

## Mike Wells Piece on Moving On –April 6, 2010

“I would like to start all over again,” sings a song of my youth.

The singer’s love interest gets away from him. His plan to get her back had always worked before. But instead of coming back this time, she walks out, and she walks out for good. He has paid the price for his mistake.

But he cannot let it go. He relives his mistake over and over again. His failure at love is compounded by his failure to move on.

Life does not always go as we plan it. In fact, it seldom does so, at least not without a ripple or two, and some more serious than others. Yet we are often surprised when our plan turns one way and our life turns another.

The trial of a lawsuit is a lot like life. Despite all of your planning, the trial takes an unexpected turn. A ruling by the court, the late discovery of an important fact, or an anticipated harsh witness for the other side turns on the charm and garners unexpected sympathy.

You better be ready to change course, and to adapt quickly. There is no time to handicap what you could or should have done differently.

Trials, however, mercifully come to an end, and life moves on.

But what happens when life takes an unexpected turn for the worst? You don’t get to “start all over again,” as the song mournfully pleads.

You revisit those awful events in your mind’s eye. A failed marriage, a missed opportunity, a misjudgment, a lapse of conscience, a misstep caused by pride, arrogance, anger, or simply a chance to change what you know you could and should have changed.

These are hard things. Very hard. Whatever you do, you know they are going to hang with you, and it is going to be awhile.

But you still have to move on at some point, don’t you, even when it is hard? Don’t you have to see it through?

“What’s done can’t be undone,” said William Shakespeare. The proverbial bell ring cannot be unring. Yet we continue to stumble over this unyielding truth.

In a famous lawyer movie, “The Verdict,” Paul Newman plays a lawyer who had it all going for him. A bad thing happened to him. He loses his promising career, the love of his life, and his self-respect.

But then comes a case. Another chance. A chance to make it right again. And he is redeemed.

Only Superman in the movies can go back in time and change events by reversing the rotation of the earth. But you don’t need a movie with Paul Newman to get another chance in life, and to change the ultimate result.

They come to all of us, if we are on the lookout for them. And we are willing to take another chance on ourselves.

What I have learned about life on the way to the courthouse is this: It’s not how you act in a time of crisis, it is how you react. Only one person I know of ever made all the right moves.

Figure out what you did, and try to correct it. Sometimes you can correct fully your mistakes. Sometimes you cannot.

But whether you can correct your mistakes or not, you have to move on. Learn from them, and move on.

One of life's greatest misdirections comes from our trials and tribulations. It is life's most ironic little jigger step. If we react to them well, they often turn out to be one of our greatest moments, which lead to our greatest insights, and our greatest learning experiences. I don't know why that is, but it is.

You may not be able to start all over again, as the song pleads. But odds are, if you work at it, you can make a new start. And in the process, one of life's greatest insights is likely right around the corner, too. What my wise father called a "Lucky Strike extra" (which is yet another story you may read about sometime).

You just never know what you might learn the next time life takes that unexpected turn.

It sure beats wringing your hands and trying to undo what even literature's greatest sage says cannot be undone.

You see that, don't you?

Mike

*POSTSCRIPT If you receive this e-mail and you have enough e-mails in your life, please let me know. I do not have an Internet adviser, or marketing group, which has designed an icon to click to unsubscribe. As they say in the country: It's just me. And the chickens.*

*Many of you who receive these pieces ask permission to forward them to others. I am honored that you think well of them. But you do not need permission to send them on to others. With the proviso that if anyone disagrees with the sentiments contained in the pieces, they should be upset with me, not with you. RMW*

R. Michael Wells, Sr.  
Wells Jenkins Lucas & Jenkins PLLC