

# Practical wisdom, trusted advice.

July 2021

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**T**his July, Jill and I will celebrate 20 years of marriage. It's both hard to believe yet totally believable! In some ways, I don't remember what life was like before Jill. We have been together for 25 years — more than half of our lives — and I don't remember any part of my adult life without Jill.

On the other hand, where has the time gone? I feel like it went by in a blink!

As you may remember, our wedding weekend was a whirlwind! I finished the bar exam that week, we got married, and a few days later, we left for our honeymoon. All I could think about was relaxing on the beach with my wife, but a volcano, of all things, stalled our plans. We finally did make it to that beach, though!

Life moved at a faster pace when we returned home.

We moved into a condo that was a good starter spot for us. We wanted to start our family soon after getting married, but we also knew that we would need a bigger home. So, after more than a year of living in the condo, in 2003, we bought our first home in Wilmington.

Shortly after that, Jill was pregnant with Gabby. I can still remember painting Gabby's room. It was pink and purple — the perfect colors for our princess. She was (is) certainly treated like one! That's what happens when you're the first grandchild and great-grandchild.

Mikey was born 16 months after Gabby's arrival, and when he was still a baby, Jill encouraged me to take the biggest leap I



## 20 Years Later

### REFLECTING ON 2 DECADES OF MARRIAGE WITH MY BEST FRIEND

had ever taken: starting my own law firm. To this day, I credit Jill with everything we have built at the firm. Anytime I was hesitant or nervous, Jill would provide her faith in me and support. She always knew I could do it, even when I didn't know if I could. That continues today.

Within the span of five years — the first five years of our marriage at that — Jill and I underwent some major life changes. We bought and moved into our first home, we had two children, and I left a steady job with regular income to hang my shingle on my own practice. It feels like yesterday, but now we have two teenagers who are considering college and my business is growing in ways I could have never expected. We still live in that same Wilmington house, however, and it's been the backdrop for many of our favorite family memories.

As we approached our 20th wedding anniversary, Jill and I knew we wanted to do something special. Since we both love to travel, we decided that the perfect way to celebrate our marriage was to take a trip, just the two of us, to Jamaica!

We have been to Jamaica before, on another one of our rare trips away from the kids. We had the chance to stay in those cool huts in the ocean where parts of the floor are glass. It was relaxing and fun, but after a few days, we both agreed that we missed the kids too much. We rarely travel without them!



Looking ahead at our next 20 years and beyond, Jill and I know we're not destined to be lifelong Bostonians. (It's too cold!) Our dream is to winter someplace warm, along the beach. We plan to travel, too, maybe to see the pyramids or the Great Wall of China.

Regardless, when I think of retirement and old age, I always see Jill. We have gray hair, but we're in our rocking chairs overlooking the beach from our balcony. If the last 20 years have been any indication of what's to come, life can't get much better than that.

Happy anniversary, Jill!

*—Mike Monteforte*

# 3 Business Tricks That Will Improve Your Personal Life

When you're constantly in the "zone" at work, you're not always thinking about what's best for your personal life. While many business owners prioritize balance, what will truly benefit both your home and work life? Check out these three tricks.

## 1: Start your day with a plan.

We know what you're thinking: *Writing out your plan is more work than just doing it.* The key is to plan whenever you can. If you jot down things you want to accomplish the following day as they come up, all you'll need to do is spend a few minutes organizing your list the next morning.

Pro Tip: Remember to include time to unwind and relax!

## 2: Develop new and improved processes.

While certain activities can't be replaced with shortcuts (like spending time with family), consider ways to make your current processes more efficient and beneficial. For example, you can't lose weight if you don't change your diet and exercise.

Adjusting your habits might seem difficult, but there's actually a straightforward method. According to "Atomic Habits" by James Clear, every new habit has a simple formula behind it: motivation, ability, and prompt.



Whether your reminder is an alarm at the same time every day or even another habit ("I'll exercise before I take my morning shower"), make sure it's part of any new process you implement.

## 3: Remember, work is flexible — your personal life isn't.

Bryan G. Dyson, CEO of The Coca-Cola Company, once told his staff, "Imagine life as a game in which you are juggling some five balls in the air. You name them — work, family, health, friends, and spirit — and you are keeping all of these in the air."

In his metaphor, work is a rubber ball. "If you drop it, it will bounce back. But the other four balls are made of glass. If you drop one of these, they will be irrevocably scuffed, marked, nicked, damaged, or even shattered. They will never be the same."

We hope these tips help you protect the "glass balls" in your life!

## Poor Safety Meets Molten Enamel Nothing Cold About These Refrigerators



If you don't know what enamel is, you've probably seen it around: It's the colorful, protective coating that covers tiles and all kinds of fancy cookware. But how does it get on to things? For that, you need heat — enough to melt enamel into a workable, molten-hot liquid. It's dangerous stuff to work with, which means facilities need to provide extensive training, personal protective equipment, and proper maintenance.

The Grand Rapids Refrigerator Company of Grand Rapids, Michigan, had not met its duty in any of those three areas when Harry Adams,

an employee, was working for them in the early 1900s. The company used enamel to line the inside of its refrigerators in a process that involved introducing molten enamel to water, a hardening reaction that had a high potential for disaster.

And disaster struck in November 1906 when, in the course of Adams' normal duties, the holding tank full of molten enamel exploded while he operated it at close distance — at the instruction of his foreman who was overseeing the operation.

It's a miracle that Adams wasn't killed, although he lived in severe pain for the rest of his life. His employer attempted to dodge all responsibility, and Adams was forced into the courts to get some kind of justice. As you can imagine, the judicial system took note of the incident and, after examining everything in detail, came to some groundbreaking conclusions, at least for the day.

The chief one was that Adams' injury could not have been foreseen by an average person, because although he had experience, he lacked understanding of the materials he was working with — an understanding that his employer had not provided.

Molten enamel has similar properties to lava, and an exploding tank full of the stuff is not a hazard anyone should have to deal with in the workplace. The shockwaves of Adams' near-fatal injury have reverberated for over a century now and provide valuable precedence when it comes to the duty employers have to their employees, whether that person has experience or not, which is why even today, when we attend ongoing, yearly safety training, we benefit from the hard lessons learned in *Adams v. Grand Rapids Refrigerator*.

# TAKE A BREAK



## THE BEST TEXAS-STYLE SMOKED BRISKET

Inspired by [AllRecipes.com](https://www.allrecipes.com)

Impress guests at your next barbecue with this perfectly smoked brisket. Plus, you'll have plenty of leftovers!

### Ingredients

- Wood chips
- 1/4 cup paprika
- 1/4 cup white sugar
- 1/4 cup ground cumin
- 1/4 cup cayenne pepper
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup chili powder
- 1/4 cup garlic powder
- 1/4 cup onion powder
- 1/4 cup salt
- 1/4 cup pepper
- 10 lbs brisket

### Directions

1. In a bowl, soak wood chips in water overnight.
2. In a large bowl, mix paprika, white sugar, cumin, cayenne pepper, brown sugar, chili powder, garlic powder, onion powder, salt, and pepper.
3. Rub spice mixture on the brisket and refrigerate for 24 hours.
4. Preheat smoker to 230 F. Drain wood chips and place them in the smoker.
5. Smoke brisket until it has an internal temperature of 165 F.
6. Remove brisket and wrap it in aluminum foil.
7. Smoke brisket further until it reaches an internal temperature of 185 F.

## WHAT'S THE FUTURE OF WORK?

### IN-PERSON, REMOTE, OR HYBRID WORKPLACES

After more than a year of working remotely, the initial excitement of being able to work in your sweats probably wore off long ago. But this stint of remote work has shown many upsides: Productivity has increased. Eliminating the daily commute has been good for the environment, and workers are spending more time with their families, pursuing hobbies, or exercising. Having a more flexible work schedule has also meant there's a better work-life balance for many working parents.

But for all the benefits, there are plenty of downsides, too. Many have struggled to set boundaries as the line between work and home has blurred, leading to overwork and burnout. Others complain about myriad distractions they face while working from home, especially those who don't have a dedicated workspace and are also trying to help their children with virtual schooling. That's not to mention potential tech issues, loneliness or alienation from coworkers, and increased barriers to effective collaboration.

Yet, nearly half of those currently working remotely say they want to continue to do so 1-4 days per week even once it's safe to fully return to the office. That's led many employers to consider a hybrid model that incorporates remote and in-person work options. Publications like *The New York Times* and *Forbes* are touting a hybrid model as the way of the future. But what exactly would this look like?



A productive hybrid work model wouldn't simply mean workers come into the office a few set days a week. The smart approach, says *Forbes* writer Anna Convery-Pelletier, is to have employees come into the office for collaborative tasks and stay at home to work independently on tasks that require sustained focus and deep thinking. In-person meetings are especially good for "brainstorming sessions, introducing new projects, or team-building exercises," Convery-Pelletier says.

This focus on in-person collaboration may also mean that the office will look different when you return. Some businesses are opting to redesign their physical space to accommodate this kind of collaborative in-person work and eliminate costly individual work spaces now replicated at home.

Whatever the future of work holds, many workers will be happy to safely return to their workplaces and see their coworkers in person again, whether full time or just a handful of days a month.



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## Are ‘Tainted’ Jury Pools a Historic Problem? How Do You Get a Fair Trial by Your Peers?

**B**ack in April, the largest legal case of the year wrapped up with a police officer receiving multiple convictions after his actions resulted in the death of a civilian. Heavily publicized from beginning to end, the trial highlighted the difficulties the internet era exacerbates with information, bias, and trial in the court of public opinion. Attorneys had trouble finding appropriate jurors in a pool tainted by media coverage and preconceived notions. But was this really a new dilemma or merely the newest spin on a very old tale?

The American justice system is founded on the concept of offering people fair trials by their peers; this usually means the jury will consist of a reasonably diverse assortment of people representative of the community. Of course, that could mean different things, and attorneys are given leeway in selecting jurors for that reason.

The media has often run antithetical to this principle, so we’ve never really had an American jury formed outside of media influence. After all, a 1995 examination of jury bias by sociologists Brian Breheny and



Elizabeth Kelly of St. John’s University points out that the same men who drafted the Constitution also ran the largest newspapers at the time. Media bias has always been part of the mix.

It became even more pronounced in the live-coverage TV era, as the murder trial of O.J. Simpson exemplified. Just as people had strong opinions going in, they had strong opinions coming out, and not much has changed in the 25 years since — including people’s opinions on the guilt or innocence of the party on trial.

But one thing *can* change: the beliefs of a juror, even one who comes in with preconceived notions. It can be easy to think we know everything the jury does, but following a case in the headlines as we go about our week isn’t the same thing as being in court all day, day after day, going through the nitty-gritty details of a crime with professional, experienced attorneys. The general public just doesn’t have all the information despite what the media provides.

Prejudiced or not, if jurors come in wanting to serve justice, then they can be up to the task if they are willing to focus on the facts and evidence at hand. That’s ultimately what Breheny and Kelly found back in 1995 — and despite the advent of the internet, there’s no reason to think jurors can’t do the same today.