

V&B ATTORNEYS

Board Certified Injury & Accident Lawyers

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“Your law firm did a great job getting the case settled. You were helpful and I would recommend you to anyone.”

*Betty J. Richmond
Houston, TX*

We Appreciate Your Many Referrals! Thank you for continuing to refer your family and friends to our firm for their legal needs.

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Advice From A Six Year Old

I have a mirror in my office at home that I use when I get dressed in the morning to make sure my tie is straight and I don't have any shaving cream on my face before I leave the house. I always look in the mirror in the morning so I thought that would be a good place to post my New Year's Resolutions for 2010. I get to see them every day and am reminded about my goals for the year.

My six year old son Gus saw my New Year's Resolutions and decided to make his own resolutions for the year. He wrote them on a piece of paper and placed them on the mirror next to my resolutions.

After reading them, I thought they were pretty good resolutions for all of us as well. Gus' resolutions for this year are:

1. *Be Good;*
2. *Love everyone;*
3. *Exercise;*
4. *Get Sleep;*
5. *Be Nice.*



Life is pretty simple for a six-year old. Sleep, eat, play, and go to school. We learn from our parents, teachers, siblings, and friends. We learn simple but profound rules for life. If we follow our parents' rules, we are rewarded with candy or cartoons or toys.

As a parent, I am constantly trying to remind myself to teach my children valuable life lessons to ensure they become responsible adults. But I sometimes forget that children have good lessons to teach us too.

I think I am going to adopt five more resolutions to my goals for this year (see Gus' resolutions above).

And here's sixth resolution I am going to adopt in my life that you may want to consider too: *Listen to the wisdom of children.*

Sometimes the best things in life really do come in small packages.

Brian

Client Spotlight-



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We Get Questions



Q: I was hit by a driver who was distracted because they were talking on a cell phone. What can I do?

A: Distracted driving is becoming a serious issue across Texas, as drivers choose to focus their attention on handheld devices like cell phones rather than keep their eyes on the road and avoid causing an accident.

If the driver who hit you was distracted by a cell phone, either because they were talking or because they were sending or receiving a text message, you can hold them responsible for their negligence. An experienced Houston auto accident attorney like those at Vujasinovic & Beckcom can help you.

The other driver's cell phone records can be examined to confirm that they were indeed using their phone at the time of the accident. Evidence from the crash investigation may also be useful, as distracted drivers may not take proper evasive action when a crash happens (i.e. they don't apply the brakes or apply them late because they were not paying attention).

If the other driver was conducting business on the phone, their employer could also be held accountable for negligence. A thorough and determined Texas auto accident attorney will conduct a complete investigation of your accident case to find out exactly what happened, so you can receive fair and honest compensation.

Will the Insurance Company Really Protect You?

You pay your insurance premium with the belief that your insurance company will step up when you need it. However, many people are shocked when they discover that the insurance company has denied their claims. Isn't the insurance company supposed to protect you from loss?

According to a report by the American Association for Justice (AAJ), one of the largest insurance companies in our country was in the habit of denying claims in an attempt to boost its bottom line. The insurer went as far as creating an employee incentive program that offered incentives to adjusters who met low payment goals.

The AAJ identified some of the nation's largest insurance companies as ones that were frequently denying claims, based on its research. These insurance giants included Allstate, AIG, State Farm and many others, which have been known to aggressively fight claims.

Insurance companies use all sorts of excuses to deny claims, but you can fight back. Read your policy carefully to know what is covered and put everything in writing. If you are still having trouble with the insurance company, you might want to contact the state insurance department or even a lawyer who can help you. Whatever you do, don't give up. The insurance company is hoping that you just walk away.

Non-Disclosure

If you successfully completed deferred adjudication (which is a type of probation that keeps you from having a conviction if was successfully completed), you may be eligible to have your criminal record sealed.

ELIGIBILITY: You must have successfully completed deferred adjudication.

WAITING PERIOD: Most misdemeanors may be sealed immediately upon completing deferred adjudication. However, there are some misdemeanors that require a 2 year waiting period before you can have your record sealed such as assaults, disorderly conduct and violation of a protective order.

Felonies require a 5 year waiting period before you can have your record sealed.

Even though you may have received deferred adjudication, there are some charges that may not be sealed at all such as any crime that requires sex offender registration, murder, injury to a child, or any crime that involves family violence.

If the 2 or 5 year waiting period applies to your case, you may not be convicted or

be placed on deferred adjudication for any other crimes during that period.

EFFECT: Once a nondisclosure is granted, your record is "sealed" and criminal justice agencies may not provide any information about the arrest or charge. However, government agencies will still be able to "see" the charge. So if you apply for a job with a government agency or need a state license (i.e. teacher, electrician, nurse, lawyer—even a hair dresser), they will still be able to see the charge.

Otherwise, you may deny the charge except in the case of a future prosecution.

If you have questions about sealing your record, contact us today for a free consultation.

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What to Do If Your Pedal Becomes Jammed in Your Toyota



If you have one of the Toyota vehicles involved in the pedal entrapment or floor mat recall by the auto manufacturer, you probably aren't feeling too comfortable in your car these days.

There have been numerous reports of sticky pedals that have led to serious accidents. The problem is so significant, that Toyota temporarily halted the sales and production of certain vehicles.

In the unfortunate situation where your accelerator pedal becomes stuck while you are driving, there are some things you can do to avoid a collision. Toyota has come up with the following actions to take if you experience floor mat pedal entrapment:

1. Pull back the floor mat and dislodge it from

the accelerator pedal, if it is safe to do so.

2. If you can't remove the floor mat, then put both feet on the brake pedal and press firmly. Don't pump the brake, as it will only make it harder to stop.
3. Put the car in neutral and press on the brake to stop the vehicle.
4. If you can't put the car in neutral, turn it off. Turning the vehicle off will not cause you to lose control of your steering or braking.

Toyota has come up with a solution to fix the accelerator pedals. Engineers with the auto manufacturer have created a precision-cut steel reinforcement bar, which is supposed to eliminate the excess friction that can lead to a jammed pedal. According to Toyota, customers will be contacted when it is time for them to bring in their vehicles for repair.

That Cup of Joe Could Benefit Your Health

Is coffee good for you or bad for you? It seems like the answer to this question changes all the time. If you are an avid coffee drinker, there is good news for you. Current research has found that consuming a moderate amount of coffee can actually benefit your health.

In a *Washington Post* article, Rob van Dam, an assistant professor in the departments of nutrition and epidemiology at the Harvard School of Public Health, was quoted as saying, "coffee is generally associated with a less health-conscious lifestyle – people who don't sleep much, drink coffee, smoke, drink alcohol, but as more studies have been conducted – larger and better studies that controlled for healthy lifestyle issues – the totality of efforts suggests that coffee is a good beverage of choice."

Some of the many health benefits that have been associated with coffee include lowered risk of stroke, Alzheimer's disease, dementia, gallstones and even some cancers. Coffee is also believed to

reduce the chances of suffering from Parkinson's disease.

Besides the caffeine that most people rely on when drinking coffee, this beverage also contains valuable compounds, such as antioxidants, vitamins and minerals.

All of these health benefits are based on moderate consumption of this caffeinated beverage. So, how much is considered moderate? According to van Dam, "in terms of health risks, up to around six cups a day or so seems to be fine." Keep in mind, though, that a large gourmet coffee drink does not count as one cup of coffee!



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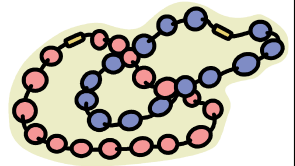
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Guard Valuables from Inheritance Thieves

If your parent or grandparent has jewelry and other valuables that could easily be "misplaced" when they die, give them this advice: Make a list of the valuables, give a copy to each heir, then put them into a bank safety deposit box. That's what experts quoted in Bottom Line Personal say.

Where valuables are concerned, it's not unusual for a parent to give a piece of jewelry to one heir, making others wonder what happened to it. The list would make it known to all.



Otherwise, a thief could break into the home and make off with one piece or more. Thieves sometimes target victims whose names appear in the obituaries.

An item could also be taken by a caregiver or anyone who has access to the home. Using a safety deposit box would keep that from occurring.

Firm Communication Policy

Our goal when we are working on our clients' cases is obtain the best possible result as quickly as possible. When we are working on your case, our lawyers do not accept unscheduled phone calls or respond to emails. We believe this allows our lawyers to be much more productive and provide fast and effective legal services to our clients. Remember, if you are a client of the firm, you can always call our firm and schedule an appointment to talk with a lawyer at any time about your legal matter. We will call you back within 24-48 hours unless it is not possible to do so. We also will respond to your emails in the same time frame. We have found that focusing on our clients' cases helps us to provide the best services possible.