



Vacationing Without Guilt (and Email)

HOW I LEARNED TO DO IT

Years ago, my family and some friends of ours traveled to the Turks and Caicos Islands for a vacation. It's a gorgeous place to visit, so one morning, we all decided to enjoy a relaxing day along the island's white sands and turquoise waters.

The only problem was that, while everyone played in the water and took in the gorgeous view, I stayed on my phone, pacing along the beach and chatting with attorneys back in Massachusetts.

Sadly, this wasn't that uncommon. For years, vacations never really felt like "vacations" for me. I would wake up before my wife and kids just to check my email, and at various points throughout the day, I would return to our hotel room just to check my email — again. I always had my work tools with me, which meant I really worked remotely during each vacation. As my kids got older, they picked up on this habit and often asked why our vacations had to be put on hold while I answered an email.

On this particular trip to Turks and Caicos, I could sense my normally calm, supportive wife becoming a little irritated (understandably so). This was a big trip for us. It cost a lot of money, and we planned to spend time with our children and friends — none of whom had brought their work with them. Luckily, I did put my phone away and spent at least half of my day relaxing on the beach.

I don't let that happen anymore. Vacation guilt is something I have long struggled with, and I know I'm not alone. Vacation guilt can happen to anyone for a variety of reasons, from feeling like you don't deserve a vacation to fearing you will miss out on a big event while you're gone.

Recently, I've written about how much Monteforte Law, P.C., has changed in recent years, and these changes have allowed me to

actually take a vacation. I've learned how to trust my team to take care of problems as they arise. I no longer bring my laptop with me, and I have full faith in my employees to put out the fires that will inevitably come up when I'm gone. Plus, with the addition of Attorney Amanda Wood, I know that if anything major were to happen while



I'm away, our team and clients would have the knowledge and expertise of an attorney available.

Regrettably, I lost a lot of vacation time on my computer in hotel rooms in various cities and beach towns. I wish I had learned sooner the value of unplugging and turning away from work. Now, when I return from

vacation, I actually feel refreshed and recharged. Is this what I was supposed to feel all along?!

Recently, Jill and I took an anniversary trip without the kids. It was the first time we let the kids stay home alone, without a grandparent, while we were gone. So, just as we stepped out the door, my brain began to panic. I looked at Jill and said, "Are we doing the right thing?"



Ultimately, we agreed we had to put this trust in our kids. Plus, our families live close by and so does my marketing expert at the firm, Nicole. If anything were to happen, we knew they would be safe.

And guess what happened? We had the perfect five-day adventure, and the kids were fine. By day five, we were ready to be back home with our kids, and we returned refreshed, with a better mindset. It was just what we needed.

This holiday season, I hope you can (safely) travel without qualms. Put away your email, check out of work, and remember that you deserve a restful vacation. Don't be like me in Turks and Caicos — enjoy the beach while you can, instead.

—Mike Monteforte Jr.

The Next Big Health Secret

Why Seeing an Attorney May Be Good for You!



Consulting with an attorney when you are facing legal trouble allows you to have an advocate and expert in your corner who is fighting for you and your rights. And according to recent studies, it may be good for your health too!

According to NPR, a 2017 study of Veterans Affairs offices in Connecticut and New York found that veterans who saw clinic attorneys reported improved mental health within three months after their initial meetings. Additionally, in Colorado, a five-year survey of 69 patients from 2015 to 2020 found that patients in Medicaid programs who saw attorneys at their clinics had a decrease in the amount of physical health problems they were facing.

While further studies are needed to corroborate this evidence, the message is clear: Finding solutions to your legal concerns through an attorney is healthy!

This idea has led to several states permitting Medicaid patients to use some of their health care dollars toward legal clinical programs.

For example, in Colorado, some chronically ill patients are struggling with immigration issues or problems as a result of losing their jobs in the COVID-19 pandemic. By consulting with lawyers — in addition to psychiatrists, social workers, and medical doctors — patients are lowering their stress levels, improving their physical well-being, and staying closer to their families.

But how does this work? To answer that question, we have to examine the toll stress takes on our bodies. Constant stress, like concerns about visitations or deportation, can cause our bodies to fail. This often leads to headaches, heartburn, a weakened immune system, insomnia, stomach problems, and more. These problems then compound into other issues, causing the body to spiral when intervention isn't possible.

However, when the source of stress is relieved, the side effects are eliminated as well. This can powerfully help people who are facing potentially life-altering legal situations.

So, while your attorney may not be able to perform heart surgery or help alleviate your knee pain, their expertise may be just what you need to feel better in the long run.

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What is libel?

Libel is a method of defamation expressed in print, writing, pictures, signs, effigies, or any communication embodied in physical form. Libel used to refer to things printed in newspapers and other forms of print media, but in our digital world, things like blogs, Twitter posts, and online publications can now be subject to libel lawsuits.

Tabloids have been a reliable source for drama and libel cases for years. Many celebrities have repeatedly sued them for publishing stories with false or untrue allegations. For example, the British tabloid Daily Mail published multiple untrue stories regarding Keira Knightley's weight, claiming she was anorexic. She sued the tabloid for libel and won. J.K. Rowling and Kate Winslet have also successfully sued Daily Mail for libel.

How does slander differ from libel?

Where libel is a physical form of defamation, slander is spoken defamation, whether it be on television, radio, or even just rumors spread around the water cooler at work. Like libel, slanderous statements need to be expressed as fact, not just opinion. Since slander is spoken defamation, it can be much harder to prove than libel. Not only do you have to prove the person said it, but you also have to prove the person was negligent with the truth. Politicians have to prove actual malice in addition to all the other stipulations regarding slander.



Just tell the truth.

If you are ever accused of defamation, the best defense is the truth. If you can prove what you said or wrote was truthful, there is no case. The bottom line is this: The easiest way to avoid defamation lawsuits is by simply telling the truth about people. If you're not sure something is true, don't spread it around. Find out the facts before needlessly ruining someone's reputation. Telling lies and spreading rumors can cost you big in the long run.

TAKE A ***BREAK***



DIY HOLIDAY EGGNOG

Inspired by
TastesBetterFromScratch.com



Ingredients

- 6 egg yolks
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 2 cups milk
- 1/2 tsp nutmeg
- 1 pinch salt
- 1/4 tsp vanilla extract
- Cinnamon and whipped cream, for garnish

Directions

1. In a medium bowl, whisk the egg yolks and sugar until light and creamy. Set aside.
2. In a saucepan over medium heat, stir together the cream, milk, nutmeg, and salt. Bring to a simmer.
3. Add a spoonful of the milk mixture to the egg mixture. Whisk vigorously and repeat, one spoonful at a time.
4. When most of the milk is whisked in, add the egg mixture to the saucepan.
5. Whisk until the liquid thickens slightly or reaches 160 F. Remove from heat and add vanilla extract.
6. Pour the eggnog into a glass container and cover. Refrigerate.
7. When the eggnog has thickened, pour it into glasses, garnish, and enjoy!

SPENDING THE HOLIDAYS ALONE? *BOOST YOUR MOOD WITH THESE TIPS*

Many Americans spend the holidays alone every year, and the pandemic has only made it more difficult for people to see their loved ones, as travel has become more restricted and strenuous.

If you're one of these people who are spending their first holiday season alone this year, here are a few strategies you can try to make the situation a little easier.

Don't hold yourself to the usual standards.

One of the best things about spending the holidays alone is that you can do things your way. You don't have to worry about meeting everyone else's standards. Instead, you only have to make yourself happy. Simply telling yourself that you are not going to have the usual holiday environment can slightly help, but redefining what the holiday means to you can remove a huge weight. Trying new things or looking toward the future are great ways to reduce the stress of spending the holidays alone. Keeping up with old traditions may remind you of what you're missing out on, so it can greatly help to create your own traditions.

Plan ahead.

If you know in advance that you're going to be spending the holidays alone, planning ahead can prevent negative feelings. While being spontaneous can sometimes keep things fresh, it could leave you with a feeling of hopelessness about what to do next. There's no need for your list to be extensive or highly detailed, but even just planning to watch a movie or cook some of your favorite dishes can give you something to look forward to.

Take care of yourself.

Just because you're not seeing people during the holidays does not mean you should forgo your basic needs. Stick to your regular hygiene habits and do not let them get away from you. The same goes for eating and sleeping. Staying clean, well-fed, and well-rested goes a long way toward improving your happiness.

As with all mental health advice, what works for some does not work for everyone. Do what you think will work best for you and help you keep your thoughts happy.





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Slander, Libel, and Defamation What's the Difference?

In a time when attack politics are at the forefront of media and politics, we often hear terms like slander, libel, and defamation. While the First Amendment gives us our freedom of speech, not all speech is protected. It's more important than



ever to understand the difference between slander, libel, and defamation and know how to ensure your speech does not cross into these areas.

What is defamation?

Defamation is the all-encompassing term that describes both slander and libel. When an untrue and damaging statement, *presented as fact*, injures a third party's reputation, it's defamation of character. For example, you can't hurt a person's reputation by simply saying they're annoying; however, saying they participate in illegal activities when they actually do not can be extremely damaging.

It should be noted that you cannot be sued for defamation for simply stating an opinion. However, if the statement is untrue and damages the person's reputation, whether it be written or oral, you could be sued for defamation.

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