

*The Orange County Bar Association  
Covid-19 Task Force Presents*

---

# **Keeping Calm During COVID: Tips for Mental & Physical Well-Being**

---

Wednesday, April 8, 2020



## Speakers

**Marisa K. Commerford, Esq.**  
*Attorney at Law*

**Taly Harel-Marian**  
Educator and Social Psychologist

**Brandon Loveladdy**  
*Orange County Reiki & Sound Transformations*

---

# Speaker Biographies

---

## **Marisa K. Commerford**

Marisa K. Commerford is an experienced civil litigator specializing in employment law. Marisa believes that excellent representation is increased by an ability to view employment related issues from an employer and employee perspective. She exclusively counsels both small business clients as well as represents individual plaintiff employees in wrongful termination, discrimination, harassment, retaliation, whistleblower and wage claims. She has successfully taken multiple cases to verdict in trial. Marisa also lectured as an adjunct professor at Santa Barbara City College for several different legal courses, including human resource management.

Marisa grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area. She is a Registered Yoga Teacher (RYT) with Yoga Alliance, avid long-distance runner, swimmer, and hot sauce aficionado. Marisa received her Bachelor of Arts in Law and Society from University of California at Santa Barbara, and attended Whittier School of Law on a Dean's Merit Academic Scholarship, graduating cum laude.

## **Taly Harel-Marian**

Taly Harel-Marian is an educator and a social psychologist, focusing her work on positive psychology and students' well-being. She holds an M.A. in Social-Organizational Psychology from Teachers College, Columbia University, and an MSc from the Technion - The Israeli Institute of Technology.

She taught psychology at the college level for several years, before joining TVT Community Day School in Irvine, where she currently teaches Positive Psychology, and oversees the school's wellness and character program. In addition to her teaching experience, Taly brings with her a wealth of relevant practical experience. She held multiple positions in executive search companies. She also served in the Behavioral Science Division in the Israeli Military. In addition to her interest in happiness and well-being, she also loves hiking, reading books and music.

## **Brandon Loveladdy**

Brandon Loveladdy has been professionally facilitating Reiki and spiritual coaching since 2013, helping people find clarity, truth, and peace in their life. He is a Master of multiple Reiki modalities including Usui Reiki, Karuna Reiki, Healing Hands of Jesus, Tibetan Reiki, and Violet Flame Reiki, and uses these modalities to assist with Spiritual Awakenings and Empath Guidance.

Brandon has a passion for music, being a trained musician. Because of this, he wanted to incorporate Healing Energy into a form of music, so he became certified in Sound Therapy to offer Sound Healing. He is also a certified RYT200 Yoga Instructor, occasionally offering meditative yoga classes that are more Yin and Restorative based.

As a cancer survivor, whose life purpose was revealed through a painful awakening, it is with great bliss that he assists on the path to find one's Highest Self. He and his wife Chelsea Loveladdy run Orange County Reiki & Sound Transformations in Orange County. Together they provide a variety of spiritual arts and services to the public, working as a team to bring healing and peace to the world.

---

# Program Materials

---

## **Wellness Seminar Outline 4/8/2020**

While this may be more apparent than ever in the time of coronavirus, the issue of lawyer wellbeing is certainly nothing new for the legal community. In 2017, the American Bar Association published a report by the National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being. The first page of the report states, "To be a good lawyer, one has to be a healthy lawyer... This research suggests that the current state of lawyers' health cannot support a profession dedicated to client service and dependent on the public trust." "Change will require a wide-eyed and candid assessment of our members' state of being, accompanied by courageous commitment to re-envisioning what it means to live the life of a lawyer."

As lawyers, we are often over-achievers, so while we may consider managing to squeeze in only five minutes of yoga as a failure —the end result is that we can still feel better than if we didn't practice at all. Remember that we are more than just our jobs – our true value is in our health, and our ability to create and continue relationships. While this may be cold comfort – hopefully there is some warmth to be taken from the fact that we are in this together and if we create an environment where we are all looking out for each other people will not be left behind.

### **How can yoga help those of us in the legal profession?**

#### **1. Yoga helps you to listen mindfully and become a better listener.**

Yoga is ultimately a mindfulness practice. What we're doing on the yoga mat is staying in the moment and focused. So it's helpful not only for general wellbeing, but also for how we interact with clients, judges or co-workers. The tendency for lawyers is to race ahead and think of the next thing to say instead of really listening to what's being said (flashback to the many follow-up questions missed during a deposition). But if you're able to stay in the moment it really helps you to understand what the client ultimately is looking for, or to understand important facts you may have otherwise missed.

#### **2. Yoga creates a balance between the right and left sides of your brain, and allows for the benefits of a "beginners mind."**

Because of the type of training we undergo as lawyers—the focus on analytical structures and problem-solving—adding the mindfulness of yoga is like a booster. It allows you to engage in the analytical part with a more creative openness.

Due to the pace of technology and the unprecedented changes we've had to make in the face of this pandemic, we'll have to be perpetual newbies... meaning always learning things for the first time. The idea of beginner's mind is being able to see things without undue bias, prejudice, or routine and to see things with a fresh outlook that you'll need to solve problems when you're seeing new things for which you don't necessarily have a framework to evaluate them anyway.

Yoga really helps with that idea of a nimble mind that can be, certainly, somewhat fresh, somewhat rested, and somewhat capable of seeing things for the first time or in a way that's not blundered or too encumbered by other things.

#### **3. Yoga can help you to understand your client.**

Sometimes understanding your client requires reading between the lines, and yoga can help develop the sensitivity needed to do this. If you have a client who is communicating from a very emotional place instead of just laying out the facts, you're a much more effective lawyer if you're able to pick up on their needs.

Empathy can be described as the ability to identify, understand and share in the feelings of another person. Unlike pity, which infers a sense of judgement, empathy is about non-judgment. Aside from the fact that having greater empathy benefits those around us, the roll-on effect is a practice that is

profoundly good for us. Research suggests that being more empathetic can improve relationships, creative productivity, and overall health & wellbeing.

Yoga cultivates empathy by helping us to form a deeper connection within ourselves, and a deeper connection with others as a consequence.

#### **4. Yoga helps you to filter out thoughts that don't need your attention.**

Thoughts come constantly, but yoga teaches us to become aware of the thoughts without becoming so preoccupied by them. By practicing yoga and using our breath as an anchor, we strengthen our ability to see, or to get a sense when we're being set off or becoming distressed, or when things aren't going well. Or when someone or something is throwing you off your game, it's extraordinarily useful to think in terms of, "Well, what am I doing?" Come back to what's important here. "What are my themes? What's going on with me and how can I come back to the focus on where I am and what I'm supposed to be doing right now."

That sense of insight and seeing the way your own brain and mind work is invaluable when you're dealing with other people, dealing with decision-makers, dealing with the myriad tasks and challenges that you have in a given day. It's hard to measure it but that ability to be somewhat flexible and the way you think and the way you respond is very important in this business.

#### **5. Last but not least, yoga slows us down, and teaches us to have compassion and forgiveness towards ourselves – a necessary skill to be successful.**

As lawyers and as human beings, we judge. We judge everything. Yoga teaches us to leave judgment behind, and instead become the observer in our bodies, the observer of our thoughts. With practice, we start to see things as they are, not how we think they should be. When we come from this place of truth, we are better equipped to handle problems with clarity. And yoga creates a bit of space when you're approaching a problem. Instead of just tackling it, you become comfortable in sitting with it for a bit longer.

SEATED EAGLE ARMS



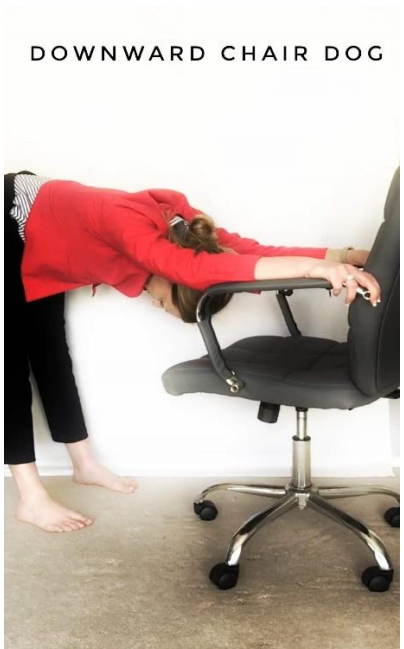
SEATED PIGEON



FORWARD FOLD SQUAT



DOWNWARD CHAIR DOG



SEATED COW



SEATED CAT



SEATED FORWARD FOLD



SEATED SHOULDER STRETCH



SEATED TWIST

