

Summer 2021

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

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THE NEWSLETTER
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hello
Summer

Summer is here
and Covid is exiting
stage left.

Now is the perfect time to de-stress after a particularly tumultuous year. Vacation is the obvious answer, but if that's not in the cards for you then in this issue you can find plenty of other ideas to de-stress year round from the brilliant people I employ.

Refer me a long-term disability claim, and you might be able to de-stress by depositing a nice referral fee check after the claim is successfully closed out. ☺

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PLANNING THE GREATEST VACATION EVER!



MARC WHITEHEAD
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With the end in sight of the Covid 19 pandemic, many of us are thinking about getting back to real vacations this summer. With that, I would encourage all of you to conduct a similar exercise I just did in my **Atticus DYM (Dominate Your Market) program - planning the perfect vacation.** See the Atticus worksheet at the end of the article.

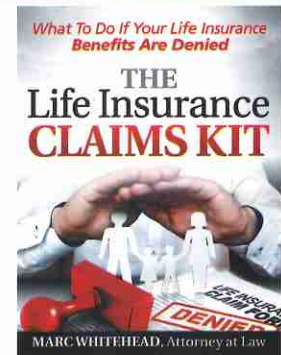
One of the tenants of Atticus is we should take 175 days off during the year to recharge our batteries. While it may sound daunting, if you think about it you have 52 weekends a year so there's 104 days right there. That means we just need to find another 60 to 70 days and we will be there.



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FEATURE BOOK



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

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But Marc, how in the world could I take that much time off and still have a practice when I come back?

That's a good question, but I think I found the answer. While reading the book *Traction*, I learned the concept that we, as leaders of our business, are to be the Visionary. All Visionaries need what *Traction* calls an Integrator. The Integrator is the person who gets the stuff done, who is in charge, who makes sure the Visionary's vision comes to fruition. The other side benefit of having an Integrator in your office is the Integrator can keep your business running when you're not around. So you get to take a long vacation... **a loooong, well-deserved vacation.**

In the business world, more specifically, the Integrator is frequently referred to as the Chief Operation Officer. The Visionary, by contrast, is the Chief Executive Officer. I made the decision last year my firm needed a Chief Operating Officer. But without any real experience in the business world other than as a lawyer, I didn't have a clear idea about duties and responsibilities of a Chief Operating Officer. Therefore, the first thing I needed to do was to sit down and design the job from my perspective as the Visionary.

I found a neat little trick that if you go to Indeed.com and dig around deep enough into their website, they have job descriptions for almost any position. I've done this several times in the past with designing other types of jobs, so leveraging that habit I found a job description for Chief Operating Officer. The job descriptions I read weren't exactly what I needed for our industry, but it was a good place to start.

The next thing I did was try to figure out where you might find such a person. After digging around in Google, I found an organization out there called the Association of Legal Administrators (ALA). And lo and behold, right there on the website, they had a job description for Chief Operating Officer. They termed it as a legal administrator, which in my mind is basically close to the same thing.

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From these two sources I was able to cobble together what I thought was a really great job description for COO of the law firm. It went something like this:

JOB SUMMARY

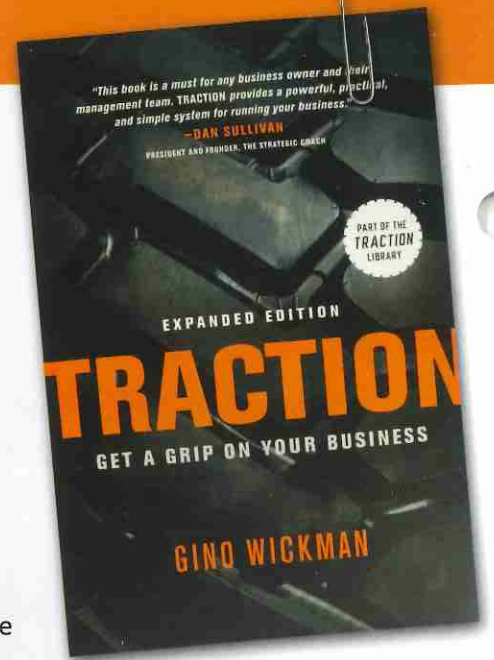
COO shall be tasked to lead the staff and the operations of the law firm including:

- Daily Management & Leadership
- Hiring, Staffing & Training
- Regulatory Compliance & Insurance
- Quality Control
- Systems, Processes & Technology
- Finances

JOB REQUIREMENTS

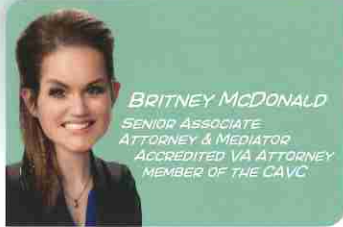
COO shall have the following skills:

- **Knowledge**
 - Knowledge of professional services organizations
 - Experience managing business operations
 - Working knowledge of CRM software systems
- **Skills and Abilities**
 - Can identify and analyze complex issues and problems in management areas, and recommend and implement solutions
 - Can manage office functions economically and efficiently, organize work, establish priorities, maintain good interpersonal relations and communications with lawyers and support staff
 - Displays excellent supervisory and leadership skills
 - Demonstrates willingness and ability to delegate
- **Education**
 - Graduation from a recognized college or university with major coursework in business administration, finance, human resources, technology, marketing or comparable work experience and/or professional certifications such as Certified Legal Manager (CLMSM)



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NO VACATION NATION



BRITNEY McDONALD
SENIOR ASSOCIATE
ATTORNEY & MEDIATOR
ACCREDITED VA ATTORNEY
MEMBER OF THE CAVC

Summer is upon us. Kids across the nation are out of school and riding their bikes across your driveway as you sit in front of a computer. As the days are brighter & longer, the pull to be outside or just

disconnected from your office grows. Vacation is good for the soul—most people can agree with this sentiment. Since it is such a widely accepted concept, you'd think more people actually took it, right?

AMERICA NEEDS TO REEVALUATE ITS APPROACH.

Our country has been called “*no vacation nation*” by our overseas counterparts. For example, according to the Center for Economic and Policy Research, the European Union requires member countries to grant workers at least 20 working days of paid vacation; but many countries go far beyond this minimal requirement, granting workers several paid holidays as well. France requires at least 30 days of paid vacation outside of paid holidays and other members of the Union are a close second at 28 days paid. America—our bustling economy with between 55-60%+ percent of population employed in the past 5 years—has no mandated paid time off. While most employers gracefully do offer paid time off, the general atmosphere around vacation in our country is that it's not a priority and even to many, makes employees taking it appear less committed. Americans have internalized this attitude.

While 90% of full-time employees and 40% of part-time employees have some degree of paid vacation, it's unsurprising given our ideals that these employees don't use it all, and if they do, they take work with them on their time off.



Americans have developed this (un)truth that if you're not working, you are replaceable. This attitude is both mentally and physically taxing for the workforce. People are scared to take time off because it's expensive to live in America and people need their jobs to pay for even the most basic of needs. Owners wonder why their employee turnover is so high. This is true even where those departing individuals were once great teammates and leaders.

DISCONNECTING.

People need to disconnect from even good stress every once in a while. Employees need to perform maintenance on their personal lives to be able to show up as the best and brightest in your building. Giving your employees causal days or offering fun activities during scheduled meetings is helpful to build teamwork and cohesiveness within your walls; however, this does not retune your employees like good time off should. Unfortunately, this and similar activities is all that many employees will get in order to refresh and reset.

*“It's not stress that kills us,
it's our reaction to it.”*

— Hans Selye

HOW BAD IS IT, REALLY?

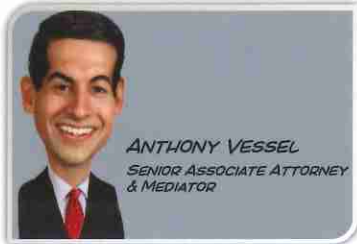
An article from the Washington Post highlighted some of the trends in America surrounding our feeble attempts to disconnect. Headings like “*The guilt factor is real,*” “*Leaving it on the table,*” and “*Short and sweet, apparently*” underline how Americans basically feel judged or judge themselves for not working and fail to utilize their paid time off because of it. One interesting trend mentioned was the predominance of taking “*microvacations.*” As it sounds, mini-vacations to fit in one or two quick activities or just unwind for a short “*long-weekend*” have become the norm here. 72% of those surveyed were taking these 3-day weekend trips. The most disappointing trend you wonder—even those only taking these microvacations never actually unplug, so basically, you are **remote-working** (but hopefully under a palm tree). Stresses like the sheer amount of work upon return to the office prevent us from truly taking a break.

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MEDITATION:

Yes, it's possible to turn off your ever-swirling attorney brain



ANTHONY VESSEL
SENIOR ASSOCIATE ATTORNEY
& MEDIATOR

After, or even in the middle, of a stressful, frustrating, and draining day lawyers can feel like they've given all they can give to their clients. Some days we feel the need to mentally reset,

shed some stress we're carrying and come back to neutral.

Enter meditation, or as the "woke" crowd is calling it these days: mindfulness. Meditation can be simpler (*and harder*) than most people think; however, the mental and overall health benefits speak for themselves. Try these steps, make sure you're somewhere where you can relax into this process, set a timer and give it a go!

1) TAKE A SEAT

Find place to sit that feels calm and quiet to you. Although meditation is one of those things that can be done virtually anywhere, a lot of those who practice have dedicated spots that are peaceful or significant to them.

2) SET A TIME LIMIT

It can be helpful to choose a short time, such as five or 10 minutes, especially for those who are just beginning. Set it and forget it!

3) NOTICE YOUR BODY

You can sit however you like: in a chair with your feet on the floor, you can sit loosely cross-legged, you can kneel—all are fine. Just make sure you are stable and in a position you can stay in for a while comfortably with minimal repositioning and fidgeting.

4) FEEL YOUR BREATH

Follow your breath as it goes in and as it goes out. Breathe slowly, calmly, and deeply. I'm no expert, but I try to picture cool clean air (light blue) entering my lungs, and warm (light red) air being exhaled. I don't know that I've ever been instructed to do it this way, but it helps me keep focus on my breath and picture the transitioning air.

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5) NOTICE WHEN YOUR MIND HAS WANDERED

Inevitably, your attention will leave the breath and wander to other places. When you get around to noticing that your mind has wandered—in a few seconds, a minute, five minutes—simply return your attention to the breath.

6) BE KIND TO YOUR WANDERING MIND

Don't judge yourself or obsess over the content of the thoughts you find yourself lost in. After all, one of the main reasons to meditate is to calm an over-stuffed, racing mind. It's natural for it wander. When it does, notice it, and just come back to your breath.

7) CLOSE WITH KINDNESS

When you're ready, gently open your eyes and lift your gaze. Allow your senses to reconnect with your surroundings. Take a moment and notice any sounds in the environment. Notice how your body feels in that moment. Notice your thoughts and emotions. Slowly reengage with your day.

That's it! Those are the basics to beginning a meditation practice. You go away, you come back, and you try to do it as calmly/kindly to yourself as possible. *Go forth and relax my fellow practitioners.* 😊



Demons Out



MADISON DONALDSON
ASSOCIATE ATTORNEY

This issue we're talking about how to manage your stress levels. There are some standard ideas such as regular exercise, drinking your water,

NOT drinking your alcohol, and meditation which Anthony explores in his article. But here's the thing, I can't sit still long enough to meditate, I hate water and LOVE wine. Exercise I like, but it merely quells my homicidal tendencies. No, those methods are not for me.

What I've found works best for me has been attending regular sessions with a therapist.

Therapy and mental health have historically been taboo and it's time that is changed. I try to talk as openly about my experience with therapy as possible in an attempt to end the stigma. I've seen the same therapist on and off since I was in fifth grade and she has really changed my mental stability for the better (*you're welcome*).

Talk therapy is not just about getting some issues off your chest, although that in and of itself makes therapy worth it. Therapy also helps you develop tools to handle issues the next time they occur. Therapy can give you an alternate perspective on challenges or difficult people and helps you take a more objective look at things. Ultimately, therapists arm you with your own arsenal of tools to employ in order to handle the stressors you experience.

"Success means only doing what you do well, letting somebody else do the rest."

– Goldstein S. Truism

I understand therapy can be expensive. However, these days there are more economical options offered such as video therapy sources. For example, Talkspace offers remote therapy at more affordable prices. People can also find therapy to be intimidating; I completely agree. I break out in hives when I think about meeting a stranger and verbally vomiting all over them. However, I can *promise* you it is worth the initial agony to find someone you can eventually

become comfortable talking

with. Debbie is my homegirl who exorcises all my demons. **Go find you a Debbie. Cheers, Nerds.** 😊



Lawyers Who Lunch



NATALIE
HIGHTOWER
MARKETING & INTAKE
DIRECTOR

“People who work through lunch every day are miserable.”

These were the sage words spoken by The **Successful Barrister** himself when I was dealing with a direct report and her pushback against his directive that all hourly employees are required to clock out for an hour for lunch.

And really, he’s not wrong. Besides the part where working through lunch runs up overtime, people need that time to disengage from work and relax in order to put their best foot forward for the rest of the day.

If you are self-employed or earn a salary, it can be easy to forget that lunch should be a necessity and not a luxury. Believe me, I’ve been there. An 11am conference call runs long and someone has booked my next meeting at 1pm. In the era of Uber Eats and DoorDash, if I don’t have something quick and easy stored in my fridge then I am punching in an order and continuing to work while I wait for my lunch to arrive.

It doesn’t have to be this way. It shouldn’t be this way. Here are some simple tips and ideas to help keep your lunch hour sacred.

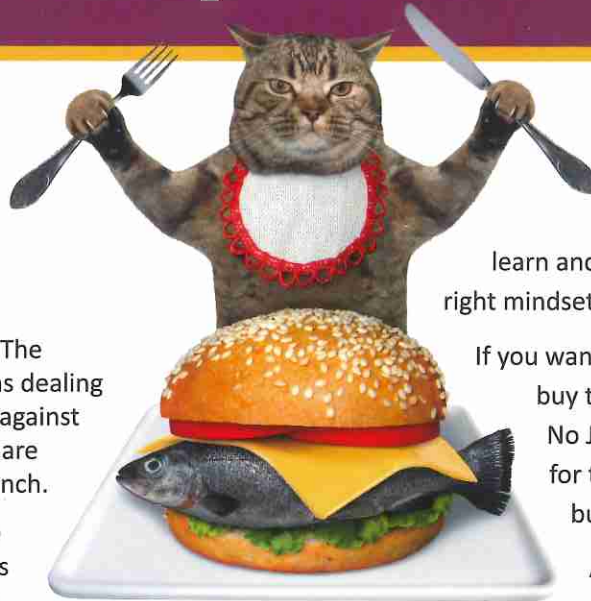
If you think adventure is dangerous, try routine. It’s lethal.”

– Paulo Coelho

Lay off the Lunch and Learns

Lunch and learns seem so appealing and efficient. You don’t want to take away from your employee’s workday, so you buy them lunch (*everyone loves free lunch*) and then impart whatever wisdom you want them to soak in and apply to their jobs. If you’re feeling especially benevolent, you might even buy them something better than Jason’s Deli.

Lunch and learns still utilize people’s brainpower and keeps them locked in work mode, despite



how novel or interesting the material may be. I almost always feel more tired after a lunch and learn and find it difficult to get back into the right mindset to tackle the afternoon.

If you want to treat your staff, then buy them lunch. No strings attached. No Jason’s Deli. Find another time for them to learn within the business day.

And the same goes for the lunch meeting. Sometimes they’re a necessity due to people’s conflicting schedules and a pressing matter to tackle. But make them the exception rather than the norm.

Block it Out

As a courtesy, I try my very best not to schedule meetings between 12pm and 2pm. Not everyone is as courteous as I am, so if you have an assistant or colleague who is time-agnostic when scheduling a meeting, then block it out. Don’t title the event “Lunch” or anything else suggesting the timeframe is negotiable.

Might I also suggest not blocking 12pm-1pm. If I want to take a non-negotiable lunch hour, I’ll block 11:45-1:15. Not because I plan on taking a 90 minute lunch, but that gives cushion if the server takes forever to bring the check, if Chatty Cathy attacks while refilling your water bottle or when the Zoom meeting runs long.

Taste Your Food

I attended the LMA Southwest Regional Conference recently and one of the speakers gave a presentation on wellness and preventing burnout. One of her points she reiterated over (*and over*) again was to really **taste** your morning coffee - meaning, savoring it and enjoying the moment rather than chugging it and getting on with the morning. The same principal can be applied to your lunch.

Whether you’re having a *boozy bougee* lunch or heating up your meal prepped healthy lunch, take time to bask in the gloriousness lunch is intended to be. ☺

NO VACATION NATION

Continued from page 3

BENEFITS OF DISCONNECTING COMPLETELY.

To be able to leave work behind takes a lot of forethought, a lot of planning, and mental energy—but the benefits of doing so are well-worth it. For employers, you are ensuring increased productivity and motivation for employees able to disconnect frequently enough. Employees see several benefits across varied platforms. Improved physical health, preventing things like heart disease associated with high stress, improved mental health and mental power, improvement of familial relationships, decreased burnout, and increase of happiness and joyful memories each contribute to a better personal life and form the foundation for any good employee.

Currently, Americans that actually use their PTO are taking less than 2-weeks of vacation each year. 50+ weeks out of the year we are working a minimum of 8-hour days in the office or field, often over the weekends as well. While breaking time with your office is undoubtedly beneficial, for those who don't have that ability (*thanks!*) to leave work behind for more than a hot minute, there are ways to de-stress while even at your desk or after work. **Read on for great tips throughout the *Successful Barrister* for how to disconnect and unwind in healthy ways.** 😊

So, on this cat-scale, how do you feel today?



PLANNING THE GREATEST VACATION EVER!

Continued from page 2

Once I had the job designed the way I wanted, it was just a matter of hiring a headhunter to find me the right COO. The hiring process will be the subject of a future article. (*Full disclosure, the actual job description was 4 pages long. I will email it to you if you want. Marc@marcwhitehead.com*)

Now all that was left to do was to follow the Atticus worksheet and make it happen. **Go to AtticusAdvantage.com for more goodies.** 😊

MY GREATEST VACATION EVER

Name: Marc Whitehead Date: 2/4/21

In the past, my greatest vacations had the following:

KEY ELEMENTS	TOP 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With wife With a few other couples No kids (love you guys but you can be stressful) At least 10-14 days Beautiful and unique Settings or Scenery Good food and wine Some walking but not too much Probably more than one stop on trip Luxury hotels/no dives Some place new Now not next year Spa and Exercise facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With wife With a few other couples No kids

To create the greatest vacation ever, the following must occur:

See a variety of unique places	Good food and wine
We must have 2-3 fun, active adventures as options	Time to Read
Must have a spa and exercise facilities. Maybe programs like meditation, yoga or pilates	Set aside time to play games with the group

Top Insight	Top Action
I can create fun stuff to do, even during a pandemic, i just need to plan it out.	Share with my wife and blog the time to do it. Boo it now.

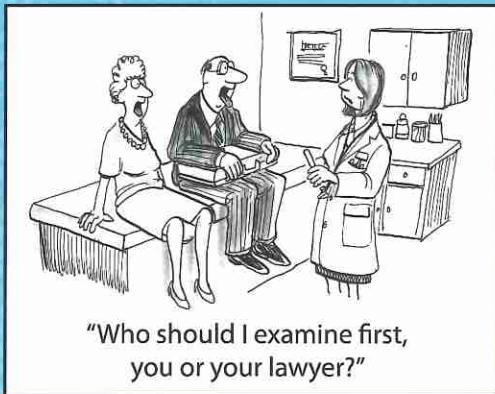
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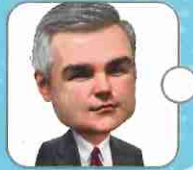
Lawyers Need a Laugh

How do the esteemed attorneys of Marc Whitehead and Associates like to de-stress?

Match the attorney with their preferred method of relaxation, take a picture and email it to marc@marcwhitehead.com to win a fun prize to help de-stress your life.



MARC



"Pounding stakes into your new turf lawn with a rubber mallet"

ANTHONY



"Play cards with my wife and stack the deck while she is not looking"

BRITNEY



"Lifting weights whilst crying"

MADISON



"Picking up my house, full-on trashed with toys, so I can make my way to the fridge for a glass of buttery chard!"

DISABILITY & INSURANCE DENIALS



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800-562-9830 • 713-228-8888

marc@marcwhitehead.com

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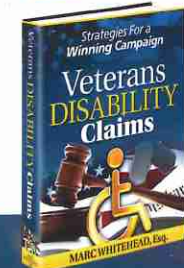
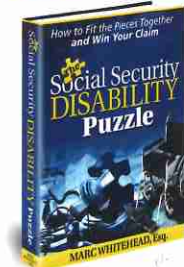
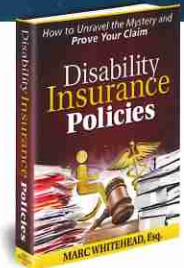
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