

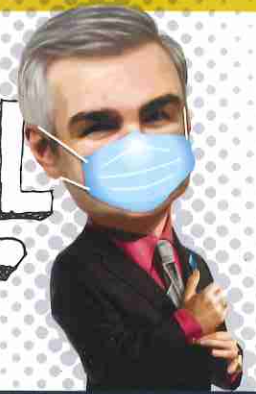
Jan/Feb 2021

MARC WHITEHEAD & ASSOCIATES
ATTORNEYS AT LAW, LLP
A NATIONAL DISABILITY CLAIMS LAW FIRM

Vol. 7

Issue: 01

THE NEWSLETTER YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR... Successful Barrister



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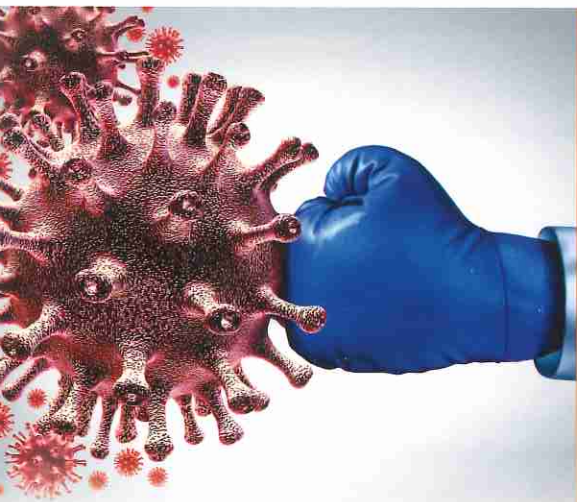
2021 HAPPY NEW YEAR

2021 has finally arrived!

Time to put the past behind us and move forward anew.

Before you let go of the past, take the time to learn from the last year. Hopefully this issue provides some inspiration for reflection on the trials and tribulations of 2020.

After your reflection, go download and listen to my new podcast with PILMMA, **Grow Your Law Firm** - Details on page 7. And send me those disability referrals (send via e-mail to Marc@marcwhitehead.com). I'm still your go-to for those! ☺



MARC WHITEHEAD
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How Covid Helped You Build a Better Practice!

The coronavirus pandemic is a pressure test for law firms. Firms with good technology and processes have fared well. Those that did not failed the pressure test and are either suffering or going out of business. Hopefully everyone got a wakeup call and started fixing their issues or are finding innovative ways to absorb this disruption.

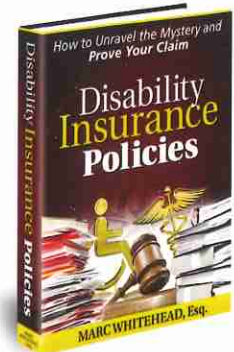
How will the pandemic reshape the legal environment over the next few years?

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FEATURE BOOK



Call Us For a Free Copy of Marc's Latest Book!

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What Doesn't Kill You Makes You Stronger

While some details are still hazy, Scott Galloway author of *Post Corona - From Crisis to Opportunity*, argues two points are already abundantly clear about the pandemic:

FIRST, the pandemic's most enduring impact will be as an accelerant. While it will initiate some changes and alter the direction of some trends, the pandemic's primary effect has been to accelerate dynamics already present in society. In other words, trends that were already underway in the economy have accelerated. The pandemic has already

helped us pack 10 years' worth of growth into 12 months.

SECOND, in any crisis there is opportunity. The greater and more disruptive the crisis, the greater the opportunities. Pandemics, wars, depressions — these shocks are painful, but the times that follow are often among the most productive in human history. The generations that endure and observe the pain are best prepared for the fight.

Galloway identified 5 trends that he predicts will come from the pandemic. Three of which I thought were relevant to the legal industry as follows:

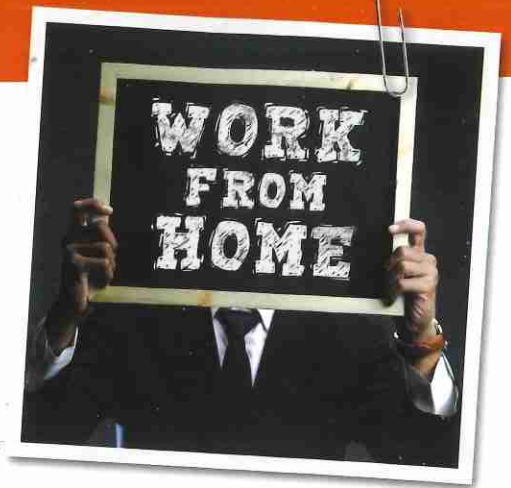
#1 The strong will get stronger

Despite Covid, capital markets have performed strongly in 2020 and so did the largest companies. There will be an inevitable culling of weaker firms during the pandemic, but post-Covid today's strongest firms will continue to go from strength to strength. The strongest firms will keep getting stronger. In other words, Darwinism at its finest. And if you're reading this newsletter, it's because you either have a strong firm or you have strong aspirations to get there so we are all good here.

#2 Industry disruptions will happen

Pre-pandemic, many in the legal industry generated unearned margins — dramatic increases in price with no accompanying increase in value or innovation. The legal industry has now become ripe for disruption as a result of the pandemic. Look for many more industry disruptions to happen post-pandemic which will drive down profit margins and increase the need for efficiencies. Our clients are also demanding more from us and will quickly kick you to the curb if you're not providing value or innovation and go find someone who will.

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#3

Education will change quickly.....

Education is ripe for disruption, and it looks like Covid-19 will bring about permanent changes for the better. It is already clear that online legal learning is here to stay and it brings about opportunities for those ready to take advantage.

In my own personal observations, I have found that remote work has proven to be effective. It has eliminated wasted time in commutes and long lunches. Our law firm is no longer confined to the size of our office space. We have access to a wider talent pool since we are not limited to hiring people that need to live near our office, and frequently we have found people willing to work for less money if they can work from home.

Attitudes of clients have changed as well. Signing up clients remotely is now the norm saving time not only for them but for you. This has allowed us to expand our geographic market. Clients simply don't care if you are next door or not. Again, if you stick with what you believe to be tried and true, another firm is going to (remotely) snatch your client away.

In terms of actually doing the work, remote court hearings and depositions have made our work quicker, cheaper and faster. No more wasted time traveling downtown or out of town for a 5-minute hearing. The same is true for depositions and other meetings.

In terms of developing new clients, for the most part, demand for legal services has not gone away and new opportunities have arisen. Marketing opportunities have expanded as geographic boundaries have been broken down and the internet is still the cheapest marketing channel available.

As an old codger, I hate change. I want to get back to being with people and rekindling the personal relationships. I am confident we will. However, we can't overlook the progress made because of the pandemic. Industry disruptions and failures are inevitable, but they have always been the price of progress. **Look for the post-pandemic economy to boom and either be ready to ride that wave to a brighter future or fade into oblivion like a Neanderthal.** ☺

Who Moved My F-ing Cheese?



SELINA VALDEZ
ASSOCIATE ATTORNEY

Let's be honest, we all know who did it. The same person who makes my blood pressure go up from time to time, but I guess when it is your maze we are running around in you

can move the damn cheese.

My cheese got moved early last year when I found out (*pre-Zoom days*) we were changing client management systems. **"We are doing what?!"** Put the cheese down and step away! Which conference did you go to this time that gave you this idea? Naturally I put on my poker face and hoped maybe the idea would fade... NOT! Do you know how long it took me to write procedure manuals for the last system and now you want to change it? Ugh. It is safe to say I was the Hem and Haw characters from the book for a while, doing my best to pressure test this idea. Sure enough, the month of May rolled around and here comes this fancy cloud-based crap with so many fields it felt like a game of 52-card pickup. It was probably a good thing we were all on Zoom so no one could hear what I actually said.

Times have changed though, and I stand corrected. Was it Hem or Haw that got smart and decided to put back on

their sneakers and tracksuit and get back into the maze? I like to think of myself as that person because once I realized that my cheese was gone, the soft gooey deliciousness that was our old system, I knew if I wanted to keep eating I was going to have to get back in the maze.

After what felt like a prison sentence worth of training videos and test cases, I found my stride and could smell the next cheese station. Naturally I knew the request was coming – update the manual.



You better believe I was ready. I pulled out my map of this new f-ing maze, beat down some doors, and dusted off my Microsoft styles skillset. Let's get this done. Nobody told me this maze came straight out of Inception and one CMS was like four different ones. Try getting people to describe their processes to you over Zoom. I don't recommend it. Shout out to anyone who started a new job during our Zoom era, you're the true MVP. It might have taken me three months, but the manual is on point. Maybe SOMEBODY will bring me an intern so we can make it interactive. Dare. To. Dream.

"A man who views the world the same at 50 as he did at 20 has wasted 30 years of his life."

– Muhammad Ali

Who knows what prompted the change? Maybe my survival instinct kicked in just like Sniff & Scurry's did. Sniff & Scurry knew there was cheese at the station, but they were wise enough to not take it for granted. As I look around at our team thriving with the new system, I realize it is a lot easier to be Sniff & Scurry from the book than it is to be Hem & Haw – probably better for my blood pressure too.



For now, I reserve my right to make facial expressions at future ideas, but I might be a little more open to them. ☺

THE POWER OF HABIT



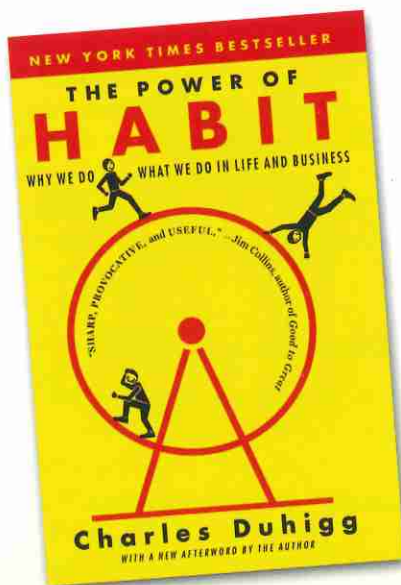
It's another new year and we're probably all busy lying to ourselves about our resolutions (*I have literally already failed dry January...*). In this latest

installation of "Non-fiction Books You Should **Probably** Read" I'm going to give you some actual know-how to help break old habits and create new, hopefully healthier, habits.

In **The Power of Habit**, Charles Duhigg discusses what he calls the "Habit Loop." It consists of three parts: a cue, a routine, and a reward. The cue is a trigger that fires up your brain and tells your body it's time to perform a certain action. This is very much akin to Pavlov's dog drooling when the dinner bell was rung. The routine portion is the actual action or habit you are trying to build such as working out in the morning, drinking less alcohol, or clearing off

your desk at the end of the workday. Finally, the reward is pretty self-explanatory, the hit of dopamine after pressing the lever, you lab rat. Duhigg states that eventually the "cue and reward become neurologically intertwined until a sense of craving emerges." Essentially, after a while, your

brain will anticipate the reward that comes after your daily workout and will start craving the workout itself.



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Once you can identify cues and rewards that are successful for you, you can use them as tools to re-shape and re-structure your bad habits. For example, when I get home

from work the first thing I do is change out of my work clothes and get a glass of my favorite wine.

The cue for me is getting home and this habit helps me shift from "work mode" to "relax mode." However, as you can imagine, a craving for wine is not exactly healthy. So,

I keep the cue of getting home from work and changing clothes, and



I keep the reward of shifting to a relaxed state, and instead of the wine I substitute tea.

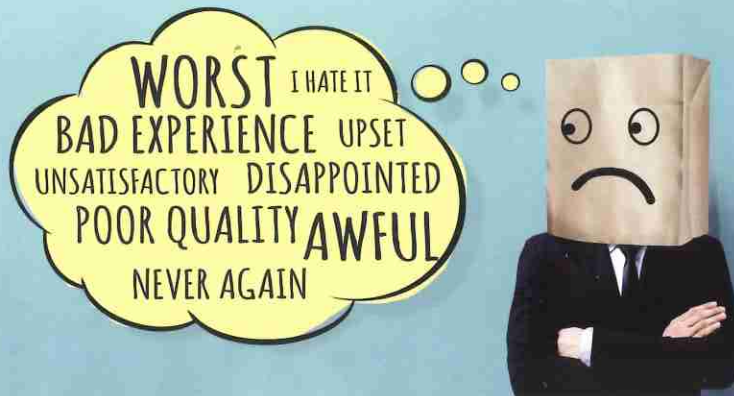
It obviously takes some work to make the change but eventually my brain will re-wire itself to crave the tea rather than the wine. Duhigg notes that this process works best for people who actually believe in what they are doing and have a system of accountability.



Your brain inherently tries to turn everything into a routine or habit because routines and habits take significantly less brain power and energy to perform. If you can learn to harness your brain's tendency to do so and take advantage of it in order to create new and healthy habits, your waistline won't know what hit it. Identify your cue, set up your reward and put that big ole brain of yours to work.

Cheers, Nerds. ☺

Leveraging the (Sh*tty) PAST to Have a BETTER FUTURE



NATALIE
HIGHTOWER
MARKETING & INTAKE
DIRECTOR

2020 is over. Done. Never coming back.

That's an easy statement to write, but not an easy one to *feel*. People had to be let go from their jobs in 2020.

Investments that seemed like a good idea in 2019 turned out to be ill-timed. It's understandable that many of us (*myself included*) feel PTSD from the series of unfortunate events that unfolded last year.

So what can you do when life sends you a curveball when you weren't expecting it? You can either drown your sorrows in another glass of wine (*my consolation of choice*) or you can learn from them.

Let's unpack a few examples.

1 Your Star Employee Leaves You

I wanted to curl up in the fetal position when my intake manager, who had been with the firm a really long time, sent me her resignation. She was the star employee I bragged about all the time. She was warm, caring and compassionate. All the intake specialists felt comfortable and at ease with her. She knew our law practices inside and out and I never thought twice about how the

department was managed because I knew she *had it*. What the heck was I going to do?

Marc was so calm when I told him the news. *"It's going to be okay. This is a good opportunity."*

And it was. This forced us to re-evaluate our processes and department hierarchical structure. Her strengths covered a lot of weaknesses brought to light after her departure. And though we ultimately didn't replace her exact role, the opportunity to hire new employees with fresh perspectives is always invaluable to the firm.

2 Dealing with the Google Gods

2019 was a rough year for me professionally. One of Google's infamous algorithm changes was not kind to us and many keywords we normally ranked well for plummeted. Website traffic and lead volume were down accordingly. Everyone knows you can't press a magic button to reset it all in Google so I was in panic mode with our SEO partner trying to figure out what to do to fix it and fix it **now**.

Ultimately with some strategic content fixes and a bit of dumb luck with yet another algorithm update, we bounced back stronger than ever.

The lessons learned:

- How can we scale business without being reliant on Google? The success of the firm cannot be entirely dependent on the whims of this faceless beast. We are working on a plan to maintain (*if not grow*) business should Google pull the rug out from under us again.

- Continuing education is not best practice, it's essential practice. I'm blessed to have an amazing SEO agency I trust and who gets in the weeds with me to fix any problem we have. They might not be around next time. I have to stay ahead of the curve with the latest and greatest marketing trends and best practice.

3 Prepare for Tomorrow, Today

Years ago I started vetting new CRM and phone technology for the firm, all of which were cloud-based systems. Being in Houston, the pitch was always *"If there's another hurricane you can pack up your firm, evacuate to Dallas and carry on business as usual"*.

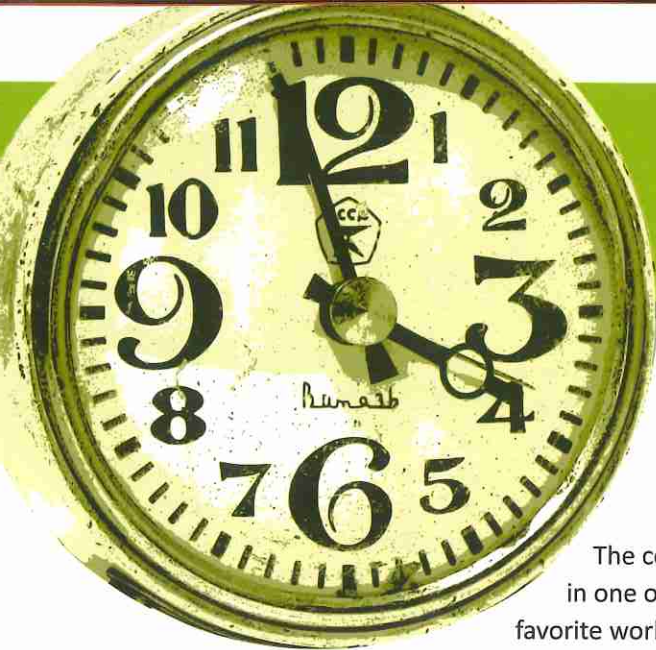
We were in the middle of the CRM implementation when the pandemic arrived, forcing us to jam on the gas to get it finished and get all employees set up from home. I shudder to think about where we would be had we not been that far along in upgrading our systems.

"Be yourself; everyone else is taken"

– Oscar Wilde

The moral of the story? Never be complacent in your business. The world is constantly evolving and it's good to know what else is out there to make life easier, better, faster and more efficient.

And more profitable. Because who doesn't want more money? 😊



EMBRACING TIME UNDER TENSION

The coach in one of my favorite workout

videos likes to say “time under tension” when she is asking us to hold a squat for the umpteenth second. Her theory is that you do not get “gains, bro” by going to the gym once or even just



DIANA SINGSON
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

by consistently hanging out by the treadmill at the gym. “Gains” (to use millennial terminology) can be attained only by consistently doing the difficult things. Such a theory may be unpopular, and I would not blame you if you decided to stop reading, especially after the year that was 2020. However, I encourage you to consider that growth and success can only be obtained by identifying, leaning into, and learning from those times under tension.



Name It to Tame It....

In my short tenure with the Firm, I have heard Marc repeatedly say, “name it then tame it.” I would like to offer the slight edit of “Name It to Tame It.”

When going through a difficult season, the initial reaction is to resist it. Common tactical solutions include: the blame game, the “ignore it and it will go away” game, and the “let’s find a new distraction and/or indulge in bad habits like Netflix binging so I can pretend this doesn’t exist” game.

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Naming whatever you are going through is important because **acknowledging the correct problem shifts mindset.** And the right mindset switches the game to an offensive one.

So name that problem, issue, difficult relationship, or conflict by staring it down.

....Then Lean Into It

I have spent my career growing small businesses, particularly startups. Every business, every relationship goes through a difficult season. But startups seem to be particularly fraught with challenges. The tendency is always to rush through the difficulty and get to the “other side,” whether that was into a target number, profitability, or operational equipment. During one such season, I asked our management team to “lean into” what we were going through, rather than to just rush through it.

The usual reaction to change is to ignore it...then to resist it. **Power comes when you lean into the challenge.**

Leaning in is the key that unlocks creative problem solving and tenacity, rather than paralysis and defeat.

...But Do Not Romanticize the Past

Inevitably, the difficult phase will end. Even 2020 eventually came to a close! All uphill have a corresponding downhill. With the correct perspective, there exists no modern Sisyphus perpetually rolling a boulder uphill. When you do eventually make it to “the other side,” there will be a tendency to romanticize the season you left.

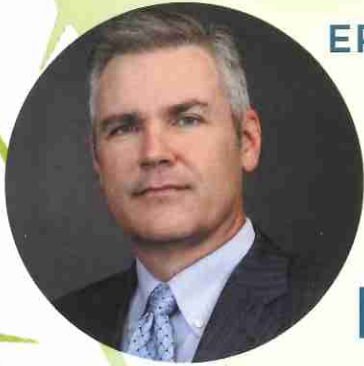
Don’t.

Hard-changed habits easily backslide into today when we look back with rose-colored glasses. Rewriting the past to only remember the good will negate the “gains” achieved by time under tension.

Whether you are creating diamonds, a law firm, or muscles, time under tension is a requisite step in the process of attaining the end product. Don’t bypass the growth opportunities available in the rush to get somewhere else.

The gains are worth it. ☺

Out Now!



EPISODE 60:

How Hiring a Business Coach Can Benefit Your Firm & Your Life

MARC WHITEHEAD

EPISODE 60

Growth • Profit • Freedom



"I know God will not give me anything I can't handle. I just wish He didn't trust me so much."

- Mother Teresa

2020 showing 2021 around the workplace



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Lawyers Need a Laugh

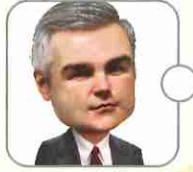
2020 wasn't all that bad.
We learned many new things from 2020 and the pandemic that we will carry for the rest of our lives.

Correctly match the attorney with their nugget of wisdom and email marc@marcwhitehead.com and we will send you a prize!



On average, a Panda feeds for approximately 12 hours per day. This is the same as an adult at home under quarantine, which is why we call it a "Pandemic"

MARC



"Don't forget to change out of your day pajamas."

MADISON



"If you can throw money at it and make it go away, you don't have a problem - you have a situation."

DIANA



"Forget the saying 'till death do us part.' We should change traditional marriage vows to read 'may quarantine not do us part.'"

SELINA



"No one cares how many books you read during quarantine. Literally no one."

DISABILITY & INSURANCE DENIALS



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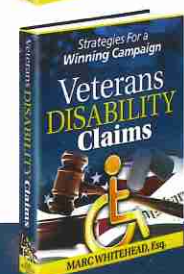
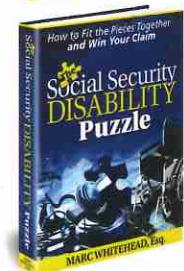
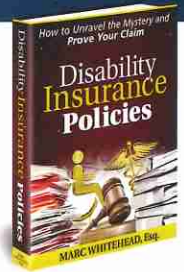
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