



Monday Monday

Connecting the Dots with Karen Kaplowitz



*Helping you create and reinforce the habits of successful career building,
gleaned from my work as a business development strategist, trainer and coach*

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Crisis = Opportunities for Leadership

It is hard to believe how much crisis, chaos, loss, and misfortune this year has brought. Adding Hurricane Isaias's flooding, tornados, and power failures this month to the pandemic, economic disaster, and social unrest was a heavy blow for many. But this is also an extraordinary opportunity for lawyers to show leadership, innovation, and empathy. We have seen so many examples of law firms stepping up like the [Law Firm Antiracism Alliance](#) launched by the Shriver Center's Racial Justice Institute and the Association of Pro Bono Counsel. Here are some questions to help you consider your own opportunities to show leadership amidst the chaos:

- Have you polled clients about how non-profits they support are faring? Could you offer to help those non-profits by using expertise you developed working for a business client such as in the areas of insurance coverage issues, rent abatement or employment issues?
- Taking into account all the special challenges and stressors relating to the pandemic, social unrest, and the recession, including clients lost to bankruptcies, can you volunteer to join a working group to help insure that the firm evaluates its own lawyers and staff fairly and appropriately this year?
- In your community, have you offered to help schools, churches, and other community organizations navigate through the crisis?
- Have you helped a friend or client find new employment?
- Are you crafting solutions to manage major matters with sensitivity toward your clients' and colleagues' family responsibilities and schedules?
- Are you consistently modeling the behavior you expect from others?

For this year's formidable challenges, the people who take responsibility for forging solutions will stand out as leaders. Can you identify opportunities to solve significant problems in your firm, in your community, and for your clients?

Example: When a lawyer spoke to a significant client and asked about her high school senior's plans for college, the client shared how stressed she and her family were about the college application process. The client said that she had already been apprehensive about college applications but that the pandemic made it even more fraught, with less access to college counselors; less ability for her family to visit college campuses; and a lot of work ahead to get the applications in on time. The lawyer offered to introduce the client to another firm lawyer whose family had successfully navigated college admissions for two children recently, as a resource. Since his alma mater was one of the schools to which the client's high school senior was going to apply, he also arranged through the school's alumni office for a Zoom call for the high school senior with a few recent graduates. The client was grateful for the support. When the lawyer shared his experience with some other lawyers, they identified some other clients and lawyers and staff in the firm facing similar situations. They then organized an online evening program on navigating college admissions during the pandemic with less stress.

What can you do to be a leader to tackle the extraordinary challenges created by the many crises of 2020? Is this a time when you can make a mark as a leader, an innovator and a role model in your firm, in your community and for your clients?