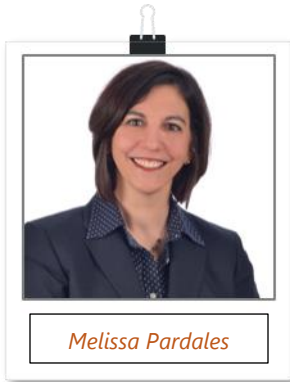


Gratitude is Our Attitude

What We've Learned During the Pandemic



2020 – Staying Safe and Being Thankful

During the pandemic the Ulliance Account Management Department has been steadfast in addressing company concerns, sharing information and supporting employees and leaders of the client organizations we serve. We have also been tending to our own loved ones and families with continued efforts at work life balance due to the current situation. While working from home tends to blur those lines of balance, we have learned a few things in the process about survival, reality versus our expectations and how to practice gratitude. This issue will allow you to get acquainted with the Account Management Team and discover what they have learned in the recent months. Remember to call for any of your management consultation needs and employee concerns. Stay safe and practice gratitude!



Coping with COVID-19

Being forced to stay at home with three teenagers, ages 13, 15 and 19, and just myself for over four months, really changed my perspective on “needs” vs “wants.” We needed the basics of survival during this time. We didn’t need all the fluff we always wanted, ordered and pined for. We needed each other and to get along, for support and connection, and to all pitch in to make it through this – but we rarely needed the help from anyone outside of our little family unit. We became resourceful, bonded with each other over our shared predicament, and I gained a new respect for my children due to how they handled this difficult, at best, and frightening at worst, world pandemic and social unrest. We needed our closest family and friends, and even a few amazing co-workers, to get by during the long shut in months, but we didn’t need ALL the extraneous people that sometimes make our lives more difficult, busy, or even toxic.

We didn’t need hundreds of outside activities or entertainments to keep us busy. But we did desperately miss and definitely need our favorite activities that not only defined us, but make us feel connected, empowered and fulfilled, such as sports teams, drama and music classes, exercise and the outdoors - all of which we realized are incredibly important for our emotional, mental and physical health. Reading books about self-help, self-discovery or new interesting topics became a welcome distraction from social media, which was both a blessing for connection, and a curse for too much information to digest.

Not being a TV watcher generally, Netflix became “essential” to fill hours at times and relax our ever anxious and overloaded minds.

Friends and relatives needing mental health support from me became an almost daily expectation and act of service. Getting through COVID-19, for me, really put a blinding spotlight on what is important in my life and has been life changing for me and my children. Having time to really think about needs and happiness and dreams - and not be endlessly busy with life’s created distractions - made me acknowledge just what I can live without, who and what I really need, the grit that we are made up of, and honestly what I truly need AND want out of my future.



During the pandemic, my wife and I had to balance working from home and managing our toddler-aged son (not to mention two very noisy dogs). It took time for us to get into the groove of things, and even when we did, it was still very stressful. Establishing a daily routine, scheduling breaks for playtime throughout the day, and not being too hard on ourselves was the key to our getting through it.



During the Shelter-at-home order, I’ve learned how important it is to strike a healthy work-life balance. Intellectually I understood the importance and I have even helped many others try and improve their sense of work-life balance, but it wasn’t until the shutdown that I realized I needed to practice what I preached. I learned it takes a deliberate approach and that it is important to strive for a healthy balance even when you do not feel the need. It’s not enough to only attend to it when things are bad; best to keep at it all the time.

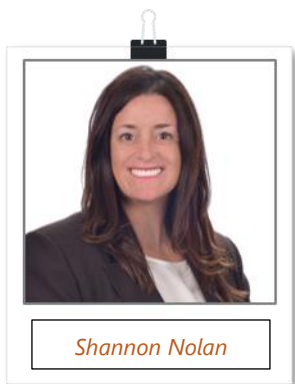


What I've Learned from the Coronavirus Pandemic— "Let Go, or Be Dragged"

Each year before January 1st, I try to set my intentions for the coming year. If I'm feeling creative, I might put it all down on a vision board, which serves as a daily reminder of the energy I want to give to things that matter to me. Last week, I took a good look at this board and I thought about how the current state of the world has put a wrench in my plans. But then, in the upper left corner, I spied a quote that had resonated with me all those months ago. "Let Go, Or Be Dragged"

I have always been big on control. Not so much of others, but of myself. This has served me well in many ways, maybe not so much in others. So, I made it a goal to be mindful, and make efforts to change my approach. Of course, I had no idea how I was going to make it happen.

Little did I know then, the Universe had a plan for that. Fast forward to March, and the global Pandemic. Normalcy was instantly out the window, along with everything I relied on to maintain that sense of control. With this sudden change, I quickly realized that this need for control was NOT going to serve me well. If I didn't learn how to adjust (and fast!) I'd suffer greatly along the way. Ironically, I didn't have to plan. I had to dive right into the deep end, when I've always been more of a dip my toe in the shallow end kind of person. Facing it head-on was in hindsight, the best (and perhaps only way) I'd be willing to let go. In the past few months, I've learned how to stop, take a step back and consider my options. I learned how to breathe and savor a moment for what it is, good or bad. I've learned that Plan B is ok, too. Maybe even better.



There is ALWAYS something to feel grateful for on any given day. I learned this lesson one morning during the quarantine when I found the light switch BEFORE my bare-feet found the foul-smelling accident my under-the-weather dog had overnight. I thought to myself "Even if there is nothing else good today, at least I didn't step in **it!



Rebecca Stros

Navigating the ups and downs of the pandemic may have been just the perspective shift I needed. Witnessing firsthand how fast things can change and the impact of the public health crisis has helped me to take more time and recognize the small, but important, details of everyday life. I reestablished routines of reaching out and talking to friends and family on a deeper level. It was much easier to sit and talk about everything going on with them when I had more time to do so. It was something that had dropped down on my priority list and I am glad that I've had this time to put in the effort to maintain these relationships. I almost feel silly for letting other things get in the way of that because what really matters is our loved ones and the memories, we have with them.



Kris Denny

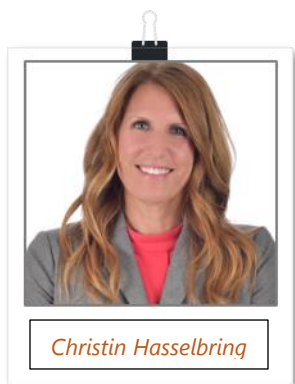
What I learned during the stay at home order

With a newborn at home, it was very important to avoid contact as much as possible. This included ceasing visits to the grocery store. I learned to cook creatively and make do with ingredients that I had. It was less convenient, but I also began to enjoy cooking from scratch. Going to the store less often also saved us money!



Fran Wilson

My faith has allowed me to get through these challenging times and maintain my sanity. My belief that God can positively influence the current situations gives me peace. Starting each day with my "quiet time" allows me to center myself to receive direction, guidance and encouragement. My interaction with nature during daily walks and time spent in my vegetable garden let me know that there is a power greater than myself that influences all life.



With two kids very busy with sports, it was nice to have a break from it. Don't get me wrong, one of my favorite things to do it watch them play their game, but the rush from school to practice to games takes a toll on family time. During the stay at home order we cooked...every day...and had dinner together at the table. I know that this probably won't last forever as some sports are already starting to resume a little, I do hope that a few nights a week/weekend that we can make family dinner a priority.



Waking up in the middle of the night
Heart pounding in my chest
What the heck
is giving me this fright?

Back to bed my head smushed on the pillow
I must, I must, I must get some rest
My limbs continue their jerk like jello.

A deep breath, I gasp
Like being born
No, I don't even want coffee!
My voice is barely a rasp.

The ticker tape begins
Clickety clack, clickety clack.
My mind mounds and fills
With day's sweet chagrins.

This virus, this news, the confusion and hate
Is it real? - but so is health, joy,
and the links that define us.
I do have a choice - today can be great

Open those eyes
See with your heart
It is worth the mind's persuasion
To create my world with every sunrise!

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*Contact your account manager for free, confidential support and assistance. **We are all in this together.***