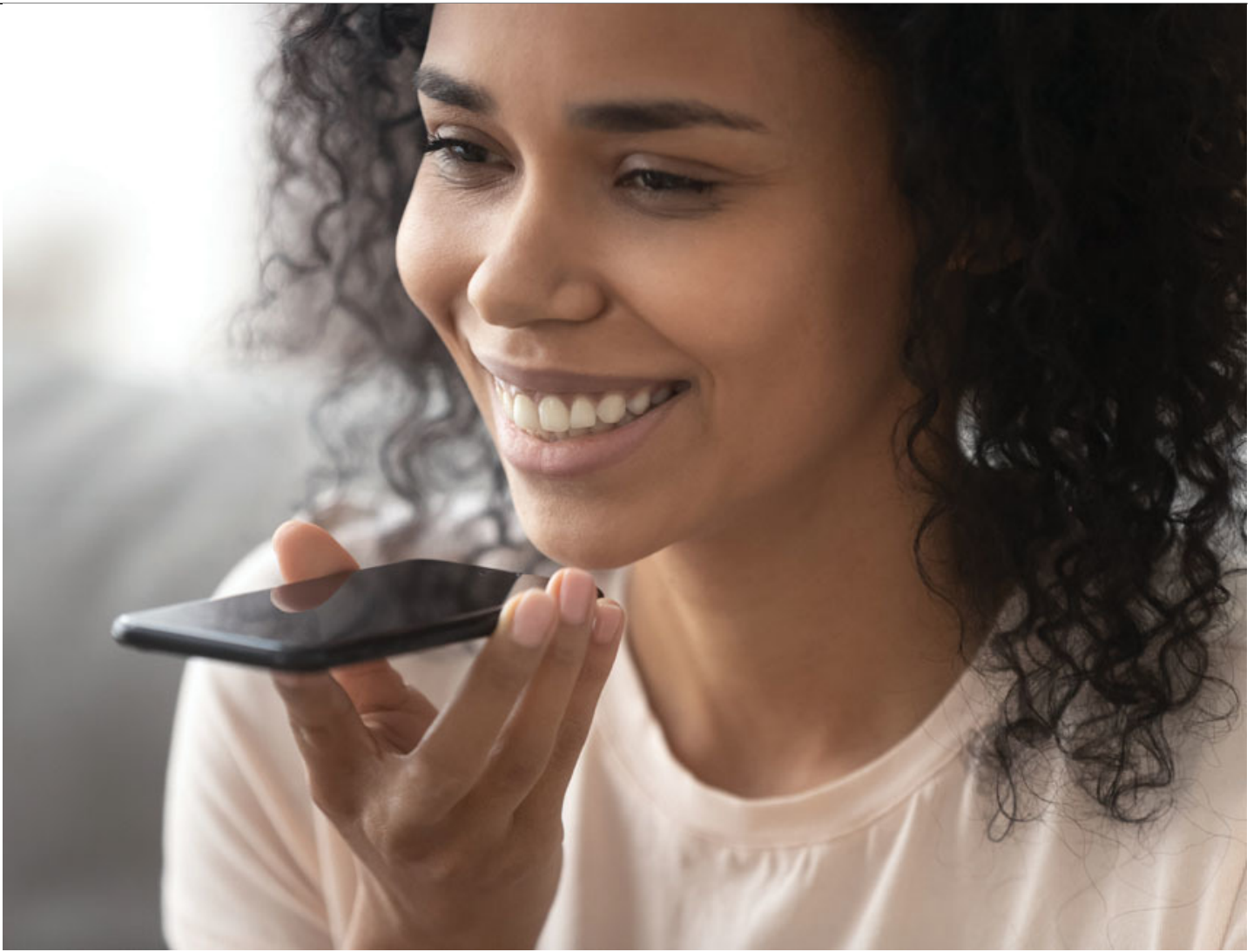




**Save a Life**

**Skills and Professional Development**





**“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.”**

You may recognize the quote above as the opening words to *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens. They could also aptly describe the events and emotional atmosphere of the current year. In my [May column](#), I encouraged readers to get creative and take advantage of the new “work-from-home” dynamic: learn a language, institute theme days at home, read through a book series.

Now, however, seven months into our very own worldwide, slightly altered version of the movie [Groundhog Day](#), a summer of sobering firsts have occurred for many of us, myself included.

Because of travel restrictions and state lockdowns, we missed two family weddings. A close family member passed away this summer. Due to the location of his passing, we were unable to get to him and hold a memorial service. An aging parent remains only accessible through staff members at a facility. I attended a graduation party by Zoom, a funeral by Zoom, and I’m scheduled to attend an upcoming retirement party by Zoom. How my heart longs for the days when the only [Zoom](#) I knew came on the TV after [Sesame Street](#) and [Electric Company](#) on PBS (the Public Broadcasting Service

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in the United States).

Don't get me wrong. I am incredibly grateful for the technology tools in place, including Zoom, that have allowed us to stay connected through this time of physical separation. But I am admittedly "Zoomed" out. Watching the news and living through a potentially once-in-a-generation period in history have left many weary, some hopeless, and others in despair.

So, what can be done? What can we do? The answer lies with each of us individually. We recover, we rebound, we restore, and we redeem this time by deciding to do one act of kindness for one person when presented the opportunity. One act could make all the difference for someone in need.

Singular acts by a community of people, each acting individually, have saved me during this time. One of those people is my editor at ACC, Joshua Shields. He not only allowed me to take some time off from writing this column while we dealt with a devastating loss; he sent me a condolence card in the mail. Another supportive soul is the ACC member who shares this column space with me: Jeff Wheeler, who graciously stepped in on a very short deadline for the July/August *Docket*. Flowers appeared from a friend in another state, mere hours after she heard the news. Other people stopped by and actually delivered flowers and hugs in person. Sympathy cards and packages filled our mailbox. My best friend sent me an assortment of my favorite items because she couldn't mourn with me in person.

Perhaps these acts of compassion and support do not seem particularly unique in a time of grief. But during this time, when the whole world is grieving and groaning not only from the loss of loved ones, but also the loss of jobs, celebrations, businesses, and normalcy; the significance of these gestures has profoundly affected me.

In a time of unprecedented individual isolation, each of us has an opportunity to make a difference in someone else's life: schedule and pay for groceries for someone in need, reach out to a distant relative, reconnect with a long-lost friend, buy a meal for a healthcare worker, provide advice to a fellow ACC member asking for help on the ACC Forum, have some patience with a coworker juggling working from home with children schooling at home. Remember the saying: ["There but for the grace of God go I."](#)

I regularly read the blog for book lovers entitled "Modern Mrs. Darcy" by Anne Bogel. In addition to providing book reviews and recommendations, she waxes philosophical occasionally. In a [January 2017 post](#), she repeats a question inspired by Barbara Brown Taylor's memoir *Leaving Church*: "What is saving your life right now?"

Bogel continues by saying: "Most of us know what's killing us, and can articulate it, if asked. Some of us are overwhelmed with hurry and worry; some of us face crushing poverty; some feel utterly paralyzed. But few of us stop to note what's giving us life."

I propose you take that question and turn it outward and ask yourself, "Whose life can I save right now, in a big or small way?"

Next ... go out and save them.

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Maryrose Delahunty



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