

MOTION BEATS MEDITATION

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“At our Firm,
Your Estate Plan
is Not Business,
it’s Personal...”



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“Remember, successful investing is based more on minimizing regret than maximizing gains.”

- Brian Portnoy



As a small business owner, networking is imperative to your growth. It should be seen as an essential part of your weekly, if not daily routine. In all my years of work, I have seen my fair share of people loath the idea, or dread the notion of partaking in it. Quite frankly, this is where attitude must come into play. Ever since I was a child, I knew I was naturally inclined to be ‘social’. I gravitated towards people, so networking was an easy transition. I needed to transition what I did in my personal life into a work environment. Now, don’t get me wrong, I had to ‘hone’ in and learn the do’s and don’ts of professional conversation, but it wasn’t a big leap.

But as it is with any skillset, one can always learn and get better. Here are some tips I have picked up throughout the years, and am happy to share them with you. Heck, may it save years of heartache for some of you! Let’s start with the most helpful one, how to get out of feeling ‘anxious’ when you find yourself in a social setting. Have you ever felt... uncomfortable, almost forced to interact with people at times? Do you ever get stressed feeling like a Used Car Salesman (no offense to my used car salesmen readers out there, just using a common saying 😊)? Here is a simple, yet incredible mind shift for you to apply. The social gathering you are in is not about you! Quite the contrary, make it about the person with whom you are interacting! A lost art, one I do not claim to master by the way, is that of listening! Simply be present and in the moment, truly take the time to hear what your new acquaintance has to say, feel his / her story. You would be amazed at the mutual empathy and respect it generates for both parties.

One interesting thing you will notice, with a little practice, is you will start to enjoy learning about their personal story. Heck, what is the human experience if it isn’t about learning about our fellow man? Not only that, in many instances, it will bring about perspective. We often get so caught up in our daily lives, we tend to forget what other people go through. Personally, it has made me a more grateful person in my daily life. I would even venture to say it will teach you to want to be better.

Here is another tip that has helped tremendously. There is something to be said about the law of karma. Yes, networking should be about expanding your professional outreach. However, for the coming few months, try this approach – be genuinely invested in trying to introduce the right party to the person you just met. He / She needs a new attorney, a more reliable plumber, a good banker. Whatever their “ask” is, make sure to be the one that finds it for them. Once again, having done this countless time for others and expecting nothing in return has been such a gratifying experience. Not only are people thankful, they remember you for the impact and altruistic gesture. What more, it often cost you nothing more than a quick call and an introduction.

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INTRODUCTION

Aaahh, the month of love, the infamous Valentine’s Day! Easy with the eye roll People, take it with good cheer and make the best of it! We always advocate any occasion to spend time with your loved ones. On that note, for you music lovers out there, you have the opportunity to enjoy a very cool musical experience with a group called Candlelight Concert. This group is composed of musical virtuosos that lets you enjoy music in your particular genre, be it – classical, jazz, any Taylor Swift fans out there, or even movie soundtracks by the great composer Hans Zimmer. Trust us, it is worth going to see, we guarantee you will come out inspired!

So far, 2024 has proven to be a bit... calmer than expected. This is a welcome change when you think about it. We have faced many ups and downs as a nation as of late, this is a welcomed change of pace. It is actually in periods of stability that you can aim to achieve a lot as a small business owner. So by all means, keep your head down and keep working!

Enjoy this shortened month and thank you for your continued readership and loyalty. Would it be too much to say... we love you?! 😊

DOES PRIVACY EVEN EXIST ANYMORE?

If you look at the news today, it has become abundantly clear that our obsession with celebrities and their personal lives is... getting out of hand! In January, at the Golden Globes Award, a whole ordeal was made out of Selena Gomez not being able to get a picture with Timothee Chalamet (shoutout to the Netflix movie The King, a great watch!) because his girlfriend Kylie Jenner supposedly turned down the request. How does the media know all this you ask? A purported 'expert' lip reader put it out there. Next thing you know, it made the front news... And yes, I am guilty as charged, I read every word of that article! Stop it, I can feel it, you're 'celebrity obsessed' shaming me!

But in all seriousness, this is one of thousands of examples that happens on a regular basis. Most of us are not celebrities by any stretch of the imagination. Though my YouTube Channel may turn me into a Social Influencer one day, I am not quite there yet. And until that day, private citizen or not, I do not take my privacy for granted. The context of our conversation is strictly pertaining to one's personal life. Now, imagine this being brought out in the context of your finances? What about your family affairs? The list goes on, but the point remains – you should protect your privacy! And such task does not happen by merely wishing upon it, you must take an active role in the matter.

Being an Estate Planning Firm, it is only natural that we discuss privacy in that context. Too many times... and I mean too many times, we have witnessed personal 'dirty' family laundry being aired out in public. As if exposing family relationship dynamics is not bad enough, imagine one's finances becoming public information. Believe us, these type of inquiries does not happen to public figures only. While alive and healthy, do whatever is in your power to prevent any unnecessary divulging of your family affairs to the public arena, aka the Probate Court for our purposes. First and foremost, get your Revocable Living Trust in place.

Not only do your wishes and desires remain confidential, only the involved parties would be able to get a copy of your legal documents. For everyone else, it stays the way it should be – no one else's business! Assuming you have 'sensibilities' among certain family members, you can draft your trust in such a way that neither party may know or need to know what the other received. Is there a specific asset, i.e., classic car or luxury watch; you want to ensure goes to a specific beneficiary? Feel free to write your legal wishes as you envision, it will be the Trustee's job to make sure that happens!

There are countless benefits to a Revocable Living Trust, the goal here is not to go over each one of them. This article is rather to highlight the importance of the role you play in maintaining your family and personal affairs private. Doing so will give you a sense of empowerment. Take it from a firm that has drafted thousands of RLT's, and have seen the long term, beneficial impact it can have on the entire family. Many of us will never have to deal with the heartache of being a celebrity, but it is wise to learn from everything and everyone around you. Protecting your privacy is definitely one of those lessons you should apply.

In a time and age where people tend to overshare, be it on Facebook Instagram, Tik Tok, etc... remember to stay grounded when it comes to the important matters of life. Doing an Estate Plan falls in the important category! Though privacy is not its key benefit, it is one of them, and it works!

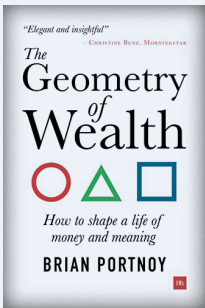
If this doesn't convince you, I encourage you to go to Court one day, a Probate Court to be exact. After all, it's open to the public! The things you'll hear may scare you straight into going to your Estate Planning Attorney. I happen to know of a decent one! 😊

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Here is one last pointer. Many people... pooh pooh (I work hard on my vocabulary People!) the idea of small talk. "What do you do for a living?", "Where do you live?" I mean, if this is how hard you try, let me brutally honest with you... You're boring! If you're doing that, stop it immediately. I have never minded 'small talk', how else are you supposed to get to know someone? On the other hand, I don't start conversations with "Tell me your biggest fear?", I mean, come on! Again, the 'trick', if I can call it that, is simply to be interested and interesting. People will feel your energy and will gravitate towards that. In a social gathering, you will always sense the individual whose energy draws people in, dare to be that person!

Networking will be an important tool not just for 2024, but your entire professional career. There is no point in shying away from it. Take the time to learn it well, you'll be amazed the fulfillment it can actually bring to your career.





BOOK REVIEW – BRIAN PORTNOY: THE GEOMETRY OF WEALTH

As you may know by now, the intersection of law and finances cannot be understated. Having one in order promotes the handling of the other, as it should

be! Thus, this is why we are big on encouraging you to read financial books. You can add *The Geometry of Wealth* to that list! Author Brian Portnoy brings a very fun... angle (pun intended 😊) to this discussion. As you may have guessed, he discusses finances in the context of a circle, triangle and square; for those of you that happen to be geometrically inclined!

Of the many interesting topics discussed, Author Portnoy distinguishes between being rich and being wealthy. It may sound like semantics to most, but that is far from the truth. When studied in depth, he categorizes being rich as an unsatisfying treadmill. Speaking from experience after having represented many affluent individuals through the years, we think he is onto something. We know of many high income earners who indeed, do live a life of luxury by all accounts. However, should they stop working a few months, the speed at which they would reach bankruptcy is nothing short of frightening. There is absolutely no judgment in that. To the contrary, it should be taken as a word of caution and to ensure you keep yourself and family out of that hamster wheel.

The counter to this lifestyle would be wealth, or what Author Portnoy calls funded contentment. That is a very well-coined term. It is not so much about having large amounts of assets, but rather living a life of ... well, contentment; and that is something that can be defined individually. He looks at making financial decisions and having a joyful life as one and the same, not two isolated tasks that should be thought of separately. That is a very powerful concept when you apply it to your spending. This is worth pondering about for a bit of time.

If you are not quite convinced, he takes the reader on a journey by demonstrating his points via various disciplines – from ancient history to neuroscience. Talk about having done your homework! He gives you well thought out arguments to explain how being self-aware in your financial journey may be much more beneficial than being market savvy. He explains how carrying a meaningful life does not necessarily entail a high-end luxurious lifestyle. One should aim for a healthy state of mind and continue striving for goals, but not at the cost of letting that ambition stand in the way of experiencing contentment. The balancing of the two should be the adventure!

Finally, he uses the metaphor of geometrical shapes to help us visualize how to adapt to life circumstances, how to set priorities, and most importantly – finding power in simplicity. All in all, this is a great read and a very original take on some old concepts.

Why do we experience skin hunger?



The biological craving for human contact is known as skin hunger. It explains why newborns are put on their parents' bare chests in neonatal intensive care facilities. Because of this, solitary confinement inmates frequently express needing human interaction as furiously as they do their freedom. Additionally, it explains why many of us may feel depressed, flat, or increasingly sad three months into the lockdown. You can be a lone resident or you might live with flatmates or family in a courteous but remote adult cohabitation where you are next to each other but never touch. You might live with neighbours you don't particularly like. Even if you physically affectionately live with people you love, your need for connection and comfort may feel voracious right now just because life is so difficult.

Your body may begin to make various attempts at establishing contact. It's not just that your body is missing its daily cardiovascular release when you skip your stroll that leaves you grouchy; your mind also lacks its daily dose of greenery. The pressure receptors in your feet are stimulated just by moving around in your room. Your body needs to be supported when you slump into the couch at the end of the day. Remember, the standard teen couch position is full-length on the floor. We typically begin to retreat when our mood is deteriorating. You might have stopped showing your family affection, or you might discover that if someone gives you a hug, you start crying for no apparent reason. These two are both perfectly normal. See what it's like to start reaching out once more. For example, give your mother's arm a squeeze when she brings you a cup of tea or accept a hug from a flatmate you can trust. Be kind to yourself, take baby steps, and monitor your progress.

Conversations are sometimes the first step towards reaching out. If all of your interactions right now are online, you might even notice that a buddy says to you after a pleasant conversation, "I wish I could give you a hug." The notion "but he can't!" may cause sadness in the mind. However, try to take a moment to reflect on your friend's well wishes. Keep an eye on your body's reactions and trust that your hug will come soon.

You might be an only resident or feel too exhausted and flat to reach out to your roommates. Movement that stimulates the receptors in the soles of the feet can be incredibly stimulating and grounded. The phrase "skin hunger" is excellent because it serves as a helpful reminder that, at the moment, feeding our senses is crucial to feeding our minds. It doesn't always take much; sometimes all that's required to make a day better is a well-timed walk. But on the other hand, making regular, small, frequent "skin food" choices while considering what might be helpful – and perhaps being a little courageous by turning the music up louder, just so you can lie on the floor and thoroughly enjoy it – might be something to consider.



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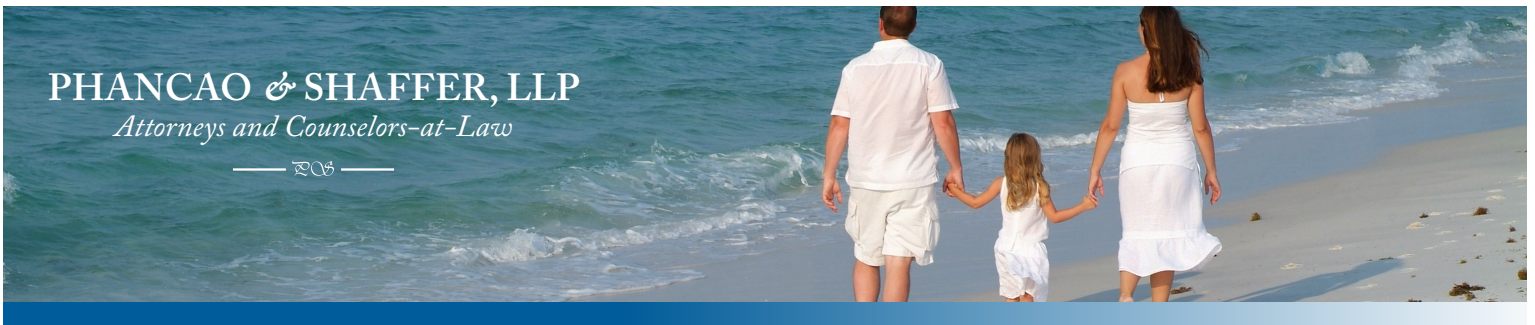


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Every month, we encourage you to live a responsible life. Take care of your estate plan, make sure to earn and save responsibly, keep working hard, etc... Come to think of it, we realize this can seem daunting at times. That is a completely fair assessment. However, we want you to think about it differently. The goal is not simply to attain your personal / financial objectives. Don't get us wrong, each and every achievement is a great thing and should be celebrated! But in the spirit of this month's book review, remember to appreciate the person you are becoming in the process. Be honest with yourself, would you stop working completely if you had sufficient funds to retire? Think about this existential question, you may be surprised at your own response!

For most of us, working gives us a sense of drive and purpose. It gives us a reason to wake up every morning, and it feels good to contribute to society at large. Even when you feel your work may only impact one or two individuals, remember that your contribution changed their world! So in the month of love, we remind you one important lesson, remember not to be so hard on yourself! Happy Valentine's Day!

