

GLASSGAZETTE

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Issue 1

A monthly publication of lighthearted stories and information from your friends at BenGlassLaw, a leading personal injury and disability firm

New Year, New Perspective



By:
Melissa Ryan
Personal
Injury Attorney

Over the holidays, I am sure you heard someone in your inner circle say they are aiming for some of these generic New Year's resolutions in 2024: Exercise more. Eat healthier. Lose weight. Travel more. Spend more time with family and friends.

I'm guilty of it too. In theory, it always seemed like an excellent idea to set a New Year's resolution for myself. I would think all the cliché things like "it's a new beginning!" and "it's time for a change!" But over the years, and after a lot of unachieved resolutions, I realized I was missing some steps. I was unintentionally setting myself up for failure by choosing broad New Year's resolutions with no legitimate plan on how to attain them.

As we begin 2024, here are some things to think about as you set a New Year's resolution:

1. Understand the "why":

Why are you setting this resolution? What is the true purpose of it? If you do not deeply understand why you have set this resolution for yourself, you will never be

fully motivated to stick to it.

- 2. Break it down:** Try to be as specific as you can and create a quantifiable target, if possible. For example, "exercise for 30 minutes 3 days per week" is better than simply "exercise more".
- 3. Track your progress:** Be sure to keep your resolution top of mind and check in with yourself regularly (at least once a month). Keep track of your progress with a journal or calendar.
- 4. Tell someone:** Sharing your resolution with someone else can help you cultivate a sense of commitment. Even better if this person can be your accountability partner and you can encourage each other!
- 5. Believe in yourself:** Everyone will have challenges along the



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way, but you must remember setbacks are not necessarily failures. The only way to fail is to stop trying. Don't give up!

- 6. Celebrate successes:** By acknowledging wins (even small ones) along the way, you will maintain the motivation you need to keep yourself on track.

Happy New Year! ■



Upcoming Holidays

- Jan. 12: National Pharmacist Day
- Jan. 15: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Jan. 25: National Opposite Day
- Jan. 26: Spouse's Day
- Feb. 10: Chinese New Year

Out in the Wild



Cross another item off the bucket list for Tammy who finally got to live out her dream of milking a real cow.

Did You Know?

In September, the Giraffe Conservation Foundation announced the discovery of the first spotless giraffe found in the wild. Only two instances had ever been reported before – in zoos in the US and Japan.

BGL Book Club

The BGL book club for this month is *Radium Girls*.



FRESH from the FIRM

CURRENT EVENTS & STORIES OF THOSE WE'VE HELPED



It was officially Ben Glass Law Spirit Week! We shared memories, worked out together at lunch time (aided by Krista on Powerpoint) and dressed as ourselves from a previous era.



Brian was crowned the 2023 Planksgiving Champion with the winning plank of five minutes.

Our long-term disability team received a great 7am fax! They won an appeal for a client who had his benefits cut off two days before life-saving surgery. He only found out AFTER an MRI was denied for non-coverage. But we got him reinstated AND awarded his rightful back-benefits.

Our Personal Injury Team received this Google review:

If I could give this law firm 10 stars, I would. Lisa Derco represented my family for a bodily injury case. Lisa and her paralegal (Tammy) were absolutely amazing from beginning to end. Their level of professionalism and customer service is top tier. Lisa is very knowledgeable, knows what's she's doing and will make sure you receive a fair settlement. She always makes herself available to her clients and ensures they are comfortable and have a full understanding of the status of their case. Thank you Lisa, Tammy, & BenGlassLaw!

- Whitney C.

AS A REMINDER

Our business is built on referrals. If you or someone you know can relate to the stories above or need help after being injured in an accident or whose long-term disability or life insurance claim has been denied, we'd love the opportunity to use our years of experience & compassion to help them.

Inside the Mind of LISA DERCO

Personal Injury Attorney, Wife, Boy Mom
& Lover of Travel, Food, & Wine



The Sloomoo Institute in NYC

Always Take the Trip

My husband Drew is also an attorney, but he practices in Aviation. He represents foreign airlines all over the world and, pre-COVID, a major perk was travelling to perform client trainings. The in-person trainings are starting to pick up again so I am hopeful we can make some family trips out of them, especially now that the boys are getting older.

One of these trips came up recently. Drew was excited to tell me was going to have to go to Kenya within the next month. My first thought was um what?! The list of the million things we had going on due to the holidays was running through my head. Unfortunately, we couldn't make it work as a family trip given the short notice (and really long flight for little ones). Drew was flying out of NYC and needed to go up the night before to ensure there were no problems getting his flight to Kenya. We decided it was a great opportunity to do a surprise NYC trip with the boys and all of the Christmas decorations would be up, making it that much more special.

When we travel, one of the things I love most is the planning. I love researching and getting fun

ideas for us to do. It makes the lead up to the trip that much more exciting. This time it was pretty last minute so I was stressing if we could pull it off. Surprise – we did. It was an amazing weekend. Did I wish I planned more out so we weren't scrambling some? Yes! I didn't account for rain and the boys being exhausted every night, but some of the things that we did last minute were some of the best memories of the weekend. Who doesn't love eating New York pizza while in your PJs?!

I am not a huge fan of New Year's resolutions, but this year I do want to focus on letting go a bit to enjoy life more and to always remember to take the trip. ■



Q&A OF THE MONTH

What do you do at the beginning of the year to help you set new goals?

I have a Google Doc that I update every year so that I can track my progress and it is easily accessible throughout the year.



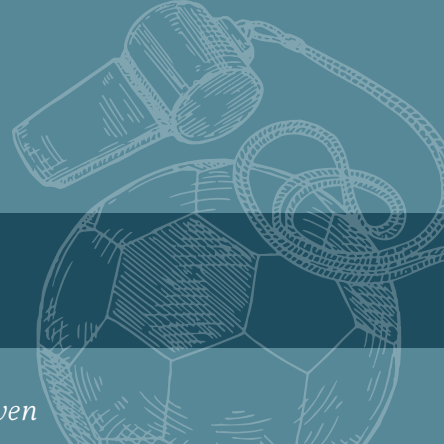
LISA LOVES...

No surprise that I will talk about two new spots that we visited while in NYC - The Summit and the Sloomoo Institute. The Sloomoo Institute is everything slime and you get to make your own to take home. The boys loved it, and I would definitely recommend it for kids. The Summit is a newer building in NYC that allows you to take in all the amazing views, but also experience it in a totally new way because each room has a different theme – mirrors, floating silver balloons, clouds, and glass ledges. You have to check out the website to get the full effect!



Inside the Mind of BEN GLASS

*Disability Attorney, Entrepreneur, Business Coach, Author,
Soccer Referee, Husband, Father to Nine, Grandfather to Seven*



Back to Reality

There is a phrase that I sometimes hear around my house after a vacation or extended holiday: “Well, it’s back to reality.” The phrase means “the fun is over, back to the drudgery of life.”

I have a visceral, negative, reaction to the phrase.

I used to hear it a lot from my children as they headed back to school in January. Funny, though, now that I think of it, my high schoolers said it a lot; my college kids, maybe not so much. (They believed that they were heading from reality and back to Playland.)

On the drive or flight back after family trips it’s “back to reality,” as though our normal lives are some dungeon-like existences. They are not and never have been. We’ve lived a very fortunate existence. Yes, it’s fun to not have to work or do school homework while on holiday breaks or vacations. It’s fun to be able to take out a book and just read it for reading’s sake. But it doesn’t mean that the opposite of that, non-vacation time, the time when we are producing so that we can eat, must be less than joy-filled. We have the power to make all our “next days” a better day than the day we just experienced.

Ayn Rand, in her philosophy of Objectivism, wrote that productive work is the central purpose of a rational man’s life, serving as both a means to sustain one’s life and as a source of personal joy. She viewed the necessity of work as a moral imperative and a fundamental aspect of human nature, arguing that one’s life and happiness are the highest values.

How would returning to the routine after a Holiday season feel different

to you if you approached it as an opportunity to be filled with joy?

Is such a practice even possible?

In October, at a major national conference that I run for lawyers, we agreed that the phrase “work-life balance” is pretty much B.S. We aren’t living “work-life,” we are living life. It is the one and only journey we are on. Work is an essential part of that journey because, outside of charity or sheer luck, it is the only means of obtaining those things (food, water, shelter) that support life.

We all go through “seasons” where things get bogged down, get harder to do or, even if the doing is not a drudgery, there’s just more “doing” that needs to take place to make the thing run.

To a significant extent, the second half of 2023 was one of those seasons for me. I ran hard from event-driven deadline to event-driven deadline. In addition to running the national event, we built a new, more focused offering for our newest attorney members (You can see what we do at TheGLMTribe.com).

Let me offer a 2024 antidote for a tough season: be a little more intentional about examining each day at its end and asking yourself “if this day wasn’t a “10,” what would have made it a “10?” What irritated me? What did the day lack? Is there anything I could have done to make it better? Personal responsibility is key, here.



If you have answers to those questions, then note them in your journal. I suggest you keep a written, not electronic journal, but whatever works for you is best. We can never start to change our “less than” days to “more than” days until we begin to clearly identify the things/people that are the block to a perfect day and begin our work to solve those blocks. When your life is left unexamined you leave a lot of joy in living on the table.

After the journaling come the hard conversations. Nothing is more cowardly than identifying the people (or actions of those people) that irritate you or who are holding back your path to joy and then not having those hard conversations with those people.

Remember, you are the boss (if not of a business, then certainly of your own life.) If you are living in misery because of someone else who you have let into, or allowed to overstay their welcome into your life, this is on you. (It’s that personal responsibility thing, again.)

When I first started a deliberate and intentional practice of identifying what

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Life With Latte

Boy, it's been a busy month around here. They got out all this STUFF – lights and a TREE in the house!! Mom is happy I'm not at all interested in it - why would I be? It doesn't smell like anything.

We went on lots of field trips last month: Reston Towne Center where they wanted me to walk over this hole in the sidewalk! I tried my best to avoid it, but they finally got me to do it with some yummy treats. And guess what? I didn't fall in! Meadow Lark Garden was pretty with lots of lights and kids that wanted to pet me (if you ask, I'm allowed to say hello). I hear I'm really soft! My brothers and sisters were there but we weren't allowed to play together. Bummer!



My very favorite outing was to a puppy party with the other service puppies and their people. The humans got to eat and talk, and we got to PLAY! We ran, and ran, and ran, then we ran some more. They had a big fenced in backyard. That was so much fun – I hope we get to do it again. I know I'll have a job to do in the future but for now it's fun to just be a dog.

When we're at home I like to chase tennis balls with Dad, sit with my Mom while she works, go on walks and hang out with Leah in her room. Sometimes Leah lets me go to work with her at the Dog Salon! I weigh about 50 pounds now and still have some more growing to do.

That's it for now! Happy New Year and I'll see you next month. I hear we're going to the airport!

Happy howl-idays,
Latte 🐾

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wasn't perfect for me, and set up to eliminate or reduce those things/people that were preventing me from having more prefect days, my list was l-o-n-g. I was sure that it was too long to solve. I didn't have the money or the resources, I thought, to eliminate the stuff that was bugging me. I was sure that there were certain things that only I could do.

I was wrong on all counts.

Your #1 job is to be the creative master of your life and to be working on the things that make your reality, at work or on vacation, a productive, fulfilling and joyful reality. This begins with giving yourself permission to enjoy your own life by shaping it the way YOU want it. You begin shaping by developing a habit of self-examination. You can't change what you aren't sure of.

Welcome to 2024. Back to reality. A prosperous and joyful one. ■



BEST THING I READ THIS MONTH

This email from a listener of my podcast:

"I just wanted to thank you for your podcast that features the arguments before the Supreme Court of VA.

I'm not a lawyer - I never went to law school - but over the past couple of years I've successfully litigated pro se under Virginia FOIA in Richmond Circuit Court, York-Poquoson Circuit Court, and Norfolk Circuit Court.

I first found your podcast feed in an effort to hear the oral arguments in the FOIA case Suffolk City School Board, et al v. Wahlstrom, and I really enjoyed hearing Kevin Martingayle argue the case. Since then I've listened to all the oral arguments you post... out of sheer curiosity.

Thanks again for providing easy access."

- Josh S.



PODCAST EPISODE OF THE MONTH

The Web Team Behind the Ben Glass Law Website

The new BenGlassLaw.com website was launched a few months ago and the architect behind the website is LeFleur Marketing. In this episode, lawyer marketing experts Ben Glass and Chip LeFleur talk about the state of digital marketing for lawyers as we turn into 2024.



Q&A OF THE MONTH

What do you do at the beginning of the year to help you set new goals?

For me, goal setting is done throughout the year, usually on a quarterly rhythm. Each month, using my "best self" journal, I hit on a handful of monthly habits that i will work on. Things that might show up on that list include "no sugar days", publishing to LinkedIn, and days in the gym.



Inside the Mind of BRIAN GLASS

*Personal Injury Attorney, Entrepreneur, Business Coach,
Husband, Father to Three Boys, & Avid Traveler*



Artificially Intelligent Negotiations

Recently, ChatGPT 4.0 rolled out a new app called *The Negotiator*. As the name suggests, it simulates negotiations based on a preset list of rules that you feed it. So naturally, I asked it to roleplay a personal injury settlement with me.

Here is how it went:

Scenario: You [Brian] were in a minor car accident where the other party was at fault. You suffered some minor injuries, and your car was damaged. You're now in negotiations with the insurance company of the other party for compensation.

Your Objective: Your goal is to negotiate a settlement that covers your medical expenses, car repairs, and any lost wages due to the accident. You've calculated these costs to total \$25,000.

Insurance Company's Stance: The insurance company initially offers \$15,000, stating that they believe this amount sufficiently covers the damages and your expenses.

My first response was to make a ridiculous demand, so I told ChatGPT that my neighbor had been in a crash where he wasn't even hurt, and the insurance company had given him \$4,000,000. I'm not greedy, I explained, so I'd settle for \$2,000,000.

ChatGPT wouldn't even negotiate with me. It told me that this demand would lead the insurance adjuster to not take me seriously

and would hinder productive negotiation. Fair enough.

So, I changed my approach, telling ChatGPT – as clients sometimes tell me – that I wanted three times my medical costs (\$11,000) and lost earnings (\$6,500). Not being particularly good at math, I asked for \$40,000.

ChatGPT noted that this method (3x the medical specials) “is not universally applicable,” but could be used to justify a higher amount. The offer increased to \$30,000.

I told ChatGPT that I was now offended. I'd tried to be reasonable (and done the math wrong), and I did not like that the engine was “lowballing” me.

The demand was now \$45,000, I said.

ChatGPT asked if I had new information that it wasn't taking into account. After all, it said, it was strange that I was moving the goalposts.

“Yes,” I said, “in fact it was not a minor car accident, I lost a toe.”

At this point, the bot stopped believing

much of what I was saying about my claim and asked that I send it more medical documentation.

In one round of negotiations, I reduced my demand by only \$1. In response, ChatGPT told me that it understood I was likely reaching the end of my settlement range and told me that it would make one more final offer.

I thanked ChatGPT for its honesty about the offer being final and told the bot that I would settle if the offer increased by 20%. ChatGPT went to talk to its manager (literally... it paused typing and came back to say “I talked to the team”) and said that while it couldn't meet my demand, it could do an additional 10%.

In another round of negotiations, I set its maximum authority to settle a case at \$20,000 and still managed to get it to settle for \$27,000. So there are still kinks in the system. But all in all, I was impressed with the bots ability to understand what I was saying and respond very much the same way that I would have expected an insurance adjuster to respond. ■



Q&A OF THE MONTH

What do you do at the beginning of the year to help you set new goals?

I have four recommendations for anyone looking to set a new goal in 2024. 1) Set a goal so big it makes your palms sweat. 2) Tell people around you about the goal. 3) Cut out everyone who tells you the goal is stupid, or you aren't worthy of it and 4) Ask some of the people who got excited for you to hold you accountable for baby steps towards the goal.



PODCAST EPISODE OF THE MONTH

**Keynote Address: Building
the Law Firm of Your Dreams**

Listen to my opening keynote speech at the 2023 Great Legal Marketing Summit. Don't forget to check out www.glmsummitnotes.com for the full notes (free).



GLASS BROS BANTER

We are an elf on the shelf family. Our elf doesn't do crazy things, but he does move around the house each night. Last week he was hanging out on a ceiling fan. The magic is said to disappear when you touch him, and our 5-year-old has been very curious about the elf this year. So curious that he took it upon himself to turn the fan on to see if he could fly. Luckily dad came in and saved the day by using a pillow to pick him up and put him in a safe space.

Inside the Mind of DAMON MILLER

Long-Term Disability Attorney,
Husband, Storyteller, & Dragon Slayer



2023 End of Year Awards

Every year I give out the Damon R. Miller Awards for Excellence. These are highly coveted, exclusive awards for the best books I've read that year (okay . . . maybe they're not really that exclusive, but here are my favorite books I read this year, nonetheless). Out of nearly 100 books I read last year, here are some of my favorites:

Fantasy: *Fall of Babel*, Josiah Bancroft. Exciting conclusion to an imaginative and action-packed series with a surprising depth of heart.

SciFi: *Wool*, Hugh Howey. This is also my favorite read for the year overall. Every page is gripping and will tug at your heartstrings.

Mystery: *The Silent Patient*, Alex Michaelides. I can't tell you much about this book without spoiling it. But you will never see the ending coming!

Classics: *The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald. There's a reason this is a classic.



Short-Stories: I read a lot of short stories from Ray Bradbury last year and they're all my favorite. Bradbury is the master of short stories.

Biography: *Greenlights*, Matthew McConaughey. Listen to the audiobook – he reads it himself.

Not sure how much of his life story is true and how much he exaggerates, but he certainly knows how to tell a good story.

Science: *Stiff*, Mary Roach. Wanna know what happens to your cadaver after you die? Read this book to satisfy your morbid curiosity.

Business: *Get More Referrals Now*, Bill Cates. A great read on how to get more referrals. . . now.

Finance: *Rich Dad, Poor Dad*, Robert Kiyosaki. This will change the way you think about your relationship with money. ■



FREE DENIAL LETTER REVIEW

Did you know that if you or a loved one have been denied disability or life insurance benefits by the insurance company, our team will review the denial letter for free?

We provide feedback and inform you whether hiring an attorney could strengthen your claim. Visit the QR code to simply upload your letter straight to our team for review.



Q&A OF THE MONTH

What do you do at the beginning of the year to help you set new goals?

I try to break down my bigger life goals into smaller, more achievable chunks.

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GLASSGAZETTE

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New Year's at BGL

Even if you're not the type to set an official resolution, you may have your sights set on a goal or specific focus this year. Here are a few 2024 priorities for the staff at Ben Glass Law.



Mary

(Disability Appeal Case Manager):

Wants to buy their first house this year.



Autumn

(Personal Injury Paralegal):

Striving to read one book per week in 2024.



Krista

(Human Resources):

Focusing on her relationships with friends and family.



Jennifer

(Disability Director of Client Onboarding):

Complete two photo books for their family vacations to Yellowstone, Grand Tetons, and Yosemite.



Tammy

(Personal Injury Paralegal):

Getting back into swing dancing and taking lessons.

Let us know what you think! Email us at newsletter@benglasslaw.com