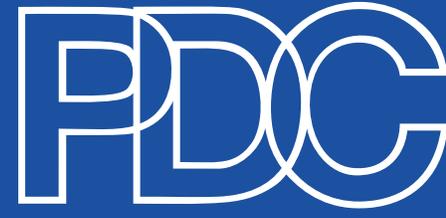


# Linkletter

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONSORTIUM



Spring 2016, Vol. 4, Issue 1

## CHAIR'S NOTE

by Amy Hancock



### Spring Into Renewing Your Own Career Focus and Passion – Let the PDC Help You With Those Efforts!

Spring is here. It's a season of renewal – both physically and metaphorically. This is the time of year "spring cleaning"

efforts get underway – when many of us throw out the old to make way for things refreshing and new. Do you have plans to rid your offices or homes of any unnecessary clutter that may have become a distracting roadblock or obstacle to your productivity lately? What about the mental clutter that's accumulated in your head over the past year? Have you considered doing some philosophical spring cleaning, as well? Maybe it's time to learn more about the helpful mindfulness techniques discussed at our Winter Meeting. Some of us need to reassess and reframe the critical things we've been telling ourselves about our goals and give ourselves a well-deserved pat on the back, instead!

I recently read about a scientific study which concluded that empathetic parents of stressed (or similarly challenged) children had heightened bouts of sicknesses and other debilitating ailments themselves. The empathetic parents had more cell inflammation in their bodies and higher incidences of suppressed immune systems than those in the study's counter cohort. The results of this study remind me of our PDC members and the characteristics that seem innate to our roles - we are empathetic by nature to the plights of our stressed-out

"children" (the attorneys, law students or others in our organizations) whom we serve. The study concluded that these "parents" need adequate amounts of sleep, hydration, proper nutrition and exercise - especially during heightened times of stress for their loved ones and themselves. How many times have we heard these worthy recommendations but still find ourselves sacrificing our needs to meet the deadlines and aid in the challenges of those we serve?!? TOO MANY, my friends! In this season of renewal, let's strive to renew our commitments to *ourselves* and take more time to focus on our own well-being.

I challenge each of us to "spring into action" and take stock of our professional and personal goals during this season of new growth. Take my encouragement literally and [Renew your PDC membership](#) as soon as possible. The PDC is a community that enjoys banding together to help each other grow, thrive and succeed in our professional endeavors. Let us use each other to stay accountable in these efforts. Renew your commitment to your own PD by taking full advantage of your membership benefits and resources. [Register](#) to attend the Summer Conference on July 21-23 in Naples, FL, and remember your PDC community is always here for you through the dynamic website, resource list, webinars and postings on the listserv!

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# PERSEVERING IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY: WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM "THRIVERS"

Joanne Schaefer, Founder, JSchaefer Coaching



**Joanne Schaefer** develops practical training programs and firm-wide wellness strategies to address mental health concerns in lawyers by combining her PD background and personal experience. Joanne's sessions raise awareness and give lawyers effective tools to build resiliency and improve productivity. Working with lawyers individually, Joanne helps craft personal strategies around common career transitions, such as lateral moves, maternity leaves, business development and making partner. Previously, Joanne served as Board Member for the Professional Development Consortium. Joanne is also a certified professional coach and founder of JSchaefer Coaching.

***"When you become comfortable with uncertainty, infinite possibilities open up in your life."***

**- Eckhart Tolle**

Life throws curve balls at us. Hardships we aren't expecting. Events we didn't see coming. Sometimes we get stuff we don't want just because that's the way it is. Big or small, the question isn't *if* we will encounter adversity again, but *how*.

You may not be one of them, but all around us are examples of people who adapt well to adversity. These individuals fall hard but get up strong, making *"lemonade from lemons."* They fit into the extraordinary *"I don't know how they do it"* category. What do *"thrivers"* (people who flourish even when bad things happen) do differently than the rest of us? How do they manage to adapt so well to unplanned (and unwanted) change?

Thrivers work hard to see the world through the lens of *prospective hindsight*. People who adapt well to change understand that, while the event itself may be uncontrollable, the power to regulate a positive response and, in turn, chart a new course is all ours. Acknowledging what's in their way, and redirecting energy and attention to controlling what they do next, they learn how to struggle well.

Accepting a new normal isn't the same thing as being Pollyanna. While a helpful outlook, thriving isn't about believing everything always happens for a reason

or turns out for the best. Thrivers give due respect to the struggle but also choose not to prolong the suffering. Thrivers get to a problem-solving, solution-focused mindset as quickly and as often as possible.

Recent studies in the field of positive psychology and the science of happiness validate the tremendous power of our thoughts, both positive and negative. Personal happiness and contentment are determined not so much by the cards we've been dealt but rather *how* we play them. Genes and life circumstances matter, but so does the way we elect to manage our individual reality. Look to your left and you will see the faces of happy people who descend from a crappy gene pool and have many hardships. Turn right and you will encounter miserable people who have everything they possibly need for success at their doorstep.

There's a dynamic relationship between our thoughts, feelings and actions. Our *explanatory style* (habitual way of explaining good and bad things that happen to us) charts our course. Change your mindset – change your life.

Let's suppose I just got fired from my dream job. If my *go-to* way of explaining life events is negative, the voice in my

head is screaming: *"Idiot. Why did you let that happen? Clearly you're not competent or capable enough to do this job. It figures. Chances like this never come around twice."* You can see how binding the adverse event so closely to my personal skillset disempowers me and leaves me unable to move forward. Jumping to conclusions, personalizing and catastrophic thinking boxes me in, and my fears become reality. I'm now jobless and without self-efficacy.

What's possible if I flex my thinking brain and challenge my inner critic? Under this scenario, imagine I start processing getting fired by suspending my judgment and being curious. *What's going on here? What do the facts tell me? If a camera were recording me, what would show on the screen? If this were happening to my best friend instead of me, what truths would I see? Can what happened be attributed to anything other than my stupidity and incompetence?* While doing this, if I were a thriver, I would allow myself to experience my negative emotions. I would feel anger, angst, fear and grief, and then let them pass. Next, I'd pause and allow some perspective to come in. *"How bad is this? What is my mind chatter telling me? What limiting beliefs are coming into my head? As bad as losing my job might be, is it the end of the world? What's the worst*

*(Continued on Page 3)*

thing that can happen? What's the best outcome? What's most likely going to happen?" With some perspective, I'm now able to reframe my adversity and open the door to action and possibility. "This hurts. I need to work, and I have to start budgeting better, but I know I can find another job. I've done it before, and I can do it again. At least, I now know there are jobs out there that will pay me for doing what I love."

Minding mindset isn't all thrivers do well. They also invest in relationships and build communities of support. In times of hardship, thrivers resist the compelling urge to retreat inward and go it alone. They connect with friends and family, and seek out others with shared experiences.

Thrivers also practice self-care, especially when they don't want to. Eating well, sleeping and exercise are critical elements of well-being, and people who thrive in the face of adversity move and nourish their body, because they know it helps them think better and craft solutions.

People who fall hard and rise strongly also accept and forgive. They accept things as they are – not as they wish them to be. They let go. Most importantly, thrivers forgive others – and themselves.

When adversity strikes again, which path will you choose? Will you be skeptical and stagnate or will you learn and grow? Will you allow adversity to take you wildly off course or will you channel your energy into strategy? Easier said than done, I know. Choosing to be positive when life is unfair and harsh is challenging work, requiring vigilance and continual effort. But it beats the alternative!



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Thank you for your ongoing support!

For questions about renewing your membership, email [info@pdclegal.org](mailto:info@pdclegal.org).



# MENTAL HEALTH IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION

by Karen KH Bell, McCarthy Tétrault LLP



**Karen Bell** is Senior Director, Professional & Client Education at McCarthy Tétrault LLP, a Canadian multi-office firm of 500 lawyers. She is responsible for developing and delivering a broadly based Capabilities Curriculum under the platform McCarthy Tétrault Advance™ for the firm's professionals and clients. She also co-leads the firm's mental health initiative. Before joining McCarthy in 2005, Karen held various roles in law firms driving practice efficiency, knowledge sharing, resilience to risk and business development, drawing from a rich 20-year experience as a large firm business litigator.

## *May is Mental Health Awareness Month. As it's just around the corner, we wanted to showcase some of what we are doing in Canada.*

Let's start with stats: Economists estimate the price tag of mental illness in Canada at \$50 billion, even more in the US, and in the trillions worldwide. 1 in 5 Canadians suffer from some form of mental illness. Compare this to 1 in 4 Americans and 1 in 2 Australians. Wait! The numbers are worse in our profession. In Canada, 1 in 3 lawyers suffer from a mental illness. It is similar in the US according to a recent ABA study, and in Australia as reported by PsychSafe in Queensland.

Why so high for lawyers? Key factors are demanding hours, pace and pressure of our environment; extremely high levels of lawyers' skepticism with low levels of resilience; and entrenched professional overachievement.

Which mental illnesses do lawyers suffer? Mood disorders – primarily depression, anxiety and stress, although addiction, and particularly alcohol dependency, is very high.

There are two barriers to addressing mental illness in our profession – stigma and lack of insight. How will we overcome them?

### **WHAT'S THE PROFESSION DOING IN CANADA?**

#### **Communicating**

Last year, two lawyers in leadership roles risked their reputations and used their platforms to face mental illness head-on. Orlando Da Silva,

as President of the Ontario Bar Association (17,000 members), and Michele Hollins, as National President of the Canadian Bar Association (36,000 members) publicly shared their struggles with depression. We were stunned. It got us thinking. It got us talking. We embraced their stories and some valuable resources.

#### **Building Awareness**

One is an online program entitled Mental Health & Wellness in the Legal Profession produced by our CBA, in partnership with the Mood Disorders Society of Canada and Bell Let's Talk. In 90 minutes, it weaves compelling facts and stories to inform lawyers, judges and students, and their colleagues and families, about mood disorders and addictions, causes, symptoms and treatment options.

#### **Developing Workplace Best Practices**

Another is the *Psychological Health & Safety Standard for the Workplace*. Released in 2014, the Mental Health Commission of Canada, in conjunction with our Canadian Standards Council, identified 16 elements to support a mentally-healthy workplace. While voluntary, a group of some fifty companies are undertaking a three-year project to implement the Standard in their organizations. It is now drawing the attention of law firms. Noteworthy is its mandatory application in Australia, best

described by Rolf Moses, Director, People & Development at Norton Rose Fulbright in Brisbane.

#### **Training Leaders**

Another valuable resource is the result of a partnership among Queens University's Health Faculty, Morneau Shepell (an EAP) and the Bell Canada Mental Health & Anti-Stigma Research Chair. An accredited three-part training program for leaders and managers called the *Mental Health@Work Leadership Certificate Program*, it prepares those who supervise others with the essential knowledge and leadership skills to identify and manage mental health illness, and establish best practices for a psychologically-healthy and safe workplace. 4,000 of Bell's managers, including their in-house lawyers, have completed the 12 hour certification.

#### **ONE FIRM'S PATH**

As you can see, there is momentum in our profession to make mental health a priority. We are part of it. Continue reading for a snapshot of the McCarthy Tétrault initiative to support all members of our Firm in managing mental illness, and promoting mental health.

#### **Building Awareness**

Last fall, our leaders, lawyers and staff alike, shared stories of how mental illness impacts them. With that context, every member of our

*(Continued on Page 5)*

firm is asked to view the CBA Mental Health online program described earlier. Its message is universal, and staff, as well as lawyers and students, have found it valuable. Working with our EAPs, we also offer group workshops on topics such as resilience, mindfulness, care for caregivers, and nutrition, and promote use of their many counselling resources.

### **Communicating**

This January, we participated with our client, Bell, referred to earlier, in their annual national Bell Let's Talk Day fundraising campaign. Using its mobile platform, Bell invited its customers to talk, text, and tweet about breaking the stigma around mental illness. We were among Canadians across the country who sent 126 million such messages and raised over \$6 million.

### **Leader Training**

In June, our Services Leaders and Managers will be taking the Queens University Mental Health@Work Leadership Certificate Program referred to previously.

### **Community Involvement**

During Mental Health Week this May, and Mental Illness Awareness Week later in October, we will participate in a variety of community activities using our legal experience to help those with mental illness navigate the legal system.

### **Workplace Standards**

With our eye on prevention, later this year we will plan a review of how to adapt to the PHS Workplace Standard described previously.

**Has this got you thinking? Consider what your firm will do during Mental Health Awareness month this May!**



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## *Write for the PDC Blog!*

*The PDC now has its own blog, the PDC Link! If you are interested in writing for the blog, contact Sally Burroughs at [sburroughs@pdclegal.org](mailto:sburroughs@pdclegal.org), or visit the PDC Link page on our website for more details.*

[www.pdclegal.org](http://www.pdclegal.org)

# LOCAL GROUP SPOTLIGHT: Chicago

The Local Group Spotlight focuses on the work being done at the local level by members of the PDC. If your local group is interested in featuring its programs in an upcoming issue of the Linkletter, contact Sally Burroughs at [sburroughs@pdclegal.org](mailto:sburroughs@pdclegal.org).



**Local Group Leader: Lewis Check,**  
North America Professional Development Manager, Baker & McKenzie LLP

In this issue, we highlight the Chicago Local Group. With more than 75 PD professionals working in law firms, government agencies, in-house legal departments, and legal associations, the Chicago group is a valuable resource for any PD professional in the Chicago area. Continue reading to learn more!

## **How often does the group meet?**

The Chicago PDC group meets every other month throughout the year, and we feature a PD presentation at each meeting, either by an outside consultant or by Chicago group members.

## **What are some recent topics the Chicago group has covered?**

Recently, Sue Schoenfeld (a former PDC member) and Natalie Loeb, of Loeb Consulting, gave a comprehensive presentation on the DISC assessment and provided the assessment for the Chicago attendees.

In January of this year, Ann Hopkins Avery (Chicago Local Group and PDC member) co-presented a workshop with her Women To Know colleague, Jennifer Schwartz, focusing on innovative goal setting and how to enroll the advisors and sponsors that women need to reach the next level of their careers. In our upcoming March meeting, Jon Krop of Mindfulness for Lawyers will be presenting on what mindfulness really is, reviewing the fast-growing scientific evidence of its benefits, and offering a taste of the practice itself with interactive exercises.

## **How do people join and participate in the Chicago Local Group**

In addition to the Chicago meetings, members communicate through a members-only Yahoo Groups (listserv). Membership is not open to consultants, or to PD vendors. Those interested in joining the Chicago group should contact Lew Check, the current chair of the Chicago group, at [lewis.check@bakermckenzie.com](mailto:lewis.check@bakermckenzie.com).



# THE PDC SUMMER CONFERENCE: Naples, Florida



## JOIN US FOR THE 2016 SUMMER CONFERENCE!

The 2016 Summer Conference will be held at the Ritz Carlton Golf Resort in Naples, FL. This year's conference highlights sessions on understanding adult learners, mentoring, retention, leadership and much more! For a complete agenda, visit the [conference page](#) on the PDC Website.

**[REGISTER TODAY!](#)**

### THURSDAY, JULY 21

- **New Member & First-Time Attendee Welcome Reception**
- **Welcome & Opening Remarks**
- **Keynote: Cialdini's six Patterns of Influence**
- **Concurrent Sessions**
  - Session A: Understanding What Drives the Adult Learner to Enhance Learning Outcomes
  - Session B: Being the Boss and Other Four Letter Words
- **PDC Talks**
  - How to Transition from Subject Matter Expert to Thought Leader in Your Firm and Industry
  - Establishing an Effective System of Mentors to Develop Attorney Resilience
- **Concurrent Sessions**
  - Session A: Balancing Passion and Perspective in the Legal Industry – A Mindfulness Approach
  - Session B: Creating Successful Succession Plans
- **Welcome Reception**
- **Large Group Dinner – Dinner Cruise in Naples Bay**

### FRIDAY, JULY 22

- **Plenary: You Don't Have a Retention Problem, You Have a Context Problem – Shifting Paradigms to Improve Retention**
- **Concurrent Sessions**
  - Session A: Client-Centric Advocates
  - Session B: The Myths and Truths of Cross-Selling

*(Continued on Page 8)*

- **Lunch**
- **Concurrent Sessions**
  - Session A: Color Accounting for Attorneys
  - Session B: The Speaker's Society: Helping Your Lawyers Help Themselves and Each Other Be Better Speakers
- **Roundtable Discussions**
- **PDC Talks**
  - Thriving in Law: Your Blueprint for Burnout Prevention
  - Loving What You Do: A Slightly Torturous Life Lesson
- **Small Group Dinners**

## SATURDAY, JULY 23

- **PDC Annual Membership Meeting**
- **Concurrent Sessions**
  - Session A: Instilling Habits – Teaching Writing Skills, Not Just Rules
  - Session B: Making Lemons into Lemonade – The Psychology of Neutralizing Lawyer Negativity
- **Plenary - Jump Start Your Leadership Presence**



## **ANNUAL GROUP DINNER – SUNSET CRUISE ON NAPLES BAY**

Our annual group dinner offers the perfect opportunity for PDC members to catch up with colleagues and make new connections during the Summer Conference. This year, our annual group dinner will take place on Naples Bay aboard the Naples Princess Yacht. Take in views of the sunset over the Gulf of Mexico while enjoying a reception and dinner with your colleagues. Members are able to register for this event during the conference registration process.