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## Coping with ‘Corona’

### FINDING WAYS TO CHANNEL NEGATIVE ENERGY INTO POSITIVE ENDEAVORS

It has been about six months of this now...this coronavirus taking over our lives. Like many of you, I have been practicing almost exclusively from home since early March. Sure, the shutdown/slowdown of the courts and its impact on the progression of my cases has afforded some measure of free time that did not previously exist, but I'd much rather be meeting face to face with my clients, owning an expert witness in deposition, or standing in the courtroom advocating for what is right. Anything to bring justice to my clients quicker.

Yes, I have confirmed there is little that I do at the office that I cannot do from home thanks to technology, but it's just not the same. I miss the connection of being in the same office space with the people I work with.

While it is true that wearing a mask, washing my hands incessantly, and maintaining at least six feet of distance from other members of the public has become almost second nature and has allowed me to venture from home base to do what I need to do out in the world, looking at only the upper third of every person's face is just not cutting it. I miss expressions, reactions. And although the occasional backyard dinner at opposite ends of a long table, or a Zoom happy hour, has allowed me to share a meal or a drink with family and friends, the distance is still so palpable and uncomfortable.

So how do we cope with this new, but not so, normal? For me, it is about being honest with myself about these feelings, allowing them to exist, but remembering that they too shall pass and not allowing myself to sit in those negative feelings for too long. Even more so, it is about channeling the energy given to feeling down, towards different positive and uplifting endeavors. Dale Carnegie said, "Feeling sorry for yourself, and your present condition, is not only a waste of

energy but the worst habit you could possibly have."

I find listening to music, cooking, mixing cocktails, and organizing my work and living space soothes me. Meditation helps too, especially when it involves mindfulness. For others, coping takes the form of dedicating one's self to creating something new or championing a cause. As much discomfort as these times can dole out, there are always ways to engage in something positive to lift your spirits.

It would be easy for me, as I write this article for the September issue of Advocate, to dwell on my memories of the September issue usually being disseminated at the annual CAALA Vegas Convention, and feel the utter disappointment that there will be no convention this year because of COVID-19. It is almost impossible for me to not feel the void that has been left by the lost opportunity to come together with thousands of colleagues to learn from the best trial lawyers in our state, and often from around the country.

I think of the comradery I always feel during the weekend, seeing so many friends sharing the same goals of becoming the very best civil advocates we can be. I miss the feelings of inspiration the convention always provides. I miss wandering around the exhibit hall, having the annual catch-up with the faces behind the vendors I use, not to mention discovering new legal services that will be useful in my practice. I miss the cocktails at the casino bars, the dinners, the parties. I miss being with everyone. However, that is OK. This too shall pass, and one day we will return to the incredible conventions we became so accustomed to, and maybe took for granted.

I take inspiration, in coping with my disappointment, by looking at how our organization itself has coped with the loss of the convention, its marquee event.

CAALA staff and leadership found ways to channel their energy into positive endeavors to benefit our membership in other ways.

CAALA has increased and improved its webinar offerings, including separate practice area tracks on Tuesdays and Thursdays, as well as the "First Fridays" series, where on the first Friday of each month, we can all enjoy watching a conversation between great trial lawyers including personal stories and practical tips. New member resources are being created including a library of short and helpful YouTube-style videos (which are in production as I write this) covering various areas of the practice of law to give members access to quick tips on the go. CAALA has partnered with others in helping our members contribute to social justice causes by providing education and volunteer opportunities.

Further, our organization has a stronger relationship with the Los Angeles Superior Court than ever before, as together we have joined in keeping the bar apprised of the latest developments and Administrative Orders that affect and impact our abilities to move our clients' cases forward, and of course when and how civil trials will resume. CAALA is also engaged, more than ever, with its sister statewide organization, Consumer Attorneys of California (CAOC) on legislative affairs, including those stemming from the effects of the pandemic. Most recently, CAALA has taken on the task of addressing certain factions whose goals potentially threaten the regulation of the practice of law, our livelihoods, and more importantly, the quality of legal representation available to the citizens of California.

As an association, CAALA has coped by redirecting itself to positive endeavors. So should we all.

