



So Long, FAREWELL

“So Long, Farewell” —Title of *Ted Lasso* finale

IF YOU CAN'T TELL BY MY TEXAS BAR JOURNAL ARTICLES, I AM A TED LASSO FAN. It is rare, at least for me, for a television show to be entertaining, funny, and educational all at the same time. I think attorneys can learn a lot from Ted about how to lead, how to follow, how to listen, and how to communicate. Below are just five of the lessons I learned from the show as to professionalism in the law.

- **EVERY CHOICE IS A CHANCE.** “It is our choices that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities.” Read that sentence again. Every choice we make as attorneys defines what kind of lawyer we are. Everything from granting that extension to answer discovery to agreeing to take a difficult case to the language we use in an email. All those small choices make up who we truly are and what kind of lawyer we truly are.
- **BE A GOLDFISH.** “You know what the happiest animal in the world is? It’s a goldfish. You know why? It has a 10-second memory. Be a goldfish.” Carrying around grudges is exhausting. It ends up hurting the one carrying the grudge more than the person against whom the grudge is held. Maybe we all need to be more like goldfish.
- **BE CURIOUS, NOT JUDGMENTAL.** “I was driving my little boy to school, and I saw this quote by Walt Whitman. It was painted on the wall, there. It said, ‘Be curious, not judgmental.’ I like that.” Instead of assuming we know a person and what they are going through, be curious instead. Ask questions. I wrote an email to opposing counsel one time, and as soon as I hit send, I knew it was a mistake. Let’s call it a snarky email. Haven’t we all done that? As soon as you hit send, you wish you could take it back? I cringed and went on about my day thinking I would call him later to apologize and discuss. About five minutes later, he called me. Before I answered the phone, I knew I was about to get a dressing down—and I deserved it. When I picked up the receiver, though, he was laughing! The first thing he asked was, “Are you OK? That email was not like you. Are you having a bad day?” That call, and consequently that case, could have taken a wrong turn from my email, but instead, my opposing counsel was curious and not judgmental. It made all the difference.
- **NEVER SETTLE FOR FINE.** “He’s fine. That’s it. Nothing wrong with that. Most people are fine. It is not about him, it’s about why you think he deserves you. . . . Don’t you dare settle for fine.” I am not here to give you dating advice, but this quote can and should be referred to often in our daily practice. Sometimes we get in a rut and just coast through our day, coast through our client meetings, coast through that hearing, or coast through the entire case. Our clients deserve better than just “fine.”
- **BELIEVE.** “I believe in hope. I believe in BELIEF.” I absolutely love this profession. It has given me and my family everything. I believe in this profession. I believe in the judicial system. I believe in the adversary system. I believe that we are the only ones to maintain the civility of this profession.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to be State Bar president. I hope that along the way, I helped at least one of you. I hope that in the future, benefits and ideas we implemented this year will help many more. This may be the end of my term as president, but I still hope to volunteer and help where I can. So long. Farewell. But not goodbye.

CINDY TISDALE
President, 2023-2024
State Bar of Texas