbolizes revitalization and the possibility of new beginnings and new life, this year we have a renewed hope for better health — as COVID-19 vaccines are being administered and we are beginning to see states reopen as emergency orders are relaxed.

As we mark one year since the World Health Organization declared Coronavirus a pandemic, we reflect on the toll this past year has taken on all of us. Who could have predicted the level of uncertainty, disruption, and change that has impacted virtually every part of our lives? While the long-term effects of this past year remain to be seen, now more than ever, we can benefit from the inspiration and hope which the possibility of new beginnings offers.

Traditionally, the first sign of Spring means ‘spring cleaning’ our homes — a thorough cleansing, decluttering, and reorganizing of our personal spaces that helps us embrace the summer season with a ‘clean slate.’ This year, why not extend your ‘spring cleaning’ routine beyond your home — to your mind?

Revitalizing your mind — and renewing your perspective — isn’t nearly as labor-intensive as power washing the house, but can be just as (if not more) beneficial. Here are a few simple steps you can take:

DISRUPT YOUR SCHEDULE:

“More disruption,” you ask? “Haven’t we had enough of that already?” Disruption forces our brains to establish new patterns and helps us develop a sense of stability through familiarity. Patterns can quickly become routines or habits, all of which might not be productive. Feeling stuck? Shake up your routine by introducing small changes. Start by making a list of your daily routine, then shake it up by purposefully reordering or adding new tasks. For instance, try taking a different route to work, brushing your teeth with your opposite hand, or reading a book instead of watching television one night per week.

CHANGE THE WORDS YOU USE.

Words have power and speaking them aloud gives them life. Using words or phrases which convey a sense of powerlessness or lack of control over our actions prevent us from taking ownership and accountability for decisions. Plus, thinking in terms of less or negative (subtraction) rather than in terms of positive (addition) can have a negative impact on motivation, confidence, and mindset.

Make an effort to change a few words or phrases to clarify priorities and encourage a growth mindset. For example,

INSTEAD OF:

TRY SAYING:

I HAVE TO... (e.g., I have to work late.)

- I choose to/I do not have to/choose to...I have an opportunity to...
- » I have an opportunity to clean the house.
- » I do not have to clean the house.
- » I choose to clean the house.

I CAN'T... (e.g., I can't have ice cream on my diet)

- I choose to/I do not have to/choose to...I have an opportunity to...
- » I choose to eat less sugar and improve my health.
- » I have an opportunity to eat healthy food.
- » I do not have to eat less sugar, I choose to.

I DON'T HAVE TIME... (e.g., I don't have time to [read, exercise, go to the doctor, etc.])

- It is not a priority to me...
- » It is not a priority to me to [read, exercise, go to the doctor, etc.]

I'M SORRY... (e.g., I am sorry I am late.)

- Thank you...
- » Thank you for being patient and waiting.

I NEED TO STOP BEING SO NEGATIVE

I will find ways to be more positive.

I NEED TO REDUCE MY STRESS

I will increase joy in my life.

FIND THE GOOD:

Identify three things in your life that changed in response to the pandemic that you found to be beneficial. Maybe you began having regular Zoom calls with relatives you were not able to visit, or you started going for walks with your children after dinner. When the emergency orders are lifted and we return to the 'new normal,' make an effort to continue these practices.

PROTECT YOUR PEACE:

Every day, our friends, family, coworkers, devices, televisions, and more serve up a steady stream of data input that our brains must process. Evaluate the quality of that information, its source, and how it makes you feel. Be honest with yourself about interactions that you find negative, toxic, draining, or not otherwise contributing to 'your best you.' Don't be afraid to reduce or disconnect — whether from a person, device, or other source.

REFLECT ON YOUR SUCCESSES:

Each time you receive a compliment, a thank you that mentions something special about you, or some other positive comment, save it in a drawer, file, or folder on your computer. When you are feeling overwhelmed, have self-doubt, or just need a positivity boost, re-visit and reread these messages. Not only will it help lift your mood, but your new-found positivity might just rub off on someone else!

THE 'DON'T DO LIST':

Honestly assess what is on your "to do" list by asking these questions:

- What's been on my list for way too long? If I haven't gotten to it yet, or at least started it, is it ever really going to get done?
- What's on my list just because I feel I "have" to do it, but won't provide much value, joy, or benefit to my life?

DISCOVER YOUR JOY:

What brings you joy and happiness? Make a list — then make another list tracking how you are spending your time (including your 'to do list'). Compare the two lists to see how much time you are spending on those things that bring you the most joy and happiness. Reduce or eliminate time spent on items that are not a source of happiness.

MAKE SPACE FOR NEW BEGINNINGS:

When you stop doing things that no longer bring you happiness, you'll have space to add something new. Is there something you've always wanted to do but haven't had the time — learning a new language, taking up a hobby? Make a plan to start.



GET TO THE ROOT OF THE MATTER:

Consider why you haven't learned that new language or taken up that new hobby. Is it really a lack of time, or something more? Evaluate your behavior and try to identify the root reason you are not taking action so that you can take steps to overcome:

1. Your Fear. Often, imagined consequences or risks prevent us from taking action. Because our brains are hardwired for protection, we focus on what might go wrong instead of what might go right and, confronted with all the possible negative outcomes, we choose not to act. Counter your fears by playing out each possible consequence to its logical conclusion — what's the worst that can happen? How would you handle that situation? What can you do to mitigate the risks? You might find that your fears weren't as likely — or impactful — as you thought, and that you've actually developed a plan to deal with your 'worst-case scenario'.

2. A Sense of Guilt. Sometimes the thought of committing already scarce time and resources to pursue our own joy can leave us feeling a little bit guilty, even though it pays dividends in other ways. Consider whether a sense of guilt is holding you back and examine why you may have created that boundary for yourself.

3. A Lack of Interest: Be honest - is this really something you want to do? Sometimes we set goals for ourselves because we believe it's the right thing to do, or because it's expected of us. However, it's possible that you just aren't all that interested in that goal or task. Your lack of interest or action may be rooted in comparison, obligation, or expectations of others rather than in what you aspire to for yourself.

4. A Feeling of Being Overwhelmed: Perhaps your goal or interest feels too overwhelming and you're not sure where to begin. Instead of creating a grand plan and making big strides, start small (for example, instead of cleaning out your entire closet, put a bag or box in the closet. Add a few items a day, or as you come across items in your daily life. The only rule is that you can't remove anything once it is deposited). Setting smaller, attainable goals can reduce the feeling of overwhelm, allow you to get started, and provide a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment by completing the first step.

Happy spring cleaning! 

SPRING FORWARD INTO ORGANIZATION!

BY JULIA KEYS, DIRECTOR OF CLIENT SERVICES
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"SPRING WILL
COME AND SO
WILL HAPPINESS.
HOLD ON. LIFE
WILL GET WARMER."

— ANITA KRIZZAN

BEHOLD, MY FRIENDS, for Spring has arrived!

A little over a year has passed since our lives were forever impacted, extraordinarily challenged, and substantially changed. We have learned so much in this short period of time. One thing is certain, and no matter the miles that separate us, we have experienced every shift in the seasons under the same sun, together. I am so very thankful to be here and incredibly grateful in advance for much brighter days ahead for us all.

If I had to guess, I think it is fair to assume that the cold winter storms and cloudy days did not register significantly high scores on energy levels and motivation meters for most of us. Now that the darkness of winter is transitioning into the light of spring, there seems to be shared and restored feelings of hope to be found. Flowers are in bloom and fresh air is the current fragrance trending across the world. The beauty and warmth of this scenery shift has a natural tendency to produce a psychological surge of optimism, nostalgia, and the release of feel-good endorphins. What if we could maximize this frequency even when we are indoors by simply organizing our personal and workspace environments?

It is highly likely that significant amounts of dust, dirt, and plain "stuff" have been accumulated over the last year as so much of our time has been spent at home. It is time to revive, refresh, renew, and get organized! Let's have some fun, translate the work that we do to our exercise for the day and develop a routine to revisit this initiative more frequently going forward, all in one swing!

FIRST, SET THE STAGE

WHAT'S THE PLAN?

- ✓ Consider the priority of focus and the specific area(s) for today.
- ✓ Is the goal to reshuffle your space, clean, or organize or is it to conquer all of these?
- ✓ Tip: Remember the ultimate goal is to get rid of everything you do not need!
- ✓ Donate: There are many people in need of clothes and household items. I recommend locating your nearest charity and giving back as often as possible.

INVEST IN FRESH PRODUCTS! A LITTLE GOES A LONG WAY

- ✓ Upgrade your old cleaning cloths, sponges and find some colorful and fun cleaning tools that will make your time easier, faster and interesting.
- ✓ There are many new organic cleaning products trending on the market now, including those that provide refillable glass bottles and essential oils if you are interested in moving away from harsh chemicals.
- ✓ Purchase organization containers, document file holders, back pin boards to maximize space, a cart with various organizing cups, bins and trays which is ideal for a limited space, perhaps better lighting, etc.

GRAB YOUR NOTEBOOK, PEN OR WHITEBOARD & CREATE A LIST OF ALL OF THE TASKS FOR THE DAY

- ✓ Crossing items off of a goal list is psychologically fulfilling and motivating.
- ✓ If you are overwhelmed and want to complete this exercise for your entire home, take a deep breath (woooooosahhhhh!) and start with your work space first since this is where we are spending the bulk of our time.
- ✓ Focus on additional rooms or areas on a

schedule; perhaps two rooms every Saturday until completed, for example.

MUSIC! THE LOUDER THE BETTER

- ✓ This is an important step that, if skipped, may hinder participation with the next step, especially if you have teenagers.
- ✓ Speaking from experience, it is recommended to avoid 70's, 80's, 90's, the spa channel, and early 2000 genres, sadly.
- ✓ Tip: let the kids DJ.



ENGAGE THE FAMILY (SPOUSES OR CHILDREN) TO CONTRIBUTE

- ✓ The more the merrier and this is a huge time saver.
- ✓ Make it fun! Example: time tasks to see who finishes first.

GO "VIRTUAL ORGANIZING" WITH OUT OF STATE FAMILY OR FRIENDS

- ✓ Schedule a date with a motivation partner and have some fun!
- ✓ Spoiler alert: Accountability partner.



NEXT, IT IS SHOWTIME!

FIRST THINGS FIRST – WE ARE CLEARING CLUTTER!

- ✓ Set a timer and clock your time spent on this project starting now.
- ✓ Review all stray papers, sticky notes, mail, and toss everything unnecessary.
- ✓ Take a break, hydrate and repeat this step often. That was likely exhausting! Stand back, admire your work and enjoy this moment of clarity.

TIME TO DEEP CLEAN!

- ✓ Remove all things not attached to the floor or furniture and thoroughly clean/sanitize.
- ✓ Dust, vacuum, mop, wipe down screens, phones, keyboards – basically everything.
- ✓ Your workspace is unfortunately, a perfect breeding ground for germs – put some muscle into it.

FINALLY, IT IS REORG, RESHUFFLE, AND SPRING FORWARD TIME!

WORKSPACE: It is important to create a separate workspace if located in your home regardless of the size of the space.

- ✓ This separation of space creates the feel of going to work and balances both work/personal responsibilities.
- ✓ If you have identified a more efficient workspace, relocate and set up!
- ✓ Wires and cables – where is IT???

 - Lock cables in and zip tie into an 8-12 foot cable zipper.
 - Create labels for tagging each end of each cable or wire.

- ✓ Organize the space giving your desk or table a much openness as possible *a cluttered space creates a cluttered mind.

 - Filing cabinets are a life saver and will help manage cluttered document and keep your personal and work material separate, organized and maintained.
 - Fact: Sanity game changer.
 - Wall containers are easy to mount and can be removed and repositioned as needed.
 - Storage bins in closets, bathrooms, kitchens and

even in your garage will make your space look and feel double the size.

✍ *Craft stores, office supply stores and home repair stores are where you will find these (size dependent).*

- ✓ Label everything possible! (minus yourself).

 - This is tremendously helpful with storage bins and is a time management efficiency when you need to find something quickly.
 - This is also helpful on pens and highlighters if yours somehow disappear and are later found in a family members workspace.

- ✓ Brighten.

 - This could include a familiar, personal touch, additional lighting.

✍ *You would be surprised what a little extra light in the room can do to elevate your energy levels and concentration efforts throughout the day.*

- ✓ Keep it simple.

 - When resetting your work space in the final

steps of declutter, reorg and revive, remember that less is more.

- Minimize distractions by keeping your workspace as open and clear as possible.
- Always think “clutter free” and limit the number of items on your desk that you have more available workspace; items that you do not frequently use should be put away in a drawer or supply closet.
- Avoid using the floor for additional storage as this is usually where stage one of clutter piling begins.

SOAK IT ALL IN, OWN YOUR TALENTS AND FINISHED PRODUCT.

- ✓ End timer – how did you do?

 - Record this number to try and break your record next time.
 - If you want to be extra diligent, set your health timer on your phone to capture your movements and calories burned.

✍ *A recent study finds that cleaning and reorganization projects burn between 100-300 calories (skip the gym today).*



- ✓ Calendar a repeat session of this exercise every now and again to keep it fresh, interesting and organized.
- ✓ If you are feeling really awesome about your renewed space, take down your zoom background you have been using this year and own your bragging rights proudly.
- ✓ Tip: schedule a time daily and before shutting down to spend five minutes or so clearing small amounts of clutter that have accumulated throughout the day.
 - This will minimize the deep clean next time and begins to develop as a positive habit over time.

Congratulations if you made it this far through the article without giving up, I commend you as we are literally and figuratively in this together! I encourage you to look at the small amount of time spent maintaining organization of your office, workspace, and

home as a small, yet rewarding, personal investment. After all, the better we feel, the better we perform. The more organized we are, the better quality and productivity of our output. The more efficient that we make things on ourselves, the less we are bogged down with roadblocks and delays. Clearing physical clutter clears the mind of clutter while working towards your goals and celebrating those accomplishments along the way.

Like a mirror, giving the very best version of ourselves to the world is a conduit to magnetic attraction. How we see ourselves is how the world also sees us, and we are truly operating at our best, when we **feel** our absolute best. This season, I want to encourage you to remember to dedicate time to caring for yourself, finding peaceful energy and calmness in your space where you spend the bulk of your time. You deserve it. Happy Spring to you all! 🍷



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WILLing Participants

WE DO OUR OWN STUNTS

Interview of Beth Northrop-Day



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In

this series, I am interviewing the women who lead our industry.

I'm doing it on their terms, while they show me first-hand the hobbies, interests, and activities that make them who they are. We will get to see them in a unique way, and maybe understand a little bit more of how they became the influential person they are. For my part, I will willingly take part in any activity as their sidekick – or, when in quarantine, we will Zoom about it until we are free to meet up again. Here's hoping that none of my future subjects are into base-jumping!

SALLY: [00:00:10] I would love for you to introduce yourself for our audience. Who are you and who do you work with?

BETH: [00:00:28] Who am I? I am Beth Northrop-Day. I am Vice President and Assistant General Counsel for US Bank and I've been with the bank since 2014.

SALLY: [00:00:38] And I see that you're also phoning in from home. So pandemic life - how has that been treating you?

BETH: [00:00:44] It's... it's going, I'm sure, like most of us who are used to traveling. This being at home is a little crazy. I think my husband wishes I would go somewhere, anywhere but here. But yeah, I mean, it's different. It's unique. It's given us all an opportunity to figure out how to work with remote teams all the time. And certainly from a legal perspective, this isn't what we do, right? I mean, we're out in the industry and going to hearings and meetings and things like that. So, it's been a switch, but I think it's been a good one. I won't be sad, though, when it's over.

SALLY: [00:01:24] Me either. And I thank you for doing the Zoom meeting with me, because I love seeing your face. It's been, it feels like, far too long.

BETH: [00:01:31] It's been a year.

SALLY: [00:01:33] And I was off the road before everyone else because I was studying for that bar exam! So I have been out of pocket for ages and ages, but it's just so good to see everyone's face. So tell me this. How did you get here? Was this your career objective? Was this something that you discovered mid-career? How did you get to where you are? What was your path?

BETH: [00:01:58] Yeah, so I guess if I go back from when I was really little, I'd always wanted to be an attorney since I was tiny, tiny, and I watched Adam's Rib with Katharine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy. And I loved her sass and how she handled the whole thing. And that kind of kicked off my path. I veered way off my path, though, at 19, when I had my girls, and that became a priority. And then I became a paralegal. And then I think I guess it was 13 years ago now, I decided, well, what the heck, my kids are finishing high school. Why don't I go to law school? That sounds like a whole boatload of fun. And it's not like I have anything better to do. And so, yeah, I went to law school about 13 years ago, and when I got out and passed the bar (thank goodness), it was foreclosure crisis time. And, you know, we were in a recession. There were way too many attorneys in Minnesota that were unemployed that were coming out of law school. We had four law schools in Minnesota at the time, pumping

out graduates like crazy. And so I honestly, I just happened in to a position at GMAC Mortgage, back then, handling contested matters. So contested foreclosures, highly litigated stuff. And then from there, I went from GMAC to OCWEN and then to US Bank. So, certainly mortgage default was not my main choice of law, but it was an opportunity. And from that, I've kind of just taken all of the opportunities that have popped up and just grown my position, grown myself, into hopefully being a strong, default-based attorney.

SALLY: [00:03:56] That's so great. So on the way, did you have any particular mentors who sort of informed how you built your career or people that you really look back on and say, OK, that person taught me something important that got me here?

BETH: [00:04:12] Yeah, yeah, absolutely. You know, if I go back to law school, there were a couple of really strong attorneys that I had the opportunity to work with. Mary Pat Byrne was one I was able to help her write some papers on surrogacy for the LGBTQ community and taxation of surrogacy payments and things like that. So she was she was awesome, incredibly intelligent woman, strong leader. And so, you know, I got to have a taste of some other areas of law and some different ways of thinking, which I think is a very good thing. And then Eileen Roberts, who taught real estate. And so I got some more background into real estate, how all of that works, learned about securitizations and

tranches and things like that, not knowing coming out of law school, I was going to end up needing to understand those things. And then really, when I got focused on mortgage default, Elizabeth de Silva was probably my biggest mentor through the whole thing. I mean, I met her very early on in my career and she just really taught me how to how to think about things, how to communicate, how to be assertive when needed, and to really get your voice heard, which isn't always easy for a woman in a room full of men in particular. So and, you know Liz, she's like tiny nothing. And you can't miss her when she comes into a room. Right. So, yeah, because of everything that she taught me and guided me, you know, I'm here where I am today. So, yeah, those three in particular were fantastic mentors.

SALLY: [00:06:11] So what I think is really interesting about all of that, number one: all of the mentors that you mentioned are women, which I think is... I think it's unusual and I think it's awesome. But also, I love where you started when you were watching Adam's rib and you really liked how Katharine Hepburn showed up in that picture and was, well, articulate. Yeah, I think you said sassy. And I always think of her as spicy.

BETH: [00:06:35] Yes!

SALLY: [00:06:36] She has a kick to her. And then that arc to where you're talking about Liz also helping you give you with some tools to communicate in what is I mean, as an attorney, a confronta-

SALLY

Books:

Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy
by Douglas Adams
Game of Thrones
by George RR Martin
Good Omens
by Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchett
The Lady Astronaut Series
by Mary Robinette Kowal
The Handmaid's Tale
by Margaret Atwood

Movies:

StarWars (originals)
Alien Series (Ripley for-evahl!)
Snowpiercer
Bladerunner
Contact
The Abyss
In my queue: District 9

TV shows:

Westworld
Stranger Things
The Handmaids Tale
Watchmen
X-Files
The Mandalorian
In my queue: Orphan Black

tional situation sometimes.

BETH: [00:06:53] Yes.

SALLY: [00:06:54] And even with your colleagues, we deal with confrontation all the time.

BETH: [00:07:00] Yes.

SALLY: [00:07:01] That's not the most comfortable place to be.

BETH: [00:07:03] Right, right. Yeah, and you know, not that we have to get into that much of my background, but confrontation and being assertive for myself is a very big issue for me. I unfortunately was married to a man who beat me for 10 years. And coming out of that into my life now with my girls and my husband now, you know, they gave me the strength and the courage to actually go to school and to find myself and to get onto this path. But developing myself past all of those things that we as women, with or without a tumultuous background, we can get into our own heads. Right? And say, oh, I can't speak up and I have to not be the loudest voice. And if I'm assertive, then excuse my mouth, I'm bitchy, right? While a man is assertive. And so it took a lot for me to put that stuff aside and to realize that (1) I was valuable, (2) I could have a voice and I had important things to say and why can't I speak up? Right? So I look at my girls who are awesome young adults, but, you know, raising them, it was so key that they understood that just because they're women, young girls and then women, doesn't make them any less valuable than anybody else. And so, it's so important, you

know, as you're talking about having different females for role models, yet it's so important for us to reach out to other women, other whether they're young, old, it doesn't matter, and say, "Hey, I got your back, let's work together, let's figure out a path forward and just help build each other up." There's still too much of the "not," right? Where we're too much nit-picky and stabbing each other in the back. And we just we can't do that. We have to support each other now more than ever.

SALLY: [00:09:19] Yeah, I always think of that as sort of like negative competition. I love competition. I don't think there's any attorney out there that's like "meh, I hate it." I love competition. But there is a way that we all can share the light. There's room for everyone. So I think that's a really important message, that boosterism that we should have for each other. And one of the things that resonates with me with what you're talking about is that idea of having to readjust your boundaries as a woman in a professional setting. You want to be assertive. You want to have your voice heard. But it is so uncomfortable because we don't know...we've been told different things about where our authority ends, where are our voices should be heard and shouldn't be heard, and having to reteach yourself all of those things to be, as you are now, super effective in a large industry, in a competitive industry, is so important and so hard, especially if you don't have those support groups.

BETH: [00:10:20] Right. Yeah, I agree. I agree.

BETH

Books:

The In Death Series

by Jd Robb

The Living Dead

by George A Romero

The Anita Blake Series

by Laurell Hamilton

You are a Badass: How to Stop

Doubting Yourself

by Jen Sincero

The Subtle Art of not Giving a F*ck

by Mark Mason

Movies:

Greenland

Zombieland

The Dead Don't Die

Bird Box

Quiet Place

Anything with Harrison Ford (did I tell you I made him Breakfast once? :))

TV shows

Eureka (older but such fun!)

Ally McBeal

The Walking Dead (including Fear the Walking Dead and The World Beyond)

Doctor Who (of course)

Z Nation

The Good Place

Good Omens

Jack Ryan

And how could I forget Zomboat!!

SALLY: [00:10:22] Do you have any heroes outside the industry? Any people that you look at and go, I wish that's how I would do life or that's how I aspire to do life?

BETH: [00:10:33] I mean, there's probably plenty, I guess I'd have to think about that some more. I mean, right now, my brain is completely blank, I'm like on the spot, who are my heroes? Oh, my God, I've lost it all.

SALLY: [00:10:53] I just always think I love a fighter. I love someone who has that moral imperative and sticks their neck out. And I do think, like women in our industry, the women who went before us got us to the table for sure, but now I think it's our moment to push that to "We're going to be heard. We're going to be owners, we're going to be leaders. We're going to set the agenda as well as speak on it."

BETH: [00:11:25] Yeah, yeah, yeah, absolutely. And in all walks of life, you know, when I think about my mom, you know, she was beyond feisty and assertive and certainly before her time when it came to speaking up. And I think I get a lot of those good things directly from who she was. If she wasn't as strong as she was, maybe I wouldn't be where I am today. And there's a lot of great women out there. I mean, just all over the place, I could say Ruth Bader Ginsburg. I mean, wow, what an incredible woman and everything that she did for us. There's just great, great women, great milestones out there that we can now

build off of and that hopefully our children can build off of. You know, I always hope that my girls can see what I've done, where we've come from and where we are today, and take that as encouragement for things that they can do. That there's really no stopping any of us. There's no ceiling. Yeah, maybe it's still out there. We know we still butt up against it. But we shouldn't be afraid to take it on and say, OK, bring it. I can sit in a conference room full of men and talk about my position. I won't say that I won't be scared, you know, to pieces. Right? If I'm there alone. But it challenges us and it keeps us moving in the right direction. And as long as all of the women around us and those who come after us continue to take those steps, I think we'll continue to see great progress.

SALLY: [00:13:12] That is the hope. I want to talk a little bit about corporate and industry culture. So, obviously you've got a huge corporation that you work for. And I think when you have a big company like that, they do spend a lot of time and money and intention on what their culture should be, what they want it to be. I kind of want to get an idea of where you think we are, where we're going, where you think we should be going. Like, I know that when we probably came into our positions, we were at a different point. And where do we think we're going now?

BETH: [00:13:53] Yeah, you know, the great thing, I think, even though it certainly has come about

in not great ways, right, is all of the conversations we've been having over the past year and a half. We're having a lot of conversations about diversity and inclusion where, when I think about prior to the past year and a half, there wasn't as much of a focus. And we could go into the politics of all that all day long. But the bottom line is, you know, people are, whether you're female or male, LGBTQ, however, you identify, people aren't being treated equally with the same level of respect and, you know, having the same opportunities. And it's still so apparent and rampant in our society. And maybe we needed a bit of a wake-up call to have those discussions again. But it's kind of invigorating. People are now recognizing, wait a minute, this isn't OK, why did we just take a step back and not continue having the conversations? And, you know, for myself personally, and I've shared this with my kids, too, we have to step back and look at ourselves and say, am I just responding to an issue or an action based on, "Well, this is just me and I'm going to put up my defenses and say, well, that has nothing to do with me. And why do I have to have this conversation." Or am I going to take a step back and say, "wait a minute, let me put myself in your shoes and listen to what you're saying to me and then figure out what you're feeling?" Not, "it doesn't have anything to do with me. It has to do with other people." And I think when for us as women, it's the same thing. Right, whether it's, you know, men who are direct if you want to call them competitors in our field or

even those who are in positions of power, we have to have them take that step back and say, OK, it's not about me. I'm Mr. Joe and I'm in control of this situation and I've advanced to this level and what-not. But I have to look at you, Sally, and say, wait a minute, what's Sally going through? What is she feeling? And how do I help her have the voice that she needs? And so whether that's women's rights and everything we have to do there or our LGBTQ partners or different races, different ethnicities, we have to step back and put ourselves in other people's shoes. The great part about our corporate culture, too, is we're all now so invested in having deeper conversations, more so than we were having before. And they're so vital and they're so necessary as an entire society to keep things moving in the right direction. So, yeah, it's invigorating. It's fun. It's great to have conversations. And I don't know about you, but I love when somebody says something and then all of a sudden I have this aha moment. I mean, I'm not certainly, you know, the knower of all things, but having that moment where I even have to correct myself is a great learning opportunity and can help me help others to, right?

SALLY: [00:18:04] Yeah, I think of it as a pick your head up moment. We are all doing our work. Business as usual and all of a sudden there was upheaval. We as an industry, as a corporation, whatever, need to pick our heads up and say, OK, where are we and where do we need to be and

how do we move that way? And then, also, what you're talking about is the nuance of, not only changing an industry, changing a corporation, but changing your own perspective. And we're going to make mistakes and it's not going to be perfect, but that we have to recognize that it's continual work. Right? We don't have an answer that fixes it for everything. We have to continue to work and

which I'm so excited about, because I don't run into people who share a lot of my same like sci-fi interests. We're going to talk a little bit about Doctor Who and The Walking Dead, which I'm very excited about, and I really find interesting about these two being part of the hobby obsession is that they're both so much about humanity. So, it's a great time to talk about these things. I wanted

And then, also, what you're talking about is the nuance of, not only changing an industry, changing a corporation, but changing your own perspective. And we're going to make mistakes and it's not going to be perfect, but that we have to recognize that it's continual work.

get better every day. Every year, whatever the measurements are, the point is continual work on yourself and your corporation and then your industry by extension.

BETH: [00:19:03] Right.

SALLY: [00:19:03] I think it's an exciting time and I hope that there's a lot more conversations and inventive - not only solutions, really, but changes.

BETH: [00:19:17] Yeah, yeah, I agree, yeah.

SALLY: [00:19:21] So, we're going to talk about your hobbies,

to start with Doctor Who. I think is a little more of a niche following in the US. How did you find Doctor Who? How did you get into it?

BETH: [00:20:02] So, I think David Tennant was the doctor for about a year and a friend of mine kept saying, "Oh, you should watch Doctor Who. It's really great." And I was like, it's not that old timey show where they have weird looking robots and some guy wears a big, long scarf. Why do I have to watch that? And so I watch David Tennant and just I fell in love with the character. I fell in love with how he was playing The Doctor. He was so clever and

fun and it was just a great show. And so I just stuck with it. So, I picked up with David Tennant and then I had to go back and watch Christopher Eccleston because he came a year before and I stuck with it. And then, ironically enough, which I will admit to this, Jodie Whittaker became the next Doctor. Right. And so I was stuck in my head that a woman could not be Doctor Who. This is how - and I'm fully admitting this, right - this was stuck in my head: A woman could not possibly be The Doctor. The Doctor has always been a man. And how could she be The Doctor? We can't all of a sudden change genders. This is just crazy. And so for her first year as The Doctor, I actually didn't watch it. I didn't watch it. I was being so incredibly stubborn and stuck in my ways. And then I can't remember. I saw an ad for something, one of the episodes that looked pretty cool. And I said, you know what? I'm just going to watch it. And it was great. It was different. I had to step back for a minute and change the way I was thinking. And granted, it's a show, I know. But, you know, it was just very indicative of who I was at that time and that a woman couldn't possibly be a great time lord.

SALLY: [00:22:04] Pretty timely, right? For this moment in our society.

BETH: [00:22:08] Right.

BETH: [00:22:09] Right. Yeah. And so I have been watching. It's been great. She definitely has a new kind of a spin on how she

handles things. You know, if you look at David Tennant and Peter Capaldi and Matt Smith and all of them, they definitely have their companions, right? The people that they're traveling with. And while if you watch Jodie and her rendition of The Doctor, her travel companions are her mates there, her family. And to me it's kind of cool because that was just their mere companions and Jodie comes on scene and this is her family. And so it just kind of sets a little bit of a different tone. Not that the other companions weren't very important to David Tennant and all of them, but the new Doctor really considers these her family and her mates, and she's there to have fun with them, but to protect them and to always be there with them. So it was kind of a cool little transition. And now I'm all on board. I'm like, yes, this is awesome. The Doctor can be anybody at any point in time. This is great.

SALLY: [00:23:28] And for readers who don't know, so The Doctor regenerates after every life and you get a different version. And I think that's one of the most winning things a TV show could do. Not only do you have longevity because you're going to give new leading person every time they regenerate, but I think that they've been able to do what The Doctor does in different ways. So to me, it's like you've got the warrior doctors, you've got the ones that are compassionate and much more nurturing. And then you have like the ones that are more like the David Tennant that are very hyper

focused and full of energy, maybe a little bit funny, but also kind of wildly protective. So you get all of these different flavors of how you can do life, basically. But what the thing that I love about it is the emphasis on the value of the individual never changes. That's the thing - that everyone is important. That has been their message from the beginning is that every person is important and they want to protect those individuals. And I think that's such a lovely message. And I don't think I got it when I was younger watching it. I think it was when I was watching it with my son that it kind of clicked. But I was like, oh, this is about taking care of others.

BETH: [00:24:51] Yeah, yeah.

SALLY: [00:24:53] And, I do love the sonic screwdriver, but I think is really cool about The Doctor, one of the other many, many things that's very cool about The Doctor, is that he doesn't have any superpowers.

BETH: [00:25:04] Right.

SALLY: [00:25:06] His super power is that he has two hearts.

BETH: [00:25:08] Right.

SALLY: [00:25:10] So honestly, I feel like there's a lot of poetry to this. But it is still like you said, a very weird, like 60s, 70s weird robot show that has, you know, those murderous daleks that scared the pants off me as a kid. And then the weird robot men.

BETH: [00:25:31] Oh, the Cybermen.

SALLY: [00:25:33] Yes! The Cybermen. How weirdly true is that becoming. So all of those used to terrify me from like just a strict entertainment perspective.

BETH: [00:25:43] Yeah.

female James Bond. Why not?

BETH: [00:26:30] Oh, yeah. Yeah, absolutely. Well, and, you know, I'm sure if you haven't seen the ads and that's not to give you spoilers. River Song is- my favorite companion ever - but John Barrowman comes back and, you know, Captain Jack is back with Jodie Whittaker and their chem-

devoted and in love with each other. And even the way he adores his parents is, you know, we all love our parents, but he really has this very large adoration for his family and everybody around him. And, yeah, he's just a really cool individual. Definitely.

SALLY: [00:27:50] Maybe that who we will try to go see together is maybe John Barrowman. If you had to pick which Doctor to time travel, with which one would it be?

But in a time when there's so much division, it's just so nice to see when people aren't afraid to show that they love each other and who they love and they just put it out there for the world, so.

SALLY: [00:25:44] But now I see it with a much more loving eye. I think that it is about really caring about other people more than anything.

BETH: [00:25:50] Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. No it's fun. And I actually have my sonic screwdriver over on my shelf. Yeah.

SALLY: [00:26:04] I haven't actually seen Jodie Whittaker yet. OK, we were in the middle of Peter Capaldi when my streaming service dropped Doctor Who. So now I'm getting it like a couple seasons behind. But I'm very excited to see her. Just like I would love to see a

istry is just amazing. I mean, they play off of each other. It's so much fun. It's amazing.

SALLY: [00:26:55] You've actually met him.

BETH: [00:26:57] Yes. Yes. About six times. He's an amazing individual.

SALLY: [00:27:04] Is he as charming in real life as he is on the show?

BETH: [00:27:07] Absolutely. And he's a really nice person. He's incredibly funny. He clearly adores, loves his spouse, they are clearly

BETH: [00:28:03] I would pick David Tennant. Yeah, I just he's amazing. Yeah, I've met him, too, by the way, and he's - be still my heart. He's fantastic. I think, in not just Doctor Who, but other things that he's done, he's just fantastic. I mean, Good Omens. He plays such a good devil. Jessica Jones. He plays a fantastic bad guy. I mean, he's a great actor. I admire him. And he's another one - I don't know about you, but something about people who just love and adore their spouses. For me, that's like a major plus. It's like I love that you are so in love with your partner, which sounds really kind of dorky. But in a time when there's so much division, it's just so nice to see when people aren't afraid to show that they love each other and who they love and they just put it out there for the world, so. Well, that's my dorkiness.

SALLY: [00:29:12] Quick aside for Good Omens, which is one of my absolute favorite novels. And I love the show. And one of the authors was the showrunner, Neil Gaiman. David Tennant played

a demon and Michael Sheen played the Angel. And during the pandemic they have been posting really cute videos of their Zoom chats. And so if you haven't seen them, you should because they're great. So this is going to bring us to The Walking Dead, which I'm going to admit to you that I did not get involved with until a few years ago. I mean, it's been going on for a while now. 13 years? 14 years?

BETH: [00:29:50] Yeah, ten.

SALLY: [00:29:52] I am the biggest chicken in the world. Like, I do not do horror at all. But some years ago, maybe five years ago, six years ago, I really wanted to watch this show because everyone at work was talking about it and I really felt left out. So it took me a year to get through the first episode.

BETH: [00:30:18] Oh, wow!

SALLY: [00:30:19] It scared me so badly, like I was like hiding behind blankets and I would watch like five minutes of it and I'd turn it off and I'd be like, "I can't do it!" And then a couple of weeks later, I'm like, "OK, I'm going to do it." Then I would watch a little bit more of it and I'd be like "AH! I can't do it!" I've gotten over that. So then I crushed like seasons at a time. So I'm fairly new to it. And I haven't seen the most recent season yet. But I want to hear your take on what you think the themes of The Walking Dead are to you. Actually, let's first go into did you what did you read the graphic novels first? Did you find

it on TV first?

BETH: [00:30:57] So I found it on TV first. So I started watching the series. And since then, I've watched or watched read the graphic novels and the other dorky part of me: I've gone on three Walking Dead cruises and I've gone to the Atlanta Walking Dead Comic-Con. So total, total, big, huge fan of The Walking Dead. It's amazing.

SALLY: [00:31:29] You don't have to worry about being dorky because "game recognizes game." So, you got into the show first. Obviously, your favorite is Daryl.

BETH: [00:31:45] Love, Daryl, love, Daryl, loved Rick, Rick, Andrew Lincoln did a great Rick Grimes. Looking forward to the movies. If they ever come out. That will be amazing. But Daryl - I can't remember if he was ever in the comic, the comic books or not, but he is such a crazy character. And then Carol. Carol is absolutely amazing. She started out as an abused woman. Her husband dies very early on in the show. And you watch her progression.

SALLY: [00:32:27] Wasn't his name Ed.

BETH: [00:32:29] Yes. Ed! Yes. But you watch her progression from being this meek and mild and very scared woman to a powerhouse. I mean, Carol is out there and she takes control and leadership. And she's had her kind of little whackadoo few moments, but she is a force to be reckoned

with. And so she and Daryl are pretty cool together.

SALLY: [00:32:55] Yes! They are. And I think pretty much most of the populace that watches The Walking Dead would agree with you. So what are the themes that you see really highlighted by this world?

BETH: [00:33:07] One, people can be cruel to each other. That's the sad part of it. I mean, I think when people are faced with this type of crazy disaster, there's a lot of fight to protect your own. And sometimes to the extent of, "Well, I'm going to destroy you before you can destroy me." And when that happens, even in a make believe TV show, the result is one group is decimated, right? While another stands at the end of the day. But look what it's done to the population. The survivors that are left on the planet are now reduced even further. And it's also interesting to me because when you look at the different groups, and I'll use Negan and his group, they think as they're progressing in the positions that they've taken, that they're in the right. They don't think that they're doing anything wrong. They're trying to ensure their own survival. They can justify their reasons for doing things. Not that I'm saying anything Negan did back then was good. But when you look at Rick and his group and how he's led that group, he's made a lot of decisions that have hurt other people, too. Right? And he's taken the position of "What I'm going to protect my own at all costs." And so some of those

positions haven't always been the best. Right? Because you're not looking at the society as a whole. And how do we all come back together to ensure we all survive? It's survival of the fittest. And I think, even in what we do every day, that's not a good position to take. We're all on this planet together, right? We only get one spin around and we should be figuring out how to make it work together. And so I'm not saying that, you know, Rick and Negan could have been best friends at the beginning, but they certainly at least... Well, Rick's gone now. Spoilers for everybody. Sorry, but Negan has come around. And he's seen that there are different ways to do things. And, you know, where he was a bad guy before, he certainly is changed. But he's still got a lot of that past history to overcome and to convince other people that he's a good guy. And I think, you know, decisions that we make in today's life, sometimes they could hurt other people and sometimes we have to back up and prove to them that, no, we are good people and we're on the same team and we have to move things forward. So, yeah, I guess that was a long winded way of saying that's one of the big things that I see, you know, and also just trying to figure out how to get people connected and to lead them forward. Right? Well, where are we going to live? What decisions do we have to make in order to survive? It's a big deal when you have to have somebody kind of rise up into that position. Right? And figure out, well, how do I get people to follow me and how to

ensure it's the right stuff and that you can take away to what we do every day.

BETH: [00:36:53] We've got teams of people. And right now in the middle of a pandemic, we start having all of these internal conversations and we're meeting with our teams and how are you doing? And I know you're scared and how do I help you get through this? And at the same time, as a leader, you have to be assertive and you have to be confident. You can't be overconfident. But you also have to be willing to show vulnerability. Right? And so you have to say, listen, I don't know and I'm scared and we're going to figure this out. And so when I look back at The Walking Dead, there were plenty of moments where it was just a fight, fight, fight, it's us or them. And then other moments where you see the actual leaders, whether it's Rick or Maggie or someone else, take a step back and go, wait a minute, I can't destroy you so I can survive. I have to figure out how you and I can connect. And I have to tell you that I'm scared and that we're going to figure this out and it's not going to be easy, but we can figure it out. We're going to leave behind a wall or, hey, we're going to live at home during a pandemic and never be able to go outside. But we can figure it out. Right, and we can make it we can make it work.

SALLY: [00:38:12] That's certainly one of take-aways from the show. You have a genesis of morality and ethics in new communities. But what happens when

diplomacy fails? Establishing and building trust in a situation that puts your life on the line. The effect of isolation on people. All of those, I think, are things that we can apply, like you said, to our daily lives, like how is it when someone is isolated, whether it's in society or at work or whatever, how does that make them interpret the world? How does it make them feel? How does it make them act differently than perhaps someone else who has a community or a lifeline supporting them? You know, obviously, lots of courage involved in The Walking Dead. There's been lots of episodes where I'm like, I don't know if I could do that. But that idea that, you know, my community, my people need me to do this and I'm going to put my life on the line for it, that kind of commitment we don't necessarily put in life and death terms in our day to day. When you take it out into a sci-fi scenario like that, you kind of have to think it through that way. And I think that's really an important academic exercise, is to where does your courage, where does your commitment to these ideals lie. Right? And where then it becomes maybe a hostile act versus a protective act.

BETH: [00:39:57] Right.

SALLY: [00:39:58] So, in short, I love it. But one of the things that you did say, especially about Negan, is forgiveness - like that idea that maybe he's different now, but how do we get from where he was a prisoner. He was a he was a reviled person. He was some-

one they wanted to kill, to someone we're going to....Are we going to accept him in? Are we going to take him as one of our own? How do you get from one place to another in several years?

BETH: [00:40:25] Well, if you're the Walking Dead, you have a time jump that jumps ahead for six years. But, yeah, yeah, I think you're absolutely right. And some of it is just, obviously, it takes time. It takes time to re-establish trust and re-establish communications and to build that up again. But, you know, if you're the person who has been wronged and you're not open to having those conversations and open to having communications and even listening, Negan would still be in a jail cell. Right? I mean, he wouldn't get out because, you know, he had to grow. Granted, he was in a jail cell but he found his humanity again. And even on the other side, you're not in the prison but you've got to maintain your humanity and your kindness and your hope with everything that goes on during a pandemic and everything like that. I never lose that part of myself, that humanity, which love for other people. I'm sure there's plenty out there that would say, "Man that Beth. She's gone crazy." And there are moments I have. But I also have to check myself and say, wait a minute, hang on for a second. That was a mistake or that wasn't communicated appropriately or hey, I've got team members that are now fully remote and trying to make it in every day, day-to-day life and we can't meet in person. How do I give

them the support and the encouragement and the time that they need to continue to grow, even though things are going a million miles a minute and we never know what's going to happen next and there's so much going on and so much of who we are is, well, we're humans, right? So we have a lot of emotions and we have a lot of things that go on in our own heads. And sometimes it's just a matter of reaching out to somebody else and saying, hey, let's connect, let's talk. I'm not going to just stick you in a jail cell and ignore you for a couple of years and hope you get better. Let me help you figure out how to get better. And it takes a lot of strength and courage, I think sometimes to say those things and to be willing to be vulnerable and show that to somebody else, because sometimes you don't know what they're going to do. But I think we have to as leaders, as people in this community, in the society, we have to say, hey, I'm the same as you. I'm vulnerable. I'm going through all of this stuff, too. Let's not grab a baseball bat wrapped in barbed wire and beat each other up. Let's have a conversation.

SALLY: [00:43:58] What I think on the flip side of that, too, you've got "cancel culture" like, OK, this person has committed a horrible act. You're done. And the idea that once they say they're sorry, everything's all forgiven and I think we're missing some of the nuance in there is how do you earn redemption? How do you earn that forgiveness? And maybe forgiveness is something we give freely,

but then maybe being fully integrated back in requires some sort of contrition, some sort of meaningful, over-time action that shows that you are contrite and sorry. So that's something that we really are wrestling with as a people, as a community, is do we just when we have the Negans of the world and obviously not literally, but when someone screws up pretty dramatically in entertainment, in industry, and whatever and we decide that we're not accepting that behavior, is it forever? Is there a path to forgiveness? What does that look like? And I think we really haven't spent a lot of time in that gray space between "your canceled" and "you're back in with the community."

BETH: [00:45:14] Yeah, yeah. No, I think that's a great point. And, you know, I've had to have personal conversations, obviously, in my own head where because of my past life, I worked so hard to forgive past actions, past harms, and things like that. It's not always easy because, I again, I keep saying I'm human, which I am, and the human part of me is still mad. It's still mad. It's still hurt. It still has so many different conflicting emotions going on. But at the same time, I have to separate forgiveness from forgetting, right? I'm never going to forget, but I can forgive and I can figure out how to take what happened, learn from it, teach other people what to do and what not to do, and move on. And to your point, it can't just be canceled and we're going to pretend like it never happened because history is history.

It happened. So, it doesn't make it right. But it does mean that we have to pay attention. We have to look at the sins of the past, the things that weren't quite correct, and figure out how they got to be that way to ensure that they don't happen again. And so I worry a lot about the cancel culture concept that, you know, I just don't want to see us as a society pushing those things under the rug and thinking, well, if it's not there anymore, I don't have to worry about it.

SALLY: [00:47:00] Right. And you learn from it if you're just deleting it. Yeah, it's something I struggle with, too, because I'm also one who I'm not... well, if you are someone who's committed horrible acts, I can't watch your movie in good conscience. I'm not one of those people who can just right things really easily. Same with music, which has been really hard because there's some hits out there that I would like to listen to, but I morally feel like I can't. And it's figuring out what those people need to do. I feel like forgiveness is something we should give and it's a gift to ourselves more than anything else.

BETH: [00:47:38] Yes.

SALLY: [00:47:40] Making it all OK again is a different thing. That requires some education. Some learning. Some I guess evidence or behavior that shows that, "Okay. I learned from that moment, I'm truly sorry and I'm trying to move the needle and maybe I won't get back to where I was, but I want to do better."

SALLY: [00:48:24] But in the world of The Walking Dead... So that's the thing I kind of wanted to tie these two together with. I mean, have you always been a sci-fi fan or fantasy or fantasy fiction, whatever you want to call it?

BETH: [00:48:39] Yeah, actually, I mean, way back. Right. I loved William Shatner and Star

life stuff. And for me, I don't. I'd rather go completely not real life, immerse myself into time lords and zombies and things that aren't what we deal with every day. Speaking of Covid and pandemic's and stuff and sci-fi geekiness, there, I don't know if you ever watched the show called The Dead Zone of Anthony Michael Hall.

I feel like forgiveness is something we should give and it's a gift to ourselves more than anything else. Making it all OK again is a different thing. That requires some education. Some learning.

Trek. Watched Star Trek forever. Watched the first parts of Star Wars, with Mark Hamill and Carrie Fisher and all that stuff. And so, yeah, I mean, I can't remember a time. I'm old school, Battlestar Galactica. I love it. So, yeah, I guess I've always been a total sci-fi geek and because for me, I know a lot of people like watching reality shows or, you know, that Tiger King thing.

SALLY: [00:49:29] Okay! That's profiling that you would bring that up to me since I live in Oklahoma.

BETH: [00:49:36] But you know, they like more of like the real

SALLY: [00:50:12] It was it was sort of like a reboot of Twilight Zone, wasn't it?

BETH: [00:50:18] Yes. Yeah, yeah. And he's got these special mind powers and things like that. And anyways, one of his episodes, it was probably, gosh, 10 years ago, my husband and I were re-watching it the other day and all of a sudden all of these kids get sick in this elementary school and he sees it right, because he can see the future and they the kids start getting sick and in real life in the show and they're getting them to the hospital and they're trying to diagnose them. Well, lo and

behold, what did they have? They had Covid. And so, yeah, I kid you not. So they're talking about Covid, and about the Ebola virus, and how to make vaccine to help all of these folks. And so, ironically enough, you know, I watch this thing and we're in the midst of a pandemic. And I'm like, how? How? How did this happen? Did we just name the virus after this? It's like, how did this come to be? So we all get so busy doing stuff right. And you and you're reading things on Facebook and Twitter and Instagram and people giving all of their own opinions. And actually sci-fi forced me to actually pay more attention to the virus that was going on. And I did my own research into the history of Covid and things like that. And it was actually sci-fi. Sci-fi helped me because it made me actually pay more attention to the actual facts of the virus that we're currently dealing with and that, yeah, it's scary. But Lord only knows we've had viruses throughout history that human beings have been able to overcome with time and with vaccines and things like that. So yeah. So sci-fi, all that to say sci-fi has always been a part of my life. And sometimes you can pull really great things from it and sometimes you just learn that if you're being chased by a zombie, what to do.

SALLY: [00:52:33] So that makes me think of two things. Number one, I also have been doing all sorts of sci-fi apocalyptic stuff during the pandemic. I don't know why it makes me feel better, but it's been like lots of zombies,

Earth-killing asteroids, lots of reading *The Plague* by Camus. I don't know why it's making me deal with it better. My husband thinks it's perverse, but that's what I do. Second, one of the things I think that sci-fi does really well is it takes us out of our own prejudices and preconceived notions. Like if you are going to tell the story of two warring factions in real life, you and I would bring our own political perspectives, our own social norms, and the things that we build around us to get through a regular day with us to that story. Whereas if you take someone completely out of it and put them in a world that they're unfamiliar with, you kind of take away a lot of their armor for the messages and the conflict you're going to create for them. And I think that that's been actually really helpful.

BETH: [00:53:42] Yeah, yeah.

SALLY: [00:53:44] It certainly helps me think about things in multiple ways when maybe I think I have already figured out. The other thing I would say is the one that I discovered during the pandemic that I absolutely loved was *Watchmen*. Did you get to see that?

[00:54:00] No, I have not seen that.

[00:54:02] I'm going to recommend that one for you. You'll love it. It deals with some sort of apocalyptic overtones. It's definitely got some superhero vibes going on, but it takes place in Tulsa, Oklahoma. So not the Tiger King. It does have to do with the after-

math of the Tulsa race massacre, which we still are grappling with here. It's a phenomenal piece and I don't think they're going to any more seasons. It's just one done.

BETH: [00:54:29] Oh, OK. OK, I'll check it out. Yeah, I'm running out of things to watch. So although *The Walking Dead* does come back in 20 days, so...

SALLY: [00:54:39] I've got to get caught up. Well maybe that means that my streaming service will catch up. So I always give everyone opportunity. Anything else you want to add, any other topics of any other shows or media that you think have been helpful?

BETH: [00:55:00] No, no, I can't think of anything. I mean, Lord only knows I think we've all, like, watched so much on TV and because we're so limited with what we can do and who we can see. And I think Brian asked me one day, my husband, I was flipping through Netflix or something, trying to find something. I couldn't figure out what I wanted to watch. And he looked at me and he's like, "Have you watched all of Netflix? What's happening?" And I'm like, well, maybe. But no, no. I mean, with everything that's going on right now, the one thing that I like to tell my teams and my family and anybody else who cares to listen to me, is it's stressful. I mean, humans weren't meant for this, right? We weren't meant to be locked in in our house by ourselves. And sequestered and not having human contact and Lord only knows I feel sad for children who don't

have the ability to connect with other young folks. And we can get so busy and so immersed in our work. You know, some of us, work is like going a million miles a minute. And I know for others it's not, right? Things are very slow and there's so much uncertainty no matter what way you look. We have to remember that whether you decompress by watching sci-fi shows or you like to lift weights or go for a walk or just play with your dogs or whatever the case may be, it is vitally important that we step away and we take a mental health break and we check in on ourselves.

BETH: [00:57:10] I do my best to check in on my teams and my other partners as often as I can to make sure that they're doing OK. Can I do anything? Things like that. But when I don't myself step back and say, wait a minute, I need to take a mental health break and I need to take care of me, that's a problem. And then I see the impact that has on other people. Because then if I'm too stressed and I'm too tense and too snippy, other people are going to feel that. And so it's also incumbent on myself that while I'm looking out for other people and trying to keep all these things moving, that I have to take care of myself. And I think any leader has to realize that, yeah, it's about the people that you're supporting and helping to grow and things like that, but, man, if you don't take a few minutes to check on yourself, you can suffer. And I think that then has a negative impact on

others.

SALLY: [00:58:22] You really need to get back to the plane because that's when the stewards tell you have to put your mask on first before you help others.

BETH: [00:58:30] There's no one around here going, "Beth, put

when I came back, I was revitalized. I was ready to go and dive back in.

SALLY: [00:59:20] The world kept spinning.


BETH: [00:59:22] Yes, it did. It did. Nobody broke anything. It was good.

And I think any leader has to realize that, yeah, it's about the people that you're supporting and helping to grow and things like that, but, man, if you don't take a few minutes to check on yourself, you can suffer.

your mask on." You know what? I'm wearing a regular mask all the time, but yeah. Yeah, it's really tough. And, you know, I went a million miles a minute all year last year trying to keep up with things. And I can tell you we threw caution to the wind and we decided to go on vacation the first week of December and get on a plane. And it was the most amazing vacation I've probably had in a very long time because I was forced to relax. I thought about myself, my husband, that was it. And then

SALLY: [00:59:27] It will be easier next time, right?

BETH: [00:59:28] Yes. Yes.

SALLY: [00:59:31] Well, we can wrap this up. What I'd love to do is have maybe you and I both give our sci-fi recs. We can do that as a separate little end piece, because I have some books that I think you would love, too, called the Lady Astronaut Series. You would love them. I really appreciate you doing this. 



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