

Inspiration

By Sharon J. Arkin



This job gets tough sometimes. I don't mean being editor of the *Forum* – that's a cake walk. I mean being a consumer attorney. Losing trials – or, worse yet, appeals – is disheartening. The hours are long. The workload is overwhelming. The playing field is anything but even.

And yet. And yet – we get up every morning, and jump back into the coal mine we call our careers. And yet – we continue to meet with people who are broken – in heart, mind, body and soul to try to help them and their families. And yet – even when we suffer a heart-breaking loss, we

head back to court to try again in another case, for another family.

Some consumer attorneys make lots of money; some not so much. But the thing we all have in common is persistence; a willingness to keep moving forward to try to right the wrongs, no matter how much it costs us in time, resources, energy, money and security. You, my dear colleagues, are some of the toughest people imaginable.

But. But – sometimes it gets too hard. But – sometimes it feels like just too much. But – sometimes we feel like we just can't do this again. Sometimes you just need a

break, some relief, a way to escape it all for a while. And, you know what? That's okay, too. It's sort of like the speech that airline cabin attendants give about the oxygen masks. They tell you to put yours on first, before helping a child with theirs. There is a very simple reason for that – you cannot save someone else if you're out of oxygen. And, sometimes, we run just out of oxygen.

When that happens, take action. Read some of the inspiring articles in this edition of the *Forum*, which can re-energize you for the good work we do. Take some tips from Richard Carlton's article about how to relieve the stress of our careers on a day-to-day basis. He is also reassuring about the fact that it's not our fault when we fall. Most importantly, he explains how to reach out for help when we've gone too far down the rabbit hole of burnout and addiction. When you feel like you've hit a wall emotionally or otherwise, reach out. Talk to someone. Make connections that enrich you and fulfill you outside of your career. Refresh and reset. Repeat as needed.

And when you see someone else struggling – reach out to them. We are *literally* all in this together. And together we can make the kind of differences that no single one of us alone can make. We need you – each and every one of you – and we need you to be well and happy. Do whatever that takes. ■

Sharon J. Arkin is principal in The Arkin Law Firm, specializing in plaintiff appeals. She is a former president of CAOC and is Editor-in-Chief of the *Forum*. She is also a 2010 recipient of the CLAY award in appellate law. www.arkinlawfirm.com