

The Dispatch

The January 2022: New Things

As we all know by now, a *new* year mostly brings more of the *same old* things. We continue in our relationships, work, joys and worries. Occasionally we still make New Year's Resolutions, but those have mostly gone by the wayside. Yet, the promise of newness is there. The January Dispatch focuses on "new things" in each one of our lives. Davon encourages us to lay aside nagging worries and take on a renewed sense of hope. Lance considers new roles you might want to take on in the family business. Finally, Bill describes a new (or rekindled) love: poetry. What new things are YOU taking on this year?

Contagious Hope

[Davon Cook](#)

I generally consider myself a can-do person with a decent amount of optimism. Yet in the last few months I have found myself spending too much energy courting fear, imagining the worst. Amid family health worries, Covid (still!) causing havoc, devastating wildfires near where I live, world peace (still!) elusive, an almost empty nest, etc....it's easy to spend too much time worrying.

I realized this while driving on a lonely interstate. I noticed one of those [PassItOn.com](#) billboards that said, "Fear is contagious. So is hope." That was the slap in the face I needed. I realized worrying and contingency planning for bad possibility A, B, and C were bogging me down—and more importantly, it was impacting other people. Viruses are contagious; so are attitudes. So, that's my new goal: infecting myself and others with hope.

What does that look like in your world? Perhaps it's noting that while input costs are skyrocketing...yo u're good at risk management strategies to protect margin. While labor is tight...you can count on certain people on your team to help you figure it out, or you are willing to try new ideas like H2A, or a profitable year allows for pay increases. Even though family dynamics are tense, all are agreeing that it's time to make needed changes and you've found resources to help with that. Even though drought is pervasive, your faith helps you let go of things out of your control. Even though you're worried about a loved one's mental health challenges, you can project confidence to help them envision a different future.

May our hope infect many others in 2022!

Of Roles that are New in Twenty Twenty-Two

[Lance Woodbury](#)

Unless a man starts afresh about things, he will certainly do nothing effective. - G.K. Chesterton

A new calendar year encourages us to think about resolutions, habits, and goals. I'd like you also to consider new *roles* in the family or family business. By a new "role," I do not mean new "job," where you take on new responsibilities.

Rather, think of a new way in which you might be helpful to your family partners. Here are three examples of roles you might assume:

The Family Champion. [Joshua Nacht at the Family Business Consulting Group](#) says family champions promote the family and its work to define how they will affect future generations. Specifically, “the family champion is an inspirational leader for the family who works to help develop the family as responsible owners and stewards of their business.” They call the family to a higher and longer-term purpose.

The Chief Succession Officer. Whether focused on the management handoff from the senior generation, the development of an estate plan, or the updating of existing entities, trusts, and operating agreements, this person keeps the family tuned-in to the ramifications of partners exiting the business.

The Forgiveness Advocate: This person looks at the conflicts among family members and encourages the parties to forgive one another. That may or may not involve meetings between them, but it most certainly involves asking each person how they might move on from the hurt of the past. It is reminding people who love each other, as [Lewis Smedes](#) said, that “forgiving is love's toughest work, and love's biggest risk.”

What role will you play in your family business in 2022?

My New Thing: Rediscovering Poetry

[Bill Long](#)

One of the distinctive pleasures I had as a fourth-grader was dressing up in a baseball uniform and reciting “Casey at the Bat” for a school assembly. People applauded, though now that I think of it I don’t know whether it was of appreciation or pity, but I assumed at the time that people liked what I did. I felt at that moment that the recitation itself actually created the event, as if words unaided could bring to life an imagined scene. The lines still ring in my mind, “No stranger in the crowd could doubt ’twas Casey at the bat,” or, when the umpire had the audacity to call a strike on Casey,

“Kill him! Kill the umpire! shouted someone on the stand’;
And it’s likely they’d have killed him had not Casey raised his hand.”

I remember with fondness the boy at nine or ten reciting that poem and I said to myself, nearly sixty years later, that I wanted to recapture the innocence, energy and joy of moments like that. So, I have set myself the task this year of collecting 100 of my favorite poems, ranging from the sonorous sonnets of Shakespeare to the simple picturesque vision of the “Red Wheelbarrow” by William Carlos Williams. As I am beginning my task, I am also reading poems that I thought I knew in a new way, as well as discovering new poems. For some reason, Longfellow’s trip to his boyhood home of Portland ME in his 30s and the poem that came from that (“My Lost Youth”) appeals to me deeply. To be sure, I won’t be memorizing all of them, but I want to rediscover some of the full range of emotion and thought that comes from some of these poems. That, then, is my “new thing” for 2022. And if, on December 31, 2022, I have identified and internalized those 100 poems, I believe I will be an even happier man than I am now.