



Can We Have a “Do Over” for 2020?

By: Sheryl L. Loesch, Clerk

As we’ve all ridden this rollercoaster called COVID-19 since early Spring, I think we’ve all run the gamut of emotions – from disbelief, to concern, to fear, to perseverance, to hope, and back to concern and possibly fear again. We ask ourselves, when will this end? Will life ever return to normal? Will we ever feel comfortable going to a sports event or a concert again? Just going out to a restaurant causes some uneasiness for many people.

During the past few months, many articles have been written about the times in which we are living and how humans are dealing with this unprecedented situation. Being the tough and gritty Americans we are, we’ve seen people rise to the occasion and meet the challenges we now face. We’ve seen the bravery of our health care workers and researchers in facing this virus head on. We’ve seen teachers suddenly adapt to teaching students in a virtual environment. We’ve seen restaurants get creative with ways to provide takeout food that closely replicate the meals they regularly served in house. We saw many volunteers step up and design face masks because online supplies were exhausted. Yes, as Americans we adapt and overcome.

We’ve seen how our own Court has risen to and faced the challenge with creative ways to protect the lawyers, parties to cases, and the court staff while still ensuring that justice is carried out. Our judiciary is strong and will not fail the citizens it serves.

We’ve all been under stress; however, I recently read an article that quoted former Navy Seal, Brent Gleeson, where he said crisis makes us better leaders since it:

- Demands humility
- Combats complacency
- Expands comfort zones
- Makes you agile
- Broadens perspective
- Forces organization
- Drives innovation
- Fuels resilience, and
- Prepares you for the next challenge

The author of the article, Janet G. Cornell, is a leadership consultant and former court employee. In her article, Ms. Cornell states that stress causes us to be on our toes and to be motivated. She mentions how this pandemic has caused us to “see lemonade everywhere” and that we have found opportunities for agility, trying new things, collaborations, and incredible efficiencies. This is true – we’ve seen this happen in our very own court.

We’ve learned a lot during these past several months. We’ve learned we don’t have all the answers, and that’s okay. We must contact others for ideas and answers. We must be humble, curious, productive, and “other” oriented. Together we can explore new ways of doing things. If we take risks, we can make things happen.

Personally, I see many of our new ways of doing things continue in the post-pandemic world. This pandemic has forced us all to think outside the box and become more efficient. Those efficiencies will benefit us later. Other positive results have occurred – we have more family time and more family activities. More pets have been adopted from shelters as pets have become companions to those who live alone. Air quality around the country has improved due to less traffic being on the road.

I hope that we see some light at the end of the tunnel and that we transition into whatever will become our “new normal.” Whatever our “new normal” turns out to be, I know the Bankruptcy Court in the Middle District of Florida will meet that challenge head on and embrace it.

Please stay well and stay safe!