

50 Lessons for Women Lawyers: Ethics and Diversity in Practice – Rules and Reality

Panel Discussion Program

Two 50-minute panel discussions by women lawyers who are contributors to the book
50 Lessons for Women Lawyers – From Women Lawyers

Moderator

Nora Riva Bergman

Date

May 3, 2019

Time

Panel Discussions
2:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Book Signing and Reception
4:30 – 6:00 p.m.

Location

New York City Bar
42 W 44th St, New York, NY 10036

Sponsored by
Women in the Legal Profession Committee



NY CLE Credit

2.0 Total: 1.0 Ethics & 1.0 Diversity, Inclusion and Elimination of Bias

PROGRAM AGENDA

- 2:00 – 2:30** **Registration**
- 2:30 – 2:35** **Welcome**
Melissa Colon-Bosolet, Chair, Women in the Legal Profession Committee
- 2:35 – 2:40** **Introductions**
Nora Riva Bergman, Moderator
- 2:40 – 3:30** **Life Lessons Panel Discussion**
- How personal life experiences inform relationships with prospective clients, courts and other legal institutions
 - Practical implications of how personal ethical issues can impact ethics in the profession
 - Strategies for integrating one’s personal values into professional values such as the promotion of fairness, justice, and morality
 - Effective strategies for managing stress in both your personal and professional life
 - How cultivating a sensitivity to cultural and other differences in your personal life translates to your professional life
 - Diversity initiatives in the private sector that could benefit the legal profession
 - How experiencing bias in your personal life affects your reaction to bias in your professional life
- 3:40 – 4:30** **Career Lessons Panel**
- Best practices for managing legal work
 - Critical law office management/organization skills
 - Ethics rules in marketing
 - Why greater diversity of all types within law firms better serves the profession and individual clients
 - Initiatives for increasing diversity and cultural awareness in the law firm
 - Have you experienced implicit or explicit bias in your career? How have you dealt with it?
 - How implicit and explicit bias affects the profession and individual attorneys
- 4:30 – 6:00** **Book Signing and Reception**

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Table of Contents

PROGRAM AGENDA.....	1
WHERE WE ARE NOW.....	3
The Rules	3
The Reality	4
LIFE LESSONS PANEL DISCUSSION	6
CAREER LESSONS PANEL DISCUSSION	7
<i>50 Lessons for Women Lawyers – From Women Lawyers Contributions From Panelists.....</i>	<i>8</i>
LIFE LESSONS	9
Lesson 3. Discovering Your Authentic Self, Sabrina C. Beavens	9
Lesson 5. Chances & Ampersands, Nora Riva Bergman	11
Lesson 12. Three Things I Wish I Remembered at the Start of My Practice (and That I Am Still Learning), Katherine E. Charonko	13
Lesson 13. Don’t Do It Alone, Mandi Clay	15
Lesson 18. Own Who You Are and Share Your Authentic Brand with Ease and Grace, Katy Goshtasbi	16
Lesson 20. Dream Beyond Perfection!, Melanie S. Griffin.....	18
Lesson 29. The Pearl Necklace, Kate Kyres	21
Lesson 35. Listen, Kate Mitchell	23
Lesson 39. Slow It Down, Stephanie Scarborough.....	25
Lesson 46. Make an Absolute Uncompromising Commitment to Taking Care of Yourself, Mary E. Vandenack	26
CAREER LESSONS	29
Lesson 8. Find a Mentor – Be a Mentor, Sandra Brown	29
Lesson 10. They Will Crush You, If You Let Them. Don’t., Maria-Vittoria “Giugi” Carminati	31
Lesson 11. Effective Organizational Habits Open Doors, Including Those that Allow You to Be Your Own Boss, Kelly Carmody.....	33
Lesson 37. Pushing Past Fear and Failure, Artie Renee Pobjecky	34
Lesson 40. Don’t Resist...Reinvent, Karen Dunn Skinner	36
Lesson 43. Buy a Ticket, Linda S. Thomas	38
Lesson 47. Overcoming the Obstacle of Naysayers, Wendi Weiner.....	40
PANELIST BIOGRAPHIES.....	42
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES.....	50
ADDITIONAL ARTICLES FROM OUR PANELISTS.....	51

WHERE WE ARE NOW

Diversity may be the hardest thing for a society to live with, and perhaps the most dangerous thing for a society to be without. – WILLIAM SLOANE COFFIN, JR.

The Rules

While the ethics rules of most jurisdictions prohibit discriminatory conduct in the practice of law, in most cases, these rules do not prohibit or sanction discrimination in the business of law, i.e. recruiting, hiring, promotion, or other employment practices. However, New York's Rule 8.4. (g) provides:

A lawyer shall not: (g) unlawfully discriminate in the practice of law, including in hiring, promoting or otherwise determining conditions of employment on the basis of age, race, creed, color, national origin, sex, disability, marital status or sexual orientation. Where there is a tribunal with jurisdiction to hear a complaint, if timely brought, other than a Departmental Disciplinary Committee, a complaint based on unlawful discrimination shall be brought before such tribunal in the first instance. A certified copy of a determination by such a tribunal, which has become final and enforceable and as to which the right to judicial or appellate review has been exhausted, finding that the lawyer has engaged in an unlawful discriminatory practice shall constitute prima facie evidence of professional misconduct in a disciplinary proceeding. (emphasis added)

Although the New York ethics rule affords some protection from discrimination, a claim may be made only after final judgement has been entered at the close of a discrimination lawsuit. "The burden of bringing such a suit in terms of time, expense, and exposure of oneself to employer backlash presents a significant impediment to the disciplinary process and the overall goal of eliminating bias." Hull, Helia Garrido. "Diversity in the Legal Profession: Moving from Rhetoric to Reality." Columbia Journal of Race and Law (2013).

In 2016, the ABA amended Model Rule 8.4, first adopted in 1983, and which set certain boundaries for professional misconduct. The original Model Rule 8.4 provided that it was professional misconduct for a lawyer to engage in the following conduct:

- (a) violate or attempt to violate the Rules of Professional Conduct, knowingly assist or induce another to do so, or do so through the acts of another;
- (b) commit a criminal act that reflects adversely on the lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness or fitness as a lawyer in other respects;
- (c) engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation;
- (d) engage in conduct that is prejudicial to the administration of justice;
- (e) state or imply an ability to influence improperly a government agency or official; or
- (f) knowingly assist a judge or judicial officer in conduct that is a violation of applicable rules of judicial conduct or other law.

It should be noted that the comment to this rule made clear that the rule applied only to conduct that occurred in the context of the "administration of justice."

The 2016 amendment to Rule 8.4 added subsection (g) which made it professional misconduct to:

(g) engage in conduct that the lawyer knows or reasonably should know is harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, national origin, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status or socioeconomic status in *conduct related to the practice of law*. This paragraph does not limit the ability of a lawyer to accept, decline or withdraw from a representation in accordance with Rule 1.16. This paragraph does not preclude legitimate advice or advocacy consistent with these Rules. (emphasis added)

The phrase “conduct related to the practice of law” expanded the focus of the rule beyond “the administration of justice.” The Comments to the rule make clear that “conduct related to the practice of law” includes “[o]perating or managing a law firm or law practice.” Comment 4 to the rule provides that harassment and/or discrimination “includes harmful verbal or physical conduct that manifests bias or prejudice towards others. Harassment includes sexual harassment and derogatory or demeaning verbal or physical conduct. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. The substantive law of anti-discrimination and anti-harassment statutes and case law may guide application of paragraph (g).” The Model Rule 8.4(g) prohibitions apply to a lawyer’s conduct in both the courtroom and the boardroom.

While a number of states, 20 at this writing, have adopted rules similar to Model Rule 8.4(g), seven states have rejected the rule, citing constitutional issues including freedom of religion and freedom of speech.

For an excellent summary of the evolution of Model Rule 8.4(g) see *The Evolution of Model Rule 8.4 (g): Working to Eliminate Bias, Discrimination, and Harassment in the Practice of Law*.

https://www.americanbar.org/groups/construction_industry/publications/under_construction/2019/spring2019/model_rule_8_4/

The Reality

- “The entering law school class for 2011-12 was comprised of 53.3% men and 46.7% women. Today, women comprise only one third of the legal profession. The downward trend is related, in part, to the great disparity in gender equality that still exists in the legal profession.” Hull, Helia Garrido. “Diversity in the Legal Profession: Moving from Rhetoric to Reality.” *Columbia Journal of Race and Law* (2013).
- Women make up only 19 percent of equity partners and women over 50 make up only 27 percent of lawyers at firms. *Achieving Long-Term Careers for Women in the Law, ABA Presidential Initiative Report, 2018*.
- “In addition to facing inequities with respect to opportunities, women frequently face gender bias with respect to compensation. In 2011, women lawyers earned only 86% of what male lawyers earned. The trend is similar for women equity partners in the 200 largest firms, who earn roughly 89% of the compensation earned by their male peers.” Hull, Helia Garrido. “Diversity in the Legal Profession: Moving from Rhetoric to Reality.” *Columbia Journal of Race and Law* (2013).

- Issues identified by ABA focus groups when asked why gender disparities remain at law firms include:
 - Closed compensation system
 - The credit system disadvantages women
 - The breadmaker/homemaker stereotypes persist
 - The “boys club” limits opportunities for women
 - Ageism impacts men and women differently.

Annual 2018: Why women leave the law—and what we can do about it, ABA Annual Meeting Report, 2018. See also, *The Florida Bar News*, September 15, 2018.

- “[W]omen are consistently underrepresented in lead counsel positions and in the role of trial attorney . . . In civil cases, [for example], men are three times more likely than women to appear as lead counsel . . . That substantial gender gap is a marked departure from what we expected based on the distribution of men and women appearing generally in the federal cases we examined (a roughly 2 to 1 ratio) and the distribution of men and women in the legal profession generally (again, a roughly 2 to 1 ratio).” *If Not Now, When? Achieving Equality for Women Attorneys in the Courtroom and in ADR*, Report of the New York State Bar Association, November 2017. (citing a 2015 ABA Commission Report)

- “The ABA Report also provided more granular statistics about the sample population, including that out of the 558 civil cases surveyed, 68% of all lawyers and 76% of the lead counsel were male.⁷ The disparity was even more exaggerated in the class action context, in which 87% of lead class counsel were men.” *If Not Now, When? Achieving Equality for Women Attorneys in the Courtroom and in ADR*, Report of the New York State Bar Association, November 2017. (citing a 2015 ABA Commission Report)

- According to The Florida Bar’s 2016 Survey on Gender Equality in the Legal Profession:
 - 29% of female respondents and less than 1% of male respondents report personally experiencing being addressed by names like “honey” or “sweetie” by male lawyers.
 - 27% of female respondents and less than 1% of male respondents report personally experiencing female lawyers being accorded less respect than male lawyers.
 - 20% of female respondents and 3% of male respondents report personally experiencing inappropriate sexual jokes, questions, gestures or looks made by male lawyers.
 - 19% of female respondents and 6% of male respondents report personally experiencing being consistently interrupted or cut off due to gender.
 - 18% of female respondents and 5% of male respondents report personally experiencing being treated differently by opposing counsel in court or related proceedings than other counsel of a different gender.
 - 17% of female respondents and 4% of male respondents report personally experiencing being asked to do lower level tasks not typically requested of other attorneys of a different gender.
 - 14% of female respondents and 4% of male respondents report personally experiencing their work being attributed to or assumed to be that of another lawyer of the opposite gender.
 - 12% of female respondents and 5% of male respondents report personally experiencing being treated differently by a judge in court than opposing counsel of a different gender.

LIFE LESSONS PANEL DISCUSSION

Moderator

Nora Riva Bergman

Panelists

Sabrina C. Beavens

Katherine E. Charonko

Mandi Clay

Katy Goshtasbi

Melanie S. Griffin

Kate Kyres

Kate Mitchell

Stephanie Scarborough

Mary E. Vandenack

Topics Addressed in Life Lessons Panel Discussion

- How personal life experiences inform relationships with prospective clients, courts and other legal institutions
- Practical implications of how personal ethical issues can impact ethics in the profession
- Strategies for integrating one's personal values into professional values such as the promotion of fairness, justice, and morality
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CAREER LESSONS PANEL DISCUSSION

Moderator

Nora Riva Bergman

Panelists

Sandra Brown

Maria Vittoria “Giugi” Carminati

Kelly Carmody

Artie Renee Pobjecky

Karen Dunn Skinner

District Court Judge Linda S. Thomas

Wendi Weiner

Topics Addressed in Career Lessons Panel Discussion

- Best practices for managing legal work
- Critical law office management/organization skills
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- Why greater diversity of all types within law firms better serves the profession and individual clients
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50 Lessons for Women Lawyers – From Women Lawyers Contributions From Panelists

What follows are excerpts from *50 Lessons for Women Lawyers – From Women Lawyers*. The Lessons included in these materials were written by the women on today's panel.

Each Lesson is a unique expression from the contributor. Each woman is sharing her personal truth. She is not speaking for her law firm or employer.

LIFE LESSONS

Lesson 3. Discovering Your Authentic Self, Sabrina C. Beavens

The only time you are really insecure or not sure of yourself is when you are not being your authentic self.

– ROBIN ROBERTS

She looked me in the eye and said, “You need to get comfortable in your own skin.” I doubt that she remembers saying it, but those words from my mentor, Judge Pamela A. M. Campbell, struck me at my core. I recognize that I was fortunate to receive her honest feedback, but it bothered me that she called me out. I was a twenty-something new lawyer and had done very well until that point. Why was Judge Campbell criticizing me? My self-perception was that I projected as a very confident young attorney. After all, I had always been a good student and excelled at most things that I tried, from athletics in high school through the moot court board in law school. But my mentor saw through all of that and called me on it.

Frankly, I was shocked that someone else could hear the voices in my head. She called my bluff. She knew me well enough to know that I was struggling to be myself and that it would hold me back. Still, I did not take a lot of time to reflect on her advice.

Several years later I watched Robin Roberts discuss being your authentic self as a component of success on an episode of Good Morning America. I remember hearing those words and feeling them resonate within me. I wrote them on a sticky note. Perhaps for the first time, I gave greater thought to what Judge Campbell said several years prior. I questioned whether I was being authentic in both my career and personal life. I was not. This time I made a conscious decision to change. But that change did not happen overnight. It was a process that involved the following:

Accepting my gifts. I am smart. I am a leader. I am funny. I am a good listener. I am someone who people trust. I have a big heart. However, these were not always natural gifts that I valued and at times, some gifts, such as being a leader, made me uncomfortable. I grew up long before Sheryl Sandberg proclaimed that “bossy” should be banned. I remember being called bossy at home and at school at an early age. As a result, I can recall situations where people looked at me to be a leader and feeling uncomfortable or shying away from that position. I have grown to accept and embrace these gifts—it is, after all, who I am. I have no problem being the center of attention and telling a good story to a group—I relish it! If someone needs to step up in a certain situation, I raise my hand. I have the shoulders that can carry the load and hopefully do the job. If someone needs an ear to listen, I am comfortable lending that ear. I have a big heart and that does not make me weak. As I read this paragraph, it seems silly to me now that I felt like these qualities were not gifts.

Accepting who I love. The first draft of this lesson did not include a discussion about accepting myself as a gay woman. But if I am being authentic in my advice to you, this was as big of a step for me as accepting my gifts—perhaps bigger. I started law school in 1997 and met my wife around the same time. I would like to say that today is a much different time for a young gay attorney, but recent events have caused me to rethink that conclusion. As a young attorney getting to know members of the legal community, small talk often involves discussion about your family. I played the game of speaking in generalities or avoiding the topic all together. That often resulted in one-sided conversations or

awkward moments where I knew someone suspected that I was gay, but didn't ask. This was exhausting. It felt disrespectful to my wife to hide her existence and our happiness. Keeping the secret made me feel bad about myself.

I am so proud of my marriage and our family. I love them more than I can put into words. I grew my confidence over time and started engaging in conversations about my personal life rather than avoiding the topic. Being comfortable took practice. It was hard to speak honestly to people that I perceived may have moral or religious objections to being gay. But, I was tired of protecting their feelings and sacrificing my own. Being authentic about who I love and who I am was worth the risk of possibly offending a few people.

Accepting that not everyone will like me. Wanting to please and be liked by everyone are issues I think many of us struggle with, and we adapt our behavior accordingly. As attorneys, we are constantly introduced to new relationships through clients and as a part of marketing our business. The goal of marketing relationships, of course, is to be hired for new work. I accept that some prospective clients may choose not to hire me for any number of reasons. I'm okay with that. Or perhaps I hold a minority opinion in a group. Will that make the others not like me? Maybe. But if I try to be someone other than myself, I am definitely not being authentic and in the long run, the relationship likely will not be a good fit.

At the end of 2016, I found myself interviewing again after working at the same firm for many years. I definitely approached interviewing differently than the younger me Judge Campbell counseled all those years ago. I had years of experience and a client base to offer this time around, but I was more confident when I interviewed because I was the authentic me. I no longer let self-doubt creep into my mind. I was open about the value I place on working in an environment that allows people to be themselves. I was not interested in jamming myself into a mold of what a firm created as a model attorney. As a result, I landed at a firm that is a great fit for me. I am not restrained and frustrated by trying to be what I think my firm or our clients might want me to be. Instead, I am myself, which I believe makes me a better attorney for our clients and a better colleague at the firm.

Accepting that I am not perfect. Authentic me makes mistakes. I now realize that being hard on yourself for a mistake is like sinking in quicksand. The negative thoughts you tell yourself keep you weighed down and the longer that state continues, the harder it is to get back on the horse. It is okay to take a moment and experience disappointment when something does not go your way. Having awareness that I am too hard on myself and moving on from that state of mind has been helpful in managing stress, and having the confidence to take risks and seek new opportunities.

In preparing this lesson, I asked myself, "How can I evaluate whether I truly am living an authentic life?" Then, I remembered an exercise I recently participated in at the end of a month's-long leadership training program. The exercise involved my classmates saying one-word descriptions describing me in a short period of time. I was surprised at how many of the words my classmates used to describe me mirrored what I know as my true self: funny, smart, intense, dedicated, kind, creative, storyteller, clever, and initiative. At the end of the exercise, I felt like they really got to know the real me—and I felt more connected to them as a result.

So, take it from me who took years to follow my mentor's advice: Make it your goal to be your authentic self and be comfortable in your own skin. You will be surprised at the ripple effect that this awareness and freedom brings to your life. You'll have the added confidence to take risks, pursue goals, and share

your thoughts and ideas with others. And if you're like me, you'll find an increased sense of inner peace and better relationships. It sounds cliché, but it is true: Life is far too short to be someone other than your authentic self. Who are you?

Lesson 5. Chances & Ampersands, Nora Riva Bergman

I take my chances.

I don't mind working without a net.

I take my chances.

I take my chances every chance I get.

– MARY CHAPIN CARPENTER

Before I went to college and law school, I was a professional musician. I played the guitar and sang. Still do—sometimes. Music has always been a big part of my life. In fact, my first TV memory was watching the Beatles on the Ed Sullivan Show. I was only four years old, but after the show I nagged my dad until he bought me the “Meet the Beatles!” album. I still have it. When I was a kid, all I wanted to do was listen to music and learn to play the guitar. I could never have imagined where my life would take me. From growing up in Wilton Manors, Florida, to becoming a musician – yes, I did learn to play the guitar – to going to law school, practicing law, teaching, running a bar association, coaching other lawyers, and now having the privilege of writing a book with 49 incredible women as contributors.

This life is one awesome journey. The thing about journeys is...they can be risky. You might not be sure of the best route to take to get to your destination. Sometimes you might not even be sure of your destination. And you know what? That's OK.

When I was growing up, becoming a lawyer was not something I ever imagined doing. In fact, it was probably the furthest thing possible from what I wanted to do. I wanted to play music. I wanted to write songs. I did that for nearly 10 years after I graduated from high school. Then I realized I wanted something more. I didn't know what it was, but I knew it was something different from what I was doing. So, I took a chance.

After 10 years out of school, I decided it was time for me to go back. And it was very scary. I never thought of myself as a great student, and I hadn't been in a classroom for 10 years. I was 10 years older than most of my classmates. I felt more of a kinship with some of my professors than with the other students. And I didn't know what I wanted to do when I got out of college. I decided to work toward a journalism degree. I liked to write songs; maybe that would translate to other kinds of writing. As part of my major, I had to take a class in First Amendment Law. That class was fascinating. I loved it. So, I took another chance.

I decided to apply to law school. But I was in my late 20s, and I was concerned about how old I'd be when I graduated. I remember talking to one of my journalism professors and saying, “If I go to law school, I'll be 32 when I graduate!” Her response, “How old will you be in four years if you don't go to law school?” So, I took the LSAT and did pretty well. Then, I took another chance.

I applied to only one law school. Stetson University College of Law had a wonderful reputation, was highly ranked, and was in my backyard—figuratively speaking. I had no intention of moving to go to law school. If law school was meant to be, it was going to be Stetson. It was Stetson.

I'm not sure what I expected, but I will tell you that every day of my first semester at Stetson I wanted to drop out. Every day I would go to the library and say to myself, "OK, if you can get through today, then you can think about dropping out tomorrow." Something about it just didn't feel right for me. Yet at the same time, I was beginning to like it. The first semester went by, then another semester, and another. I was still alive. I worked hard and got on law review. Then in what seemed like the blink of an eye, it was graduation day.

Graduating from law school in 1992 was a bit of a challenge. The country was still in a recession, and law firms were not hiring. The firm I had clerked for during law school had no positions available. I didn't want to work for a big firm. I didn't even want to interview with a big firm. I knew big firm life wasn't for me. I took another chance.

I decided to put myself to work. The firm I clerked for during law school had me working on civil rights and discrimination matters during that time. I loved this area of law, so I continued to do contract work for them and other firms. I started to build my own practice. I met an incredible attorney who is one of my closest friends to this day. This time it was she who took the chance—on me. We started a law firm. We took a chance.

My partner was board certified in workers' compensation law; I focused on employment discrimination law representing employees. It was a great fit. Another attorney and friend mentored me in federal practice. I had my first five-day federal jury trial with him. It was exhilarating and terrifying. It was a tremendous learning experience. We lost. But that trial helped me prepare for another. I was representing the first female firefighter hired by the City of Tampa. That case settled the night before jury selection. My client's story and the settlement made the papers. She left her employment with the city, and she and her husband started a whole new life. They remain dear friends to this day.

Those two cases taught me a lot about myself. I learned that I didn't enjoy litigation. I knew that I was fighting for good people, and I could put on the battle gear each day. But I didn't like it. It wasn't me. Not long after, I lived through an ampersand. My mom and aunt were both killed in an automobile accident. With an ampersand, there is a before & after. That day was an ampersand in my life. Before the accident & after. I realized that when I left home in the morning there was no guarantee that I was coming back. This ampersand made it crystal clear that I had to make change. You guessed it. I took another chance.

I left my law practice and my wonderful law partner to become the executive director of our local bar association. In that role, I found me. The real me. I loved the work. I loved our members. I loved my staff. I loved being able to help other lawyers improve their lives and their practices. That role led me to taking another chance – becoming a business coach for lawyers, and another – writing my first book, and now a second book. I know there are many chances yet to take.

My Lesson: Don't be afraid to take your chances. And pay attention to the ampersands in your life.

Lesson 12. Three Things I Wish I Remembered at the Start of My Practice (and That I Am Still Learning), Katherine E. Charonko

Nothing can bring you peace but yourself.

– RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Practicing mindfulness and meditation were part of my childhood. I grew up in a family of communicators, counselors, and wonderful people who support their communities. I always wanted to help people; the question was how. Before I practiced law, I worked in professional theater. While maybe not a traditional pre-law profession, theater ignited my desire to pursue the law.

When I started law school, I knew I wanted to be there—I was there to help people. And I knew it would be hard. What I didn't know was that I would question being there. I didn't know how I would be helping people. And I didn't know how hard it would be.

When I am asked how I found my path or how I ended up interested in my current area of practice, electronic discovery, I respond that I found an area that engaged me and ran with it. When I am asked how I balance work and life, I explain that it isn't easy. I don't always find balance, which is okay.

Passion: How it can help you find your path.

I remember when someone asked me, “Did you ever think you would be here?” My answer was, “It depends.” Did they mean: (1) here as a lawyer, (2) here at my firm, or (3) here in a management role? The answer to all those questions is “yes.” They weren't the first and they won't be the last person to ask if I am surprised that I am where I am. I'm not surprised to be where I am because I learned a secret early on, one that sometimes I forget along the way. I am the only one who can maintain my path. I was diagnosed in first grade with dyslexia. I never let that stop me from meeting my goals and making my own path in life. Passion has always guided me to my chosen path.

Simplistic in theory, monumental in practice. Other legal professionals have told me they don't know if they want to do “this” anymore. Hell, I've been there, too. What is often forgotten about passion is that it doesn't always burn bright every day. There will be days that you hate what you do. Passion keeps you going on those days. The path to legal passion was clear as mud for me. I graduated law school not knowing what I “wanted to do.” My work with indigent clients steered me toward plaintiffs' litigation. Life, however, is not binary. I started at a boutique law firm (where I work to this day) that afforded me the opportunity to experience all aspects of practice.

When I found my passion, I also found my path. I took what kept me motivated and interested in electronic discovery and used it to develop my career. I took a passion and ran with it. You can, too.

Patience: Practice it every day.

You are not going to like everyone. Everyone is not going to like you. It is as simple as that. The lesson to learn is how not to outwardly show that dislike, and to practice stepping back and being mindful of others. In my pre-law life, I didn't contemplate the rigors involved in working at an office. Anyone who works in an office can understand these. I found myself forgetting early lessons about dealing with myself and others. Stress played a starring role in my early career. I found myself behaving in ways that

were not normal for me. I forgot to practice patience. I sniped at others over trivial matters. I forgot to practice mindful breathing and meditation because I was “too busy.” It is never intentional to forget the lessons we learn about human interactions, but as humans, stress often guides our behavior. This was the case for me until one work trip when I found myself telling another attorney who was feeling excess stress about how growing up I was taught about mindfulness and the importance of practicing meditation. We talked mindful breathing and focusing your thoughts back to a quiet place. I was reminded of something I heard when I was in grade school: “[w]hatever the tasks, do them slowly and with ease, in mindfulness.” It wasn’t until much later in life that I came across that quote in a book by Thich Nhat Hanh called *The Miracle of Mindfulness: An Introduction to the practice of Meditation*. This simple idea is one that I had to rediscover. The lessons that were a fundamental part of who I was were so easy to share with someone else. I had just forgotten them for myself. Stress doesn’t go away, but taking stress out on yourself and others isn’t the answer, either.

After that trip, I started to focus back on being an active listener and meditation. I opened myself back up to the understanding that everyone has more happening in their life than what I was seeing. This rediscovered philosophy refocused my agitated energy back to mindful energy. My stress dropped, and I was more focused. Now, I take proactive steps to manage my stress. I encourage you to do the same.

People: Find them. Connect with them. Spend time with them.

Finding people is different for everyone. I found “my people” by reconnecting with lifelong friends, one of whom is now my husband. I found my people by spending time outside of work with colleagues who have become my friends. I found my people by staying in touch with my family. Humans need other humans. Our profession has a lot of causalities, especially when it comes to relationships. The only way to find people is to put yourself out there. Take a chance on yourself. Burnout is real, so make sure to take time for an adventure. I had forgotten this.

You need people in your life. You need your family. You need friends. You need colleagues. And you need to spend time with them outside of work. As attorneys, we often find ourselves “at work” more than we are at home. I found myself living my work most of my waking hours. Sometimes, I still live my work at odd hours of the night when I wake up worrying about this or that. But, the difference is now I practice turning work off when I’m at home (or at least reducing the impact work has on my home time). It is true—you need to find a balance between work and life.

When I started practicing full time, like so many other first-year associates, I felt I had to eat, breath and live my work 24/7. To some extent, this is true. But like so many others, I let my work affect my relationships outside of work. For me, the change came when my now-husband and I started taking extended vacations each summer. At first, I felt guilty being away from the office. On one of these trips I read a study about lawyer burnout, and it clicked for me. I couldn’t stay on 24/7. I needed people in my life. I needed adventures. I needed to be out of the office.

I leave you all with one final piece of advice: What works for me may not work for you. And that is okay. In the words of Abraham Lincoln, “I do the very best I know how – the very best I can; and I mean to keep doing so until the end.” So should you. That is how you find your path. That is how you find your passion, your peace and, more often than not, your people.

Lesson 13. Don't Do It Alone, Mandi Clay

Walking with a friend in the dark is better than walking alone in the light.

– HELEN KELLER

Survey after survey shows that lawyers are disproportionately susceptible to mental health and addiction issues. These problems get worse with isolation. Being the only, or one of a few, female attorneys can add to this isolation. So, don't isolate yourself. Get out there and be someone that people expect to see, so that if you start isolating yourself someone might reach out to check on you. Be a name and face that people recognize; it makes you more accountable to yourself as well. You're less likely to isolate yourself if you feel that your absence from events will be noticed.

The best way to avoid isolation? Voluntary bar work. There's a belief that it is difficult to make friends after college, and that is probably true for a lot of people. But, of all the things that are difficult about being a lawyer, the opportunities it gives you to meet people and make friends are unparalleled in any other profession. My voluntary bar work has given me the strongest network, of mostly women, I could ever imagine. These are the people who found me a new job when the one I was in was unbearable; sent food and flowers to my home when my husband's brother died; came to and publicized my party kicking off my mediation practice; nominated me for awards; and just generally held me up professionally and personally.

Note, though, that I said voluntary bar *work*. Don't just be a joiner, paying dues and listing things on your bio without actually doing anything. Take a role, even a small one, and show people the kind of person you are—your commitment, your creativity, your empathy, your kindness. These are things that don't always shine through your legal work, especially to people who don't work directly with you. They are, however, the most important things. Getting involved in even the smallest of voluntary bars, or joining a state bar committee, will help you make friends and build a network. These friendships will keep you from being isolated and will become resources for your professional advancement. The business development benefits are side effects of the friendships you create. Both are invaluable.

I suffered from depression and panic disorder long before I became a lawyer, which gave me the benefit of learning how to cope before adding the stresses of the law to my life. One of those lessons is that people are more important than anything in this world. Medication and therapy are crucial elements of my mental health treatment, but my friends are just as crucial. You need people who notice when you're not yourself, people you can fall apart in front of, people who will stand as allies with you in uncomfortable situations, and people who can keep an eye on you when you can't be trusted to be alone.

As soon as I started in private practice I began attending voluntary bar events, mostly because I felt compelled to make myself known to other lawyers. I started small, just attending a few events and meeting a few people. After a year or so I decided to do more. I emailed the incoming president of the local women lawyers association and asked to be on a committee. Well, guess what? She needed a public relations committee chair. Six years later and I am the Vice President of that organization, looking toward being President Elect and President in the next two years. I stand in the shoes of amazing women who have become judges, managing partners and successful entrepreneurs. I stand in the path of greatness, thanks to a single email I sent when I was a baby lawyer.

I also never gave in to the law firm culture of working 24/7/365. Once you do, it is extremely difficult to walk it back—so set these boundaries early. I leave the office for lunch almost every day and come home in time for dinner with my family. I use my lunch breaks to go to voluntary bar events, to meet up

with friends, and to talk to my family on the phone. Every lunch break is a connection to someone who thinks I'm awesome. How great does that sound? An hour a day with someone awesome who thinks you are awesome, too. I use my Monday lunch dates to overcome my Sunday night dread. No matter how stressful the job is, how nasty my superiors or opposing counsel are to me, or how difficult a client is, I have a break and an escape. Most of my lunch dates are friends I made through my voluntary bar work.

Once you build these relationships, you will have a network of friends and connections who can be invaluable. I highly recommend asking your network for help when you need it, and recognition when you deserve it. Every year there are hundreds of awards given to lawyers across the country—and in almost all cases those awards start with a nomination. Ask your friends for those nominations. It is not egotistical, it is – in fact – less egotistical than just sitting back and expecting people to think of you for whatever award they hear about and then making the effort to nominate you. And no, you're not using them—as long as the friendship and your behavior are genuine. Lawyers are busy; we don't know all the awards available, all the deadlines or all the nomination processes. So, if I see an award that I think I'm qualified for, I ask someone to nominate me for it—and I ask them if there is something I can nominate them for. It starts with simple things—reaching out to the people you will be nominating for recognition and asking them to nominate you. I don't present it as a quid pro quo, just as a nudge to keep me in mind when filling out the form and letting them know which category I want to be considered in.

Getting involved with the legal community will bolster your self-confidence and increase your ability to market yourself. The best things that have happened in my life and career come from being bold and blatant. Introducing myself, asking for what I need or want, and letting people help me when they can. It definitely has to be a two-way street; you have to help others if you want them to help you, and you have to show that you are deserving of the things you want. But working yourself to death in your office with your head down is certainly not the road to happiness, and rarely the road to success. Look up, get out, stand out, and take advantage of the biggest asset the legal community has—the community itself.

Lesson 18. Own Who You Are and Share Your Authentic Brand with Ease and Grace, Katy Goshtasbi

Hurt people hurt people. That's how pain patterns get passed on, generation after generation after generation. Break the chain today. Meet anger with sympathy, contempt with compassion, cruelty with kindness. Greet grimaces with smiles. Forgive and forget about finding fault. Love is the weapon of the future.

– YEHUDA BERG

Everyone has a great story that can inspire others and drive success. Everyone's story is just as important and impactful as the next person's story. Without our stories, our impact and success are minimized.

My story of success starts as a 6-year-old girl in Iran. When the revolution hit Iran in 1979, we knew we were not welcome there anymore as a religious minority. We decided to leave for a short bit until the unrest died down. We packed two suitcases and flew to Indiana, thinking we'd be gone for a few weeks. We never went back to Iran.

I was blessed to grow up in a wonderful suburb of Indianapolis with very kind and accepting people. But I was beaten up as a kid because I looked different than all the other Midwestern kids. Kids are not nice to other kids necessarily. It hurt and it angered me. I felt alone at times. It was tough to be different.

Fast-forward a few years. I always wanted to be a securities lawyer. Two reasons: 1) I wanted to save the world, and I thought being a lawyer was the way to do so; and 2) I wrongly thought that maybe, if I was a lawyer, people would love and accept me more.

So, I put myself through undergraduate college and law school. I had a wonderful career as a securities lawyer, mostly in Washington, D.C. First, I was a federal lobbyist on Capitol Hill. I lobbied for state securities laws. I saw first-hand the ugly truth of the old saying: "Laws are like sausages. It's better not to see them being made." At the time, I was wide-eyed and so idealistic. I still am idealistic, only now I know what it really means to use my idealism as a tool to serve humanity.

Following my work as a lobbyist, I got my dream job at the Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC). I was humbled to work with such great minds every day at the SEC. I was there during the Enron cleanup post-Sarbanes-Oxley and Bernie Madoff.

I remember the day I appeared before the SEC Chairman and Commissioners arguing for a rule I had helped draft. CNN and all the major networks were covering the hearing. Substantively, it went well. When we took a break, a respected colleague of mine in private practice who was in the audience came up to me to congratulate me. I still remember his words so clearly: "Never mind the substance, Katy. Your hair and suit look so great, even from back where I'm sitting." I was taken aback. My first instinct was to be offended. But he looked so sincere and genuinely proud of me. I stopped and took it as a compliment. Was there more to success than substantive knowledge?

My next position was with a major law firm with offices in Washington, D.C. I was surrounded by men almost twice my age, but I developed strong professional relationships with them. I would wine and dine and plan events. Other lawyers would ask me for advice on how I got promoted or how I got "that assignment." I took a lot of these lawyers to lunch and shared with them what I was doing. I was giving branding advice, but I just didn't know it.

Soon I had another choice to make. I could stay in D.C. and have a great time, or I could move to California to be closer to my family. I chose to move. I took my last legal job as in-house counsel at a large insurance company. I had come full circle and had been around the entire legal arena.

Then I burned out. It hit me the day I had spent 15 hours drafting a tiny part of a mutual fund prospectus. I went home at nine o'clock that night and opened my inbox to find my own prospectus. I reflexively threw the prospectus away because no one reads that stuff. I no longer felt I was of service to humanity. That's the moment I knew I had to move on from my legal career if I wanted to be happy, live longer, thrive and contribute to society. It was a personal decision. I was scared and confused, yet oddly very clear.

So, I switched careers and found my natural talent and strength in what I do now. Every day I'm grateful to do what I do and to make a contribution.

As a growth, change, and branding expert, I believe in success every day. I believe success is easier than we think it is. Here are the main tips I give to all my clients, whether I'm conducting a law firm retreat, working with partners in a training, or in my current role as Chair of the ABA Law Practice Division.

1. Own it. This is my favorite phrase and one I use often with clients. Before anyone believes us to be an expert in any field, we must first believe in ourselves. So, do you believe you are good at what you do as a woman lawyer? Do you believe you are an expert in your space? If so, then use your expertise and share it with everyone more often. Trust your gut. If it feels good, then you can own it. If it doesn't feel good, don't do it. Don't even bother. You won't "own" it well.

2. Show up and be ready to be seen as yourself. I've observed that as women, we often don't show up. When we do, we don't always show up as our best, genuine, and authentic self. It's easy to get sucked into the problem of competing with the opposite gender. When I practiced law in Washington, D.C., I saw many women lawyers (including myself at times) try to compete with men by trying to look and behave more like a man. We would wear dark pant suits and pretend that we were like men. It was painful and didn't get results. The men didn't respect us, and other women competed harder with us. All it did was drive up stress and reduce self-confidence.

Only genuine brands win. If you are going to show up, show up as your best self. If you want to wear a skirt, go for it. If you stand out and look good in pink or a floral print, please do so. Makeup is fine. At conferences, having makeup on allows the audience to see your features and facial gestures better from afar. So, it possibly enhances communication. There's nothing more powerful, attractive, and credible than a person who knows who they are and shows up as their best self.

3. Bring your unique natural strengths to the game. Each of us has one thing we do so easily that we don't necessarily realize others may not do it as well. We take our natural ability for granted. And oftentimes, it has nothing to do with our actual legal expertise. Identifying and deliberately using your natural strength makes you feel good about yourself because you are at ease. This then puts you in a place where you resonate even more powerfully with your audience and are seen as even more credible and influential.

You've got this! I promise.

Lesson 20. Dream Beyond Perfection!, Melanie S. Griffin

Perfectionism is self destructive simply because there's no such thing as perfect.

Perfection is an unattainable goal.

– BRENÉ BROWN

My husband and I recently adopted a beautiful son. Wanting to be the best parents possible, the positives and negatives of our childhoods were analyzed. For me, the reflection revealed a main characteristic developed that deeply intertwined with my legal career—perfectionism. Although this attribute resulted in some pretty sweet successes – a silver lining – it also meant I was petrified of failure—a significant professional impediment.

To illuminate, during a conference addressing perfectionists' low self-esteem, decreased self-confidence and minimized achievements, a story was told about a female lawyer who let perfection overrun her

practice. For years, she reviewed all of her office's work before it was finalized, the only way she could ensure perfection. Problematically, capacity limited her review capabilities, preventing her practice's growth. Additionally, the mounting documents required around-the-clock work to the exclusion of family and friends. The lawyer was unhappy both at work and home until eventually realizing that abandoning perfection would cause professional and personal growth. She committed that moving forward, at least 10% of her daily work would be "wrong," as dealing with the fallout from any associated mistakes was faster than perfection. The model was a success.

Like this lawyer, self-esteem, confidence and failure issues often negatively impact female attorneys. To overcome such obstacles, women lawyers can use the following strategies to mentally reset to connect with the best within themselves.

Ask "How Will," Not "What If." For years, I constantly repeated all the ways I would fail. "What if I don't get into law school? What if no law firm hires me? What if I can't develop clients? What if my branch office is unprofitable?" What if, what if, what if...Despite my successful record making 100% failure unlikely, I never once challenged myself with a positive question like: "Melanie, how will you excel in law school? Serve as an effective associate? Provide impeccable client services? Motivate and empower others?" My singular focus was short-term negativity, not long-term goals or strategy. Thankfully, using the techniques herein, this mindset eventually shifted to planning for success and embracing failure, allowing me to find professional purpose, create a personal brand, expand my mentorship and enjoy a newfound peace. So, the next time you start asking yourself: "*What if I fail,*" refocus on: *how will* you achieve your most audacious dreams.

Don't Dwell, Learn and Move Forward. Like the "what ifs" early on, my mind was overrun with everything I wish I had done differently, that I wished had gone differently. Sadly, these alleged inadequacies oftentimes did not warrant the attention received, and rather, were trivial occurrences, such as a comment made at a party or a typo in an email that no one likely remembered but me. Despite the insignificance of these trivialities, they consumed my mind to the exclusion of forward-thinking thoughts worthy of my attention. Thankfully, a mentor stopped this negative habit by teaching me to learn from an imperfection by briefly recognizing how the moment could have been improved and then immediately moving on from it. Maya Angelou summarized this practice well when she reflected: "Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better." Take her advice—when future imperfections surface, stay positive, focus on what you will do to change the outcome the next time, and smile knowing that due to the experience, you are now a better professional and friend.

Mentally practice positivity and goal achievement. Like physical exercise, mental positivity must be consistently practiced. Try the following techniques to build your mental prowess:

- **Education through mentorship:** My outlook changed upon attending women's empowerment programs. Learning from inspiring females, a key takeaway is keeping a physical object, a stuffed toy gremlin, for example, that represents your internal naysayer in your office. When leaving for important business matters, look at the "gremlin," say, "goodbye," and physically depart from your internal self-doubt.
- **Focus through journaling and vision boarding:** Consistent journaling, even if only for a few minutes each session, fosters goal achievement. For example, begin each workday by writing your daily goal, such as, "I am a great litigator." Or, "I inspire my attorneys to provide service excellence." These statements affirm what you *will* do, not what you *want* to do, which can

breed self-doubt. Next, write what you *will* do that day to make your goal a reality. For example, a great litigator might draft her theory of a case to avoid litigating without a clear theme. Likewise, the firm leader inspiring service excellence might give each firm attorney a blank notecard to complete for a client.

Vision boarding images of your goals to hang in your office is similarly a good reminder of the dreams you *will* achieve. Two lawyer girlfriends annually co-host a party for local female attorneys to complete their boards together and cheerlead for each other. During the exercise, clip additional images to hang in your at-home closet and on your bathroom mirror. Viewing these images over time opens your mind to the reality of big dreams that originally seemed unachievable.

- **Motivation from podcast and audiobook listening:** Busy professionals have little time for non-work-related reading. You do, however, have time to listen, such as while driving or exercising, so replace your exhausted playlist with inspirational podcasts or audiobooks. To start, list five trailblazers from whom you want to learn. Search the podcast app for such names. The podcasts that scored such interviews are likely podcasts to which you want to consistently listen. Additionally, during their interviews, your heartthrob trailblazers will mention what inspires them. Add the referenced people and books to your list, and also review the related podcasts recommended by the app. My list is a note on my phone to easily personally reference and share with others. And, it is often used, as podcast and audiobook listening has afforded me tremendous growth, especially concerning the topics herein.

Embrace the awesomeness of failure. A recent podcast featured famed gymnast Nastia Liukin sharing that the singular standing ovation she received during her career was not after winning 2008 Olympic Gold, but after falling flat on her face at the 2012 Olympic Trials. Why? Because she got up and finished the competition despite knowing that her gymnastics career was over. She also connected with many others who believe that the worst possible outcome is failing to pursue your dreams, not “failing” to achieve them. Thus, when analyzing a new potential goal, consider if you’ll regret someone else accomplishing it instead of you. If so, pursue it using the strategies herein to plan your “*how wills*” and silence your “*what ifs*.”

Additionally, change your definition of “failure.” An outcome different than that originally envisioned is not “failure;” it’s a chance to learn and grow on the best path for you. So, when things don’t go as planned, take a deep breath, yell “plot twist!” and move on.

Be a dreamer, not a perfectionist. In sum, many women lawyers grow up believing perfection is the gold-standard. Oppositely, it oftentimes is unattainable, stagnates law practices, and precludes personal and professional growth. Thus, to find true happiness, forget the idealism breeding your fear of failure and unapologetically pursue what brings you true joy.

Lesson 29. The Pearl Necklace, Kate Kyres

A life lived in fear is a life half-lived.

– BAZ LUHRMANN

We are born with the potential to create our own pearl necklaces. Our pearls begin to form as we move through life experiences. When an oyster's solitude is invaded – say by a grain of sand – it responds to the invader by secreting nacre, a light but incredibly strong mother-of-pearl substance. Over the years, the oyster diligently secretes its powerful nacre, layer upon layer, until a pearl is formed: one pearl unlike any other created in nature.

As meaningful life experiences invade our solitude, we too shape our pearls. Some enter college with nascent strands. When I entered a private women's college, my irregularly shaped pearls were layered with nacre.

In the summer of 1977, I turned thirteen. At that time, domestic violence and child abuse laws were not meaningfully written or enforced. A summer evening encounter with a police officer created the most luminescent pearl on my strand when I witnessed the perverse allocation of power. I watched my mother beg for help while my older brother sat in a fetal position, faceless and motionless. Instead of the officer offering us protection, he shamed my mother for working late and for not being home to prevent her husband from “snapping.” In disbelief, I asked him if he had a daughter to which he replied, “Yes.” I implored him to remember my face when he looked at her. I told him that I wanted him to *see me*.

At thirteen, *I saw me*; a funny, smart girl who had power and right to lay claim to a beautiful life. Despite many terrifying times, my mother's intelligence, courage and resourcefulness saved our lives. The pearls laid upon her breasts illuminated my path to college.

I hesitated to pursue a law degree after graduation from college. One of my pearls needed time secreting layers of nacre defending against the specter of a professor who I had encountered my junior year abroad while studying art history in Florence. He wrote a letter to me saying that I was not smart enough to grasp the theoretical concepts inherent in the practice of law so I should never go to law school. I ripped up that letter. My pearl necklace continued to grow.

I loved law school. The opportunity to dabble in different, complex legal studies without concern for life application to a distressed family, imprisoned person, or bankrupting company was explosively exciting. I loved to feel the weight of societal strife argued by passionate lawyers in legions of paper bound in heavy leather treatises.

The watershed times in my youth were fortunately an amalgamation of love, humor, and strife. Humor has always been my preferred nacre. From humor can flow love, compassion, and hope. Humor can disarm. Humor can connect our humanity. Humor served me well in law practice. I always searched for the humorous storytellers; the perplexed thinkers; the vibrant lovers and protectors of life and liberty. The practice of law is loaded with these creatives. They clang their pearls wherever they roam. Find these lawyers and collaborate with them.

One of my pearls was shaped during my first appeal. I was working for a firm that gave me incredible opportunities to layer my pearls. Right out of law school, I was provided a leather chair, a big desk with an intercom to beckon my assistant, and an unspoiled view of Tampa Bay. I had made it, and my first state court appeal and oral argument had me pinching myself. I represented a white mother who remarried a black man and, who, to this day I believe, lost primary residential custody of her daughter because of her interracial remarriage. My client pursued an appeal to build up the pearls of her necklace for her daughter. The case involved complex constitutional issues. We didn't win. But the experience of representing this strong woman shaped one of my irregular pearls into a strong, round one.

Another one of my pearls was shaped by a disabled father's harassment case. Every day on the job, he was mocked. After work, he returned home to care for his disabled child. During a full day of depositions, he listened to each one of his coworkers and supervisors' sworn testimony that they didn't recall hearing anything said about his disability. Then the final witness walked in. He testified that he had heard every alleged harassing comment, every day, multiple times a day, coming out of the hateful mouths of all the men who had just testified that they didn't recall a word of it. When my client and I went to our cars, he cried.

There were many pearl shaping moments in my discrimination law practice. My law office was broken into, glass smashed, nothing stolen, but a plant was ceremoniously placed in the center of my foyer's floor. I appeared before judges who applied dissimilar standards of diligence to counsel standing before them. I experienced bullying beyond mere posturing and several scary threats made by defendants. During my first deposition as a new lawyer, I was dispatched to observe a case involving many lawyers. A meddlesome attorney seated next to me asked if my briefcase was made from penile foreskin. I told him to shut up. Today, I would stroke my pearls and offer a fitting retort.

I had many professional successes in my practice. Nacre made my pearls grow rounder and more lustrous. But the pearl that I could not live my life without having was being a nurturer to my own child. When you represent clients in pregnancy discrimination cases and you secretly cry alone in your law office's bathroom for hours while miscarrying for a third time, you clutch your pearl necklace to your heart, and you reflect on your pearls.

I became a mother through adoption and concomitantly, a life trustee of a beautiful daughter. She is the most important case that I have ever worked on. I am all in—just like I was in my law practice. I am her mom, building my pearls which she will one day have. So, for a season I left the orbit of law and entered a new one designed to shape both of our necklaces. I created a children's business and have self-published the first of – hopefully – many children's books based upon stories that I always carry around in my pocket. This orbit and the legal one circle one another in harmony, and their co-existence will allow me to fly between the two when I so choose. I am a lawyer for life.

You see, the polestar lesson, truth, and value of being a lawyer is that your profession and your role in that profession have no shelf life. You can practice to the degree of your choosing when you are mindful of the type of advocate that your pearl necklace inspires you to be. Wear your pearl necklace proudly, and don't hesitate to clang it.

Lesson 35. Listen, Kate Mitchell

Learn to be silent. Let your quiet mind listen and absorb.

—CREDITED TO PYTHAGORAS

The practice of law is a skill, and like most skills, takes many years and experience to develop excellence. To develop competency in any field of law takes less time and less experience. There is a reason why we attorneys call what we do the “Practice.” The Practice demands keeping at it, day-in and day-out; demands research, inquiry, and seeking answers and solutions from others; requires personal and professional examination; learning from one’s mistakes; and pursuing excellence. We begin our career attending law school where we are taught the intellectual exercises of thinking logically, rationally, and reasonably; understanding legal constructs and concepts, and developing research skills. Law school gives one critical knowledge and exposure. It does not give you competency. For that, you must step out after your degree and begin somewhere to practice law, with the building blocks developed in law school.

I recommend that you not practice alone. If possible, begin with an apprenticeship. Find a mentor, preferably another woman attorney. If that is not possible, begin your practice surrounded by attorneys you respect, who you know are good at what they do, and can guide you when needed. Find a colleague with whom you can have lunch regularly. Practicing law is needlessly difficult without a guide to help develop the competencies your clients require. You are seeking a combination of feeling competent and being centered in your own Practice. If you are reading this book, you are highly motivated, have developed or are developing competency in the areas in which you practice, and have been applying what you know to each client’s issues from the initial consultation through successful resolution, growing professionally every day. Now, you seek a level beyond competency; you are seeking excellence.

On the road to excellence, I recommend you consider three things and then act upon each: (1) listen to yourself; (2) feel good about yourself in the profession; and (3) take time away from your practice.

Listen to yourself. The art of listening is also a practice. However well you listen today, learn to listen better every day. Listen to your clients, listen to your potential clients, listen to your colleagues, listen to whoever is across the table; and listen first and foremost to yourself. Scientists have hypothesized that the two sides of our brain, the right side and the left side, each performs different functions; yet each side communicates with the other. The left hemisphere of the brain is the side that we use developing our skills in logic, reasoning, linear thinking, thinking in words, and the like. The right hemisphere of the brain we use to develop artistic creations, think in sensitive terms, think conceptually, or “outside the box,” engage our imagination, visualize skills, and the like. The right-brain/left-brain construct can be useful in discussing the Practice of Law. We use our left-brain skill set to look for and develop our logical, rational, and reasonable skills; to formulate and draw conclusions based on fact-finding and the written word with rational interpretation, precedents, traditional basis, and what is fair, just and reasonable. This we learn in law school, and we put these skills to work in developing competencies in our legal practices.

Our right-brain skill set comes into play as we learn to listen, see, and sense the softest of whispers from within, and intuit what must be done to accompany the reasoned approach. It means taking time, whether that is a moment just before you decide on whether to represent a client or how best to

proceed on behalf of a client. For example, a client calls with a legal problem within your practice area, outlines a fact pattern where you think you can be of use, is willing to sign an engagement letter and agrees to a retainer. You schedule an initial consultation and meet with her. As you inquire as to the circumstances, there is a hint that the facts are not as clean or clear cut as first indicated. Something isn't sitting right with you, but you can't quite pinpoint it. You just don't feel comfortable. Perhaps, there is more than one client and you don't like how they interact with each other. Or perhaps she writes a check and asks you to hold it for a week. If you take a moment and listen to yourself and what you are seeing, noticing, hearing, and sensing, you may decide that you should not take on that client.

Another example: You are meeting with a potential client for the first time—the legal issue will require considerable time in billable hours. She has the means to pay you and will give you a substantial retainer. You discover that she has been to another attorney, and that relationship didn't work out for her. You ask her to consider certain approaches on how best to proceed, and she rejects whatever you recommend. It is possible that this client and her legal issues would be financially lucrative to you. However, if you take a moment to listen to yourself, you know that it is not worth the financial gain, that this client likely will be dissatisfied with your work product, you will be frustrated with your interactions and her rejecting your advice and work. In each of these examples, there will be another attorney better suited than you to represent her. And by not taking on that client, you will be free to take on a client for whom you could truly be of use, who has a problem that you can solve and will happily pay you for your services. To listen as I recommend is another kind of Practice, but nevertheless so important.

Feel good about yourself in the profession. I want you to feel good about yourself in the profession. Feel good about where you are in your practice, feel good about how you have gone about getting to where you are today, and know that learning is good. Acknowledge what you have accomplished. Learn from your mistakes. Imperfection comes with the human condition. Learn from the past and look forward. Learning and feeling good about who you are professionally is essential to attaining excellence in the law.

Take time away from your practice. In order to attain feeling good about yourself, feeling centered and developing the ability to listen, you must take time away from your practice. Tap into that right-brain creative self you naturally have; give it a chance to develop. Do something every day that is for you. Sit and breathe; walk somewhere beautiful each day; play with your kids; paint; exercise; dance, do your sport—whatever is truly nurturing to you. Leonardo Da Vinci believed that going away from where you are in your work was a good thing. To quote him: "Every now and then go away, have a little relaxation, for when you come back to your work your judgment will be surer; since to remain constantly at work will cause you to lose power of judgment. Go some distance away because the work appears smaller and more of it can be taken in at a glance, and a lack of harmony or proportion is more readily seen." Give your right-brain an opportunity to grow, develop, and communicate with and influence the left side of your brain. Foster your quiet mind and listen.

Lesson 39. Slow It Down, Stephanie Scarborough

In the quiet hours when we are alone with ourselves and there's nobody to tell us what fine fellows we are, we come sometimes upon a moment in which we wonder...what good are we doing?

– A.A. MILNE

As women in the legal profession, we are everything to everyone. Counselors, managers, mothers, partners, lovers, and leaders. We work at full pace from the time we wake up in the morning until we close our eyes. Even our weekend mornings are ever-filled with duties and commitments as we head off to our tennis matches, take the kids to soccer, or volunteer at our church or temple. We are always organizing, moving, and producing. The same is true for me in my business and law practice. For the past 18 years I've been focused on grinding out more work and growing my business, and it's paid off in tangible successes. What I haven't done, however, is slow it down. I've never been well-suited to a slow pace. I'm a grinder. Nonetheless, I have found my insistence on pushing forward actually works against me. Sometimes one needs to simply slow down to allow our brain to make the necessary connections. It is in these slower periods of relaxation or meditation that the best ideas and connections often come.

As an avid but relatively new cyclist, I am always training to improve my speed and overall fitness level. My trainer tells me that at least one ride per week must be a recovery ride. A long, slow distance ride helps the body recover from rigorous maximum output training. Too much intensity on a recovery ride compromises recovery. I recently completed a 56-mile ride. I started the ride with the intention of riding at a long, slow distance pace. When I checked my stats post-ride, I realized spent two hours and 30 minutes in the highest heart rate zone. Seventy percent of my ride was firmly at or near maximum heart rate which my fitness app tells me is "historic." That historic ride nearly did me in physically as I pushed myself to the limit. I wasn't racing anyone. In fact, I had no one to impress or beat as I was riding solo. I just couldn't bring myself to slow down the pace and listen to my trainer. My inability to slow down was hurting my overall improvement and, that day, almost had me calling for a ride at mile 40 when I was physically spent. In cycling, we call this "bonking" when we've depleted all our stored energy and nutrition. In business and in law, we can't allow ourselves to bonk. Following the right nutrition and riding strategies can prevent bonking in cycling. If you follow the right strategies, you can also prevent "the bonk" in your practice.

For many years I've kept the A.A. Milne quote at the top of this Lesson on my desk to remind me that every day I should be striving to make a difference in the lives of others. Recently though, the quote has taken on a new meaning. "In the quiet hours when we are alone with ourselves..." How often do we have quiet hours? We need to give ourselves the time to reflect and contemplate. Because in the quiet moments, ideas and innovation are born.

As lawyers, our lives are often filled with chaos. Taking time to reflect can marshal our thoughts and help us take transformative action. Reflection can also slow us down, give us time to recharge, and prevent our professional "bonking."

Reflection does not involve a formal planning session so don't break out the spreadsheets. I'm referring to mindful and purposeful quiet time. This quiet time can simply be down time. Turn off and recharge and just be in the moment. But let's be honest, as women lawyers we are typically Type A. We may start off our recovery time nice and easy, but before we know it, we're hammering it out and pushing ourselves once again. Slowing down is hard, but it is essential to optimize your mind.

How does one slow down? Time blocking! Block off some time for yourself this week to simply be alone in the quiet hours. Be prepared because for those not accustomed to quiet time, the reflection that comes during this period can make you feel uncomfortable and even vulnerable. Still, your time of reflection can be some of the most valuable time you build into your week. At first, just allow the thoughts and ideas to come. Eureka moments often happen when we are not directing our minds to search for them. Don't force your thoughts. If something brilliant comes, take the time to write the thought down. If no thoughts come, that's okay, too. With time, your mind will become accustomed to the quiet times. Just as your muscles must be conditioned to meet cycling or fitness milestones, the mind must be trained and conditioned to expect these quiet times.

When you're ready, you can begin to use this time to reflect on specific issues or goals.

Here are some questions you can reflect on:

1. Where is my business or career today?
2. Where do I want my legal career to go?
3. Is my work still fulfilling to me?
4. If not, how can I make it more fulfilling?
5. What does success look like for me, for my colleagues, and my staff?
6. How can I better support my staff, colleagues, or partner?

As you enjoy the quiet moments, you are likely to have a eureka moment where a previously unsolvable issue suddenly becomes clear and obvious. Be sure to record your ideas and findings as these are the gifts that result from reflection.

Reflection has aided my practice during a recent transformation. My reflection was focused on the broader question of resource alignment. I worried about the issue for several weeks, but it wasn't until I quietly reflected that my eureka moment came. I needed to re-evaluate and change my practice. What followed was a transformation that allowed me to spend more quality time with my family as I started to rebuild the practice I love.

Quiet, solo reflection is the candy bar that restores our blood sugar and heals the bonk. The long, slow distance days and those quiet moments exist to supercharge our minds and energize our spirits so that we can again take on the world. Give yourself time today for your own quiet hours.

Lesson 46. Make an Absolute Uncompromising Commitment to Taking Care of Yourself, Mary E. Vandenack

You will never find time for anything. If you want time, you must make it.

– CHARLES BUXTON

As a young lawyer, I was fortunate to have a mentor who pointed out that the legal profession can be consuming. A lawyer can be consumed not only by time demands, but intellectual and emotional challenges related to what they do. Regardless of a lawyer's practice area, a lawyer spends every day dealing with problems presented by others and constant deadlines related to dealing with such problems. Lawyers are always using significant energy to help others, meet deadlines, and deal with

multiple conflicting priorities. My mentor suggested that those of us who engage in professions requiring constant output of energy need to be committed to practices and making the time to restore our energy and keep ourselves well.

I had a friend early in my career who had achieved significant success and climbed to a high-ranking corporate position at a Fortune 500 company at an early age. I used to work out with this friend. We were both runners and we ran races together. My friend's favorite statement was "Never compromise a workout for work." I watched my friend live that despite a very busy career path and a family life. I decided to follow that example and I have lived that, no matter how busy I have gotten at times.

Finding Time

We aren't going to "find" time. We absolutely must make time. On a regular basis, make time to re-evaluate your schedule. If you hear yourself saying "I just need some time to figure out how to find time," then you urgently need to make an appointment with yourself to evaluate your time use.

At your appointment with self, list all the items that you are committed to doing to take care of yourself. Prioritize them. Fill the self-care items into your calendar before you fill in anything else. Block them out a year in advance and prepare a calendar entry three to six months before the last entry reminding yourself to update the calendar to extend those personal calendar items further into the future. If you don't want others to see a particular entry in your calendar, write in "carpe diem," the Latin phrase for "seize the moment."

After you fill in your calendar with time slots for taking care of yourself, then fill in slots for family and friend commitments. Fill in sufficient blocks that you will be able to nurture your relationships and take care of family responsibilities. Avoid getting carried away in a manner that your calendar will become overwhelming.

Finally, consider your job. Identify all the things you must do on a daily basis such as answering emails, verifying time entries, and returning phone calls. Fill those items in on your calendar. Then, identify all those things you must do on a weekly basis. Fill those items in on the calendar. Then, identify monthly, quarterly, and annual things that you must do and fill those in. First, you will likely be amazed at how little time you have for anything other than such requirements. When you go through this exercise, you will have a clear picture of how you use your time. You will be able to make good decisions about what you can take on in terms of projects and meetings. Most lawyers keep taking every project that comes in and attend every event they are invited to.

Steps to Take Care of Yourself

1. **Block out time in your calendar.** Put wellness activities in first.
2. **Know what nurtures you.** Each of us has different needs in terms of what nurtures and feeds us and keeps us whole. And, that can change over time. Develop an awareness of what feeds you and makes you feel whole. Consider physical, financial, emotional, social and spiritual needs.
3. **Make physical movement a daily part of your life.** During my early legal career, I was a runner. I blocked out time in my calendar for my runs. I found others who loved to run and could run at similar times. By participating in running groups, I could take care of exercise and social needs at the same time. Not everyone likes running or the gym, but I very much encourage any woman lawyer to make physical activity a part of daily life. If a traditional

- workout doesn't appeal to you, walk, take up ballroom dancing, Jazzercise®, or tai chi. You can kayak, sail, hike. Housework and yardwork are physical activity.
4. **Eat well.** Eating well should always be a priority. The legal profession is fast paced. It is easy to engage in stress-related eating or eat poorly at the many events and activities that you are expected to attend. Develop strategies to eat healthy no matter what is going on. Make a priority timeslot in your calendar for planning what and how you will eat.
 5. **Maintain a social life.** Practicing law is consuming if you don't have a family. If you are practicing law and have a family, finding time for social connections can become nearly impossible. However, maintaining connections and having a supportive group of friends is a fundamental aspect of staying well. Often, you can combine social connection with other activities in which you are engaging for wellness.
 6. **Get regular massages.** Massages are a great way to “put back in” some of the energy that you expend in taking care of others and dealing with challenges all day long. Early in my career, an occasional massage was a luxury, but I built it into my budget. Currently, I get a 90-minute massage once a week. I never miss. If I am travelling, I find a spa. Massages have positive physical and mental effects.
 7. **Get a coach.** Consider hiring a life coach, a business coach, or a health coach. If you work for a large law firm with a wellness budget, inquire into whether you can get coaching services as a benefit. Different coaches have different skill sets, so establish specific objectives and seek a coach that will assist you in meeting them. If a personal coach is not currently an option, participate in an organization or group where you can receive support.
 8. **Choose well when it comes to friends.** Seek out “soul group” friends. Soul group friends are the ones who are truly happy for your successes, accept you exactly as you are, know your dark side and love you anyway. Such friends are there for you in your darkest hours and care about you whether you are a successful partner or momentarily jobless. Find people who make you happy and who make you feel good about yourself. Spend time with them and avoid energy vampires.
 9. **Create a lifestyle that is in sync with your values.** As an early adult, a wise person told me, “If your values and your lifestyle are out of sync, you will be miserable.” When I was a partner at one particular law firm, as I turned on to the street that took me to my office, I would feel sick. That law firm's culture was not suitable to my value system. I left and started my own firm. I decided to work in practice areas where my values and my work were a match. To the extent I engage in community service, I pick causes about which I am passionate.
 10. **Find balance.** I'm not fond of the phrase “work/life” balance. Using that phrase implies that work is not part of life but something other than life. Work is part of life—a significant part of life. If we love what we do, it's far less of an issue to “get out of work to get to my life.” With that said, our work, our health, our family and our friends all require attention and energy. The amount of energy that each aspect of our lives demands will vary at different times. When we are dealing with young children, health issues, or other significant life challenges, finding balance can be incredibly difficult. Sometimes it is nearly impossible for a period of time. In those moments, be aware of the energy that is being consumed, stay committed to self-care fundamentals, and continue to seek a path that allows you to feel balanced again.

You can have a great life as a woman lawyer that includes career success and personal happiness. It does take a commitment.

CAREER LESSONS

Lesson 8. Find a Mentor – Be a Mentor, Sandra Brown

A mentor is someone who allows you to see the hope inside yourself.

– OPRAH WINFREY

According to Dictionary.com, a mentor is “a wise and trusted counselor or teacher” and “an influential senior sponsor or supporter.” All of my early mentors were men. My law school mentor, and all of the attorneys who trained me in the area of entertainment law were men. I am thankful for all of them because I received excellent training; but I think it would have been helpful to have had a woman or a minority woman attorney as a mentor as I made early career decisions.

Women Lawyers Entering the Profession Need Mentors

Young women lawyers are high achievers. They have graduated from high school, attended college, gotten into and graduated from law school, passed the bar, and started a very strenuous career. But, they are sometimes frustrated – as I was – with how difficult it is to find a mentor.

My advice to young women lawyers is: Don’t become angry or frustrated, because 10-20 years from now, the person who does not have the time to sit and chat with a young lawyer could be *you*. It’s not that established women lawyers don’t have the desire to provide advice; it’s just that there may not be any more hours left in the day to spend speaking with or teaching a young lawyer without compromising one’s own physical well-being.

So, how does a young lawyer go about finding a mentor? You can start by reaching out to potential mentors within your law school alumnae association—preferably before you graduate. After graduating from law school, there are a number of options you can explore.

- State bar organizations. Your mentor does not need to be in your practice area, but it is helpful.
- Potential mentors within your firm, practice group, or law department.
- Women attorneys in other firms, companies, or business organizations.
- Conferences. Your first choice would be to find an attorney in the city where you live and work because it makes it easier to get together for breakfast, lunch, or coffee, and to stay in touch. But, if you meet an attorney at a national conference, make the extra effort to try to stay in touch.
- Cultural organizations. There may be a strong community behind one’s heritage that should not be overlooked. Community ties or cultural ties may later play a role in your career as resources for business development or leads to employment opportunities.

Minority Women Lawyers

When I was in law school, I read an article about an African-American woman attorney transitioning from a big firm in Los Angeles to head Warner Bros. Records. I had reservations about entering the practice area of entertainment law because until reading that article, I hadn’t found any minority women in entertainment law in my research. Once I became a lawyer, and after joining the Black Entertainment and Sports Law Association (BESLA), I had the pleasure of meeting a founding member of the organization and first woman African-American entertainment attorney. As I became more established in my career, I was exposed to other African-American women with excellent credentials

who had succeeded professionally, holding titles like senior VP, office of the chairman & CEO at Warner/Chappell Music. There were only a few, but they were influential in motivating me in a predominantly male culture.

There are more minority women lawyers in entertainment law (and other practice areas) today; but unfortunately biases still exist. The young minority women lawyers I have spoken with still find it difficult to get the early guidance required to advance to partner level in “big law” or promoted to senior counsel positions in-house. If you are a young minority woman lawyer not finding a mentor within your own firm or at your current place of employment, it is important that you find minority mentors outside your firm. It’s helpful to have someone senior to discuss challenges you may be having, such as getting substantive work assignments, resume building, career moves, interviewing, offers, salaries, and even very personal decisions that impact long-term career goals, such as getting married and starting a family.

Can Peers or Non-Attorneys Be Mentors?

My peers have been instrumental in my career. For example, one of my close non-attorney friends had some prior experience in the music industry and suggested early in my career that I should try to work for a music production company instead of just looking to work at law firms. I had no idea at that time that this was possible. That suggestion led to my first job as associate director of business affairs for So Def Recordings, Inc. and Artistic Control Management, Inc., and launched my career as an entertainment lawyer. I also had friends who went to big law before I did, so each time I had the opportunity to transition to big law, my peers helped me prepare for the process.

Family members and parents, even if they are not lawyers, can also act as ad hoc mentors and sometimes get overlooked. Parents who are not lawyers may still provide emotional support when you need to talk through career advancement challenges. Family members who may be in other professions, such as health care or accounting, may have thoughts for you, as they may have faced somewhat similar challenges in establishing their careers. Non-lawyer mentors are not a substitute for mentors who are lawyers, but they are valuable when taking into consideration the bigger picture for your career and your life as a whole.

Senior Women Lawyers Should Be Mentors

Clients, spouse, children and their homework and extracurricular activities, boards/organizations, exercise, sleeping, caregiving, volunteer work, religious or other spiritual commitments...women lawyers manage all of it. But, because we have smartphones, voiceover IP phones, laptops, and tablets, we can work from virtually anywhere. We are no longer stuck behind our desks, so we have more time to do what we want to do, when we want to do it, right?

“Work-life balance” has become a trendy topic, but is anyone truly experiencing it yet? Today’s working world is so “plugged in” and everyone believes that you should be more accessible than ever before. No, we are not stuck in the office behind a desk as much anymore, but we find ourselves working at the doctor’s office, at the airport, or unfortunately, at kids’ soccer games, basketball games, or swim meets, instead of being “present” in other important moments of our lives. We seem to have less free time because we are *always* working. And, now I am suggesting you add “mentoring” to your list.

There is mutual benefit to mentoring a young lawyer because even as senior attorneys, there is always a need to grow your network. Finding mentees requires very little effort at this point in a senior attorney’s career, so you don’t need to add it to the “to do” list. You cross paths with potential mentees probably

more frequently than you realize. Just try to remain open. We were all new lawyers at one time. You've likely been where the young women around you currently are and have made it over the early career hurdles. We have all experienced similar desires, emotions, and anxieties. Sharing our prior experiences can be more helpful than you think. Helping another woman avoid certain pitfalls and move a little easier through her career can be professionally and personally rewarding and is a great contribution to our profession for years to come.

Lesson 10. They Will Crush You, If You Let Them. Don't., Maria-Vittoria "Giugi" Carminati

I'm tough, I'm ambitious, and I know exactly what I want. If that makes me a bitch, okay.

– MADONNA

As a young associate at large law firm, I worked hard. I arrived before everyone else and left after everyone else. I never spent less than 10 hours at the office on weekdays and always worked a few extra hours in the evening, after my son (and then children) went to bed. I traveled whenever requested. I made out-of-the-office engagements as brief as possible. I responded to emails immediately, regardless of the time of day. I dutifully did what I was told, regardless of the toll it took on me or my family. I tried to complete every task as fast as possible and as well as possible. I had one son during law school, another 19 months later, and another 23 months after that. I didn't skip a beat. I put my job before anything else. It wasn't enough.

At one review I was told I gave the impression of "not taking the job seriously." I was gutted. I was giving this job my all, scheduling my personal life down to the minute to make everything fit. While I was pregnant with my second son, a female partner gave me the best advice I didn't take. She said when it came to maternity leave, I should take all of it because nobody would remember I came back early—but everyone would remember if I struggled. I didn't listen; I thought doing more would be better. Instead of taking advantage of my full leave, I came back five weeks early. Nobody cared about my forfeited five weeks, but I was getting crushed by the work. I was also regularly reprimanded for being too direct with the staff. Eventually, the running joke became that I "communicated like a man." At one review, someone suggested I be "more feminine." They meant more submissive to the staff. Adding to this, my attitude that no job was too little or outside my duties earned me the reputation for being "an excellent paralegal." These two last statements were illustrative of the way I was viewed. No matter how hard I worked, something would always be "off." I eventually left the firm and started at a boutique.

They loved me there. How could they not? I was the engine on the biggest case they had. I worked 60 to 70 hours every week. I traveled incessantly. I worked every evening, every weekend and most holidays. For two years, I made the firm money and pushed myself to the breaking point. In return, I wasn't getting paid enough, and when I asked for more resources and support, my requests were denied. Some nights I was so tired I would throw up while driving home. I woke up every day at 5:00 a.m. and regularly didn't go to bed until midnight or later. I eventually developed heart palpitations. I had a full workup and the cardiologist explained it was stress-related, would never resolve, and I needed to be on lifelong medication. For a person who ran five kilometers seven days a week, this was a devastating heartache—literally. (The heart condition did go away as soon as I stopped relying on one particular paralegal who made my life hell. At that point, my heart rate went back to normal—though I had to do all of her work as well as mine to get things done.)

When I traveled, I took off and landed at the crack of dawn or in the middle of the night. I would pour myself into an Uber and fall asleep instantly, waking up at home and dragging myself to bed only to start up again the next day. Because I wasn't getting paid enough, I took on translation jobs to make a little extra cash. My husband was in training, so I was effectively the sole breadwinner. We eventually ran out of money, so I had to borrow from family to keep my children in private school. I was mortified, exhausted, feeling like I was tearing at the seams, and I was still failing. The last straw was when the office manager told me I had to stop using Ubers to get to and from the airport. I said I couldn't, as a matter of safety. I was so out of it when I landed that driving would have been dangerous for me and for other people on the road. Her response? I had to make "other arrangements." I found another arrangement: I quit and started my own firm.

In 2015 I launched Carminati Law PLLC. I had a daughter about a year later in 2016. That interlude, although not financially profitable, gave me sanity. I slowly found balance and re-emerged a different person. Although I was now solely responsible for rainmaking, billing, balancing the firm's books, handling trust accounts and overseeing deadlines, I entered one of the least stressful periods of my life. Even when I had my daughter, as a solo practitioner, my life stayed peaceful. I was taking care of four children now, rotating through nannies who quit with minutes' notice. I would have become hysterical a few years ago if faced with the same situation, but now I took things in stride. What I had, which I had not had before, was control over my life. A weight that I had never noticed was there lifted from my shoulders.

Eventually, a lawyer in Aspen, Colorado asked me to become his partner, so I moved to the Roaring Fork Valley. Was the partnership a good one? No. I was underpaid, among other issues, and underappreciated. However, I refused to be overworked. I refused to take on everyone else's responsibilities. I created a boundary and held to it. And lo and behold, other lawyers we worked with appreciated me, complimented me, and relied on me. I didn't have to crush myself to get those accolades. The partnership eventually came to an acrimonious end. One of the reasons was that, again, he expected me to man the office all day while he went where he wanted, pretexting that he was "rainmaking." For the first time, I said "No" and walked away. I was done giving this profession, and other lawyers more than they deserved from me.

I now run The Woman's Lawyer, my re-invented law firm, work full-time at a commercial litigation firm, and am running for the Colorado State Senate. I've made numerous changes to my life and looking back, I should have made them a long time ago. Most importantly, I could have made these changes while working for others. The secret was to set my boundaries early on and to learn how to say "no." If I am not available, I am not available. If I have a school event for my children, it takes its place on my calendar like any other appointment would. I stopped using an alarm clock in the morning (I wake up at 6:15 a.m. anyway). I turned off email notifications on my computer and my phone. I meet with clients two mornings per week and I work on their matters the rest of the time. I don't answer phone calls after 6:00 p.m. and I don't check my work email over the weekend.

Have I achieved anything since implementing these measures? You be the judge. I finished my space law doctoral thesis, which is about to get published by a European publishing house; I became vice president of a local bar organization; I was appointed to a statewide community college board of directors by the governor; I started a blog; I worked on a bill; I am running for office; I am learning a new language; and I am building a law firm. I also come home to my children, spend weekends with them, drink tea staring at the Colorado mountains, and enjoy lunches on a park bench on beautiful days. I didn't have to enable

other people crushing me in order to make it. Other lawyers will take as much as they can from you if you let them. Don't let them; it's not worth it.

Lesson 11. Effective Organizational Habits Open Doors, Including Those that Allow You to Be Your Own Boss, Kelly Carmody

A good system shortens the road to the goal.

– ORISON SWETT MARDEN

As a teenager, I was an organizational mess. My room was such a disaster that when my father came into my room to investigate after hearing someone (my boyfriend) knocking on my window one night, he crawled through my room to make sure he did not trip over the piles of clothes, books, and other items on my floor. Although being scared to death by my dad – I had not heard him come in – should have encouraged me to change my ways, it did not. When I married my boyfriend four years later, it was he who prompted the beginning of my organizational transformation. He lived by the motto, *a place for everything and everything in its place*. I started hanging up my clothes in the closet, putting things away in their place, and began to appreciate some of the benefits of being organized.

Still, it was not until I started my career that the benefits of having good organizational skills were proven to me. Two of my first bosses were very successful leaders in civil legal aid. Both, however, had their desks, file cabinets, and floors covered by multiple, random stacks of memos, reports, notebooks, newspapers, and anything else that would “stack.” They would spend valuable minutes, and sometimes hours, searching for needed information. I witnessed their lost productivity. If I was meeting with them about a project, I would wait for them to find information needed for our discussion, while watching and feeling *my* productivity slip away.

From these experiences, I learned to be the “organized one.” I learned to file away information that could potentially be needed in the future. I became the go-to person for these bosses when they were looking for information. They learned to trust that if I had seen the information previously, I would have it or know where it was. Although this may have fed into their unorganized work style, I knew it was not in the cards for me to change their work habits.

One downside of my increasingly effective organizational skills may have been the tendency of a group to look to me to do the secretarial or administrative work, since I was the “organized one.” It is difficult to determine whether this was because of my skills or because the members of work groups early in my career were predominately men and they were used to a woman taking on the secretarial duties. Although I do not believe it negatively affected my career, it is a side effect I have had to balance over time.

Fast-forward more than 30 years and I have learned that as important as my organizational skills were while an employee of civil legal aid organizations, they have been critical to my later career success as a national civil legal aid consultant. Being self-employed with no employees means I must deal with a wide variety of items on my to-do list every day. Working on multiple clients' projects in sometimes three different time zones while at the same time handling the administration of my office – billing, record-keeping, technology – takes all of my organizational skills to keep my business running smoothly—at least most of the time.

Benjamin Franklin said, “For every minute spent in organizing, an hour is earned.” He was referring to an hour of time, which I have found to be true. As important, however, is that an hour can be earned to spend on activities that earn a fee. If I am organizing work that is *not* billable, that is freeing up time for work that *is* billable. If I am organizing work that *is* billable, that is saving the client money when my billable work for them is done more efficiently.

“Being organized,” for me, includes at least these practices: using a daily to-do list; creating work plans for each project; keeping my emails organized in folders and subfolders; keeping my bookmarks organized in folders and subfolders; keeping paper files of documents that are much easier to read on paper; and making notebooks with tabs and tables of contents for compilations of documents that I refer to over time.

The thought processes that these and other organizing procedures take have led to my ability to do process or system analysis with clients to improve their efficiency. It is immensely satisfying to share my skills and knowledge with others and see their “aha” moment when they realize how much time they can save for themselves, their organizations and/or their clients. As critical as these efficiencies are to my bottom line as a solo consultant, they are equally critical to the nonprofit organizations that I work with that continually seek ways to squeeze more time for assistance to more clients.

I also have found good organizational skills are essential to managing projects. Being able to keep multiple components of a project moving forward at the right times takes organized information and systems. Having these skills is important to any lawyer, whether a consultant leading a client through a project or a litigator preparing a case for court.

Organizational skills encompass more than what I have described in this Lesson, but I have found the skills described here to be the foundation of much of my success as an employee and a consultant, and in life. Being organized has given me the time to learn, to plan, to communicate, to execute, and the time to enjoy life.

Lesson 37. Pushing Past Fear and Failure, Artie Renee Pobjecky

If you want to conquer fear, don't sit home and think about it. Go out and get busy.

– DALE CARNEGIE

Life is hard, yet success is harder. To succeed risks must be taken. Even when things go right and everything seems easy, those triumphs are often built on a foundation of failures, gambles, and numerous headaches. Part of taking risks is to accept and embrace failure. Fear did not stop Neil Armstrong from walking on the moon, nor did 1,000 failures prevent Thomas Edison from creating the light bulb. I admit I am always looking for the secret formula to triple my revenue and client base; ultimately, I am reminded, by those who have paved the way ahead of me, that I already possess the “secret.”

The secret to my solo practice and business success is working on my business versus in my business. The key component of working on my business is developing meaningful contacts with business executives. As an introvert, this is not fun, yet I push through it and I have enjoyed the rewards. However, in doing so, I must attend events without knowing anyone, run for an election and lose, and

even hire the wrong people at work. Despite the initial heartaches and rejections from each of these examples, in the end, my perseverance and determination reaped tremendous rewards.

As a new attorney, I quickly became dismayed with the practice of law and was on a mission to exit. Fortunately, an opportunity presented itself to help two young girls leave Cuba for a future in the U.S. I knew nothing about immigration law and had to admit my ignorance on an American Bar Association group email list. Then a kind soul pointed me in the direction of the American Immigration Lawyers Association. Again, I had to seek help from strangers. I remember leaving my first immigration conference with a migraine headache. This new practice area was hard, both from an educational and mental standpoint. There were times I made mistakes, and I had to overcome my fear of failure by reaching out to my colleagues or taking a case despite the obstacles. At times, I was ready to give up and admit defeat. Now, over a decade later, I am grateful that I pushed forward despite these fears and failures. I am eager to learn and take on new practice areas within the immigration field.

Now, after switching to immigration law, I am enjoying business success. Yet, I felt something was still missing, and I wanted to become more involved in my community. Working in a rural area, I felt isolated from my immigration colleagues, and I wanted more. I remember sitting in my car, making countless excuses as to why I should not attend a local event of female business leaders. I was alone and knew no one. It was awkward and hard. As soon as I entered the building, I felt immediately intimidated by the success. I wanted to run, but my feet were planted to the ground. Instead, I made my way to a small group and mainly listened to them. I began to listen to their successes and felt overwhelmed. To this day, I remember leaving the event with a headache from the stress and fear. The following month, I returned and continued the charade until it became fun. I made meaningful and lasting relationships with the “successful” female leaders. Looking back, I realized that I stayed true to myself and did not blaviate my accomplishments. Instead, I asked a lot of questions and stayed engaged in the conversations. My cell phone was turned off and I sent “thank you” notes to the hostesses. Eventually, the hard work paid off and my connections turned into genuine friendships. I consider many of these women mentors and kindred spirits because they are a part of the secret to my business and personal success. Today, I enjoy walking through an event and recognizing colleagues, and I proudly sit on several community boards. If I stayed in my car because of my fears, I would have missed out on some wonderful friendships and opportunities.

Despite my “successes,” I keep pushing myself. I cannot afford to become complacent. When I walk into a room of strangers, I continuously remind myself to smile, hold my head up high and exude confidence on the outside. My secret is that I am a ball of nerves, but with my smile and poise, no one else has to know. Yes, I have been snubbed on many occasions, and that is OK. When I enter a room full of strangers, I look for smaller groups or find someone else who is standing alone—often there is another introvert in the room. Another secret: If you appear to be enjoying yourself by smiling, then others will usually gravitate toward you. I also believe it is essential to pay it forward. I force myself to leave the comfort of my colleagues and search for newbies so that I can help them feel more comfortable. I am always impressed when someone reaches out to me. If you are attending a new event, feel free to contact the coordinator and introduce yourself ahead of time. Ask to volunteer before the event—it might create opportunities to meet others in a smaller setting, and the hostess will not forget your generosity.

I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.

– NELSON MANDELA

I do not like failure or rejection. This is a possibility with each email I send, each task I attempt, and each proposal I mail. It is only later in life that I have embraced these rejections and accepted that the rejections are not of me personally. Instead, the timing may not be right, or the email may have gotten lost in the junk box. Despite being an introvert, I have pushed myself to speak at national conferences and it is heartbreaking when the feedback is not positive. Yet, constructive criticism is critical to my success. Rejection is valuable; it forces me to re-examine my approach, it prevents complacency and it pushes my boundaries. I am always trying to learn, and better myself, both personally and professionally. Keep an eye out for opportunities and JUST DO IT. Remember, the only thing holding you back is yourself.

I've been absolutely terrified every moment of my life and I've never let it keep me from doing a single thing that I wanted to do.

– GEORGIA O'KEEFFE

So what fears are holding you back? I encourage you to write them down and set goals to tackle. Create a checklist with timelines. Is there an event you want to attend, a mentor you want to meet or a conference you want to speak at? Then do it—we will keep your fears and nerves a secret between us. While the journey may be bumpy, it will open new windows of opportunities that you may never have realized exist or believed could be attained. I wish you many blessings as you embrace your fears and push through them. Onward and upward!

Lesson 40. Don't Resist...Reinvent, Karen Dunn Skinner

Just keep swimming.

– DORY in *Finding Nemo*

I was never supposed to be a lawyer. For as long as I can remember, I wanted to be a doctor. I went to university and studied life sciences: microbiology, chemistry, physiology, virology, pharmacology, and anatomy. In my third year, when my classmates were madly applying to medical schools, I had an epiphany. I loved the science (except organic chemistry), but I hated the competition and pressure. The thought of spending another few years competing against the same people to get into medical school, and then competing with them for another four years to get through medical school, was entirely unappealing. So, what should I do with my B.Sc.? Why not law school? No competition there, right?

At that point, I didn't know anyone in law school. I didn't even know any lawyers. It just sounded interesting (and there was no organic chemistry). I wrote the LSAT and discovered I apparently had some aptitude. *OK then*, I thought, *maybe it's not such a long shot*. I had no idea which law schools were good law schools. The internet hadn't been invented yet, so I couldn't do much research. Instead, I applied to schools in cities where I wanted to live. My main criteria were languages and skiing, and possibly an ocean. I picked McGill University because I liked Montreal, I would be close to ski hills, and I'd get to improve my French.

It turns out that first reinvention (i.e., from doctor to lawyer) was fantastic. I loved law school. I loved McGill. And I still love Montreal. After years of wandering, it is once again my home (selected, along with my lawyer husband, for the skiing and the French).

After graduation in 1993, I articulated with Stikeman Elliott in Budapest. Articling is forced labor cleverly disguised as apprenticeship. It's a necessary evil for Canadian lawyers. I was extraordinarily lucky; I got to articulate in Europe and was called to the bar in a private ceremony in a gorgeous room in the old Palais de Justice in Paris. I spent two years working for Stikeman in Budapest, learning Hungarian, speaking four languages every day, and skiing in the Alps and the High Tatras (seeing the theme?).

We represented the Hungarian government in the privatization of its electricity industry. My work revolved around the development of the regulations needed to support the new industry. It was fantastic work, but the hours were long. We regularly put in 36-hour stints at the office, ate all our meals there, and slept on cots in the basement. It was hardly a normal start to a legal career; I had far more exposure and responsibility than most junior lawyers ever get. I loved it, but it exhausted me. Time for another reinvention. I moved to London and started a Ph.D. in law at the London School of Economics.

Somewhere along the way, I reinvented myself again and became a mother. I'm not sure why I thought a baby and a Ph.D. would be compatible. It turns out, they weren't. My Ph.D. morphed into part-time, and then long-distance when we moved back to Canada.

The Ph.D. became harder and harder, and at the same time, my little side-hustle grew. I'd been helping out a friend, providing legal advice on his corporate finance deals across Eastern Europe. I realized how much I missed practicing law, so I set up a small private practice and worked from Montreal. I advised him on his multi-jurisdictional mergers and acquisitions, and drafted transaction documentation. When that work dried up, I applied my experience in regulatory and administrative law to education and developed a practice advising schools on corporate governance and risk management.

Eventually, I decided I wanted back into the world of big law. Big law, however, didn't want me. Despite having a successful small practice, recruiters told me I was "too far removed from law." I'd been "out too long." So, what did I do? I reinvented myself yet again.

Together with my husband, I founded Gimbal, a Lean practice management consultancy. We trained in Lean and Six Sigma, change management, and design thinking. We adapted Lean business tools and strategies to the profession we know best, and now we work with law firms and in-house legal departments across North America. We teach LeanLegal® strategies to thousands of lawyers and the business and administrative folks who support their practice of law, and we conduct process improvement projects that make lawyers more efficient, productive, and happy. I'm back in big law—but not the way I ever imagined.

The thing is, I could have looked at every one of my reinventions as a failure. Did I go to law school because I didn't think I could hack it in medical school? Did I start my Ph.D. because I didn't think I'd be happy practicing law forever? Did I quit it because it was too hard, or because, actually, I liked practicing law more than pursuing a doctorate? Maybe I set up my private practice because I didn't get a job in a big law firm. Did I start my consulting business because (again) I didn't get a job in a big law firm?

Perhaps that's what it looked like to someone on the outside, but not once did I see it that way. All of these "reinventions" were choices. They were experiments that took me in new directions. They were responses to challenges. And every one of them made me happy. I've built a life on reinventing myself. And I haven't even mentioned my eBay business or my silver jewelry sales or my stint as a professional editor.

Constant reinvention has proven to me that I'm resilient. I'm creative. I'm strong. In Lean thinking, every problem is an opportunity to improve. I think that's one reason why Lean appealed to me and seems to offer so much to our profession.

As lawyers, we are trained to look for solutions, to develop creative responses to new problems, to get results. We find opportunities and exploit them to the benefit of our clients. And yet, according to research, lawyers lack resilience. They avoid failure and change. We see this every day in our consulting practice. Even if the changes we develop with our clients improve their profitability or their performance, or their ability to compete, lawyers resist them.

My lesson to you is this: Stop resisting.

Embrace the hurdles thrown up in front of you. Accept every challenge and use your legal training to find your own creative solution. Roadblocks are not failures, they're opportunities to improve.

Lesson 43. Buy a Ticket, Linda S. Thomas

*You can't outwit fate by standing on the sidelines placing little side bets about the outcome of life. Either you wade in, risk everything you have to play the game, or you don't play at all.
If you don't play you can't win.*

– JUDITH McNAUGHT

There's a wonderful joke that's been around for years about the poor man who goes to church every day and prays and prays, "Lord – please, please...let me win the lottery." His lament goes on for months and months, but to no avail. "Listen God," he says, "I know I haven't been perfect, but I really need to win the lottery." "I promise I will do better, if you just let me win." "I'll give some back to the church and to the poor. Just please let me win." "Help me out here. I have bills to pay." And on and on, week after week, but nothing. So, one day he shows up at the church, but instead of praying, he blurts out in anger, "God, you've disappointed me. I've prayed and prayed, and still nothing!" Completely exasperated, he storms out of the church vowing to never return. As he stomps out onto the sidewalk, the mighty clouds part, the rolling thunder booms, and a deep, loud voice resonates from the heavens and through the skies, "BUY! A! TICKET!"

I heard this joke for the first time several years ago from one of my dearest friends, Deb, who happens to be one of the best and most well-respected lawyers I know, when she was speaking to a conference of highly intelligent and motivated women lawyers about why we may find it difficult to advance in our careers to the places we want to be. Through her quick wit and mastery of the language, she reminded us it is no secret that the legal profession has historically been a man's world, and while it may be changing, it is still difficult for women lawyers to move up the ladder and achieve whatever 'success' is to us. In reality though, she went on to say, it may be at least partially our own fault. We all know that women must be assertive in our efforts to further our careers, make partner, or get appointed or elected to that office or position we want; but we also know that 'assertive' women may not be viewed in the best of light among our male peers. Deb's point, among other things, was that we cannot sit back, hoping that opportunity for advancement just falls in our lap; we must make it happen. More often than not, she suggests, opportunity presents itself in small, seemingly insignificant ways, and may be disguised as just more work for us to do. She encouraged us to look for opportunity or make that

opportunity happen, then do what is necessary to achieve advancement toward success. In other words, she says, “Buy a ticket.”

Back in 1997, I was a brand-new lawyer trying to start my legal career in a small city in Oklahoma—not a small town, but certainly not a large city, either. After 20 years of teaching public school (which becomes more relevant as this goes on), I decided to go to law school. Upon graduating from law school and passing the bar exam, I found it difficult to break into the legal world, especially in a place where I was literally the only woman lawyer in town (well, except for the few who were in-house counsel for an oil company headquartered there). I had zero luck with resumes and interviews in the all-male law firms, so I finally just hung out my shingle and hoped for the best. Then an opportunity (if you want to call it that) did actually fall into my lap. Fortunately, as it eventually turns out, the local county bar association customarily elected the newest attorney as its president—certainly not as any particular honor, but rather because no one else really wanted the position. That serendipitous event turned out to be the first step toward my success as a solo practitioner and how I became the President of the Oklahoma Bar Association. And here’s how:

Remember my teaching background I mentioned? Well, teachers are great at projects, right? Men attorneys, not so much. So, during my year as president of the county bar association, we did several community projects – blood drives, toy drives, food drives, free legal answers on Law Day, Bowl for Kids’ Sake with matching T-shirts – everything except a bake sale, I think. (I had more time than clients back then.) There was a bit of arm-twisting and maybe some shaming, but in the end, most of our members joined in.

Now here’s the ‘fortunate’ part of that: Because of all the community service projects we did that year, our county bar association was recognized as the Outstanding County Bar Association of the Year by the Oklahoma Bar Association. On behalf of our county bar, I got to accept the award presented at the OBA Annual Meeting by the OBA President. The story gets better, I promise.

About that same time, Melissa, who turned out to be my first “woman lawyer” friend and mentor, was the President of the Oklahoma Bar Association (only the second women to serve in that position since the inception of the OBA). Guess what: She, too was a former school teacher. Recognizing talent (or maybe just tenacity) when she saw it, she encouraged me to run for the OBA Board of Governors position for my district when it came open that year. Without thinking much about it, I just did. And that started my years of service to our state bar association. And all the while, my private practice was steadily growing.

Fast forward, 15-plus years. Following in the footsteps of Melissa and Deb, now two of my dearest friends and mentors, I too served as the President of the Oklahoma Bar Association in 2017—the sixth woman to serve in that position. I also have been fortunate to have served in many other leadership roles in the OBA and was recently appointed as the out-of-state lawyer liaison on the State Bar of Texas Board of Directors. I have been the recipient of a variety of awards and recognitions and have served on various boards and committees in my community. And as new opportunities continue to present themselves, I “buy a ticket” whenever I can.

I say none of this to brag, but rather to emphasize that after almost 25 years of practicing law, I now have a huge network of the “best women lawyer friends” who have, from the very beginning of my career, encouraged me to “Buy a ticket.” I give them the credit for my successes. I would not be where I am now without each of these wonderful women who lead by example, give really good advice,

encourage others, and are simply there to share a glass of wine and say, “I hear you!” I suspect that behind every successful woman lawyer is a network of women lawyer friends who champion their success and the success of other women lawyers. To all of mine, I say “Thank You.”

Takeaways:

1. Surround yourself with those women who know you don’t have to blow out someone else’s candle for your own light to shine; but more importantly, be one of those women.
2. When the opportunity presents itself, never miss a chance to “Buy a ticket!”

Lesson 47. Overcoming the Obstacle of Naysayers, Wendi Weiner

Look yourself in the mirror and ask yourself,

“What do I want to do every day for the rest of my life?” Do that.

– GARY VAYNERHCUK

One of the hardest obstacles I had to overcome when I decided to leave my decade-plus career in law was blocking out the negativity and negative thoughts that came from “naysayers.” I define naysayers as the people who will watch what you do with intrigue and interest, wonder how you do (or did) it, but fail to offer a single or encouraging word of praise. They will not support you, they will not congratulate you, and they will not approve of your career decisions.

Instead, naysayers will offer words of discouragement to derail you or make you believe that your decision to have your own law firm, leave the practice of law, or take your legal career in a different direction is not the “right choice”—or it is simply “foolish.” Their negative statements will throw a wrench in your thought process and may even make you question your journey. Perhaps it is due to their own limitations in their lives or careers, but it is not for you to understand their “why.”

Trust me when I implore you to just say “no” to the naysayers. They will not see the vision you see, and it isn’t their responsibility to see it. It’s your responsibility to live that vision and believe in it.

I want to share a story with you that happened to me—how I confronted one particular naysayer, what I learned from it, and how it changed my perception.

One of the first experiences I had with a naysayer in disguise took place at an entrepreneur event I attended on a Thursday after I had just made the bold decision four days prior to leave my 11-plus year career in law. I walked over to the coffee station at the event and was greeted by a guy in a dress shirt and navy pants.

“So, tell me about your business,” he said. “What do you do?”

I chuckled. It had only been four days since I left law and plunged into full-time entrepreneurship.

Excitedly, I responded, “I’m a lawyer who actually left the practice of law on Monday after 10-plus years to follow my dreams of being a writer. I write resumes and LinkedIn profiles for lawyers and executives.”

“Why would you stop being a lawyer to become a writer?” he asked. “That’s just dumb! You will never make the type of money as a writer that you would make as a lawyer.”

I was appalled, shocked, and humiliated. The only thing I could think of saying on the cusp in response was, “I gave myself six months to make this a reality, so we will see if it’s possible.”

I went home that day and for a good hour, I doubted myself and the plans I had for my entrepreneurial journey. I started to question what I was doing—was I making a huge mistake? Did this guy have a point? Would I ever be as successful as people thought I was as when I was a practicing lawyer?

Six months later, I re-introduced myself to that same guy, and he asked how I was doing. When I told him about being published in the *HuffPost*, *Forbes*, and multiple other publications, he inquired how I did it and if he could hire me to write his bio and website content.

The reality is that six months later, my confidence grew because I didn’t give up or give in to the naysayer. I now look back at that day, that moment, that conversation, and I realize that you will always have naysayers, haters, and fewer people supporting you as you reach business success; but what matters most is how you see yourself. Being a lawyer does not automatically make us successful; but to the outside world it does. Laypersons perceive lawyers as successful, so when we tell them we have taken an alternative path in our profession, they automatically see that as questionable success. What I have learned over time is to use my situation and example of leaving the practice of law as a teachable moment for others to show them that yes, it can be done, and with great finesse, strategy, and incredible success.

More importantly, I stopped introducing myself to people as a resume writer and began to introduce myself as an attorney and personal branding expert. It’s not that I wasn’t proud of what I was doing; it’s that I realized resume writing was only a small part of what I do as a professional writer. When I began to really discover what my own brand was and how valuable it was, suddenly there was no longer the obstacle of naysayers in front of me.

I learned to take what was an obstacle and turned it around into both a lesson and my own teachable moment that I learned and grew from.

PANELIST BIOGRAPHIES

Sabrina C. Beavens

Sabrina C. Beavens is licensed to practice law in New Hampshire and Florida. She is an attorney at Upton & Hatfield, LLP located in Concord, New Hampshire. After over 16 years as an attorney in private practice, Sabrina has developed a reputation as a personable attorney who is well-versed in a wide range of practice areas.

After graduating law school in 2002, Sabrina worked as a bankruptcy and civil litigation attorney in Florida. In 2006, Sabrina relocated to New Hampshire, where she joined a small law firm in Dover. After a few years, Sabrina returned to her prior Florida firm and opened a satellite office in Portsmouth. For several years, she enjoyed a snowbird lifestyle representing clients in both Florida and New Hampshire. With the addition of her daughter to her family in 2013, Sabrina decided to focus on her New Hampshire practice and joined Upton & Hatfield. Currently, Sabrina spends most of her time working on transactional matters such as representation of small to mid-size companies, banking and commercial transactions, real estate and estate planning. However, she still enjoys helping clients with select litigation matters.

Sabrina is AV rated by Martindale Hubbell. She served as Co-Chair of the American Bar Association Section of Litigation Woman Advocate Committee where she also completed a Leadership Fellowship and received the Outstanding Subcommittee Chair Award. She has written numerous articles on legal and practice-related topics and presented at several seminars. Sabrina is a proud alumna of Stetson University College of Law and Ursinus College. Learn more about Sabrina at www.uptonhatfield.com.

Nora Riva Bergman

Nora Riva Bergman is licensed to practice law in Florida. A licensed attorney since 1992, Nora Riva Bergman is a law firm coach who understands the unique challenges lawyers face in the 21st century. She has practiced as an employment law attorney and certified mediator and has served as an adjunct professor at both Stetson University College of Law and the University of South Florida.

Nora has been a speaker at conferences for the American Bar Association, the Federal Bar Association, the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys, the National Association of Bar Executives, The Florida Bar, and other national and regional legal organizations. She also served for eight years as the executive director of a voluntary bar association with over 1,200 members.

She is certified in the Conflict Dynamics Profile developed by the Center for Conflict Dynamics at Eckerd College to help individuals and organizations learn to deal constructively with conflict. Nora is also a graduate of Villanova University's Lean Six Sigma Program and is certified in both DISC and EQ through Target Training International.

Nora received an undergraduate degree in journalism, *summa cum laude*, from the University of South Florida and her JD, *cum laude*, from Stetson University College of Law, where she was a member of the law review and served as a mentor for incoming students. Learn more about Nora at www.reallifeppractice.com.

Sandra Brown

Sandra Brown is licensed to practice law in New York and Georgia. She is an entertainment attorney and partner with Taylor English Duma, LLP., Sandra represented high-profile talent in her own entertainment law practice, prior to joining Taylor English. She has focused her career on working with award-winning talent. Motivated by the values of honor, integrity and consummate legal knowledge, Sandra is dedicated to supporting and giving back to the entertainment and education community. Sandra started her legal career as the Associate Director of Business Affairs for the entertainment companies owned by hit music producer and now Reality TV Producer, Jermaine Dupri.

Prior to joining Taylor English, she advised clients generally in the areas of music and television. Her clients' musical credits included Usher, Mariah Carey, Janet Jackson, Michael Jackson, Alicia Keys, Mary J. Blige, Daughtry, Akon, Gwen Stefani, Eminem and Lady Gaga. Sandra has also counseled certain professional athletes in various entertainment and business ventures as well. Before establishing her own practice, Sandra spent five years of counsel to the entertainment group of a large international law firm representing managers, entertainment television corporations, and numerous Grammy-Award winning artists and producers in country, rock, pop and hip hop. Sandra is a member of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS), and Black Entertainment and Sports Lawyers Association (BESLA), and enjoys guest speaking at colleges and universities, including her alma maters, Florida State University and Nova Southeastern University, where she has served as a donor and volunteer. Learn more about Sandra at www.taylorenghish.com.

Maria-Vittoria "Giugi" Carminati

Maria-Vittoria "Giugi" Carminati is licensed to practice law in Colorado, New York, Texas, and the District of Columbia. She is a women's advocate, an intersectional activist, and a blogger. She lives in Aurora, Colorado with her four children. Her husband splits his time between Houston, Texas where they own a home, and Denver. She graduated law school in 2008 and is now at the helm of her own law firm, The Woman's Lawyer, based in Denver. She focuses on representing women, people of color, and members of the LGBTQ community. Her firm operates as a social justice firm, representing victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. To fund her work, she provides high-end legal services to other law firms. She speaks French, English, Italian and Spanish. She is on the Colorado Community College Systems Board of Directors and serves as vice president of Denver MAMAs, an organization for lawyer moms. After spending five years at a big law firm and two years at a boutique, she launched her firm for the first time in 2015. She formed a partnership in Aspen, Colorado from 2016 to 2017. She then moved to Denver and re-launched her firm as The Woman's Lawyer. Her blog, Argue Like a Girl™, addresses current events and popular culture from a feminist perspective, providing biting commentary and thoughtful analysis. She has an LLM in Space, Cyber & Telecommunications Law and a JSD in Space Law. Learn more about Giugi at www.thewomanslawyer.com and www.arguelikeagirl.com.

Kelly Carmody

Kelly Carmody is licensed to practice law in Arizona. She is the founder of Carmody and Associates, provides consulting services to civil legal aid providers, funders and supporters. Her mission is to improve and expand the civil legal aid delivery system. Her primary areas of expertise include strategic planning, program evaluation, staff/pro bono delivery system development, process/organizational analysis and development, attorney recruitment and retention, compensation analysis and strategy, and management/Board assistance.

Before opening Carmody and Associates, Kelly was a lobbyist for civil legal aid clients and a facilitator of civil legal aid's management and advocacy through statewide organizations in Kentucky, Tennessee and

Arizona, and nationally through the National Legal Aid & Defender Association, the National Health Law Program, and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

Kelly received her B.S. degree from South Dakota State University, an M.S.W. from the University of Kentucky, and a J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center. Learn more about Kelly at www.carmodyandassociates.com.

Katherine E. Charonko

Kate Charonko is licensed to practice law in West Virginia and the District of Columbia. She is a partner at Bailey & Glasser LLP where she focuses her practice mainly on complex litigation, e-Discovery and national plaintiff class actions. She serves as part of Bailey & Glasser's multidistrict litigation automotive and medical device product liability action teams as well as other multidistrict litigation matters across the country. In addition to her litigation work, Kate is the director of the firm's developing e-Discovery practice advising clients and attorneys regarding numerous aspects of e-Discovery. Kate graduated from West Virginia University College of Law. Upon graduation, she received the Order of the Barristers national honorary distinction for her written and oral advocacy skills. Kate is an active member of various legal and e-Discovery organizations. Learn more about Kate at www.baileyglasser.com.

Mandi Clay

Mandi Clay is licensed to practice law in Florida. She was born and raised in Buffalo, New York and has been practicing law in Tampa, Florida since 2008. She's a commercial litigator with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Florida Atlantic University and her law degree from the University of Georgia School of Law. Mandi has experience in a variety of subject matters, including labor and employment, intellectual property, restrictive covenants, and class actions. She represents both public and private sector clients of all sizes by providing guidance before, during, and after litigation. Mandi has experienced the practice of law from both sides of the bench, having clerked for U.S. District Judge Gregory A. Presnell and U.S. District Judge Charlene Edwards Honeywell, both in the Middle District of Florida. She prides herself on being efficient and responsive to her clients and is dedicated to providing practical advice tailored to fit each client's specific goals. Mandi is also a Florida Supreme Court Certified Circuit Court Mediator and U.S. District Court Mediator.

Within the legal community, Mandi is well respected among both practitioners and the judiciary. She is an active member of several voluntary bar groups, Vice President of the Hillsborough Association for Women Lawyers, and serves on two Florida Bar Committees: the Voluntary Bar Liaison Committee and the Standing Committee on Mental Health and Wellness of Florida Lawyers. Learn more about Mandi at www.threethirteenlaw.com.

Katy Goshtasbi

Katy Goshtasbi is licensed to practice law in Indiana and the District of Columbia. She is a growth, change, and branding expert and founder of Puris Consulting. She works with law firms, lawyers, and organizations on growing in size and profits by mastering change and developing brands that get their message out effectively. The results include happier, more productive lawyers, reduced stress, better clients, and increased revenues. Katy is a nationally recognized professional speaker and trainer, traveling the globe sharing her knowledge. She is the author of *Personal Branding 101: Develop Your Personal Brand with Ease* and *Personal Branding in One Hour For Lawyers*. She practiced securities law for over 14 years and served as Chair of the ABA Law Practice Division in 2018-2019. Learn more about Katy at www.purisconsulting.com.

Melanie S. Griffin

Melanie Griffin is licensed to practice law in Florida. She is the Tampa Office Managing Shareholder of the Dean Mead Law Firm where she champions commercial litigation, intellectual property, and labor and employment issues for businesses and trust and probate litigation and agribusiness needs of prominent Florida families. She founded Dean Mead's office that she now leads in 2014, and in 2015, was elected Equity Shareholder. Her leadership led to recognition as Florida's Most Productive Young Lawyer (2009), Super Lawyers Rising Star (Business Litigation 2010-18), Florida Trend Legal Elite (Up & Comer 2010-14, Commercial Litigation 2014-18), Best Lawyer in America (Commercial Litigation 2017-19), Tampa Bay Metro Inspiring Woman in Business (2016-17), TBBJ BusinessWoman of the Year Legal Services Finalist (2016), FSU Notable Nole (2016), and FSU College of Business Recent Alumni Achievement Award Winner (2017). Last year, Melanie was appointed by the Governor to the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority (TBARTA) where she serves as Policy Committee Chair. Above all, Melanie's passion is mentoring, and in 2017, she founded Spread Your Sunshine to empower women with the confidence to break the glass ceiling and achieve their dreams. Her success effecting positive change was celebrated through her receipt of the 2016 TBBJ BusinessWoman of the Year Angie's Award, 2017 GSWCF Woman of Promise Award, 2017 FSU Inspire Award, and 2018 Florida Bar YLD Outstanding Woman Lawyer of Achievement Award. Melanie's mission is energizing others to spread their sunshine, allowing all to find joy and grow the best in themselves. Learn more about Melanie at www.spreadyoursunshine.com.

Catherine A. Kyles

Catherine A. "Kate" Kyles is a member of The Florida Bar. She provides legal consultation services to companies, law firms and individuals on discrimination matters. She counsels women on work-life balance and life decision plans through her Broadroom Consulting practice.

Kate received her B.A. in Psychology from Simmons College in 1986. In 1991, she received her J.D. *magna cum laude* from New England Law School where she served as Editor in Chief of the Law Review. From 1991-19995, she worked as an appellate lawyer for the Tampa law firm Alpert, Josey & Grilli. Thereafter, she practiced as a sole practitioner in St. Petersburg and Tampa, FL from 1995-2008.

While in her own practice, she served as an editor of the Florida Bar Journal and the editor of the St. Petersburg Bar Association magazine. She served as President of the Florida affiliate of the National Employment Lawyers Association, was board certified in Labor & Employment Law and a courtroom expert on employment matters which she then frequently lectured and wrote about. In Fawn Germer's, first acclaimed book, *Hard Won Wisdom*, the author interviewed Kate about the practical and legal challenges inherent in the representation of women in sex harassment and discrimination cases.

In 2008, she closed her practice to raise her daughter in a creative business that serves children and the community. As a lifelong practitioner of mindfulness, Kate teaches emotional intelligence and the etiquette of empowerment to children in a storybook setting. Kate can always be found writing, thinking, crying, and laughing about something that makes us uniquely human. Learn more about Kate at www.sillydillys.com.

Kate Mitchell

Kate Mitchell is licensed to practice law in Massachusetts. She is a solo practitioner who established her law practice on Cape Cod and Nantucket in 1993, representing individuals, businesses, and families. Her practice focuses on construction law, real estate law, zoning and land use, business law, and estate planning.

After Boston College Law School and five years of practice in the Vermont and Boston area, Kate took time out to learn the construction business working first in Boston's renovation market, learning – from the ground up – carpentry, the State Building Code, contracting, and business skills. Relocating to Nantucket, she combined her construction supervisor's license and her license to practice law, by founding Island Women Construction Company Inc., and with women as her crew, built 13 homes and completed hundreds of renovation projects. As a general contractor, Kate gained experience in administrative law, appearing before town officials and committees seeking permits for Island Women's construction projects. She also served on the Nantucket Finance Committee and the Zoning Board of Appeals, broadening her knowledge of town government and zoning and land use laws.

Today, with hands-on experience, Kate brings practical business knowledge and construction experience to her law practice, providing her clients excellent legal advice, counsel, and representation. Kate's law office is located in a house built circa. 1770 on Cape Cod's historic Old Kings Highway in West Barnstable, Massachusetts, where she can be a weekend carpenter and where she is reminded daily that in providing her clients with excellent legal advice, counsel and representation, in the pursuit of excellence the practice of law requires "listening." Learn more about Kate at www.katemitchellattorney.com.

Artie Renee Pobjecky

Artie Renee Pobjecky is licensed to practice law in Florida. She is the senior partner at Pobjecky & Pobjecky, LLP, a global immigration and consulting firm. She is the Immediate Past-Chair of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), Central Florida Chapter. Artie is a nationally recognized speaker and published author on immigration issues. She is a frequent lecturer at state and national immigration conferences and has appeared on local news and cable programs. Artie enjoys speaking at local events and educating the community about the nuances of immigration law. Her speaking engagements include the 2013-2016 and 2018 AILA National Conferences and the 2012-2017 Central Florida AILA Conferences.

Artie was recognized by Best Lawyers for 2016-2018 and as a Rising Star in the practice of Immigration Law by Super Lawyer in 2014. On October 27, 2017, she received an award from the American Immigration Lawyers Association, Central Florida Chapter for Outstanding Contributions to the Chapter. Artie is active in her community. She is a board member and vice president of the Winter Haven Chamber of Commerce. Artie is a council member and board member for GiveWell Community Foundation.

Artie received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the University of Central Florida with minors in English and Business. In 2001, she graduated from Baylor University School of Law with her Juris Doctorate. When not practicing law, Artie enjoys traveling with her husband, charity runs, and reading biographies of those persevering from their obstacles. Learn more about Artie at www.pobjeckylaw.com.

Stephanie Scarborough

Stephanie Scarborough is licensed to practice law in New York and Georgia. She is an attorney and business counselor to families, small businesses and multinational corporations. After U.S. Armed Forces service, which included deploying for Operation Desert Storm, Stephanie gained exposure to the inner workings of a multinational corporation while working closely with senior executives. She transitioned

into law and has been managing her own businesses for the last 18 years. She often relies on the knowledge she gained ‘in the trenches’ to counsel clients.

Stephanie’s work with investors and small businesses allows her to provide in-depth counsel to new and emerging business owners. She enjoys working with business owners who face some of the same challenges she has faced in her business.

Whether working with multinational corporations, small businesses or families, Stephanie cherishes her connection with clients and has been fortunate to build lasting professional friendships which now extend throughout the world.

Stephanie’s career has been nontraditional starting with her military service, her status as a mature law school student with three toddler boys and extending to the leadership of her successful law practice. Throughout her career she has relied on the tremendous support of her partner of 21 years and their three teen boys. Stephanie is also an avid cyclist and credits the sport with rejuvenating her practice, health and personal life.

Stephanie is a graduate of the University at Buffalo Law School and is admitted to practice law in New York and Georgia. She manages Scarborough Law’s offices in Jacksonville, Florida and Alpharetta, Georgia and Thiruvananthapuram, India. Learn more about Stephanie at www.scarboroughlaw.com.

Karen Dunn Skinner is the co-founder of Gimbal Lean Practice Management Advisors. She’s a Lean Six Sigma Black Belt and an attorney with over 20 years of experience practicing law in Canada and Europe. She combines her deep understanding of the legal industry with her training in Lean Six Sigma to provide practical solutions to the competitive and budgetary pressures on practitioners and clients alike.

Karen is an expert in Lean and process optimization. Her work adapting Lean’s business improvement strategies to the legal industry has made her a recognized leader in legal practice innovation. She’s taught Lean and process improvement to thousands of lawyers and legal professionals. And she’s led process improvement projects in law firms and in the legal departments of government agencies and multinational companies across North America.

Karen was a member of the Quebec Bar for over 20 years. She has finally managed to meet all her criteria: She and her family live in Montreal but spend winter weekends skiing at Tremblant and summer holidays learning to kite-surf in the Outer Banks of North Carolina. Learn more about Karen at www.gimbalcanada.com.

District Court Judge Linda S. Thomas

District Court Judge Linda S. Thomas is licensed to practice law in Oklahoma. She was elected as District Judge of the 11th Judicial District, State of Oklahoma in November 2018, after having been in private practice in Bartlesville, Oklahoma for almost 25 years. She served as president of the Oklahoma Bar Association in 2017 and as their vice-president in 2009. She has also served on the OBA Board of Governors, the Professional Responsibility Commission, and has served as chair of the Leadership Taskforce since 2007. She’s been a volunteer for Oklahoma Lawyers for American Heroes, Legal Aid of Northeastern Oklahoma, and Oklahoma’s Free Legal Answers program. She’s a Benefactor Fellow of the Oklahoma Bar Foundation, a Young Lawyer Division Fellow, and an Oklahoma Life Fellow of the American Bar Foundation.

Linda is the recipient of three OBA President's Awards for excellence in leadership and outstanding service. She is a recipient of the prestigious Mona Salyer Lambird Spotlight Award and the Oklahoma Bar Foundation's Gerald B. Kline – Jack L. Brown Distinguished Service Award.

After having taught public school for twenty years, she received her law degree from the University of Tulsa. She's a member of the American Bar Association and a Life Fellow of the American Bar Foundation. She is a member of the Washington County Bar Association, and is active in her community, having served on the boards of several local organizations. She is a member of the Bartlesville First Church where she is on the Board of Trustees and serves as part of the children's ministry team.

Mary E. Vandenack

Mary E. Vandenack is licensed to practice law in Nebraska. She is founding and managing member of Vandenack Weaver LLC in Omaha, Nebraska. Mary is a highly regarded practitioner in the areas of tax, benefits, high-net-worth estate planning, asset protection planning, executive compensation, business succession planning, tax dispute resolution, state and local tax, and tax-exempt entities. Mary's practice serves businesses and business owners, executives, real estate developers and investors, health care providers and tax-exempt organizations.

Mary speaks and writes extensively in her areas of practice as well as on law practice management and wellness. Mary is a commentator for Leimberg Services and frequently contributes articles for publication. Mary also writes a wellness column for the Metro Monthly in Omaha, Nebraska.

Mary serves as Co-Chair of the Futures Task Force for the American Bar Association Real Property Trusts and Estates Section. She serves on the American Bar Association TECHSHOW board and is the incoming Editor-in-Chief of *Law Practice Management Magazine*. She has been named to Fortune Magazine Women Leaders in the Law, Best Lawyers in Omaha 2018, Best Lawyers in America 2019, and is AV rated by Martindale Hubbell.

An innovator in the integration of technology into the practice of law, Mary was named to the American Bar Association LTRC Distinguished Women of Legal Tech 2018. She won the American Bar Association James I. Keane Award and presented at TECHSHOW 2015 in recognition of her efforts in the area of e-lawyering. Learn more about Mary at www.vwattys.com.

Wendi Weiner is an attorney, former college writing professor, and award-winning career and branding expert. Wendi has been featured and published in more than 50 major media outlets for her expertise in job search, personal branding, and resume writing strategies, including *CNN*, *Huffington Post*, *Thrive Global*, *Forbes*, *Entrepreneur*, *Fortune*, *Business Insider*, and *Fast Company*. As the owner of The Writing Guru®, her trademarked namesake company, Wendi creates powerful career and personal brands for attorneys, top-tier executives, and business leaders. Wendi also serves as a contributing writer for *The Huffington Post* and *Thrive Global*, and as a content writer for *Inc. Magazine's* Content Strategies division.

A recipient of more than 10 honors and awards for her industry success, Wendi's leading recognitions include being named the #1 Resume Expert by Recruiter.com, Best Executive Resume Writer, Best Legal Resume Services, a Recommended Executive Resume Writer by Heller Search Firm, Top 25 Resume Site, and a Top 100 Career Blog.

Wendi's own career trajectory includes serving as a practicing member of The Florida Bar for over 11 years, working in BigLaw for a top national law firm and serving as a corporate trial attorney for a Fortune 200 company. Wendi entered the careers industry to follow her passion for writing and to help others achieve their own career dreams and success. For nearly three (3) years, Wendi served on the Board of Directors for The National Resume Writers' Association. Her roles included serving as a Director of Industry to mentor new resume writers and as the President-Elect and Ethics Chair of the organization to raise the public image of the organization and industry. Florida State University where she concentrated her studies in literature and creative writing. She earned her undergraduate degree from Florida State University and her law degree from Stetson University College of Law received honors in her legal writing coursework and was a recipient of the prestigious William F. Blews Pro Bono Service Award for her devoted community service. Learn more about Wendi at www.writingguru.net.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Evolution of Model Rule 8.4 (g): Working to Eliminate Bias, Discrimination, and Harassment in the Practice of Law

https://www.americanbar.org/groups/construction_industry/publications/under_construction/2019/spring2019/model_rule_8_4/

The Crusade Against Model Rule 8.4(g)

<https://www.americanbar.org/news/abanews/publications/youraba/2018/october-2018/the-crusade-against-model-rule-8-4-g-/>

Annual 2018: Why women leave the law—and what we can do about it

https://www.americanbar.org/news/abanews/aba-news-archives/2018/07/annual_2018_why_wom/

Diversity in the Practice of Law: How Far Have We Come?

[https://www.americanbar.org/groups/gpsolo/publications/gp_solo/2012/september_october/diversity_practice_law_how_far_have_we_come/?q=&fq=\(id%3A%5C%2Fcontent%2Faba-cms-dotorg%2Fen%2Fgroups%2Fgpsolo%2F*\)&wt=json&start=0](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/gpsolo/publications/gp_solo/2012/september_october/diversity_practice_law_how_far_have_we_come/?q=&fq=(id%3A%5C%2Fcontent%2Faba-cms-dotorg%2Fen%2Fgroups%2Fgpsolo%2F*)&wt=json&start=0)

Diversity In The Legal Profession: From Rhetoric To Reality, Columbia Journal of Race and Law

<https://cjl.columbia.edu/article/diversity-in-the-legal-profession-from-rhetoric-to-reality/>

If Not Now, When? Achieving Equality for Women Attorneys in the Courtroom and in ADR, Report of the New York State Bar Association, November 2017

<https://www.nysba.org/WomensTaskForceReport/>

The Florida Bar's 2016 Survey on Gender Equality in the Legal Profession

<https://www-media.floridabar.org/uploads/2017/04/2016-Survey-on-Gender-Equality-in-the-Legal-Profession.pdf>

ADDITIONAL ARTICLES FROM OUR PANELISTS

The Impact of Stress on Self Confidence and Your Brand Research Summary, Katy Goshtasbi

2019 Focus: Mental Health & Happiness, Essential for the Solo & Small Firm Lawyer, Melanie S. Griffin

The Business Case for Mentoring, Melanie S. Griffin

The 3 Reasons Why My Law Degree Has Made Me A Better Entrepreneur, Wendi Weiner



THE IMPACT OF STRESS ON SELF CONFIDENCE AND YOUR BRAND RESEARCH SUMMARY

By Katy Goshtasbi, JD

Updated April 2017

Stress is a large factor in most peoples' lives. Although average stress levels have decreased, many Americans say they struggle to achieve their healthy living goals and that their eating and sleeping are affected by stress.¹

Stress is defined as “a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well being” (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Schneider, Gruman, & Coutts, 2012). Stress manifests as we go through the process of encountering a stressor, judging how we can respond to such stressor, and then responding to the particular stress-inducing event (Schneider, Gruman, & Coutts, 2012).

The stress response a person has in any particular situation is based on the level of resources they have to deal, or cope, with that particular situation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). It is also based on their general anxiety level or “trait anxiety”, defined as how prone an individual is to see the world as worrisome and fear inducing.

Coping pertains to thoughts, feeling or behaviors (Schneider, Gruman, & Coutts, 2012). How a person copes with stress defines how much the stress in their lives impacts the person and thus, their interaction with others personally and professionally, thus defining how others view the person.

Self-Confidence, or the amount of value we place on ourselves, is a part of our individual self-concept and is a large part of a person's resonance with others in their sphere of influence and world. Self-confidence shapes how a person defines his/her own brand² and how others perceive his/her individual brand. Self-confidence is thus a coping mechanism.

Reflecting on personal values can keep neuroendocrine and psychological responses to stress at low levels (Creswell JD and colleagues, 2005). In brand development work with clients, an emphasis is placed on defining individual brand values. These individual brand values are then used to define and shape the overall brand culture of an organization.

¹ Stress In America, Paying With Our Health, survey. Released February 4, 2015; www.stressinamerica.com.

² Personal Brand is defined as: a) The process of unearthing your unique and relevant characteristics and attributes; b) communicating these characteristics and attributes consistently to your audience; and c) how your audience perceives your characteristics and attributes.

Research Query:

A) How is self-confidence a resource in dealing with stress and what is the relationship between self-confidence and stress as they impact a person's brand perception? B) How is this relationship relevant in business environments?

Hypothesis:

As stress increases, self-confidence starts to proportionally and inversely drop, thereby reducing a person's brand value to where they are no longer resonating emotionally with their audience. This lack of resonance will likely impact relationship building and trust in a business environment, which in turn likely impacts productivity.

Activities and resources that increase a person's self-confidence can also improve coping with stress, thereby directly reducing stress in proportion with the increase in self-confidence.

Control Elements:

Two main factors seem to influence a person's self-confidence: stress and a person's propensity towards general or trait anxiety. For purposes of this study, the level of general/trait anxiety was not a focal point. The focal point was stress responses derived from a) personal values and b) activities designed to directly impact self-confidence.

Results were weighted as needed for age, sex, occupation and sampling errors.

Population Studied:

Professionals (white collar, regardless of formal education), 24 to 65 years of age, female and male.

Testing:

One hundred individuals were studied. Participants volunteered with the incentive that they would get a better understanding of his/her brand resonance and impact/performance in his/her careers/jobs.

To establish a baseline, all participants:

- a) were given a set of grid, simple response and multiple-response questions regarding their stress and self-confidence; and,
- b) were asked to give a 5- minute speech in front of an unfamiliar audience on an unfamiliar topic, where the audience was asked to rate their perception of how "competent", "likeable" and "smart" each individual speaker was to them personally.

The groups were then split randomly in two:

Group One: Asked to: a) reflect on and list their most important values, b) asked to read two to four statements that others who knew them well had written about why they chose to associate with this Group A person, and; c) were each given one verbal compliment regarding their physical appearance and mental aptitude.

Group Two: the control group was not asked to participate in any further activity.

Both groups were then exposed to two high stress activities: a) taking a timed math test and b) again giving a 5-minute speech in front of another unfamiliar audience on another unfamiliar topic.

Both groups were then put back in front of their initial audience to rate their perception of how “competent”, “likeable” and “smart” each individual was.

Results:

Group One:

- Performed the timed math test significantly better than the control group
- Their second speech was ranked differently by the audience- the audience responded that the person giving the speech was increasingly more competent/credible and thus more likeable. The individual audience member also stated that they would want to associate and engage in conversation with the Group One presenter.
- Their overall stress was reported as lower.

Extrapolating this research to corporations and employees would suggest the impact of increasing self-confidence and/or reducing stress for employees at work is critical to their success and the organization’s success.

In the work environment when stress is lower than self-confidence, then the employee perceives themselves as more valuable to the organization and resulting behavior would likely include applying themselves more to their job duties, establishing and sustaining a better work relationship with colleagues and producing better and more frequent results.

In turn, other employees would likely view their colleague as more competent and likeable. Thus, they likely would associate better with such colleague to achieve more organizational goals and results, thereby directly impacting an organization’s bottom line figures/revenues.

2019 Focus: Mental Health & Happiness, Essential for the Solo & Small Firm Lawyer

By: *Melanie S. Griffin, Esq., Founder*
Spread Your Sunshine, LLC



At the beginning of the year, I went to the gym. Not exactly a novel January 1st idea. The workout was noteworthy, however, because I did not go to start losing the ever-elusive “10 pounds,” a past go-to New Year’s resolution. I went for mental health and happiness, one of my 2019 focuses.

Last fall was exceedingly busy. The packed schedule from September through November is always a challenge. In 2018, though, the addition of awesome professional opportunities and a baby tipped the scales. To save time, I quit the workouts enjoyed since middle school to exclusively focus on the workload of my then three-person law office.

What was then unknown to me, however, is that I did not create additional time, I worsened my situation. Although physical benefits are most-often associated with

exercise, physical activity has significant mental health benefits, including stress reduction. Since I unwittingly eliminated a major stress-relief outlet, stress had nowhere to go, bottling-up inside me and manifesting in physical health issues.

The first month or so, nausea was a frequent symptom. Then chronic “ear infections” ensued. By late October, the pain radiated from my ear down my jaw, making it difficult to talk and chew.

About every two weeks, I visited the doctor. Prescriptions included antibiotics, nasal sprays, new techniques for using them, pain relievers, heating pads, liquid diets, and a flying ban to avoid bursting an eardrum. Eventually, I was referred to a specialist.

Two days before my appointment, I read an article about a woman under extreme

stress. She visited her doctor complaining of ear and jaw pain, each time sent home with a diagnosis that “nothing was wrong.” I immediately instinctively knew that I shared this woman’s fate. The specialist confirmed my intuition 48-hours later when he concluded that although it felt like I had an ear infection and inner-ear fluid, they were mental ailments that did not physically exist. Leaving that doctor’s office, I knew the key to improved wellness rested with me.

5 Suggestions That Improved My Health & Happiness to Better Serve My Clients, My Family & Me

Self-Education: In 2018, I insatiably listened to audiobooks and podcasts focused on entrepreneurship and empowerment. For the first time, it was realized that although I have zero time to read, I have tons of time to listen. Hearing stories about additional entrepreneurs who overcame physical ailments caused by mental stress led to my epiphany when reading the above-referenced article that I had traveled down the same path. It’s unlikely that my health would have soon improved without such self-realization and subsequent implementation of techniques learned this past year. Audiobooks that were especially helpful to me included: *Drop the Ball* by Tiffany Dufu, *Girl Wash Your Face* by Rachel Hollis, *Option B* by Sheryl Sandberg & Adam Grant, and *Shoe Dog* by Phil Knight. Podcasts included: *How I Built This* with Guy Raz, *Rise* with Rachel Hollis, and *Skimm’d from the Couch* by theSkimm.



Ask for Help: Additional tasks meant learning to ask others for help completing projects that I previously did and did well. For example, instead of planning our son’s first birthday party by myself as would have been my usual mode of operation, I asked my husband if he would create and mail the invitation, handle RSVP’s, and oversee additional aspects of the festivities. Working together was a lot more fun than working in isolation and balanced the work between us so that it was manageable, not overwhelming. Brainstorming with colleagues, regarding, for example, best practices for tackling your email inbox, will also equip you with tools not thought of alone in your office. One additional tip here – when possible, identify when assistance with tasks and/or mentorship is needed and proactively ask for it. As much as we may wish or think differently, others are not mind readers. To best allow them to assist you, verbalize your request and the anticipated amount of time necessary to complete it so that they can plan for such task and schedule adequate time to help you.

Use Mindfulness Apps: A significant hurdle last fall was an inability to divert my mind away from the stressor, such as challenging conversations with clients or overly aggressive opposing counsel. Although the thoughts expressed here had not yet come full circle, I was aware that stress triggered at least some of my symptoms. Yet, without a game plan, the stressful event remained on auto-loop with no relief in sight. Use of a mindfulness app is one resource that changed that and equipped me with tangible tools, including meditation guides, breathing techniques, and visualization maps, useful in successfully navigating recent stressful situations.

Free, top-ranked apps that may assist in your mindfulness journey include: Aura, Breathe, Buddhify, Calm and Headspace.

Engage in Release & Transition Techniques: Additional techniques can also reduce stress during the day. For example, substantial research evidences that the most efficient employees work for increments of approximately fifty minutes followed by a short break. Intentionally following such a schedule by setting an alarm on your phone can maintain energy throughout the day, prevent burnout, and facilitate longer productive work hours. To illustrate, although it may be tempting to power through motion drafting for four hours, the research is steadfast that forcing yourself to stop every fifty or so minutes, say for a glass of water and a quick walk around the block, will improve the

quantity and quality of your work.



Similarly, your productivity can increase by properly transitioning from one task to the next, such as by: (1) closing your eyes; (2) quickly repeating the word “release” several times with the intent to release tension from your body; and (3) visualizing your intent for the next project on which you will work or experience to which you will transition. A time that this approach is particularly helpful to me is the transition between the office and home. Briefly visualizing the experience I want my family to have when we’re together instead of immediately rushing through the door has made me a better wife and mom upon arriving home.

One resource for learning such technique is Brendon Burchard, who details strategies for maximizing performance in all aspects of life through his The Brendon Show podcast, High Performance Habits book, and The High Performance planner.

Make Time for What Brings You

Joy: What ever that may be!! This article is not intended to promote exercise if you despise physical activity. The point is that you must intentionally live life in a way that fosters well-being; you cannot practice law 24-hours a day. For me, Orangetheory Fitness classes are a part of being joyful; for you, a different tool may be best. What ever you choose, choose something! No matter how heavy the workload, attempting to work around-the-clock will not make you more productive, especially not over what is hoped is the long-haul of your solo or small firm career. Additionally, remember to scale the activity to fit your current season. Whereas I completed a full workout most days of the week when I had more time, I now give myself grace to workout less often and for shorter periods. What is most important is weekly engaging in at least one activity that in some way minimizes your stress, increases your happiness, and maximizes your productivity.



So, here's to intentionally living your best 2019, friends - continue to #ShineItForward and #SpreadYourSunshine!

For additional helpful information like this:

Connect with Melanie

FB & LI: Melanie S. Griffin

Twitter: @melaniesgriffin

IG: @spreadingthefloridasunshine

melanie@spreadyoursunshine.com

Connect with Spread Your Sunshine

FB: Spread Your Sunshine

Twitter: @sunshine_women

IG: @spreadyoursunshine

www.spreadyoursunshine.com



THE BUSINESS CASE FOR MENTORING

BY: MELANIE S. GRIFFIN



While the term “mentoring” is often used, establishment of meaningful mentoring relationships and programs is a true art form that when effectively implemented, yields significant gains for both the mentoring pair and the firm/company investing in such resources. The following highlights mentoring subtleties that make a critical difference in the success of the relationship, including: how mentorship differs from coaching and sponsorship, formal and organic relationships, reverse mentoring, optimal mentor pairings, effective communication, the benefits of mentoring, and useful mentoring resources.

I. Types of Mentoring Relationships

“Mentoring” is broader than often described and takes many forms beyond traditional, formal, one-on-one pairings.¹ The following is an overview of those relationships, including the differences between coaching, mentoring and sponsorship; formal versus informal pairings; and reverse, or millennial or reciprocal, mentorships.

A. How Mentoring Differs from Other Professional Relationships

Coach. Mentor. Sponsor. Each plays a vital, yet different, role in the development of a professional. Eloquently explained, “[a] coach talks *to* you, a mentor talks *with* you, and a sponsor talks *about* you.” (Emphasis added.)²

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR MENTORING

Further examining the importance of each relationship, a business coach, like a sports coach, assists with learning a new skill, overcoming a challenge, or improving performance.³ The pairing is often short-term, focusing on perfection of a specific task that once achieved ends the partnership.⁴

Generally longer-term and more broadly-focused, a mentor enhances a “mentee’s professional performance and development.”⁵ Through this relationship, advice, guidance and support boost confidence, allowing the mentee to improve performance, navigate corporate politics, and enjoy increased competence and self-worth.⁶

Transcending a mentor, a sponsor uses personal power and reputation to advocate for another’s advancement achieved, at least in part, as a result of the sponsor’s influence.⁷ Usually a leader with the ability to control the behavior of others, a sponsor generally differs from a mentor in the following ways:

Mentors	Sponsors
Can sit at any level in the hierarchy	Must be senior managers with influence
Provide emotional support, feedback on how to improve, and other advice	Make sure their people are considered for promising opportunities and challenging assignments
Help mentees learn to navigate corporate politics	Give protégés exposure to other executives who may help their careers
Focus on mentees’ personal and professional development	Protect their protégés from negative publicity or damaging contact with senior executives
Serve as role models	Fight to get their people promoted
Strive to increase mentees’ sense of competence and self-worth	

Given the inspiration mentoring infuses into a career that can blossom into a

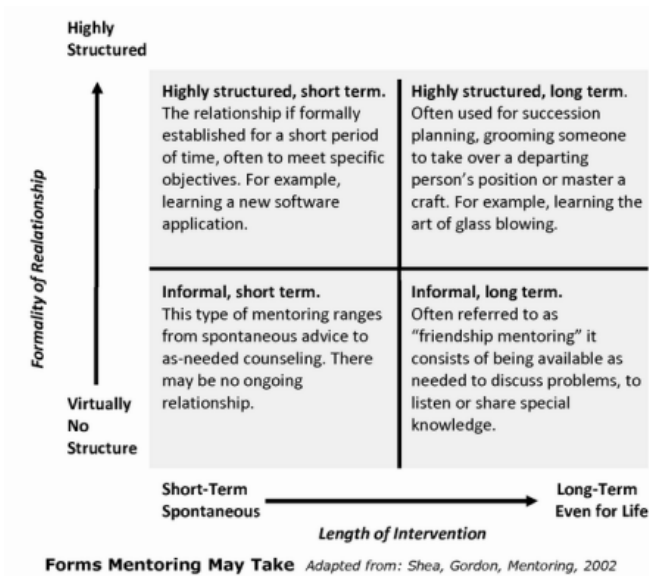
sponsorship,⁹ the often unexplained nuances of the art of mentoring are next explored.

B. Formal v. Organic Mentoring Relationships & the Role of Differing Personality Types

When envisioning mentoring, a formal program facilitated by a business or organization often comes to mind. Such programs are usually structured, founded to accomplish a specific business objective, and measured to determine if such goal is met. Pairs are often strategically matched to meet the business objective and last for a designated length of time, generally nine to twelve months.¹⁰

Informal mentoring relationships, on the other hand, are usually based on chemistry between the mentor and mentee and arise naturally when the two meet, recognize their commonalities, and agree to enter into a mentorship together. While, as discussed below, the pair can establish the criteria of their relationship to maximize its effectiveness, such matches often have unspecified goals and unknown outcomes.¹¹ They also often last longer, sometimes evolving into a friendship.¹² The two types of mentoring relationships are well-summarized in the following chart:¹³

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR MENTORING



while taking into account the personality types of its key talent to be developed.

Many report heightened enjoyment from informal mentorships due to the genuine human connection between the mentor and mentee.¹⁴ To wit, the benefits received by protégés in formal programs typically fall short of the benefits bestowed upon mentees "involved in naturally occurring, informal mentoring relationships" as a result of the social attraction that "may be absent in formally assigned mentoring pairings."¹⁵ Formal programs excel, though, in creating meaningful mentoring opportunities for introverted individuals who are less likely to attempt to initiate a mentoring relationship than their socially-skilled peers.¹⁶ Such programs are thus important for noticing and appropriately preparing high potential introverts for advanced leadership positions.¹⁷

As shown, wonderful benefits are associated with both formal and informal mentoring. Organizational leadership thus must facilitate the mentorships best suited for the business

C. Reverse Mentoring, or Millennial or Reciprocal Mentorships

Equally as powerful as a traditional mentoring pair where a more seasoned executive mentors a younger professional is a match through which a younger colleague mentors an older peer, often referred to as reverse, millennial or reciprocal mentoring. Millennial mentors are often particularly adept at teaching their senior counterparts about technology, the Web, computers, social media, and current business trends, including catering to new markets, development of fresh products and services, and organizational and social change.¹⁸

First popularized more than a decade ago by GE Chairman Jack Welch, reverse mentoring benefits include: closure of the knowledge gap for both parties, such as business terminology and best industry practices for the younger employee and online

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR MENTORING

marketing for the senior counter-part; empowerment and development of both emerging and established leaders; and a cohesive cross-generation workforce.¹⁹ Given technology's revolution of the workplace, millennials provide a fresh perspective critical to the success of the organization.²⁰ Simply, when the boss is willing to learn new techniques from the organization's freshest members, office relationships are improved and strengthened.



II. Optimal Mentorship Pairing: Find the Spark! & Focus on Goals

Organizations facilitating formal mentoring programs frequently attempt to match mentees with mentors with any number of identical traits, including gender, ethnicity, profession, marital and familial status, interpersonal skills, and leadership styles. Many times, however, such matches fail, as too many criteria complicate pairing and oftentimes, create categorically-ideal matches that lack a human connection.²¹

The best practice is thus to make achievement of the mentee's goals,²² the point of the relationship, the focus of the pairing, while also considering if a "spark" exists between the mentee and mentor.²³

Indeed, a good mentor is a trusted advisor who provides sound advice.²⁴ Such person may be older or younger, and in the mentee's chosen profession or not. This is especially true for beginner and intermediate-level mentees. Although their inquiries are uniquely phrased, distilled, they constitute a core set of questions that can be answered by a myriad of professionals, in their field or not, such as guidance on interview preparation, salary negotiation, business development, networking, work-life balance, avoidance of professional mistakes, and career best practices.²⁵ Answering such questions requires general business knowledge from a successful, productive professional, not an overly complicated matching process.

Moreover, a mentor with traits *different from* the mentee's may broaden the mentee's depth through alternative perspectives and skillsets, best helping the mentee grow and advance.²⁶ For example, a mentor of the opposite gender may most effectively foster the development of the mentee's weaknesses in a way that a mentor of the same sex cannot.

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR MENTORING

Based on the forgoing, the most successful mentoring programs will consider replacing lengthy mentor applications with recruitment of knowledgeable, compassionate, enthusiastic mentors, who take mentoring seriously, are committed to lifelong-learning and invest in the gratification and success of the mentee, and have the talent and expertise to best cultivate and nurture the mentee.²⁷

III. Effective Mentoring Communications: The Critical First Meeting

It is commonplace at the end of a formal mentoring program to hear that although the pair was initially excited to work together, they failed to meaningfully connect during their relationship. Such failure is often the result of an ineffective initial meeting.²⁸

To facilitate a successful mentoring relationship, at the outset, the mentor and mentee must be prepared to agree upon their roadmap. Discussion topics may include: who will initiate conversation – the mentor or the mentee; preferred method(s) of communication – in-person, email, phone conference, Skype/GoToMeeting/etc., or social media; expected response period – within 24 hours, the week, etc.; whether your communications are confidential; frequency of interaction – weekly, monthly, quarterly, etc.;

length of the relationship if not established, and if it is, whether such relationship may be extended; critical dates – for example, known periods of unavailability or a key project deadline for which guidance is sought; discussion topics; taboo inquiries, such as regarding personal life; anticipated connections; contemplated activities; desired programs and events to attend; and ideal goal achievement. Consider using the following prompts²⁹ during the initial strategy session:

Agenda Items	Strategies for Conversation	Possible Mentor Approaches
Take time getting to know each other.	Obtain a copy of the mentee's bio in advance. If one is not available, create one through conversation.	Establish rapport. Exchange information. Identify points of connection.
Talk about mentoring.	Ask: Have you ever been engaged in a mentoring relationship? If so, what did you learn from that experience?	Talk about your own mentoring experiences.
Determine the mentee's goals.	Ask: What do you want to learn from this experience? Give the mentee an opportunity to articulate broad goals.	Determine if the mentee is clear about his or her goals and objectives.
Determine the mentee's relationship needs and expectations.	Ask: What do you want out of this relationship?	Be sure you are clear about what your mentee wants from the mentoring relationship.
Define the deliverables and a time table.	Ask: What would success look like for you? What is your timetable for achieving it?	Do you have an area of expertise that is relevant to the mentee's learning goals?
Share your assumptions, needs, expectations and limitations with candor and confidentiality.	Ask for feedback. Discuss: Implications for the relationship.	What are you willing and capable of contributing to the relationship?
Discuss options and opportunities for learning.	Ask: How would you like to go about achieving your learning goals? Discuss: Learning and communication styles. Ask: What is the most useful kind of assistance I can provide?	Discuss the implications of each other's styles and how that might affect the mentoring relationship.

As intimated by the forgoing chart, initially, a mentorship is not a contemplated friendship or job opportunity.³⁰ To keep the relationship focused on the mentor's guidance, the mentor may ask the mentee to provide proposed meeting agendas.³¹ In addition to setting the meeting tone, the pre-meeting agenda review affords the mentor time to plan the offered advice.

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR MENTORING

Similarly, an organization facilitating a formal mentoring program may periodically provide its pairings with suggested conversation questions to foster regular communication and ensure the discussion of desired topics.³²

Above all, honesty of both the mentor³³ and the mentee³⁴ is crucial to a successful mentoring relationship. As a mentor, the provision of straightforward, candid advice is most beneficial to the mentee. Part of the first meeting may thus include preparing the mentee to hear what is *needed*, not what is *wanted*, during the relationship. Additionally, if upon understanding the mentee's mentorship goals the mentor cannot provide the desired guidance, the mentor should inform the mentee of the mismatched skillsets and connect the mentee with a better-aligned mentor, if possible. Similarly, to grow, the mentee must solicit and accept critical feedback and inform the mentor of the true mentorship objectives. Regarding the latter, for example, a mentor cannot best assist a mentee with obtaining a job in another city if the mentor believes the mentee wants to advance at the mentee's current company.

In sum, meaningful mentoring relationships are not accidental. Rather, establishment of a vibrant mentorship requires education of the mentor and mentee regarding their respective roles³⁵ and a strong commitment to a mutually agreeable plan of action.³⁶



IV. The Power of Mentoring & Benefits to the Business

The reported benefits of business mentoring are impressive and include increased productivity, diversity, morale and retention, personal growth, access to organizational resources and rewards, improved technical skills, increased cross-generation collaboration, and a heightened awareness of company culture, policies and expectations, all of which positively increase the bottom line.³⁷

More specifically:

- The productivity of managers who are mentored increases by 88%;
- 35% of employees without regular mentoring seek another job within twelve months;
- 95% of mentoring participants say that mentorship motivates them to do their very best; and
- Mentored workers annually earn \$5K - \$22K more than their nonmentored counter-parts.³⁸

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR MENTORING

Indeed, “[m]entoring has long been recognized as a tool in career development,” with evidence that “mentored individuals often earn higher performance evaluations, higher salaries, and faster career progress than non-mentored individuals,” creating higher job satisfaction and commitment.³⁹

This is particularly true for women, minorities and seniors, who experience increased self-confidence, improved communication skills, and truer self-assessments as a result of mentorships.⁴⁰

Programs targeting such employees have the ability to transform a company’s culture, creating diverse management teams more reflective of workforces and markets.⁴¹ Such transformation of a company’s leadership composition is often critical to its bottom line, as clients and vendors are demanding a diverse labor force.⁴² It is thus no longer simply politically correct and morally right to provide mentorship to women, minorities and seniors; rather, it is oftentimes a necessity for a company to remain financially viable.⁴³

Given the forgoing significant mentorship benefits, the question should shift from whether to host a mentoring program to how soon to establish one to best nurture your business and its employees.



V. Mentoring Program Resources

Many resources exist to assist with the establishment or improvement of a mentoring program. For example, organizations devoted to the practice of mentoring such as the National Mentoring Resource Center⁴⁴ and the National Mentoring Partnership⁴⁵ offer a plethora of resources including guides, handouts, training resources, management resources, program policies and procedures, and recruitment and marketing tools. Likewise, research is readily available regarding top corporate mentoring programs proven successful within companies such as Sodexo, Time Warner Cable and Caterpillar.⁴⁶ The critical questions asked by such companies when forming and evaluating their mentoring programs are also on the Web.⁴⁷ With the accessibility of such vibrant materials, a company need not reinvent the wheel, and instead, can enjoy the synergies from the tried and true mentorships that already exist that can serve as the foundation for a new, or improved, mentoring program.

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR MENTORING

VI. Summary: Effective Mentoring Requires Planning, Education & Facilitation

As shown above, successful mentoring relationships are not accidental. The most effective pairings are intentionally established partnerships, executed through an agreed upon and thought out plan, by mentors and mentees aware of and educated regarding their respective roles, committed to regular communication and interaction.

Thus, to establish or improve your program or pairing, thoughtfully create, implement and execute the roadmap that optimizes mentorship functionality, results and enjoyment.

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR MENTORING

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The 3 Reasons Why My Law Degree Has Made Me A Better Entrepreneur

By: Wendi Weiner

Published in the HuffPost

Very recently, I read an [article about a six-figure millennial entrepreneur](#) who openly announced that he wished he hadn't gone to college. In the article, he goes into detail about why he wished he spent those 4 years on cultivating a meaningful project that would have had greater impact on the world – whether by traveling, starting a business, or volunteering.

I found the article intriguing and inspiring. It also made me feel a tad envious. Candidly, I didn't hit the six-figure mark until I was well into my 30's, and years deep into my legal career.

Millennials are leading the digital age with influence, innovation, and they are employing a ton of creativity. It got me thinking though. Entrepreneurship was not even something in my mind when I graduated college in 1999, nor was it a thought when I graduated law school 14 years ago, at the age of 25.

An online business? Digital marketing? Social selling? Those phrases just weren't in my vernacular.

The leap into entrepreneurship for many millennials has become their “why” in life. In today's digital age, it's now feasible for all of us to sit in Starbucks and or at a lavish co-working space and plug away at an online business and generate 5-figures a month with a service or a product. You can market your business 100% free of charge just by disseminating your thoughts into cyberspace while creating sales funnels and creative opt-ins, and then continue leveraging them even more through social media channels. Why not take that chance?

But, in 1999 when I graduated college, the dot-com era was just rising. Law school was a practical (and conservative) option for me to continue my education and better my career. Go to college, go to law school, get a job as a lawyer, and make big lawyer money. It seemed valid and logical.

For years, I regretted it, particularly when my loan payments kicked in, and I felt trapped. It took me over 10 years to make the leap into entrepreneurship and acknowledge that the way to secure financial freedom and personal happiness was not by a paycheck.

There were many moments (more than I can even count) over the last 14 years where I have thought, what did my law degree really do for me other than give me six-figures of debt? It wasn't until I became successful at business ownership that I could acknowledge this one truth: my law degree has, without a doubt, made me a better entrepreneur. Here are the three fundamental reasons why:

1. It taught me how to use my words more effectively.

Law school taught me how to be a better writer and how to use my words more effectively. The practice of law enhanced that ability. Day in and day out as a lawyer practicing for over 10 years, I learned the power of words in both verbal usage and written usage. My words became my most powerful weapon when I deposed an expert witness or plaintiff, and those words became even more influential when I carefully selected them to formulate the crux of my legal arguments to a judge. They also gave me immense influence in legal opinions, discovery motions, and appellate briefs. When I speak to clients, my ability to articulate and put those words into the universe is succinct and clear. Law trained me well for that.

When I develop personal branding for clients, my words become the power for my clients to leverage their resume, their LinkedIn profile, or even their blog to the outside world. Utilizing my law degree in entrepreneurship has allowed me to excel in becoming a thought leader, a writing expert, as well as leveraging a direct approach that gets to the point even faster.

2. It taught me how to execute with measurable results.

Business and entrepreneurship are all about execution. You can have the most incredible ideas, but if you cannot execute them with finesse and garner monetary results in the process, then your business will fail or remain stagnant. Practicing law is all about bringing results for your clients, whether to get them money, prevent them from paying money, or prevent them from adverse consequences. Your ability to execute solutions for your clients in law is the same in entrepreneurship. I am all about the bottom-line results for my clients and in my daily interactions.

3. It helped me to analyze and reason with greater logic.

Law has taught me to create a roadmap and a plan, but to problem-solve and analyze before stepping into that plan. Everything I do in my business and personal life is with intricate detail, deep analysis, and immense preparation. As a lawyer, I've been taught to see each situation from many different angles, and to ask the right questions to convey the strongest of arguments. Whenever I work with a client, I can look at their career trajectory from every possible angle – the subjective view of the client and the objective view of the outside business world, a recruiter, a hiring manager, and everyone in between.

While attending college or law school cannot truly predict the success of a person once they graduate, the process of it does arm the graduate with certain tools and knowledge. At the end of the day, it's incumbent upon that person to execute on the knowledge and leverage the tools. I firmly believe that my law degree and practical use of it has furthered my business and entrepreneurial mindset. At almost 14 years later, I can truly say, I am grateful I obtained a law degree and leveraged it.