

## REFLECTIONS – THE SEASON TURNS, AND SO DO WE

AUGUST 2025

“At our Firm,  
Your Estate Plan  
is Not Business,  
it’s Personal...”



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“The future belongs to the competent. Get good, get better, be the best.”  
- Brian Tracy

In the spirit of following my own advice, I took the opportunity and had the privilege of taking my small family to Cerritos, Mexico this last July, and it was a trip to remember! Away from our routine and work, I got to spend time with my little rascals and really ‘halt’ life to observe their growth and be present in the moment. I remember when Kai was first born, and in the blink of an eye, he is now a teenager. I jokingly mention realizing I am getting older, but nothing will remind you of that like children! As we approach the end of August, the signs are subtle but unmistakable—summer is gently loosening its grip, and Fall is quietly preparing its entrance. The days are still warm, but there’s a shift in the wind, a softening of the light. The rhythm of the school year begins again, signaling change and routine all at once. Indeed, I am a bit more reflective than usual this month 😊.

In our office, the turn of the season brings its own kind of preparation. For over 20 years, we’ve written this newsletter—month in, month out—sharing insights, cautionary tales, reminders, and legal updates with you, our valued readers. There are times we wonder, “Have we said this before?” And the honest answer is: probably, yes. But much like the school year returns with familiar markers—first-day jitters, sharpened pencils, backpacks slung over shoulders—some truths are worth repeating.

In youth, and even in the early years of a career, much of life feels like an uphill climb. You focus on paying bills, building a name, and creating momentum. It’s an exhilarating season full of ambition and urgency. But as years go by, you begin to recognize the cycles—economic ebbs and flows, tax seasons, client meetings that echo ones from five or ten years ago. You realize that with each repetition comes an opportunity—not to say something new, necessarily, but to reinforce what has always mattered.

So as we turn the wheel once more, let me offer three reflections from running an estate planning practice—lessons that remain timeless, and perhaps even more urgent with each passing year.

**1. Financial Responsibility Is a Lifelong Practice** - One of the most consistent themes we encounter is the importance of financial responsibility—not just the discipline of earning and saving, but the deeper commitment to understanding what you own, what you owe, and what your future requires.

Too often, clients come to us after years of avoidance or deferral. They’ve done well, but their assets are scattered, beneficiary forms are outdated, or key planning tools are missing. The lesson? Success doesn’t end with growth—it continues with stewardship... I should quote myself with this one 😊. Whether you’re 35 or 75, taking stock of your financial life annually is not just wise; it’s essential.

**2. Legal Documents Are Not Optional** - Every adult should have foundational estate planning documents in place—regardless of age, income, or family status. These include a Revocable Living Trust or Will, Durable Power of Attorney, and Advance Health Care Directive.

We’ve seen the difference these documents make. When a client becomes sick or disabled without them, their loved ones face expensive and time-consuming court processes to gain control. With them, transitions are smooth, wishes are honored, and stress is reduced. Planning ahead is not a pessimistic act—it’s a deeply caring one. It says to your family: “I’ve thought about this. I’m prepared.”

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## INTRODUCTION

As August rolls in, many of us look back on a summer filled with laughter, family time, and memories that will last a lifetime—especially for our kids. Whether it was road trips, beach days, or just simple moments at home, these experiences remind us of what really matters. Now, with the school year just around the corner, it’s time to help our young ones shift gears—mentally preparing them to return with confidence, focus, and resilience. On a quick side note, I feel for them. The ‘older’ generation used to have school start in early September... and that was a dread! I can’t imagine what they’re feeling now... But onto the rest of the newsletter 😊.

This transition offers a great opportunity to reinforce lessons on positivity and peer pressure. Whether it’s children facing new social dynamics or adults navigating competitive environments, the key is the same: **stay grounded in who you are, hold fast to your values, and trust your inner compass.**

For business owners and professionals, August is also the perfect time to reconnect with your “why.” The same mindset we instill in our children—curiosity, confidence, and a willingness to learn—applies equally in business. The market may shift, clients may change, and challenges may arise, but your mindset is the foundation. Keep learning, keep showing up, and don’t lose sight of your long-term goals.

So as you help your kids get ready for a new academic year, take a moment to ready yourself as well. There’s still time in 2025 to achieve great things—both personally and professionally. Embrace the energy of the season, and let August be a month of renewal, preparation, and quiet determination.

## SCANDAL, SPECTACLE, AND THE LOST ART OF COMPASSION

In a moment meant for levity and light-hearted romance, the now-infamous kiss cam at a recent Coldplay concert turned into something else entirely—a scandal. When the camera panned to Andy Byron, CEO of the software company Astronomer, and the woman beside him, the crowd at first responded with the usual cheers and chuckles. But those who knew the pair—especially employees and insiders—quickly recognized that the woman next to him wasn't his wife.

**SCANDAL**

What followed was predictable: social media firestorms, professional fallout, and the rapid resignation of Mr. Byron. The private indiscretion, made public in the most ironic of ways, spiraled into a national spectacle. Tabloids salivated. Comment threads exploded. Then the jokes—some clever, some cruel—started circulating everywhere. For those of you who know me personally, I am not one to not joke around (indeed, a double negative 😊), but doing it at the expense of others is not my style. Especially when so much is at stake. A marriage, maybe two, families and a career, seemingly unraveled in a matter of hours.

We all understand the obvious lesson: don't cheat. And if you must, don't do it on a kiss cam. But perhaps there's something deeper, something more lasting, that this scandal can teach us as a society—not about infidelity, but about decency and character?

Let's be clear: what happened was wrong. Workplace relationships with unequal power dynamics are fraught with ethical and legal complications. The betrayal of marital vows is not something to casually dismiss. But while we can condemn actions, we can still preserve our humanity. Compassion does not mean condoning. It simply means choosing not to pile on. When someone stumbles—however publicly—we should pause before sharpening our digital comments. In a time where mockery often masquerades as moral outrage, perhaps the better path is to recognize that everyone has moments in their lives, chapters they will move on from for the better. This moment, for Mr. Byron and the HR executive, is undoubtedly one of them.

The internet moves fast. Our opinions form faster. But judgment should be a slow process, not an instant reflex. We don't yet know the full context of what happened—whether this was a long-term relationship, how it began, or what personal battles may have preceded it. That is NOT an excuse for poor choices. It's to remind ourselves that truth is often layered, and we should not be so quick to appoint ourselves judge and jury.

This scandal serves as a powerful reminder: live your life as if you were always being watched. Integrity is not about being good when others are looking—it's about being consistent when they aren't. If you wouldn't want a moment of your life shown on a jumbotron, maybe it's a sign to re-evaluate your choices. In an age of surveillance and smartphones, privacy is fleeting. But more importantly, character is enduring.

If the takeaway from this situation stops at gossip, we've learned nothing. Perhaps the real lesson is to recommit ourselves to being better. Be mindful of how your choices ripple through the lives of others—family, colleagues, friends. It's not just about avoiding scandal. It's about doing good for goodness' sake.

Mr. Byron's fall from grace is a cautionary tale. But it's also an invitation—to pause before we mock, to listen before we judge, and to live with the quiet discipline of moral consistency. In the end, we're all humans. And when another person's moment of weakness is broadcast on the big screen, maybe the best thing we can do isn't to laugh—but to learn.

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### 3. Life Insurance Is Not Just About Death

Life insurance is one of the most misunderstood tools in estate planning. Many view it simply as a death benefit—but the best clients we've worked with understand it as a living asset. It can fund trusts, cover estate taxes, protect business continuity, or serve as a wealth transfer tool.

The right policy, properly structured, can provide your heirs with liquidity at a time when they need it most—without disrupting your investments or forcing the sale of real property. For those with young families or complex estates, it's not a luxury; it's a necessity.

I open this month's newsletter with a quiet thank you. For letting me repeat myself when necessary. For staying with me through the seasons. For growing alongside our team, and trusting us with your stories, your families, and your futures. Here's to sharpened pencils, changing leaves, and the wisdom that comes with turning pages year after year. One last thought of wisdom... Getting old sucks I tell ya'!! 😊

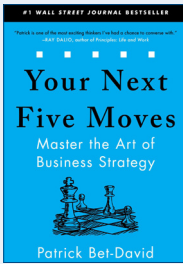
## ESTATE PLANNING TALK

**Attorney Talk with Shilpa Bhatt:** Planning for Incapacity - Power of Attorney and More August 12th at 10 am

RSVP: [tinyurl.com/APELEP](https://tinyurl.com/APELEP)

**Attorney Talk with Valerie Pasion:** Love, Protection, and Planning - Financial Security for Disabled Loved Ones August 27th at 10 am

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## BOOK SUMMARY. PATRICK BET-DAVID: YOUR NEXT FIVE MOVES

*Your Next Five Moves* by Patrick Bet-David is a strategic business book that challenges entrepreneurs, leaders, and professionals to think like master chess players—always several moves ahead. Drawing from his experience as a successful entrepreneur and founder of PHP Agency,

Bet-David structures the book around the core idea that clarity, strategy, and anticipation are essential to building a lasting and impactful business. If you're anything like one of the partner of this firm (\*cough\* Patrick Phancao), as an avid YouTube consumer, he listens to his news on the platform quite regularly! Whether you agree with the man or not, the way Bet-David approaches politics is an interesting reflection on his business approach overall.

The book begins with the first crucial move: **knowing yourself**. Bet-David emphasizes that self-awareness is the foundation to all success. Before making any business decisions, a leader must understand their true motivations, risk tolerance, strengths, and weaknesses. This clarity allows entrepreneurs to build a business aligned with their vision and values, rather than chasing goals that don't suit them or lead to burnout.

The second major focus is **refining your strategy**. Bet-David dives into the importance of crafting a business model that fits the marketplace and understanding how to position yourself in a competitive environment. He encourages readers to ask critical questions: Are you trying to build a lifestyle business, a scalable empire, or a legacy brand? Your answer will determine the kind of systems and leadership you need to put in place. From personal experience, as you 'age' into your industry, your objectives definitely pivot. For example, our mission to take care of families first will never change, however, the manner in which we undertake that mission may slightly alter over time.

A significant portion of the book explores how to **scale your organization** and develop the leadership capacity necessary to grow. Bet-David argues that at every level of business expansion, new skills, structures, and mindsets are required. He stresses the need for relentless hiring of high-performers, developing systems that create efficiency, and learning how to lead people rather than just manage tasks.

Another key concept is **understanding power plays and negotiation**. Bet-David doesn't shy away from discussing the competitive and political realities of business. He teaches how to navigate tough conversations, close major deals, and stay mentally resilient in high-pressure environments.

Finally, Bet-David pushes readers to define what success looks like for them. He encourages building a life and career not just based on growth and profit, but on meaning, fulfillment, and long-term impact. Every decision, he suggests, should be guided by a clear endgame—your ultimate goal. *Your Next Five Moves* is not just a playbook for business mechanics; it's a deep dive into the psychology of leadership and the mindset required for strategic excellence. By thinking multiple steps ahead, as one would in a game of chess, entrepreneurs can avoid common pitfalls and seize opportunities with precision and confidence.

## Minimalism: More Than Less – A Path to Peace and Purpose



Minimalism is often misunderstood as a lifestyle that simply champions owning fewer things—but true minimalism is far deeper than a cleaned-out closet or a smaller home. At its core, it's about living intentionally, shedding what doesn't serve you, and creating space for what truly matters. While the Western view of minimalism often centers around aesthetic simplicity, Japanese minimalists have long explored it as a philosophy of daily life, one that encourages not just having less, but doing less, rushing less, and consuming less—mentally, physically, and emotionally.

Prominent voices like Fumio Sasaki, author of *Goodbye, Things*, and Marie Kondo, whose work sparked global decluttering movements, have reminded the world that minimalism is not a sacrifice, but a pathway to freedom. Sasaki, in particular, embodies the idea that by reducing the noise—whether it's from too many commitments or too much stuff—you gain clarity, calm, and even happiness. Japanese minimalists often frame minimalism not as deprivation, but as liberation from unnecessary busyness and distraction.

An often overlooked aspect of minimalism is the power of boredom. In today's hyper-connected world, we're conditioned to fill every idle moment with scrolling, streaming, or shopping. But allowing yourself to be bored creates space for creativity to flourish. It's in those quiet moments—where nothing is demanding your attention—that your best ideas and clearest insights emerge. Minimalism invites us to lean into that space, to let stillness become a source of strength.

Financially, minimalism is a form of empowerment. Choosing to buy less, to pause before making a purchase, to cancel unused subscriptions, or to forgo unnecessary upgrades, isn't just about saving money—it's about unburdening your life. Every purchase carries a cost beyond dollars: space, time, mental energy. When you stop filling your home and calendar with things you don't need, you free up room for deeper experiences, more meaningful connections, and peace of mind.

This lifestyle does require resilience. It's not always easy to resist peer pressure or the temptation to keep up appearances. Social media constantly feeds us curated versions of other people's lives—luxury, success, abundance—and it's easy to feel that we're missing out unless we accumulate more. But true contentment doesn't come from comparison. It comes from aligning your life with your values and learning to be satisfied with enough.

Minimalism isn't about having the bare minimum. It's about being selective, deliberate, and purposeful. It's about recognizing that time is your most valuable currency, and how you spend it—who you spend it with, and what you choose to give your energy to—is what defines your life.

In embracing minimalism not just as a design principle but as a way of living, you step into a rhythm that's slower, gentler, and more deeply fulfilling. You buy less, but you gain more: clarity, calm, and control over your own story. And in a world that often feels overwhelming, that may be the greatest luxury of all.





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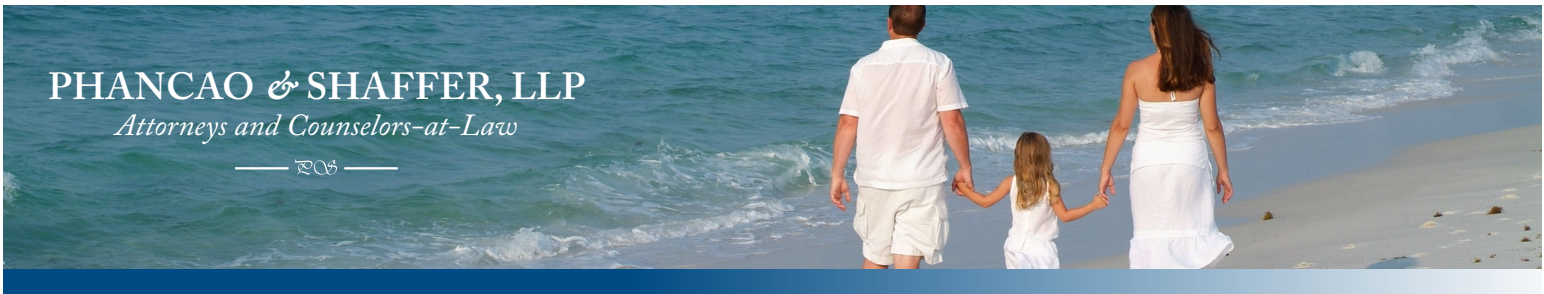


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As August comes to a close, the season of sun-soaked adventures and family outings begins to settle into the rhythm of routine. Kids are heading back to school, the backpacks are packed, and early mornings are back on the calendar. While it may feel bittersweet to wind down the family fun, it's also a valuable transition—one that gives both you and your loved ones the structure and space to refocus on growth.

This seasonal reset is your opportunity to return to your work with renewed energy and sharper intention. That mental break—however brief or busy—served its purpose: to refresh your perspective, realign your priorities, and remind you of the balance that fuels sustainable success. Now, it's time to carry that clarity into the final stretch of the year.

As your children dive into their studies, let it be a reminder that education never ends—not just for them, but for you as well. Whether through reading, workshops, mentorship, or refining your skills, continuous learning is what elevates you in your field and helps you stay relevant, agile, and confident in the face of change.

So, let the back-to-school season inspire a back-to-business mindset. Finish the year with drive, purpose, and focus. Show up with intention, pursue growth with consistency, and never stop learning—because excellence, in life and work, is always earned day by day.

