

LESSONS LEARNED

5 Things I Learned During the Pandemic

March, April, and May of 2020 will never be forgotten. The world experienced a pandemic the likes of which we have not seen since the 1918 Spanish Flu. Now, as we struggle to recover in the midst of fears of a second wave of infections, it's clear that we are not out of the woods yet. It's during trying times that we learn the most about ourselves. Here are some of the things I've learned over the last few months about myself.

1) I am not as brave as I thought I was.

I have always thought of myself as someone who doesn't panic easily and can keep a calm and steady hand in tough situations. I can tell you that during this pandemic, I have been anything but cool. Simply put, COVID-19 scared the crap out of me. Over the first few weeks, I spent half of my time worried about catching and transmitting the virus, and the other half fretting about how I was going to keep my business afloat. The real possibility of losing everything, including my health and life, terrified me to the core. At times, it paralyzed me and prevented me from doing any real productive work. I pulled out of it after a few weeks, but I was very disappointed in myself that I had let myself become so fearful.

2) Social distancing sucks!

I never realized what a touchy-feely guy I was. Maybe it's my Italian upbringing, but I miss a good handshake, a big hug, a kiss, an embrace, and all those physical reminders that we are alive and connected to one another. Social distancing may have been the right move to stem the spread of the virus, but it means that handshakes and casual hugs may be gone forever. That makes me sad.

3) Kindness is the most admirable human trait.

Never in my life has there been a situation where the statement "We are all in this together" was literally true. With the economic destruction caused by the virus and the fear of illness and death permeating our society, people's true characters quickly rose to the surface and became visible. One thing that struck me is the level of kindness I witnessed by my fellow citizens. Strangers found so many different ways to help strangers. We saw people shopping for the elderly, cheering on front line health care workers at shift changes, making masks at home to donate, and even closed restaurants making meals for the homeless and homebound. I was blown away by how people were rallying to help. It was uplifting and truly restored my faith in humankind. There are many good personality traits we should applaud, but to me, none is more admirable or important as simple kindness.

4) The most essential jobs in our society are some of the lowest paying and are often the least appreciated.

The truly essential jobs in our society are not often the ones with big salaries. Bankers, lawyers, and Wall Street executives weren't the people we looked to during the national emergency. When we were all told to hunker down to protect ourselves, there were countless essential employees who still had to put themselves at risk, going out into the world to make sure everything kept moving. I found myself saying heartfelt thank-yous to the mail carrier on my street, the cashiers at Market Basket, the gas station attendant, my auto mechanic, and my plumber who made sure that when my hot water heater decided to die, my family could have hot showers within



hours. I have friends who are nurses on the front lines, and I am in awe of their selfless and tireless dedication to helping others. Without these people, our suffering would have been immeasurably worse. To all of them, I say thank you. As a nation, we are eternally grateful.

5) Life can change in the blink of an eye.

This lesson surprised me. Several years ago my law partner and dear friend died of a heart attack and I was diagnosed with cancer within two weeks of his death. These challenges tested what I was made of and forced me to grapple with my own mortality. But the COVID-19 pandemic tested me even more harshly. I knew my own life could change in an instant. I could get into an accident, become ill, or even exit this world completely. But these were things that could happen to me personally. It was terrifying to realize that I could lose my wife, my son, or my daughter to the virus. COVID-19 made me acutely aware of not just my own mortality, but the mortality of those I love. I had been acting as if tomorrow was a given. Not anymore! Life can change so rapidly. We cannot take the time we have with our loved ones for granted.

I learned many things about myself over these last several months. Not all of them were good things, but they are all worth knowing. Learning these things about myself and about our world has given me valuable tools for moving forward. We will come out of this undoubtedly deeply scarred, but not beaten.

—Len Spada

WORKERS' COMP AND COVID-19

CAN I FILE A CLAIM IF I CONTRACTED THE VIRUS AT WORK?

If you are injured on the job while performing duties associated with your job, then you probably have a strong workers' compensation case. But what if you contract an illness while on the job? Illnesses and workers' comp cases are traditionally more complex. You probably can't file workers' comp after catching the flu from a coworker, but a coal miner suffering from lung disease after years of breathing in coal dust certainly has a case. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, many employees are wondering what rights they have should they be infected with the virus while on the job.

Under Massachusetts workers' compensation law, a "[p]ersonal injury" includes infectious or contagious diseases if the nature of the employment is such that the hazard of contracting such diseases by an employee is inherent in the employment." This means that in order to claim workers' comp after contracting COVID-19, exposure to the virus must be *part* of your job. This is different from contracting the virus *while* at your job. There are two Massachusetts cases that highlight the difference between these circumstances.

Perron's Case from 1949 is a famous workers' comp case. This case was filed by a nurse who worked in the tuberculosis (TB) ward of a hospital and contracted TB from a patient. The court ruled that "[t]here was sufficient evidence of causal connection between the employment and the tuberculosis contracted by the employee to warrant a finding of the board that the disease arose out of and in the course of her employment." Basically, exposure to TB was *part* of that nurse's job, and she was entitled to workers' comp benefits.

Another case that involved TB exposure was Lussier v. Sadler Bros. In this case, a stitcher contracted TB from a fellow employee at work. However, the stitcher's job and the shop where she worked had nothing



to do with providing health care services. Unfortunately, as it may be, in this situation the stitcher simply contracted TB *while* at her job. For this reason, the Reviewing Board denied her claim.

Using these two cases as examples, we suspect that health care workers and first responders who contract COVID-19 may have stronger grounds for filing a workers' comp case. That said, some states have proposed new laws to expand workers' comp protections to all employees deemed "essential." If you couldn't work or needed medical care after contracting COVID-19 and would like to find out if you're covered by workers' comp, then please call Spada Law Group at 617.889.5000 for a free telephone or teleconference consultation.

REVIEW OF THE MONTH

"First and foremost, the women that helped me through the horrible accidents I had could not be more helpful and compassionate. The most important thing to me is that I was dealing with caring, compassionate people. Robyn, who handled my case, worked hard to get me the money that I deserved."

"Before seeing Spada Law Group, I had gone to a lawyer who not only lost a case but also made me feel like I was not worth the effort. Robyn not only took on that case but also retrieved the funds I had coming to me with care and compassion."

"That, to me, made me want to let people know that if you are having trouble finding a good law firm, go to Spada and ask for Leonor, who is the

receptionist and the woman who interviewed me. Leonor is caring and made my interview so comfortable. No matter what the case was, the two girls saw me through a period of hard times and supported me through that difficult time. I thank you, Robyn and Leonor! You women work hard for your money with compassion that is rare to find and much to be treasured. I would also like to mention Mikeyla, who was so pleasant whenever I called. Thank you, Mikeyla, for being so helpful."

—Linda F.



Can You Help With My Divorce?

Resources Beyond Personal Injury

At Spada Law Group, we specialize in handling personal injury cases. If someone has been hurt in an accident caused by another person's negligence, then we have the resources to help our clients seek justice. However, while this is the area of law we practice, we recognize that during these days of uncertainty, you might have questions that involve areas of law we do not handle. Rest assured that even if your legal question does not involve personal injury, we're prepared to help in any way we can at this time.

As practicing lawyers for almost 30 years, we have made close contacts and friendships with some amazing lawyers in many different practice areas. The lawyers that we routinely refer clients to provide services that we do not. Finding a new lawyer can be extremely intimidating, which is why we're glad to get our clients in contact with attorneys we trust who can handle the cases we can't take on. Here are a few areas of law we are frequently asked about that we are able to help our clients with by making a trusted personal referral:

- **CRIMINAL** — All state and federal charges, including OUI defense and domestic violence charges

- **BANKRUPTCY** — Personal and business bankruptcy issues
- **ESTATE PLANNING** — Wills, trusts, elder law, Medicaid MassHealth applications for long-term care, and probate matters
- **IMMIGRATION LAW**
- **FAMILY LAW** — Divorce, child support, and modifications
- **BUSINESS LAW**
- **REAL ESTATE**

If you have any pressing legal questions, then here is our promise to you: If we cannot answer your question ourselves, then we will immediately put you in touch with a colleague who handles that area of law — a colleague we know and trust. We promise to follow through and ensure that the lawyer we refer you to is responsive and that you are satisfied with their efforts.

During these difficult times, we still want to be a resource to our clients. We have associated attorneys in many areas of the law that have proven their value and expertise to us over many years. Let us help you get in touch with them.



Inspired by [CookieAndKate.com](#)

INGREDIENTS

- 2 oz Maifun brown rice noodles
- 1 tsp toasted sesame oil
- 1/4 tsp fine sea salt
- 1/4 cup green onions, thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup roughly chopped fresh cilantro
- 1/4 cup roughly chopped fresh mint
- 1 cup torn butter lettuce, ribs removed
- 1 cup very thinly sliced red cabbage
- 2 medium carrots, peeled and cut into matchsticks
- 2 Persian (mini) cucumbers, thinly sliced
- 2 medium jalapeños, ribs and seeds removed, thinly sliced
- 8 sheets rice paper (spring roll wrappers)

DIRECTIONS

1. In a medium pot, cook noodles according to package directions until al dente. Turn off heat, drain, rinse noodles with cool water, and return to pot. Toss noodles with sesame oil and salt, then set aside.
2. In a small bowl, mix green onion, cilantro, and mint and set aside. Place noodles and other vegetables in separate bowls and keep them nearby.
3. Fill a 9-inch round cake pan with 1 inch of water. Place 1 rice paper sheet into water and let rest for 20 seconds, until the rice paper is pliable. Transfer rice paper to a tea towel and let it lay flat.
4. Leave 1 inch of open rice paper around the edges as you apply filling. Cover the lower third of the rice paper with lettuce, followed by a small handful of noodles and vegetables. Sprinkle with herb mix.
5. Fold the lower edge of the rice paper up until the filling is compact and enclosed. Then fold over short sides and roll tight, like a burrito. Repeat with remaining ingredients. Serve immediately with preferred peanut sauce on the side.

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SUPER BEAGLES AND JUMPING LLAMAS

GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS' MOST AMAZING ANIMALS

Hearing about someone who has claimed a Guinness World Record is pretty cool, but do you know what's even cooler? When animals make world records. Here are a few amazing *animals* who hold some really cool records.

Caspa, the Amazing Jumping Llama

Sue Williams is an animal trainer and behaviorist who specializes in dogs. One day, she was working on agility training with her dogs when she noticed her llama, Caspa, watching them. After a little time and training, Williams discovered that Caspa loved jumping, too. In 2015, Caspa cleared a bar set at 3 feet, 8 1/2 inches. He jumped right into the world record for "highest bar jump cleared by a llama."

"He's a complete diva," says Williams. "So, if there are people there to show off in front of, that's when he's at his ultimate best."

Didga, a Very Tricky Kitty

Anyone who says cats can't learn tricks hasn't met Didga. In 2016, Didga, with help from her human, Robert Dollwet, claimed a world record by performing 20 different tricks in 60 seconds. Her routine started with the classics, like sitting and giving high-fives, and

culminated in riding a skateboard while hopping over a low bar. Dollwet told Guinness World Records that training Didga took a lot of time and patience and that he was so proud of his clever cat.

Purin, the Beagle Who Holds 3 Guinness World Records

Nicknamed "The Super Beagle," Purin scored her first title in 2015 for her amazing goalkeeping skills. The beagle "saved" 14 mini soccer balls thrown by her human, Makoto Kumagai, in one minute. A year later, Purin claimed another record when she became the "fastest dog on a ball" by traveling 10 meters in 10.39 seconds while balancing on a ball. Not long after, Purin and Kumagai set the record for "most skips by a dog and a person in one minute — single rope" with 58 skips. Talk about super!

You can find videos of all these amazing record holders and more at GuinnessWorldRecords.com.

