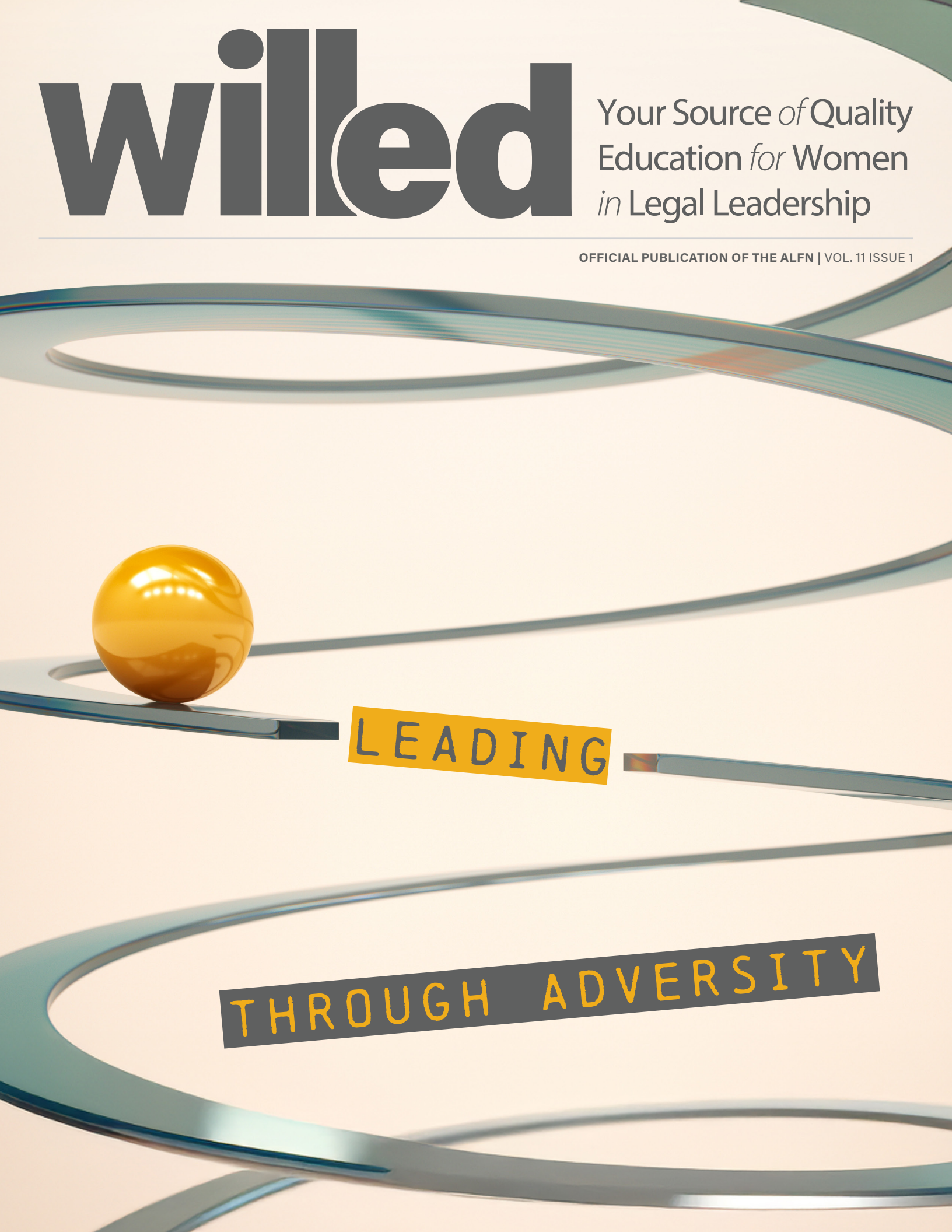
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Letter from the Editor: *In Transition*



Dear Readers,

It's truly a privilege to return as WILLed Editor and to collaborate once again with the incredible ALFN Women in Legal Leadership (WILL). Stepping back into this role feels like coming home, and I am consistently moved by the resilience, grit and strength within this community. This issue, centered on the theme of Leading Through Adversity, feels particularly timely as we continue to navigate a legal landscape that often feels like it's shifting beneath our feet.

In the pages ahead, our contributors are incredibly open about their own experiences with transition and leadership, including a powerful piece by Andrea Tromberg. Andrea takes us through her deeply personal journey of building a firm as a criminal defense lawyer only to face a necessary, and at times "slow and painful," professional pivot. She reminds us that true reinvention isn't simply starting over but rather building upon the experience we've already gained.

Following that theme, Julia Keys explores her perspective on leading through uncertainty. Julia argues that in an unsettled world, leadership is less about maintaining a tight grip of control and more about providing a sense of steadiness for those around you.

Finally, we tackle one of the most pressing challenges of our modern era: managing team morale in the age of AI written by Ben M. Schorr. Ben dives into how leaders can ensure technology is viewed as an ally rather than an adversary, shifting the firm's culture so that AI is embraced as a positive tool for growth.

While adversity is never easy, it has a unique way of having us refocus on what really matters and reminds us of the resilience we've built along the way. We hope these stories provide you with tools, confidence and the "willingness to be bold" that Andrea describes so well.

I'm so grateful to be back in this space with all of you. Enjoy the issue!

Maggie Garden

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Letter from the Editor: *In Reflection*



Periods of uncertainty have a way of revealing what leadership really looks like.

In the theme of this issue, Leading Through Adversity, our contributors explore what it means to rebuild, to lead through instability, and to guide teams forward when the path ahead is anything but clear. While their perspectives come from different professional angles, each piece speaks to a shared truth: meaningful progress is rarely a straight path, and sustainable success often emerges from moments that require patience, humility, and courage.

Andrea Tromberg's Starting Over and Making It Work: My Story of Overcoming Adversity reminds us that career paths are not always defined by flawless decisions or uninterrupted momentum. Her story of rebuilding, personally and professionally, underscores an important reality many leaders quietly share, that starting over is not failure. It is often the result of responding thoughtfully to life's demands, reassessing sustainability, and choosing long-term stability over short-term pride. Her journey illustrates that resilience is not a single act, but a series of deliberate choices made over time.

That same theme of steadiness in uncertainty continues in Leading Through Uncertainty: Keeping Teams Grounded When Everything Feels Unsettled by Julia Keys. In industries shaped by constant change, silence and avoidance can diminish trust just as quickly as poor decisions. This article reinforces the importance of acknowledging what teams already feel, communicating consistently, and creating emotional and operational stability, even when answers are incomplete. Leadership, particularly in unsettled environments, is less about projecting certainty and more about fostering trust.

Taken together, these articles offer a clear message: effective leadership is rooted in transparency, adaptability, and empathy. Whether navigating personal transitions, guiding teams through market instability, or introducing transformative technology, leaders set the tone by how they respond, not just to success, but to uncertainty.

We hope this issue encourages reflection, conversation, and confidence as you continue leading through change.

Susan G. Page

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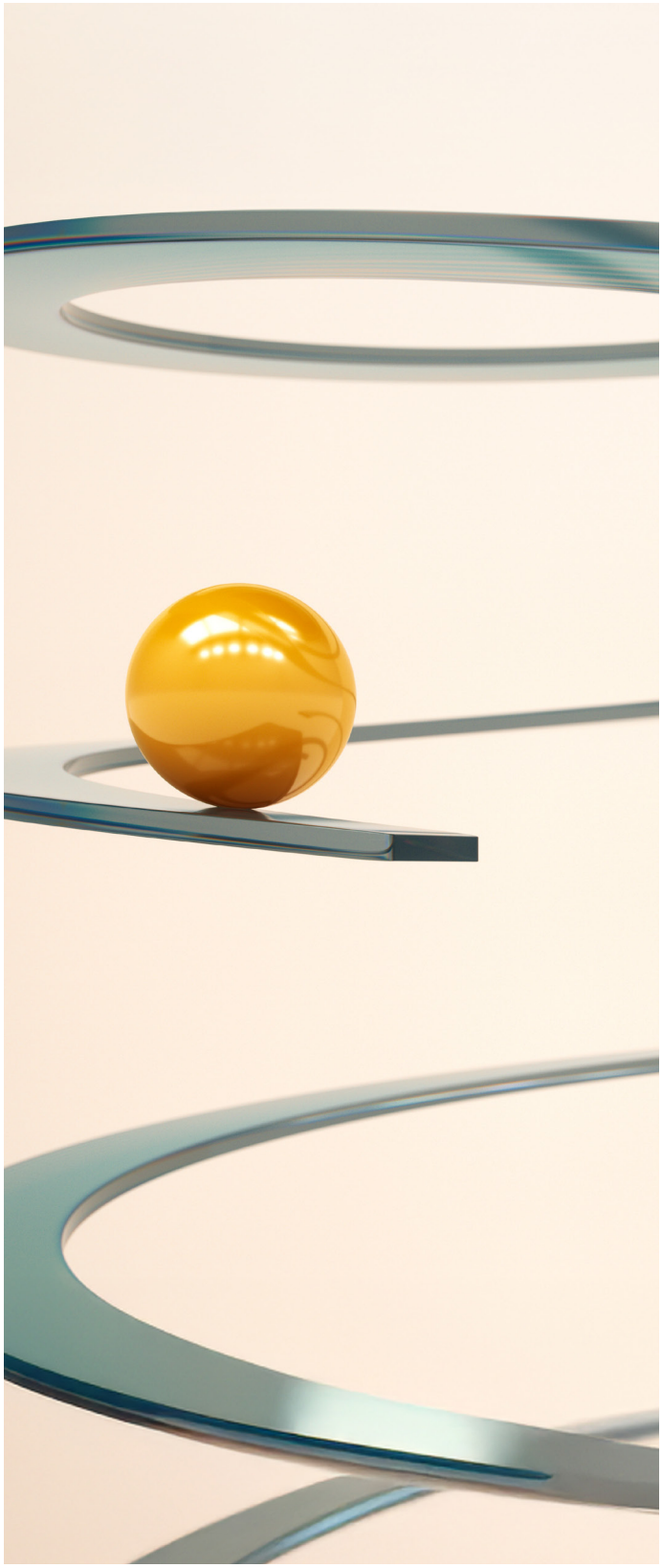
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Starting Over and Making It Work

My Story of Overcoming Adversity



By ANDREA TROMBERG, ESQ.
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Successful careers *are often described as though they unfold according to a carefully crafted plan, moving steadily from one achievement to the next without adversity. The reality is that many great careers are shaped by disruption, surprises, personal challenges, and the need to make tough decisions at moments when there is no clear roadmap. My own professional path has required rebuilding myself, my business, and career more than once, not because of poor choices, but because of life situations and adversities.*

Going back almost 30 years, to the beginning of my career, I practiced solely criminal defense law. I built my own firm and represented clients in serious and difficult cases. The work was demanding, meaningful, and deeply consuming. At that time, I had every reason to believe that this would be the work I would practice for the rest of my professional life.

Ten years into my career, my personal circumstances changed dramatically. I was going through a difficult divorce in my thirties, raising three young children, and practically on my own financially. Criminal practice required long hours, unpredictable schedules, frequent visits to jails and unpredictable fees. Over time, it became clear that the demands of that work were no longer practical. The issue was not commitment or capability. It was sustainability.

Deciding to step away from a practice I had built was a difficult professional decision to make. It meant walking away from independence and familiarity in favor of stability. I took a traditional position in a law firm to ensure reliable income, health insurance, and a more predictable schedule. That choice required setting aside pride and accepting that a step back professionally and financially was necessary to move forward.

I shifted into civil law and began working in appeals and other unfamiliar practice areas. I moved between firms and learned new disciplines, often in environments where I was the most experienced attorney in the room but knew the least. That period was humbling, but it was also formative. It reinforced the importance of being willing to learn, adapt, and rebuilding credibility over time.

Reinvention *or change feels like starting over, but the truth is, each change is built on experience, good decisions, and resilience earned from prior adversity.*

Eventually, I entered the foreclosure space as an associate. Progress came gradually. I advanced to a lead position, then to managing partner. But it was always in me to be a more meaningful owner and build something great. After a few years of negotiating and quite honestly some large financial risks, I bought the firm that became Tromberg Law Group. While the outcome of owning my own firm may appear decisive in hindsight, the process was slow and painful, and required patience, consistency, and a willingness to be bold at every level.



Running the firm did not come without challenges. Like many law firms in our industry, we were tested daily. Operational uncertainty, client challenges, staffing issues, and rapid decision making became part of daily leadership. At the same time, personal responsibilities continued. I was still raising three children and now had remarried bringing in two stepchildren. Often times there was no clear separation between professional and personal demands, and no pause button for either.

During those moments, I learned the importance of stepping back rather than reacting. Each time circumstances shifted, I had to evaluate what was realistic, what mattered most, and how to adjust accordingly. The most important question I learned to ask was not what had gone wrong, but what could I do next to make it better. That perspective made it possible to move forward without becoming consumed by frustration or fear. Most importantly, and honestly, it helped me to not just have a nervous breakdown at times.

Another important lesson I learned, which helped me succeed, was how I viewed others in the industry. Earlier in my career, competition felt intense and critical. Over time, collaboration became far more valuable. Building relationships with colleagues, peers, and mentors created opportunities for shared problem solving and support. Those relationships proved especially important during periods of transition, when perspective and experience mattered as much as industry knowledge.

While the outcome *of owning my own firm may appear decisive in hindsight, the process was slow and painful, and required patience, consistency, and a willingness to be bold at every level.*

Organizations such as ALFN played a significant role in maintaining that sense of professional connection. Being part of a broader community helped keep my work visible and provided opportunities to engage, learn, and contribute even during periods of change. That continuity matters more than it is often given credit for, particularly when you are building your dream.

would pay off hugely if I could stabilize with another line of business but fail miserably if the cost to merge and negative potential impacts were too high. Looking back, the common thread through each transition or risk has been a willingness to take on big projects without losing confidence or being overcome by fear.

Reinvention or change feels like starting over,



Growth did not end there, because if you sit on your laurels and assume the business will just be there, it could not be farther from the truth. Every couple of years, I had to stop, assess, and rebuild to keep up. COVID brought a challenge to the world, but for me, it forced me to consider another reinvention. Definitely not easy to do when the industry that feeds you is on pause, but adversity rarely arrives at a convenient time. It forces decisions that are uncomfortable and often imperfect. Between holds on Florida files from storms and COVID, something needed to change.

It was at that time; I took a bold step and entered into a merger with a collections firm. This risk

but the truth is, each change is built on experience, good decisions, and resilience earned from prior adversity. Later, I would take that bold step again with a second merger, catapulting the firm into a larger and stronger force in the industry.

My story is not over, and adversities continue to show up at every corner. But I have learned pivoting and having to change is not a sign of failure. In many cases, it is simply part of building something that lasts, which is better, stronger, and more impressive. Do not let roadblocks stop you from success or feel bad for yourself. Take on adversity, do something bold, scary, and out of your comfort zone. Go on that ugly path, and at the end, you will find success. W

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BY JULIA KEYS
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MORTGAGE SERVICING and default servicing have always operated inside cycles, regulatory shifts, interest rate changes, and economic uncertainties are not new to this industry. The past few years have felt especially heavy. Market slowdowns, staffing pressures, regulatory scrutiny, investor expectations, and rapid technological changes have all converged at once.

Many servicing professionals carry more than just a workload; they also have emotional weight. Concerns about job security, increasing automation, shifting portfolios, and compliance risk sit quietly beneath the surface of daily operations. Even strong, experienced teams can begin to feel unsettled when so much feels outside of their control.

The role of leadership in moments like this is not to pretend everything is fine. It is to create enough emotional and operational stability that people can continue to perform critical work effectively, even when the future feels uncertain.

Here is what that looks like in practice inside mortgage servicing and default environments.

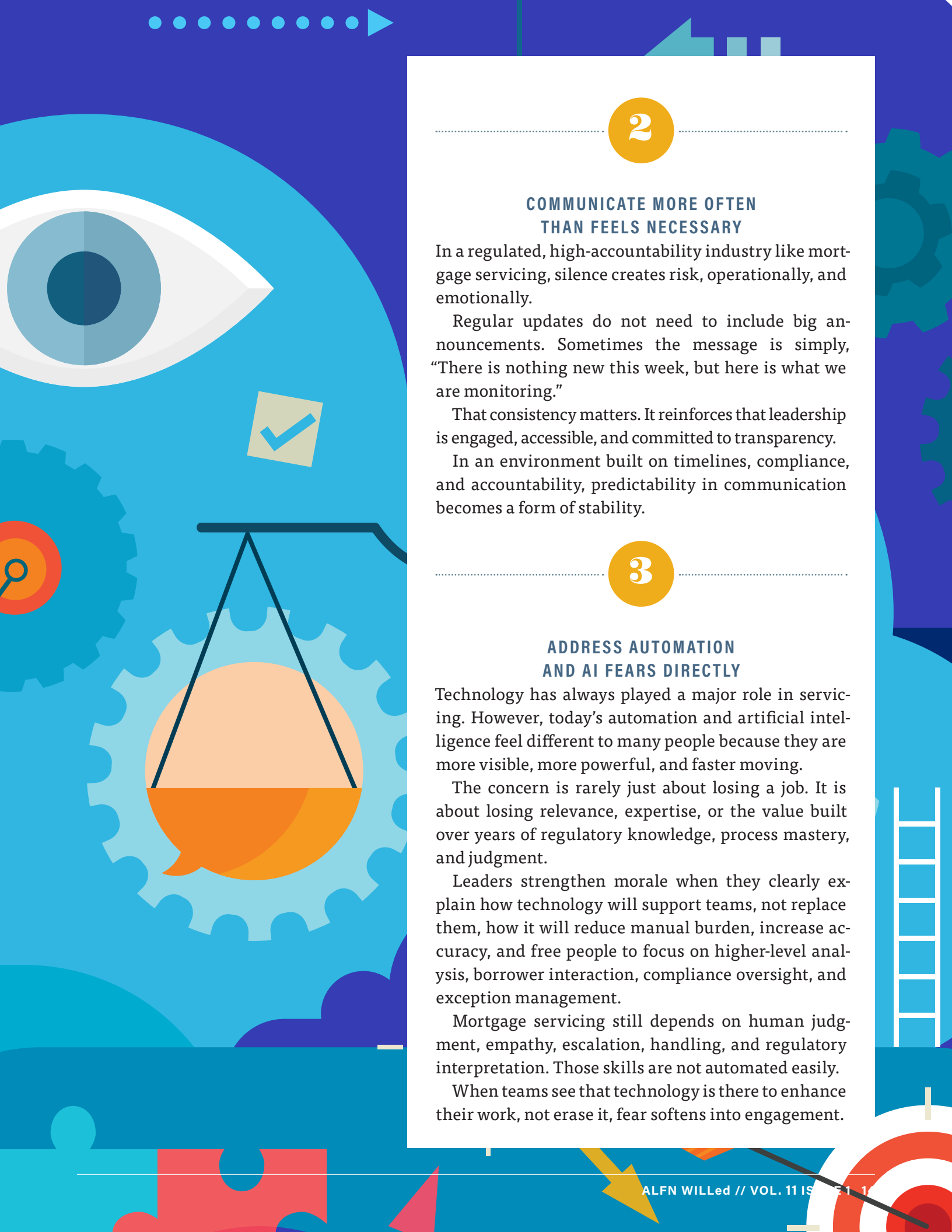
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NAME THE UNCERTAINTY INSTEAD OF PRETENDING IT IS NOT THERE

Servicing professionals are highly attuned to volume shifts, investor changes, regulatory updates, and staffing signals. They notice when things feel different. When leadership avoids naming what is happening, people do not feel protected; they feel disconnected.

A simple acknowledgment like, "We know volumes are shifting, we know the market feels unpredictable, and we know that creates anxiety," immediately lowers tension. It tells teams that leadership is aware, realistic, and paying attention. This also validates and normalizes any unwanted emotions that may accompany ambiguities.

That awareness builds trust. And trust is what keeps teams steady during change.



2

COMMUNICATE MORE OFTEN THAN FEELS NECESSARY

In a regulated, high-accountability industry like mortgage servicing, silence creates risk, operationally, and emotionally.

Regular updates do not need to include big announcements. Sometimes the message is simply, "There is nothing new this week, but here is what we are monitoring."

That consistency matters. It reinforces that leadership is engaged, accessible, and committed to transparency.

In an environment built on timelines, compliance, and accountability, predictability in communication becomes a form of stability.

3

ADDRESS AUTOMATION AND AI FEARS DIRECTLY

Technology has always played a major role in servicing. However, today's automation and artificial intelligence feel different to many people because they are more visible, more powerful, and faster moving.

The concern is rarely just about losing a job. It is about losing relevance, expertise, or the value built over years of regulatory knowledge, process mastery, and judgment.

Leaders strengthen morale when they clearly explain how technology will support teams, not replace them, how it will reduce manual burden, increase accuracy, and free people to focus on higher-level analysis, borrower interaction, compliance oversight, and exception management.

Mortgage servicing still depends on human judgment, empathy, escalation, handling, and regulatory interpretation. Those skills are not automated easily.

When teams see that technology is there to enhance their work, not erase it, fear softens into engagement.



4

REINFORCE STRUCTURE DURING UNSTABLE PERIODS

Servicing professionals operate inside structured frameworks for a reason; timelines, workflows, quality control, audits, and reporting protect both borrowers and institutions.

When external conditions feel unstable, reinforcing internal structure becomes grounding.

Clear responsibilities, consistent workflows, defined escalation paths, and predictable reporting cycles give teams something reliable to anchor to.

Structure does not remove uncertainty, but it creates safety inside it.

5

RECOGNIZE THE INVISIBLE WORK

In default servicing, especially, much of the work is quiet, complex, and emotionally heavy. Preventing errors, catching compliance risks, resolving borrower issues, and navigating regulatory demands often go unnoticed because success means nothing went wrong.

That makes recognition even more important.

Calling out clean audits, strong quality scores, a difficult file resolved well, or a borrower situation handled with care reminds teams that their work matters deeply, even when it is not visible.

That recognition rebuilds momentum and pride. Setting additional goals and opportunities for recognition amongst teams performing at high levels will also increase morale.

6

INVITE FRONTLINE INSIGHT

The people closest to the work often see problems and solutions before leadership does. Giving these individuals a voice is critical to the operation's success.

Asking for input on process improvements, technology pain points, workflow inefficiencies, or compliance risks not only improves operations but also gives people a sense of agency.

When teams feel heard, they feel invested. And invested teams' weather changes far better than disconnected ones.

7

LEAD WITH HUMANITY INSIDE A HIGHLY REGULATED SYSTEM

Mortgage servicing is procedural, but the people doing the work are human.

They manage borrower stress, regulatory pressure, investor expectations, and internal performance demands all at once. That takes emotional energy, not just technical skill.

Leaders who acknowledge this, who listen, who allow flexibility when possible, and who model calm steadiness create psychological safety.

Psychological safety is what allows teams to keep performing at a high level, even when the environment feels uncertain.

Mortgage servicing and default servicing will always be complex. The market will continue to shift. Regulations will evolve. Technology will advance.

What keeps organizations strong through all of it is not just systems and strategies, but people who feel grounded, trusted, and supported enough to do the work well.

In uncertain times, leadership is less about control and more about steadiness. Less about having every answer and more about creating an environment where people can keep showing up, doing meaningful work, and trusting that they are not navigating the uncertainty alone. W

MANAGING TEAM MORALE IN THE AI AGE



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"The factory of the future is going to have two employees: A man and a dog. The dog is there to make sure the man doesn't touch the machines. The man is there to feed the dog."

For as long as there has been automation there has been fear, sometimes justified, among workers that automation was going to mean bad things for their livelihoods. Tasks or even entire jobs might be taken over by machines forcing the workers to adjust if they could. In Western society this problem has been exacerbated by a sense that the benefits of automation almost always accrue to management and ownership, rarely to the worker.

Whereas traditionally automation has come for our muscles – the proliferation of machines on the farm and in the factory – the current wave of automation, AI, is coming for our minds. Knowledge work, long thought untouchable by automation, is now feeling threatened. According to Pew Research about 52% of employees are worried about how AI may be used in the workplace and one-third feel overwhelmed by it.

How can we ensure not only that AI is a net positive for our firm and our people, but that our people see it as an ally and not an adversary?

1. START WITH THE RIGHT GOALS

AI is too often viewed as a cost-cutting tool – a way to do the same amount of work with fewer resources. A lot of the fear that people have about AI is that in fact THEY are the resources you will want fewer of.

Instead, look at AI as a force multiplier, not as a way to cut your costs but as a tool to grow your firm. Look for ways not to do the current work with less, but to do more work with the same resources.

Work with your people to set healthy goals, communicate, and listen transparently. Involve them as much as possible, and work together to **create your next generation firm where everybody can thrive.**



Every reliable estimate is that there is a huge unmet demand for legal services in the marketplace. AI gives our firms an opportunity to grow and serve a larger part of that market, putting our services and expertise in reach for potential clients who have always needed us, but didn't think they could afford us before.

If you approach AI with that mindset, and communicate it to your people, you'll go a long way in reassuring them that AI is going to help them rather than replace them.

2. INVOLVE PEOPLE IN THE PROCESS

It's basic change management: people are more likely to embrace change if they feel like they were instrumental in driving the change, and if they feel like their voices were heard and their concerns were addressed.

When you're forming "AI committees" make sure to include people from all areas of your firm. Be open and transparent about it. Don't just have a group of firm "elites" imposing decisions from a closed room. Encourage feedback and input across the firm, especially from those who might feel the most vulnerable or have the most concerns about what AI might mean for them.

3. WALK THE TALK

One of the things you hear all the time from people pitching AI solutions is, "It will free you up to focus on more meaningful tasks!" But, to the team members that may come off as trite and hand-wavy.

Take the time to work with your team members to figure out exactly what those meaningful tasks are. If there are new tasks for that person, develop a plan to help them develop the skills and tools they need to do them. Make sure they understand what their role is when AI is part of the team, and that they have a hand in designing that role.

TAKING IT FORWARD

AI can feel new and scary to your team, especially if they fear it's going to replace them. Work with your people to set healthy goals, communicate, and listen transparently. Involve them as much as possible, and work together to create your next generation firm where everybody can thrive. W