



ATTORNEY SEARCH

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To Snuggie™... or Not To Snuggie™: Finding Warmth and Humor in a Chaotic Legal Market Market

Does the ad below look inviting to you? Have you been reading about the soaring success rate of the Snuggie™? Did friends ring you in December and recommend it as the “perfect gift?” Welcome to my world.

Friday



CRAWLING

The Snuggie Pub Crawl ¹

Your nightmares come to life with the Snuggie bar crawl, in which mis4guided souls swaddled in sleeved blankets descend on otherwise pleasant bars to mingle with their own kind and possibly spill pilsner all over their blanket-aprons. (OK, you can make reservations now...)

My relationship with the Snuggie™ began innocently enough. My sister called me in December with excitement over the fact that she had found the perfect birthday gift for me - a fleece, over-the-head blanket . . . with sleeves. I dismissed her call as a joke and as little more than a quick-and-easy way to remove me from her shopping list. However, since that fateful day, the Snuggie™ has crept into my life in unaccountable ways. Friends have mentioned it, candidates, colleagues, my significant other. Seemingly intelligent, fashion-conscious individuals are finding some sort of comfort in an overhead blanket with sleeves, which reminds me very much of the Stonehenge scene in *Spinal Tap* . . .

Psychologists will tell you that people are drawn to the basics when things get tough: food, family, home, warmth. Are the recent layoffs and job uncertainty creating the perfect storm for the Snuggie™? If you read the news, or even glance at YouTube (which actually celebrates The Cult of Snuggie™), the answer to that question is an unequivocal “yes.” Far from its warming benefits, experts claim that the Snuggie™ has psychological benefits as it is “ultra-comforting . . . for people who live in ‘affection-challenged’ families.” It further fills the role of a “faithful friend which gives us a sense of security.” ²Opponents counter that . . . it’s a robe.³

To be frank, I neither support nor oppose the Snuggie™, but I *am* strangely attracted to it, albeit the way that it keeps crawling back into my life in an odd six-degrees-of-separation kind of way is somewhat disconcerting. Is some Grand Force in the universe telling me that I need the Snuggie™?

What is it about the Snuggie™ that rights the wrongs in people’s lives right now? Is that even logical? I have no idea, but I do know one thing: When things get tough, people turn to objects, places, people that remind them of when things were safe and secure and this stabilizes them and allows them to think more clearly. I also know an-

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other thing: Maybe in our haste to find a new job or hold on to a current job, we are overlooking the things that give us comfort in chaos . . . like the Snuggie™ or a Starbucks coffee . . . and maybe we should not overlook those things despite our desire to save money right now. A candidate recently asked me how he could find a quiet moment to think when he has a great deal of white noise in his head caused by fear over losing his job. I could not think of an answer at that moment, but I did much later. Find the thing that offers you comfort and go to it. Spend some time with it, and get some clarity. Notwithstanding the recession, if a \$4 Starbucks in the morning is your idea of starting the day, stick with it. If a \$20 Snuggie feels like a right move, make it. If going home to your hometown for the weekend keeps coming to mind, go. Our inner voice is always very much aware of the things we need most to stabilize our intellect and, too often, societies (especially New Yorkers) discount that inner voice. We laugh at the Snuggie™ - like I did. However, experts claim there is value to these things.

In a chaotic legal market like we are experiencing today, it is unrealistic to believe that one can spend 10-14 hours at work, come home and listen to the news, and then sleep restfully at night. It is also unrealistic to think that on top of all this, we should be scaling back on the small items that bring "normalcy" to a day, like a \$4 cup of Joe, or new Asics running shoes, or the Snuggie™, if that brings you comfort. It may just be that 10 minutes with these items put us in the right frame of mind for the day. Who am I to say that is not the case?

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Thus, in simple terms, Snuggie™ sales are through the roof because the Snuggie™ is serving some sort of comfort purpose today, and we should not overlook its benefit. However, is there something more here? Is there an end lesson here that I am missing?

Maybe it is this: Psychologists will tell you that people often overlook the motivation behind their attraction to comfort items during times of stress and such items' value to their lives. However, it is exactly these small, rather than large, improvements which often serve to dig oneself out of a hole faster. Could the Snuggie™ be seen as a small, deliberate step or even a small improvement on the way to a more important goal? Maybe. Looking at things this way, the Snuggie™ can be seen as a means to an end . . . not unlike a runner who needs a long run to clear his/her head when making tough decisions. Wrapping oneself in the Snuggie™ could be just what the doctor ordered. Obviously, this is a simplistic view in order to better understand the popularity of the Snuggie™ and the reason why so many people (attorneys) have been mentioning this fleecy fantasy to me.

From a professional standpoint, I can tell you that candidates often overlook the small improvements that they can make to help them get through a crisis in favor of fixing things all at once which, truth be told, is impossible. This is something that lawyers tend to do; they focus on finding the immediate fix so as to exert much needed control over a situation and FIX IT. However, this isn't the frame of mind that is going to get you where you need to go right now. Instead, it is those small, deliberate steps toward a goal that offer greater reward and more certain benefit.

A recent blog called this concept the "Torpedo Principle"⁴ which dictates that *"the way people change and improve operates the way a torpedo does when it's aimed at a mark. The torpedo doesn't go straight from Point A to Point B, but rather it makes little errors throughout its trajectory, ever self-correcting as it gets where it's headed."*

Personally, I've never been a big fan of small moves and related small fixes. I much prefer major moves toward correction and immediate resolution. However, reading further into the Torpedo Principle, I have to admit that there is some value to taking small steps every day in the right direction and self-correcting as you go. In the chaotic legal market that we are experiencing today, I am seeing a large number of candidates burning out quickly in their quest to find a new job because their usual protocol of sending out resumes is not yielding the rate of positive responses that they are used to. When the usual thing that works in a time of crisis does not work anymore, it IS time to re-assess its value and move toward something better. It's not just about throwing seeds on the soil and reaping a harvest in the fall. Today, you have to pick the right seeds, find fertilized soil, throw those seeds on, water them daily, and pray for a harvest. A lot of small moves toward a bigger goal - and a lot of self-correcting and readjusting (for weather changes and otherwise) along the way.

Thinking about the Snuggie™ in this light, I realized that while it may begin with the Snuggie™ or some other basic item that gives you comfort today, that purchase may just rejuvenate you enough to cause you to modify your resume, pick up the *New York Law Journal*, call a recruiter, or run through Craigslist (through which a friend of mine just found a counsel position). You may then find yourself sending out a resume or two, making plans for a drink to network a little more this week, or get in touch with an old professor in Chicago whom you heard is looking for a researcher.

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Whatever it is, we should not underestimate the value of making small, deliberate steps each day (right or wrong) toward a larger goal - and self-adjusting where necessary along the way. It's not the typical way that lawyers like to do things, but it certainly is something that experts support in times of crisis as a faster means to an end. Lifting the fog of uncertainty may start with a cup of tea (or bottle of beer) wrapped in The Snuggie™ and end with a new job or a better perspective on your current position.

1. Ad featured on www.urbandaddy.com/nyc/weekender/2236/The_Weekender_New_York_City_NYC_UrbanDaddy
2. "The Snuggie: A Comforting Solution for Hard Times," Jan. 25, 2009, by Jennifer Gish and Kristi L. Gustafson, Albany Times Union.
3. Id.
4. The Torpedo Principle, by Victoria Moran, Feb. 16, 2009, <http://blog.beliefnet.com/yourcharmedlife>, quoting Psycho-Cybernetics by Maxwell Matz, M.D.