



The Lessons We've Learned About **ADAPTABILITY AND UNCERTAINTY**

ON FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2020, I began the day laughing with colleagues about how odd it was to not shake hands anymore. By the end of the day, I could see panic in people's eyes and I already had a few emails from friends sharing recipes for homemade hand sanitizer. I'm reminded that adaptability and positivity are just as important now, 18 months into the pandemic, as they were back at the beginning.

A month into the pandemic, I had the privilege to interview one of my favorite nonprofit and leadership experts, Vicki Clark. Vicki shared many enlightening insights, as she always does, including this accurate perspective: "Somebody said that we have to start thinking out of the box. I'm saying the box is gone." If you know Vicki, you know that she has a fabulous way with words and people. She also shared this approach to the pandemic: "There's an old song that says 'trouble don't last always,' and it doesn't. We will come through this individually, collectively, association-wise, but everything is going to be different and different isn't always bad. We have to look for the light in it, and we also have to stay connected."

Some of the things that haven't aged well in 20/20 hindsight are thoughts that *the whole pandemic will be over in a few weeks* and *virtual happy hours are fun*. One surprisingly poignant quote that has endured, though, came from an animated snowman. In *Frozen 2*, Olaf is playing a game with children, and he says, "We're calling this 'controlling what you can when things feel out of control.'" Haven't we all done this in the past year? Whether we learned a new hobby, took on a home improvement project, or made plans despite overwhelming uncertainty, we were really focusing on adapting and staying positive instead of wallowing over what we could not control.

In the past year and a half, we have faced more loss, disappointment, and change than any other time. Change and uncertainty are by no means new to our profession, yet many of us are still struggling to adapt because we don't know what the "new normal" is or when the pandemic will be "over." What do we do now if uncertainty is the only thing that is certain? One of the best answers I've found so far comes from Peloton instructor Selena Samuela: "Fear is negative imagination, and you're using it against yourself. Anxiety is just negative imagination about the future. So, let's try to do the opposite of that. Let's try to use our imagination for positive uplifting thoughts." Regardless of the adversity we face in the future, I'm comforted by the knowledge that the Texas Young Lawyers Association and the State Bar of Texas will continue to focus on positive uplifting projects and new ways to connect our members.

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