

willed

Your Source of Quality
Education for Women
in Legal Leadership

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ALFN | VOL. 10 ISSUE 1

SEASONALITY

CULTIVATING POSITIVE GROWTH "A GARDENING PROCESS"





Because Integrity Matters.

We understand that the legal services we provide represent your firm, and that frequently the Process Server is the initial contact your firm has with a defendant.

With over 20 years of experience, 360 Legal brings a different perspective to what you normally expect from a legal services vendor, focusing on national process serving and investigative services.

Relax, it's 360!



Investigations

Confidential and comprehensive investigative solutions tailored to legal needs.



Client-First Customer Service

Expert support with a commitment to accuracy, responsiveness, and trust.



eFiling & Court Services

Seamless electronic filing and court support for efficient case management.

100% U.S.-Based Data, eFiling & Coding

All legal data and filings are securely processed in the U.S.—never offshored or nearshored.



Nationwide Process Serving

We ensure accurate and timely delivery every time.

Increase Efficiency While Reducing Costs & Risks



Judicial and Non-Judicial Back-Office Services Customized to Fit Your Needs

Foreclosure attorney firms and servicer trustees must meet high standards of quality, compliance, and timeline performance. Fluctuating workloads can strain profitability and increase risks. They need agile providers who can integrate with their technology platforms, manage volume shifts, and optimize milestone performance and compliance. That's where we come in.

Increase Efficiency: Streamline processes for faster, more accurate milestone performance, reduced errors, and improved workflows.



Reduce Risks: Minimize errors and legal penalties by ensuring precise documentation in the foreclosure process.

Reduce Costs: Outsource back-office services to cut overhead costs and free up internal resources for key operations.



Maximize Scalability: Easily scale services to meet fluctuating file volumes and maintain high-quality client service.

Improve Accuracy: Ensure documentation is processed and filed accurately according to industry standards and legal requirements.



Contact us today to start experiencing the Altisource difference.

Visit Altisource.com/Servicing/Trustee to learn more.

Letter from the Editor

THE THEME of this issue is Seasonality: Cultivating Positive Growth – A Gardening Process. Our articles are diverse and inspiring, and are appropriate reading materials as we transition into 2025.

Since we are in the winter season, it is fitting that we consider the seasonal influence of grayer and colder days in the article written by Julia Keys, Rising from Mental Depression or the Winter Blues: How to Overcome and Prevent Seasonal Low Moods. Julia provides a wonderful how to handle guide for addressing the winter blues, which may lead to Seasonal Affective Disorder.

Following a similar theme of self and other care, Cheryl Cook muses on preparation for fall and winter, and how a good “fall/winter” cleaning helps with transition. Her article, Fall Clean-Up: Making Room for What Matters, inspires me to get a jump on purging!

In Lay Your Foundation Now for 2025: What Do You Need to Grow?, Robin Carberry uses the symbolism of growing a garden to illustrate how to nurture personal growth. She provides growing tips and lessons for plants and the like, and for all of us.

My article, Facing Adversity: Living Through Hurricanes Helene and Milton, is a topical article about the recent menacing hurricanes that struck Florida this past fall. I wrote the article as a testament to overcoming the many challenges of living through a natural disaster.

Another hot topic for 2025 and beyond, artificial intelligence use continues to grow, and is explored by Andrea Tromberg in Embracing AI and Expanding into New Horizons: A Guide for



Women in Legal Leadership. As Andrea explains, understanding and using AI effectively is not only necessary but provides an opportunity for leadership and innovation.

Last but certainly not least, Daris Arguelles, a new WILLED author, shares her article, Cultivating Authentic Relationships: Act on What You Say and Say What You Mean. Her words ring so true about what it means to develop and cultivate meaningful relationship, a worthy goal for 2025.

I will end with this from Daris’ article, since we have just left the gift giving season:

After all, kindness is free, and being your authentic self is the best gift you can give to others and yourself. 

Michelle Garcia Gilbert

MICHELLE GARCIA GILBERT, ESQ.

Managing Partner

Gilbert Garcia Group, P.A.

mgilbert@gilbertgrouplaw.com



YOU'LL FIND US AT THE INTERSECTION
OF MORTGAGE SERVICERS/INVESTORS *and* LAW FIRMS.

Hello Solutions offers Servicers and Investors who seek legal support in the area of default servicing and foreclosures an opportunity to connect with qualified law firms.

Hello Solution's mission is to connect mortgage servicers and investors with a network of highly qualified law firms who promise to provide tangible and reliable results – time after time – year after year.



The Hello Network provides a full suite of default-related services across the country, including work on foreclosure referrals, bankruptcies, evictions, title curative, REOs and litigation.



Find out more by calling 727.403.5900 or emailing hello@hellosolutions.com

CONTENTS



10

Facing Adversity: Living Through Hurricanes Helene and Milton

14

Making Room for What Matters



19

Lay Your Foundation Now for 2025: What Do You Need to Grow?

24

Embracing AI and Expanding into New Horizons



29

Rising from Mental Depression or the Winter Blues



34

Cultivating Authentic Relationships



PROVIDING NATIONWIDE BANKRUPTCY SERVICES



BONIAL & ASSOCIATES, P.C.



**Default Management
Legal Services For
Creditors**

**Audit & Bankruptcy
Transaction
Reconciliation Services**

**Foreclosure &
Related Litigation
Services**

For additional information, please contact Jim O'Reilly
Office: 214-860-6973 Email: Jim.OReilly@BonialPC.com

Integration, Redefined.

Leading the Industry in Excellence: Seamlessly
Integrating Expert Litigation Support Solutions and
Cutting-Edge Technology in the Creditors' Rights
Ecosystem Nationwide

ā360inc™





MTG LAW

McMichael Taylor Gray, LLC ("MTG") - Your Trusted Partner in Default and Creditor Rights

www.mtglaw.com



WHO WE ARE

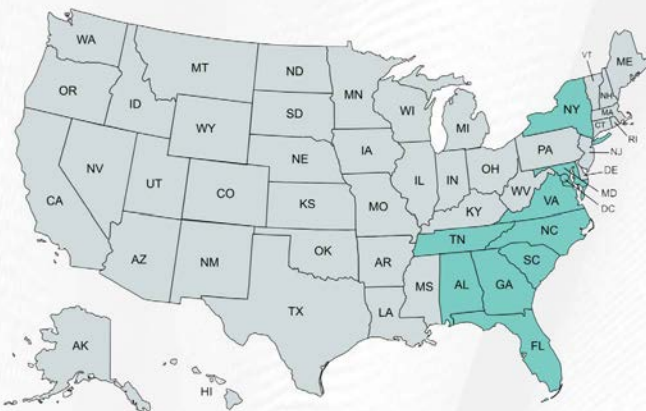
Welcome to MTG Law. We are your trusted partner in default process solutions. MTG is your go-to-full-service law firm for all matters related to non-performing real and personal property collateral. We provide quality legal services, tailored for financial institutions.

We're a team you can trust. With over 300 years of experience, our attorneys at MTG have a deep understanding of the default process and are dedicated to representing lenders and servicer clients with precision.

WHERE DO WE WORK

At MTG Law, we deliver top-notch legal services specifically designed for financial institutions across the northeast and southeast regions. We ensure quality and cost-effective solutions in:

FL GA AL NC SC TN VA MD NY DC



PRACTICE AREAS

MTG - Your trusted partner for all things foreclosure, bankruptcy, litigation, and more!

We offer a comprehensive suite of services that covers all aspects of mortgage law including foreclosure, bankruptcy, litigation, loss mitigation, eviction, closing, and title services.

CONTACT US:

INFO@MTGLAW.COM



JANUARY TAYLOR

Managing Partner

Main Office: (404) 474-7149

Info@mtglaw.com

<https://mtglaw.com>

Facing Adversity

Living Through Hurricanes Helene and Milton

BY MICHELLE GARCIA GILBERT, ESQ.
MANAGING PARTNER
GILBERT GARCIA GROUP, P.A.
MGILBERT@GILBERTGROUPLAW.COM

*Horseshoe Beach, Florida, north of Tampa.
Chandan Khanna/AFP via Getty Images*



IN OCTOBER, 2024, the Tampa Bay area experienced the devastating impact of two major hurricanes, Helene and Milton, arriving just weeks apart. These storms tested the resilience of residents and strained local infrastructure as the region grappled with flooding, wind damage, and prolonged recovery efforts. From my perspective, as a hometown girl born and raised in the great state of Florida, I never had experienced a direct hit on my beloved city, much less two storms within a few weeks.



Credit: 10 Tampa Bay

HURRICANE HELENE: THE PRELUDE

Hurricane Helene, a massive Category 4 storm, made landfall on September 26, 2024, near Perry, Florida. Although its center remained about 100 miles from Tampa Bay, the storm's expansive size brought significant storm surges to coastal communities and barrier islands. Low-lying areas faced inundation, while beaches suffered erosion and damage to infrastructure such as boardwalks and seawalls. St. Petersburg and Clearwater were particularly affected by flooding, complicating evacuation and relief efforts. Helene's impacts extended beyond Florida, causing widespread destruction and loss of life across the southeastern United States.

While our home and office never lost power or was damaged, many others in our area and nearer to beaches were flooded and destroyed. Helene ended up hitting slightly north of Tampa, but the backflow caused high winds and rain down



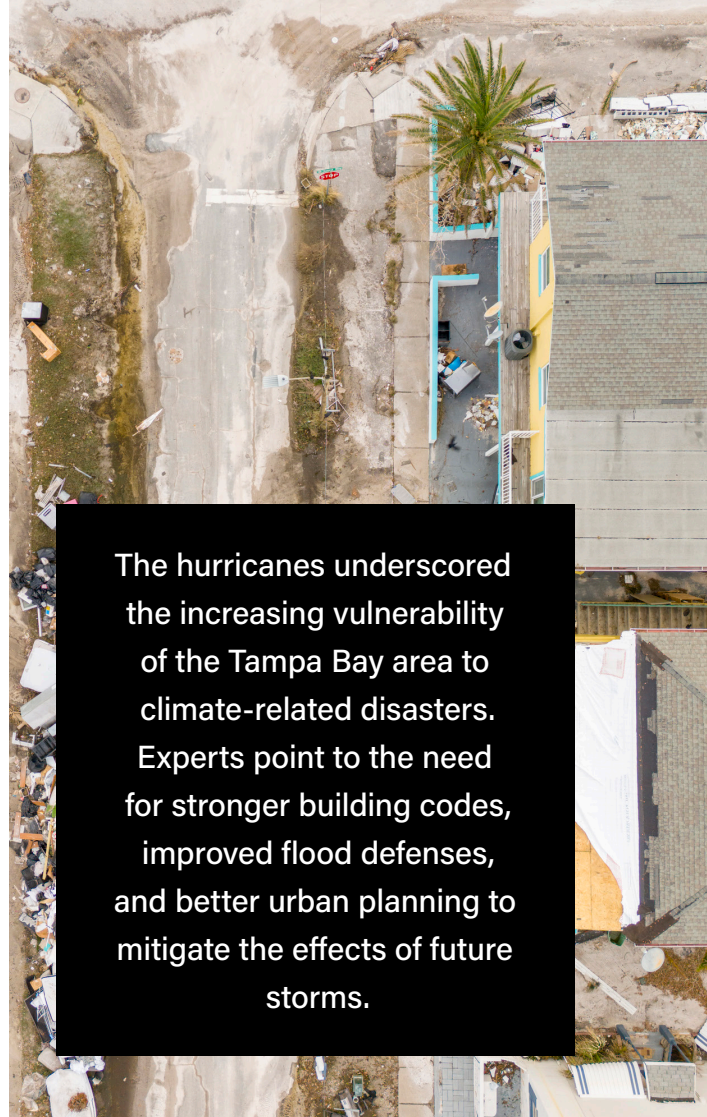
south. Helene left 116 people dead too. So, recovery from Helene seemed fairly straightforward, and then we heard about Milton...

HURRICANE MILTON: A DIRECT HIT

Less than two weeks later, on October 9, 2024, Hurricane Milton made landfall near Siesta Key, just south of Tampa, as a strong Category 3 storm, bringing sustained winds of over 120 mph. Unlike Helene, Milton delivered a direct blow to the Tampa Bay region. The storm's heavy rains caused severe flooding, particularly along the Anclote River in Pasco County, where homes and roads were submerged. Strong winds downed power lines and trees, leaving millions without electricity. Notable landmarks, such as the Tropicana Field in St. Petersburg, sustained significant damage, with the stadium's roof torn apart by the storm

In downtown St. Petersburg, a construction crane collapsed onto a building, highlighting the dangers posed by strong winds in urban areas. Debris from homes and fallen trees blocked roads, hampering rescue operations and delaying aid distribution

This time, we lost power for five days, though we were fortunate to have a generator and no damage. The night that Milton hit sounded like a freight train was coming at



The hurricanes underscored the increasing vulnerability of the Tampa Bay area to climate-related disasters. Experts point to the need for stronger building codes, improved flood defenses, and better urban planning to mitigate the effects of future storms.



our home, which was a first for me that I could recall. We had hurricane proofed our home in the past, with windows and roof, which we considered worth the effort. The debris and downed power lines and trees were everywhere and still have not been completely cleared as of December, 2024.

The lesson we learned is that if you are told to evacuate, evacuate, though we were not in a mandatory evacuation zone. The other lesson is that preparation pays off, along with having a generator.

THE HUMAN TOLL AND RECOVERY EFFORTS

For many Tampa Bay residents, the consecutive storms brought an overwhelm-



ing sense of déjà vu and exhaustion. Thousands were forced to evacuate twice within weeks, seeking shelter in schools and community centers. Emergency response teams worked around the clock to provide assistance, but the scale of damage stretched resources thin. Floodwaters contaminated drinking water supplies in some areas, raising concerns about public health.

The economic toll of the storms is staggering. Businesses, particularly in the tourism-dependent areas of Clearwater and St. Pete Beach, faced closures during their busiest season. Repairing the damage to homes, infrastructure, and public utilities is expected to take months, with early estimates of costs running into the billions.



LOOKING FORWARD

The hurricanes underscored the increasing vulnerability of the Tampa Bay area to climate-related disasters. Experts point to the need for stronger building codes, improved flood defenses, and better urban planning to mitigate the effects of future storms. In the meantime, residents and local governments continue the arduous process of rebuilding, hoping to restore normalcy. Hurricane season ended on November 30, 2024, so until next year.

This challenging period has revealed both the fragility of the region's infrastructure and the resilience of its communities. As Tampa Bay looks ahead, these twin storms serve as a stark reminder of the power of nature and the importance of preparedness in an era of intensifying climate events.

As a native, I never will again be complacent about hurricane season and will support any and all efforts to prepare my hometown for future devastating effects of hurricanes. **W**



MAKING ROOM FOR WHAT MATTERS

BY CHERYL D. COOK, ESQ.
SUPERVISING BANKRUPTCY ATTORNEY
POTESTIVO & ASSOCIATES, P.C.
CCOOK@POTESTIVOLAW.COM





WHILE FALL AND SPRING are traditionally times for cleaning, winter may be a great time to inventory the house and garden, weed out what has to go, and prepare for a new season. Whether you are a Martha Stewart¹ type or more of a “Fly-Lady²,” or even a Marie Kondo³ or Good Housekeeper⁴, there is a cleaning checklist for everyone these days.



Cleaning isn’t just for space and things, though. The intangible parts of life can also gather in the corners. From friends we haven’t connected with in ages to broken bits of relationships at work or in families, there is always time to review what we have that works, make peace with what doesn’t, and plan for what to carry forward into the next phase of life.

How to start? Wherever you are. In other words, pick a spot and do it. When I first bought my own place, I pored over housekeeping tips and checklists. I actually own a copy (digital and paperback) of Mrs. Beeton’s Household Management: A Classic of Domestic Literature⁵. If you ever want to know what our grandmothers and great-grandmothers (or maybe great-great-grandmothers) did with their time, this will tell you.

1https://images.marthastewart.com/images/content/web/pdfs/checklists/ms_checklist_fallhome.pdf, and https://images.marthastewart.com/images/content/web/pdfs/2009Q3/ms_checklist_seasonalclean.pdf.

2<https://www.flylady.net/d/zones/>

3<https://konmari.com/cleaning-is-not-tidying/>

4<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/home-products/a62055124/youre-ready-for-sweater-weather-is-your-skin/>

5Mrs. Beeton’s Household Management, (first bound edition 1861; newly typeset edition, 2006, Wordsworth Editions Limited).



Much of the text deals with food, but there are a couple of chapters on illness and disease treatment, as well as managing household staff. The primary reader of Mrs. Beeton's is presumed to have sufficient resources to employ a housekeeper, but there is a paragraph in the "housekeeper" section that reads:

The white summer curtains will now be carefully put away, the

fireplaces, grates, and chimneys looked to, and the House put in a thorough state of repair, so that no 'loose tile' may, at a future day, interfere with your comfort, and extract something considerable from your pocket.⁶

That purpose makes a difference for both tangible and intangible aspects: "put in a thorough state of repair, so that no 'loose tile' may, at a future day, interfere with your comfort, and extract something considerable from your pocket." It changes the focus from "something I have to do" to "something that will make my future better – more comfortable or enjoyable, and less problematic or expensive later on."

That covers so much! From going through closets and drawers to emptying linen closets or junk drawers (or garage cabinets and sheds), identifying what still works and just needs to be cleaned and properly stored for use versus what needs to be repaired or what might have reached the end of its useful life creates space for a new season with less expenditure and more comfort or enjoyment.

What about relationships? I remember a song we used to sing in Pioneer Girls⁷ when I was a kid: "make new friends, but keep the old – one is silver, and the other is gold." As a result, although I've "collected" friends over the years, I rarely talk to most of them these days because our lives took different directions. The most constant relationships might be with the Amazon delivery person or the people we work with.

⁶ Mrs. Beeton's *Household Management*, *supra*, page 24.

⁷ <https://www.pioneerclubs.org/>

Are they “friends?” What are friends, anyway?

C.S. Lewis said of friendship that its core arises from the question: “do you see (or care about) the same truth?”⁸ Lewis further explains:

The very condition of having Friends is that we should want something else besides Friends. Where the truthful answer to the question *Do you see the same truth?* would be “I see nothing, and I don’t care about the truth; I only want a Friend”, no Friendship can arise—though Affection of course may. There would be nothing for the Friendship to be *about*; and Friendship must be about something, even if it were

⁸ Lewis, C.S., *The Four Loves*, 1960.

Friendship
must be about
something, even
if it were only
an enthusiasm
for dominoes or
white mice.

only an enthusiasm for dominoes or white mice. Those who have nothing can share nothing; those who are going nowhere can have no fellow-travellers.⁹

So, what do we add to the lives of others, and what might they add to ours? Any time is a perfect time for reviewing the people who mean the most to us and those to whom we hope we mean a lot as well. Physical letters or cards, often at holidays or on birthdays or anniversaries, used to be a way to accomplish that, but so many people send emails or text messages instead of newsy notes. It’s great to get emails or texts from family or friends, but they can seem less personal.

To how many people would you have even a few lines to say about how your year has gone? From how many would you want to hear about how they spent their time since the last time you spoke?

Business relationships are a little more straightforward – clients or customers hire you to do work for them, you do the work, they pay you, and if

⁹ *Id.*



you are lucky, you get to know them a little and it makes the working relationship better. However, so many corporate clients (especially banks and government entities) have rules on how to maintain those relationships – you can't send gifts over a certain dollar amount, etc. So, coming up with ways to let those clients know how much you appreciate, for example, their fast turnaround times or their willingness to dig into the background of the customer to find out what might help you better serve their needs can be tricky.

Forbes¹⁰ had a few tips for letting customers know how much you appreciate them, and while the article is a few years old now, their suggestions are still good. Another more recent article from Handwrytten.com¹¹ has some more current ideas. Internet searches can yield an overwhelming number of additional ideas, but none of them work unless we use them.

At the same time, some clients or customers need different representation – and it might be time to do a little cleansing of those customer or client lists to remove the ones that never call except when they need a favor (usually unpaid) or only contact you to find out what you might know about someone else's situation. We all have those legacy clients/customers/friends, and maybe now is a good time to evaluate those relationships as well.

Whatever your goal, cleaning out is a good way to start preparing the ground for something new. Whenever



er you start, think about what might need to be done to, as Mrs. Beeton says, “put things in a thorough state of repair, so that no ‘loose tile’ may, at a future day, interfere with your comfort, and extract something considerable from your pocket.”

Happy Cleaning! **W**

¹⁰ <https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbescoachescouncil/2019/03/07/nine-ways-to-show-your-customers-just-how-much-you-appreciate-them/>

¹¹ <https://www.handwrytten.com/resources/ways-to-show-client-appreciation/>

LAY YOUR FOUNDATION NOW FOR 2025

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO GROW?



BY ROBIN CARBERRY
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COACHES LEADER
AFFINITY CONSULTING
RCARBERRY@AFFINITYCONSULTING.COM

JANUARY HAS COME AND GONE. The energy around your New Year's resolutions is fading, and you're back to real-life routine. Sound familiar? Here's the thing, though: growth doesn't happen overnight—or in the first month of the year. The real magic happens when you do the prep work, dig in, and consistently nurture your garden throughout the year.

So, let's talk about laying your foundation now for a year of meaningful growth. Think of 2025 as your garden. Whether you're cultivating career wins or planting the seeds for joy, the steps are the same: prep the soil, plant with intention, and show up regularly with a little care—and maybe a lot of coffee.

Grab your gardening gloves (metaphorically speaking, of course), and let's get to it.

REFLECT

WHAT DID YOU WANT FROM YOUR GARDEN?

Before you start planning for 2025, take a moment to look back. Did your 2024 garden deliver what you hoped? Reflection is where clarity begins.

- **Celebrate What Worked:** Look at the “blooms” in your year. Did a habit stick? Did a project take off? Recognize and savor those wins. You earned them.
- **Spot the Missteps:** Not every seed takes root. Maybe you overcommitted, neglected some priorities, or poured energy into a “weed” that didn't deserve it. It's okay—every gardener has surprises that don't pan out.
- **Assess Effort vs. Enjoyment:** Consider whether your effort aligned with your satisfaction. Was





the work worth it, or did it feel like a grind? If the joy didn't measure up, you might need a fresh approach for 2025.

Reflection isn't just self-care; it's brain care. When you pause to look back, your brain's default mode network kicks in. This system helps you connect past experiences with future goals, making it easier to adapt and grow from what you've learned.

CLEAN IT UP

REMOVE WEEDS AND DEBRIS

A healthy, thriving garden starts with clearing space for growth. In your life, that means letting go of what's not serving you.

- ***Ditch the Unhelpful Stories:*** If "I'm not good enough" or "Why even bother?" has been looping in your head, it's time to compost those thoughts. They're taking up space where healthier beliefs could grow.
- ***Declutter Your Commitments:*** Overloaded schedule? It's okay to pull out the calendar and prune.

You don't have to do everything, and saying "no" can be the most nourishing thing you plant this year.

Your brain thrives when it's free from clutter. Decluttering reduces the noise in your brain by calming your amygdala, so you can focus on what really matters.

TEST YOUR SOIL

WHAT DOES YOUR GARDEN NEED?

Healthy soil equals healthy plants, but not all soil is created equal. Before planting, figure out what your garden needs to thrive.

- ***Focus on What You Can Control:*** Your attitude, your effort, and how you show up—those are yours to manage. Spend your energy there.
- ***Accept What's Beyond Your Control:*** Some things—economic shifts, office politics, unexpected rainstorms (literal or metaphorical)—aren't yours to fix. Instead of fighting them, adjust your approach.

This shift in focus can rewire your brain. By directing your energy to things you can change, you quiet the parts of your mind responsible for overthinking and stress while strengthening pathways that support resilience.

ADD COMPOST

ENRICH YOUR GROWTH

Here's a secret gardeners know: yesterday's scraps are tomorrow's fertilizer. Take the lessons of 2024 and turn them into something that fuels your growth.

- ***Build Better Habits:*** Start small and meaningful. Maybe it's a weekly "power hour" for focused work or a daily meditation practice to breathe and reset.

- **Prevent Erosion:** Growth doesn't stick without reinforcement. Use tools like habit trackers or accountability partners to keep yourself consistent.

New habits take root when repeated actions strengthen the basal ganglia, the part of your brain that drives routines. Over time, consistency turns effort into instinct.

KEEP IT CLEAN

MAINTENANCE IS KEY

Even the best gardens need regular care. A weekly self-check can keep you from veering off course.

- **Review and Adjust:** Did you hit your goals this week? Where did you stumble? Adjust as needed—it's all part of the process.
- **Celebrate the Little Wins:** Progress is progress—even if it's just remembering to drink water today. Recognizing these victories helps you stay motivated and keeps you going.

Celebrating success, even in small ways, triggers a dopamine release in your brain. This “feel-good” chemical reinforces positive behavior, making it easier to stick with your efforts.

SHARPEN YOUR TOOLS

VALUES, PRIORITIES, AND THE ART OF THE GARDEN JOURNAL

Neglected tools get rusty—and so do neglected priorities. To grow what matters, you need sharp tools and a clear plan.

- **Reconnect With Your Why:** What truly matters to you? Your family, career, health, personal growth—what fuels your purpose? Aligning your goals with your values will keep you motivated when the work feels hard.



- **Start Journaling:** Even a weekly check-in can help you notice what's working and what's not. Jot down small wins, areas to improve, or just random thoughts. Journaling activates your brain's prefrontal cortex, improving emotional regulation and decision-making.
- **Be Present:** Growth happens in the day-to-day moments. When your tools are sharp—your priorities clear—you can focus fully on what matters.

MAKE YOUR PLAN

MAP OUT YOUR YEAR

A thriving garden doesn't just happen. It starts with a plan. But don't worry, this isn't about creating a rigid blueprint you'll resent. Think of it as setting up a flexible framework that keeps you moving in the right direction, even when life throws curveballs.



- **Start Small and Build:** Begin by setting three to five key goals for the year. These could be professional (like leading a major project or networking more) or personal (like prioritizing health or starting a new hobby). Keep them specific, but not overwhelming.
- **Break It Down:** Big goals can feel intimidating, kind of like staring at a pile of seeds without a clue where to start. Break each goal into smaller, bite-sized steps like quarterly or monthly milestones. Then narrow it down further to what you can do this week.
- **Focus on Actions, Not Outcomes:** You can't control whether a seed blooms, but you can make sure it's watered.
- **Stay Flexible:** Life happens. The weather changes, pests show up, and sometimes you plant something in the wrong spot. Give yourself permission to adapt.
- **Celebrate Along the Way:** Don't wait until December to pat yourself on the back. Celebrate small wins as they come. It's like seeing the first sprout pop through the soil—proof that your work is paying off.

Your plan doesn't have to be perfect, but it does need to exist. Think of it as your gardening schedule—a way to keep yourself organized while leaving room for creativity and the flowers you didn't plan for but are glad to see.

CULTIVATE YOUR BEST YEAR YET

The garden you want in December starts with the foundation you lay now. Give yourself the time, space, and care to grow what matters most. You don't have to do everything all at once; just start planting. Before you know it, you'll see your efforts blossom into something beautiful. **W**

EMBRACING **AI** AND EXPANDING INTO **NEW** HORIZONS



**A GUIDE FOR WOMEN
IN LEGAL LEADERSHIP**



BY ANDREA TROMBERG, ESQ.
MANAGING MEMBER
TROMBERG, MORRIS & PARTNERS, PLLC
ATROMBERG@TMPPLLC.COM

IN TODAY'S RAPIDLY evolving world, artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping industries, redefining the way we work, and transforming our daily lives. As women in legal leadership, working in consumer finance and the specialized field of defaulted mortgages, understanding and leveraging AI isn't just a professional necessity, it's an opportunity to lead with innovation, empathy, and efficiency. This article introduces and provides tips and strategies using AI to help you navigate this complex new world at work and in your personal life.

AI IN LEGAL PRACTICE: ELEVATING EFFICIENCY AND INSIGHT

In the legal profession, where precision and efficiency are paramount, AI offers transformative potential. For example, an AI-powered document review tool can search through hundreds of documents in seconds, where a human could take several weeks. The result is faster analysis and a more thorough preliminary review, leaving you time for more high-level thinking. Also, for attorneys handling default litigation, or management overseeing a portfolio, AI can prioritize cases, predict outcomes, and even draft pleadings or memos with relevant legal citations.

AI enhances the ability to make good judgment calls as well. Predictive analytics tools use historical data to forecast trends; whether it's the likelihood of foreclosure proceedings reaching resolution or the time a case might take to get to conclusion. These insights help management allocate resources strategically and make informed decisions.



ENHANCED COMMUNICATION

Chatbots and AI-driven customer relationship management (CRM) systems address client queries efficiently, keeping clients informed while reducing administrative burdens. Although this technology may not be easily available to many in our industry today, these tools are on the way. For example, soon clients will be able to send questions regarding a file, and an AI chatbot will be able to review the file and answer questions without human intervention. Imagine an AI chatbot walking staff through the next action, offering a more uniform and error-free process. This technology offers leaders the ability to scale, reduce costs and become more efficient.

AI AS A LEADERSHIP AND LIFE TOOL

As managers, juggling competing priorities is part of the job. In our personal lives, balancing a demanding career with family responsibilities can be challenging, but AI offers innovative and time-saving support. AI can help make your work and personal life more manageable and organized by offering new tools to assist. Platforms like Slack or Microsoft Teams integrate AI to summarize discussions, schedule meetings, and provide follow-ups. There are also training tools and analytics that will provide information on efficiency and identify gaps in your workflow.

IN OUR PERSONAL LIVES, BALANCING A DEMANDING CAREER WITH FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES CAN BE CHALLENGING, BUT AI OFFERS INNOVATIVE AND TIME-SAVING SUPPORT.



Applications like Khan Academy Kids or Duolingo help children learn interactively while freeing up your time. Virtual assistants such as Alexa or Google Assistant manage grocery lists, remind you of appointments, and control home devices. Further, wearable devices powered by AI monitor your health, providing insights on sleep, exercise, and stress management.

AI is also revolutionizing how we manage our personal lives and relationships. AI queries are a great method to ask questions on the best way to handle a situation or even plan a trip. Try this – Use ChatGPT to plan a 5-day vacation. Input your demographics, the family, or friends you want to travel with, types of activities you like, and weather preference. Prompt it to find 5 places, time of year, suggested activities, and hotels. See what you get! What typically would take you weeks to plan can now be done in seconds. ChatGPT and other AI applications can also research personal issues, offer mental health support, and give you tips with daily issues.

THE FUTURE

AI can think faster, organize your day, offer support and quickly answer questions. For many people, they have turned to AI for daily tasks at work and home. I often hear people worry that AI will replace them at work, but AI does not have to be a threat to our roles as attorneys, leaders, or women managing multifaceted lives. We should be focusing on embracing AI as a tool that empowers us to focus on what matters most: creating efficiencies, fostering and strengthening relationships, driving innovation, and creating a lasting impact. By embracing AI thoughtfully and strategically, we can lead with confidence, navigating the complexities of our industry and lives with newfound clarity and efficiency. As women in legal leadership, the opportunity to shape how AI is used and our ability to use it, is within our grasp. It is critical that we stay informed and educate ourselves on these new technologies and use them in our professional and personal lives. **W**



It's important to be well-connected.

**#LinkUp with Innovation & Integrity. Creativity
& Compliance. Experience & Efficiency.**

30+ STATES
FOCUSED
ON QUALITY

50+ YEARS
REPRESENTING
OUR VALUED CLIENTS

ONE VISION
LEADING THE
WAY FORWARD

Look to the future with confidence when the industry's largest,
most experienced legal network is your partner.

**Learn more about our commonly owned partnerships,
covering 32+ states at [LOGS.com](https://www.logs.com).**

RISING FROM MENTAL DEPRESSION OR THE WINTER BLUES

HOW TO OVERCOME AND PREVENT SEASONAL LOW MOODS



BY JULIA KEYS
VICE PRESIDENT OF CLIENT SERVICES
ORLAND PC
JKEYS@ORLAND.COM



AS THE DAYS GROW

shorter and the weather turns colder, many people find themselves feeling a bit down or low in energy. This phenomenon, often referred to as the *winter blues*, can feel like a wave of sadness or fatigue, sometimes even leading to full-blown depression, known as *Seasonal Affective Disorder* (SAD). However, there's good news: with a few intentional strategies and activities, it's entirely possible to lift your spirits and reclaim your joy, no matter the season.

Here's how to rise from mental depression or the winter blues, along with tips for preventing these low moods from taking hold in the future.

1.

EMBRACE THE OUTDOORS AND SUNLIGHT

One of the most effective ways to combat seasonal depression is to get as much natural sunlight as possible. Sunlight boosts the production of serotonin, the “feel-good” hormone that helps regulate mood and anxiety. During the winter months, when sunlight can be scarce, it's crucial to make the most of the daylight hours.

- **TAKE A DAILY WALK:** Even if it's chilly, try to get outside every day for at least 20-30 minutes. A brisk walk in the morning can help reset your mood for the entire day.
- **GO FOR A HIKE:** Weekends are perfect for nature hikes or walks in the park. Fresh air,



exercise, and natural beauty can be incredibly uplifting.

- **CONSIDER LIGHT THERAPY:** If sunlight is hard to come by in your area, try using a light therapy box, which mimics natural sunlight. This can help alleviate symptoms of SAD and improve overall mood.

2.

STAY ACTIVE WITH EXERCISE

Physical activity is one of the best ways to boost your mood. When you exercise, your body releases endorphins, which are natural mood lifters. Whether indoors or outdoors, finding an activity you enjoy can have a major impact on your mental health.

- **JOIN A FITNESS CLASS:** Yoga, Pilates, or danceclasses can be great indoor options. Not only does exercise help your body, but group classes offer the social support that can lift your spirits.
- **HOME WORKOUTS:** If the weather outside is uninviting, try a YouTube workout or an app that offers guided exercises. Even a short routine can energize you and improve your outlook.
- **TRY WINTER SPORTS:** If you live in a colder climate, try taking up winter sports like skiing, snowboarding, or ice skating. These activities can be incredibly fun and are perfect for both your physical and mental health.



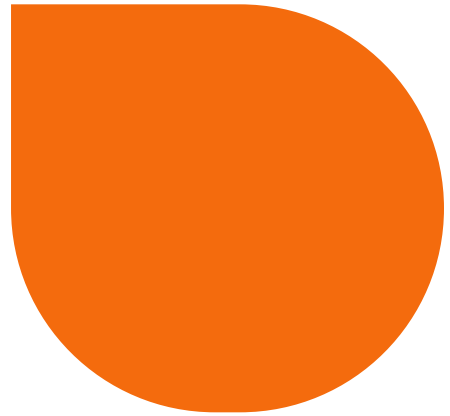
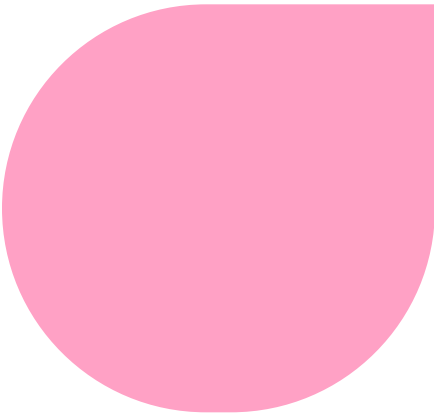
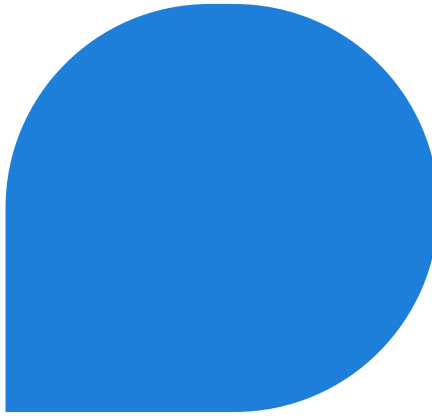
3.

PLAN OUTINGS WITH FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES

One of the best ways to prevent the winter blues is by staying connected to others. Isolation can exacerbate feelings of loneliness and sadness. Socializing with friends and family, even if it's virtual at times, can help you feel supported and uplifted.

- **WEEKEND GETAWAYS:** Plan short trips out of town to break up the monotony of the winter months. A weekend road trip to a nearby town or a cozy cabin getaway can provide new scenery and recharge your batteries. Visit friends, family or loved ones for a long weekend.
- **PLAN FUN OUTINGS:** Even simple outings like visiting a museum, going to a winter festival, or attending a holiday market can inject some excitement and fun into your routine. Doing these activities with friends or family can double the joy!
- **ATTEND A COMMUNITY EVENT:** Local events like concerts, theater performances, or seasonal festivals are great ways to get out and enjoy the company of others while participating in fun, low-cost activities.
- **ATTEND OR HOST ADULT GAME NIGHT:** A very inexpensive option that can create a ton of fun, positive energy and interaction.





4.

CULTIVATE HOBBIES THAT BRING YOU JOY

When you're feeling low, it's easy to let hobbies slip by the wayside. But hobbies and creative pursuits can be incredibly therapeutic for your mental health. Try to engage in activities that nourish your soul and give you a sense of accomplishment.

- **CREATIVE PURSUITS:** Painting, knitting, writing, or crafting can provide a sense of flow and satisfaction. Even if you're not a seasoned artist, experimenting with different materials and techniques can be a fun way to unwind.
- **COOKING OR BAKING:** The act of preparing food can be both relaxing and rewarding. Plus, baking seasonal treats or trying out new recipes can fill your home with delicious aromas and bring a sense of warmth and coziness.
- **GARDENING INDOORS:** You don't have to wait for spring to enjoy the beauty of plants. Indoor gardening, whether it's growing herbs on

your windowsill or caring for houseplants, can improve your environment and give you something to nurture.

5.

PRACTICE MINDFULNESS AND SELF-CARE

Taking care of your mental health starts with being kind to yourself. Mindfulness and self-care activities can help reduce stress, boost mood, and restore balance during the darker months.

- **MEDITATION AND DEEP BREATHING:** Practice mindfulness techniques, such as deep breathing, guided meditation, or journaling. These can help you stay grounded and focused, even when the world feels overwhelming.
- **TAKE RELAXING BATHS:** Treat yourself to a soothing bath with essential oils, bath salts, or candles. This is a simple way to reduce tension and create a cozy, relaxing environment at home.



- **SLEEP HYGIENE:** Ensure you're getting enough rest. A lack of sleep can exacerbate feelings of depression, so create a calming bedtime routine and aim for 7-9 hours of sleep each night.
- **GROUNDING IN MINDFULNESS:** Placing yourself in the moment can reduce symptoms of sadness, including nature walks or even building a snowman.
- **MUSIC:** Identify a genre or a type of music that brings you happiness, makes you feel at ease and at peace. Turn up the tunes and get lost in the melody when you are feeling down.

6.

STAY NOURISHED AND HYDRATED

What you put into your body can greatly impact how you feel. Eating nutrient-rich foods that support brain health and overall well-being can help keep your mood stable and your energy levels up.

- **EAT MOOD-BOOSTING FOODS:** Incorporate foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids, like salmon, walnuts, and flaxseeds, which support brain function. Whole grains, leafy greens, and foods high in vitamin D (like fortified dairy products) can also help stabilize your mood.

- **STAY HYDRATED:** Dehydration can contribute to fatigue and irritability. Make sure you're drinking enough water throughout the day, especially if you're spending time in heated indoor spaces during the winter months.

7.

CREATE A COZY ENVIRONMENT AT HOME

Sometimes, a little change in your environment can lift your spirits. Creating a space that feels warm, inviting, and comforting can have a big impact on your mental state.

- **LIGHT CANDLES OR USE DIM LIGHTING:** Soft, warm lighting can create a calming atmosphere. Consider using scented candles or string lights to add a touch of cozy ambiance to your home.
- **DECLUTTER YOUR SPACE:** A clean and organized environment can reduce stress and anxiety. Take time to declutter or reorganize your living space to create a more peaceful and inviting atmosphere.

CONCLUSION: TURNING WINTER BLUES INTO BRIGHT DAYS

While the winter months can feel challenging, there are many ways to combat the winter blues and rise from feelings of mental depression. Whether it's by spending time outdoors, nurturing hobbies, engaging in physical activity, or surrounding yourself with loved ones, you have the power to boost your mood and enhance your well-being.

Preventing seasonal depression in the future can be as simple as planning fun activities, keeping a regular routine, and prioritizing self-care. Remember that you deserve to feel joy, no matter the season—so take small, intentional steps to brighten your days and keep the winter blues at bay. You've got this! **W**

CULTIVATING AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS

ACT ON WHAT YOU SAY AND SAY WHAT YOU MEAN

BY DARIS-MILAY ARGUELLES
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
HELLO SOLUTIONS
DARIS.ARGUELLES@HELLOSOLUTIONS.COM





IN TODAY'S fast-paced world, building genuine relationships can often feel like an elusive goal. We interact with so many people, but how many of these relationships truly feel fulfilling and meaningful? The answer lies in cultivating authentic connections — relationships that are based on trust, kindness, and a mutual understanding of each other's true selves.

One of the most important aspects of cultivating such relationships is being clear and intentional with our words. "Act on what you say and say what you mean" should be a guiding principle for anyone hoping to build deep and lasting connections. But how can we do this in a way that invites authentic relationships into our lives rather than draining ones?

THE POWER OF KINDNESS

Kindness is a fundamental ingredient in any relationship. The saying "kindness is free" holds true because it doesn't cost us anything to be kind, yet its impact is immeasurable. Simple acts of kindness — like offering a genuine compliment, listening attentively, or lending a helping hand — can create an environment where trust and connection flourish.

When we approach relationships with kindness, it opens up the possibility for people to feel safe and valued in our presence. This environment of goodwill allows us to speak freely, act authentically, and truly get to know one another. In turn, it makes it much easier to act on what you say and say what you mean, because kindness fosters open communication and mutual respect.

However, kindness should be genuine. People can tell when someone is being kind out of obligation or as a means to an end. Authentic kindness is always rooted in a sincere desire to connect and support others. When kindness is practiced this way, it becomes a bridge to deeper relationships, not a mask to hide behind.

BE YOUR AUTHENTIC SELF FROM THE START

Another key element in cultivating real relationships is to be your authentic self from the very beginning. It's tempting to shape ourselves into

what we think others want to see, but this often leads to relationships that are inauthentic and, eventually, draining. When you aren't being true to yourself, it's difficult to maintain consistency, and you may find yourself exhausted from trying to keep up a facade.

Being authentic doesn't mean laying all your personal details on the table immediately, but it does mean being honest, open, and true to who you are. Whether it's in a professional setting, a friendship, or a romantic relationship, the more you bring your genuine self into the conversation, the more others will feel comfortable doing the same. Authenticity fosters an atmosphere of understanding and acceptance, where both parties can feel supported without the burden of pretense.

By embracing who you really are, you're inviting others to do the same. This encourages the kind of vulnerability that fosters trust and strengthens connections. And as your relationship grows, you'll find that you don't need to



put up walls or wear a mask — the relationship thrives on mutual honesty and the freedom to be yourself.

AVOID RELATIONSHIPS THAT DRAIN YOU

One of the harsh realities of modern life is that not every relationship is going to be fulfilling. Some relationships, no matter how hard we try, end up feeling draining instead of energizing. This is where practicing honesty with yourself becomes crucial. If you find that a relationship constantly leaves you feeling exhausted, unappreciated, or misunderstood, it may be time to reevaluate its worth in your life.

A healthy relationship should provide mutual support, growth, and joy. If the relationship feels more like a burden, it might be time to set boundaries, or even walk away. Being authentic from the start means not allowing yourself to be

part of relationships that compromise your values, well-being, or happiness. Sometimes, we have to recognize when a relationship isn't serving us or the other person, and release ourselves from it to make room for more positive connections.

CONCLUSION

Cultivating meaningful relationships requires us to align our words and actions. When we *act on what we say and say what we mean*, it creates a foundation of trust. Adding kindness into the mix creates an atmosphere of openness, and being authentic from the very beginning allows us to cultivate relationships that bring joy, support, and growth. In doing so, we can foster connections that are healthy, fulfilling, and true to who we really are. After all, kindness is free, and being your authentic self is the best gift you can give to others and yourself. **W**

