



Throughout history, pandemic diseases have represented some of the biggest challenges to mankind. COVID truly spanned the globe, resulting in the death of over 3.5 million people worldwide and counting, increasing poverty levels and confining us to social isolation. It could have crushed us. Yet we somehow overcame it. Our COVID experience reminds me of one of my favorite poems by Tagore, who says, “Faith is the bird that feels the light and sings when the dawn is still dark.” A positive outlook, and faith in what we can achieve together, is our greatest asset. If there’s one thing I’ve learned throughout my career, it’s that raising your hand, rolling up your sleeves, trying new things, believing in yourself, and working hard with the people around you will carry you farther than any technical skill. The pandemic has proved this to be true.

Let us embrace the spirit of optimism – in our progress, in our abilities, and in the fact that we can learn, grow and achieve. We’ve shown we can persevere in the most difficult of circumstances. Each of us goes through our own challenges in our careers and in our personal lives; pick yourself up and keep going. If there’s one thing the pandemic has also shown us, it’s that we are not alone. We need each other. So, ask questions, ask for help when you need it, play your part on the team but help others to play theirs too, as this will ultimately serve everyone well.

Try everything. In the buffet of life, take advantage of every opportunity. Life is about balance, but as my father always said, “time is elastic.” We can always find the bandwidth and the energy to invest time in what we are most passionate about – the things that breathe life into our souls and inspire the best version of ourselves are worth the extra time. And as cliché as it may sound, remember that failure is sometimes the most important ingredient to success. When we deny ourselves the opportunity to face potential obstacles that inevitably come along with our highest aspirations, we submit ourselves to drawn-out mediocrity. If met with a choice between staying in bounds or taking a risk, I urge you to pick the latter.

So believe in yourself and in others, remember none of us are alone, be comfortable with failure as a stepping stone to success, and know you can find moments of light even in dark times.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathy Bloomgarden". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'K' and a long, sweeping underline.

Dr. Kathy Bloomgarden  
Chief Executive Officer, Ruder Finn, Inc.