

*The Law Office of Brigid A. Duffield, P.C.* remains open for business under the Essential Services category. In keeping with Governor Pritzker's 'Stay At Home' mandate, our office is making every effort to ensure the health and safety of our clients and our staff. Our Mediation and Consultation services are available via Zoom video conferencing, Skype, conference calls, phone and email. We send our best wishes that you, your families and those you love are healthy and safe!

What an exciting and interesting time! Our world is full of questions that can't be answered and many of which raise Conflict. When will the pandemic recede? Where can we feel safe? What will the "new normal" be like? Do I really need to follow my court orders? How do or can I reassure myself and my children that it will be OK? Will it be OK? What is the new Norm?



Focusing on the present, recognizing and relying on our collective strengths and resilience is a great way to reduce Fear and Frustration. The 'Stay At Home' order currently in place will help reduce the spread of the virus, but it keeps us in closer and tighter proximity to the people we love and who we are most likely to be in conflict with. The order prevents our physical contact with our families, friends, spiritual leaders, therapists and attorneys. Thankfully many of these services are available virtually. Contact, conflict resolution and communication are possible in creative new ways to increase our great strengths and keep us from becoming our own worst nightmare!

Here are a few suggestions to navigate Conflicts exaggerated by the "stay at home" directive. We hope these may benefit you and yours (especially those who are starting to annoy you!) during this challenging and unprecedented time.

***Spiritual:*** Focus on Who is in Charge. Whether or not you have a spiritual or religious belief, there is no doubt that probably no Human Power could relieve this but that God, a Higher Power, a Spiritual Being could and would if sought. Find a spiritual touchstone that will quiet and fill the soul. Pray for families, the truly homebound in nursing homes and facilities, the first responders and all of us because all of us fall in the category of "those directly affected with the virus". If you have one, increase your spiritual practice, in your prayer group, rosary, day of prayer. If you don't have a spiritual practice, take the steps that keep you sane in the midst of turmoil.

***Physical:*** Take a walk, play a game, or build a puzzle with a household member while keeping 'social distance'...whatever that means for your family. The closet cleaning and other chores will likely run out before the 'Stay At Home' does, so have back-up ideas on hand and be creative.

***Emotional:*** Reach out to family, friends, and those you know are alone. A phone call, a note, a text or email may just reconnect someone isolated and distancing. A dear friend of mine frequently says "what we give is never as much as we get in return" (Thank you Lorna!) and from our quote library:

***"Only by giving are you able to receive more than you already have." Jim Rohn***

***Financial:*** Stay on track financially. Pay bills on time, be financially prudent. There are lots of opportunities to rethink your financial obligations. If you don't need to, don't. If you need resources, many are on the way.

***Mental/Intellectual:*** This is a great opportunity to learn something new. Take that computer class you have been wanting to take, learn to play an instrument or sew. Great E-learning resources are available from your local library, YouTube (learn to make that great soda bread) and your resources! Keeping our minds alert and sharp helps keep the snarky conflict-creating statements at bay.

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***BONUS:***

Please enjoy these additional *Tips for Successful (and Conflict-Free) Working from Home* (with or without kids and pets underfoot!)

**1. *Keep or Create a (New) Morning Routine.*** No need to worry about your commute to work, or getting the (prepared) kids to school on time. Studies indicate that those who stick to their usual daily routine while staying at home, do better. Modifications will likely be required but to the extent possible, stick with all the usual activities: setting alarms to get up, showers, get dressed, workout, regular meals and regular sleep all contribute to good mental, spiritual and emotional health!

**2. *Maintain Regular Hours.*** Whether it's for your work or your kid's schooling, set a schedule for the day that you can stick to. (Modify as needed) Having defined starting times, break times, and quitting times, meal times, prayer times, exercise times and entertainment times are helpful. It helps you and your kids (and your pets) when the leader of the home sets reasonable boundaries between work life and home life especially since you're all trying to co-exist in the same space 24/7!

**3. *Use the "Traffic Signal" Approach – Red, Yellow, Green.*** If you share your home (work) space with kids and/or other adults, a "traffic signal" system will help them know when it's okay to approach you...especially during the workday. Kids can make stop signs, use ribbons, scarves or bells anything to help to signal "I need space" during life in a confined space.

- Green = "It's OK to ask for my attention"
- Yellow = "Slow Down, I may not be available, does this require attention, now or later"
- Red = 'Do Not Disturb' unless there's red – as in blood – involved!

Designating a "time out" room is a great option.

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*"No winter lasts forever...no spring skips its turn." - Anonymous*

***The Law Office of Brigid A. Duffield, P.C. sends our very best wishes that you remain safe, healthy and conflict-free during this "Stay At Home" period!***

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