



## *Life Isn't Always Picture Perfect* **AND THAT'S OK**

**AS I WAS FINISHING THIS ARTICLE,** I got distracted by wondering if I could put my winter and Christmas decorations up this week. With friends and family—aka “family”—visiting for the Baylor football game this weekend, I’m sure I would get mixed reactions to our green and gold Christmas tree since several of them will be cheering for the opposing team. Speaking of distraction, I’m trying to channel this straightforward and powerful advice found on the Work/Life Balance section of the Texas Young Lawyers Association’s Attorney Wellness Hub:

**Wherever you are, be there.** When you’re at work, focus on your work. Maximize your time and be efficient. When you’re home, unplug and step away from your work. Spend time with your family or friends or do whatever brings you happiness.

This season is packed with travel, delicious food, festivities with family, more food, and a general expectation to be happy. So why do we need resources like [texaslawyercare.tyla.org](http://texaslawyercare.tyla.org) now? For one thing, I’ve found wellness is rarely achieved by speaking it into existence, especially if I’m feeling pressured to be happy or festive. November 1 looks like the herald of all things “Grateful” and “Joyous” in stores, but it’s not a magic switch that makes everything perfect in life. Family lawyers know the holidays don’t make anything easier for spouses and parents. Making a big life change like divorce is daunting, but it isn’t the end of happy family celebrations. In my favorite *You’ve Got Mail* scene, Kathleen Kelly (played by Meg Ryan) tells her friends that she is closing her store. Her maternal-figure friend tells her:

Closing the store is the brave thing to do. You are daring to imagine that you could have a different life. Oh, I know it doesn’t feel like that. You feel like a big fat failure now. But you’re not. You are marching into the unknown armed with ... nothing. Have a sandwich.

This is the mantra I want my family law clients to take to heart. Their lives and families are changing, but change means opportunities, adventures, and space for making new memories and traditions. Our court system has created new ways to serve Texans in the midst of great tribulations. Our TYLA board has embraced new traditions and found energy and creativity in the face of challenges. My family’s holiday plans have changed when we faced new circumstances, when we lost family members, when our family grew, and during the pandemic. I’ve stopped trying to make anything look social-media perfect. I’ve learned that joy is about the people you love, not about the places, the things, or the traditions. Brené Brown beautifully tells us, “You are imperfect. You are wired for struggle, but you are worthy of love and belonging.”

I hope you know that you aren’t marching into the unknown armed with nothing. You have so much support from all of us at the Texas Lawyers’ Assistance Program, TYLA, and the State Bar of Texas. You are an integral member of our bar and you are valued. For more information, go to [tlaphelps.org](http://tlaphelps.org) and [texaslawyercare.tyla.org](http://texaslawyercare.tyla.org).

To recap as we look forward to the holidays, we have advice to be present, a reminder that life isn’t (and doesn’t need to be) perfect, and something about a sandwich. From Stephen, Khaleesi, and me to you and your family, we wish you great joy.

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2021-2022 President, Texas Young Lawyers Association