



WSSFC 2024

Quality of Life/Ethics Track – Session 5

50 Tips in 50 Minutes

Presenters:

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About the Presenters...

Matthew Shin is an attorney, psychotherapist, and owner of Sidebar Counseling, a virtual behavioral health practice in Wausau providing mental health and wellness counseling, training, and workshops for the legal profession. Matt is a co-chair of the Wisconsin Chapter of the Mindfulness in Law Society and serves as a volunteer for the Wisconsin Lawyer Assistance Program. Before Sidebar, Matt was a solo intellectual property attorney, in-house counsel at Mars Wrigley Confectionery in Chicago, and an associate at Foley & Lardner in Chicago and Milwaukee. He is an alum of Michigan State University and Washington University in Saint Louis School of Law.

Julie M. Spoke is the Director of Central Intake at the Office of Lawyer Regulation (OLR). She previously was assistant Litigation Counsel at OLR. She has been with OLR for 20 years. She graduated from Marquette University with a B.A., cum laude, in both Psychology and Criminology and Law Studies. She received her law degree from William Mitchell College of Law, cum laude. Before joining OLR she was a litigation associate at Ruder, Ware L.L.S.C. and a law clerk for the Honorable Michael Hoover, Wisconsin Court of Appeals, District III. She is a member of the Wisconsin State Bar Association and serves on the Wisconsin Lawyers Assistance Program Committee and the Professional Ethics Committee. She is a 2019-2020 attendee at the G.Lane Ware Leadership Academy and is a member of the Fellows, Wisconsin Law Foundation. She is also a member of the National Organization of Bar Counsel and is a faculty member for the NOBC Trial Skills Programs.

Born and raised outside of Atlanta, Georgia, **Emily Logan Stedman** has called Milwaukee home since June 2013. She obtained her B.A. *cum laude* (Spanish and History) in 2008 from Wake Forest University. Next, she taught 5th Grade in Buckeye, Arizona as a 2008 corps member with Teach for America. In 2010, she enrolled at the University of Mississippi School of Law, graduating in 2013 *magna cum laude* and having served as Editor-in-Chief of the *Mississippi Law Journal*. From 2013-2016, Emily clerked for Judge Pamela Pepper, now Chief Judge of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin. In 2016, she joined Midwest Big Law as an associate at Quarles & Brady. Since November 2020, she has worked at Husch Blackwell, where is a commercial litigation partner within the technology, manufacturing, and transportation strategic business unit. It was joining Big Law that brought on an increase in anxiety and low mood in Emily. After seeking out solace with colleagues, therapy, and meditation, she began talking more openly about the need for improving well-being in the law. This started with programming while president of the Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar of Wisconsin, then as a committee chair for the Wisconsin Taskforce on Lawyer Well-Being. Most recently, she has built a platform on LinkedIn and now Twitter/X, where she posts regularly on the realities of being a Big Law attorney and the need to destigmatize lawyer well-being.

Emily Veenendaal, PMHNP-BC earned her Master's Degree in Nursing from the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota, in 2014. She has since been working at Western Wisconsin Health, in Baldwin, WI. She sees patients ages 13 to geriatrics for a variety of behavioral health and psychiatric medication management needs. She takes a special interest in treating chronic behavioral health conditions, community health, and integrative medicine, while using a holistic and preventative approach. She is also currently serving as the Chief of the Behavioral Health Department.

**2024 WSSFC
QOL Track
Session 5
October 18, 2024**

50 Lawyer Wellbeing Tips in 50 Minutes

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What is lawyer wellbeing?

“Wellbeing generally is the experience of health, happiness, and prosperity. It includes having good mental health, high life satisfaction, a sense of meaning or purpose, and ability to manage stress. More generally, wellbeing is just feeling well.” – *Psychology Today*

“Lawyer wellbeing is a continuous process whereby lawyers seek to thrive in each of the following areas: emotional health, occupational pursuits, creative and intellectual endeavors, sense of spirituality or greater purpose in life, physical health, and social connections with lawyers. Lawyer wellbeing is part of a lawyer’s ethical duty of competence.” – *American Bar Association*

These definitions show that wellbeing “considers the whole person.” This idea is captured in the acronym SPIRE:

Spiritual – leading a meaningful life and mindfully savoring the present.

Physical – caring for the body and tapping into the mind/body connection.

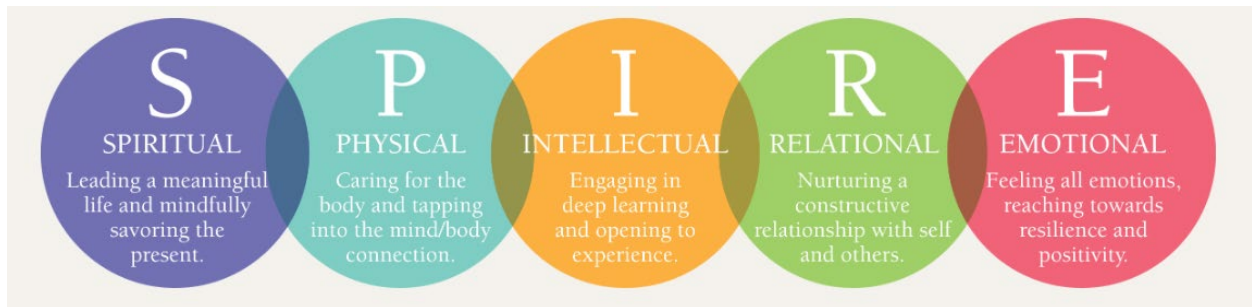
Intellectual – engaging in deep learning and opening to experience.

Relational – nurturing a constructive relationship with self and others.

Emotional – feeling all emotions, reaching towards resilience and positivity.

See “About SPIRE,” The Whole Being Institute, <https://wholebeinginstitute.com/about/spire/> (last visited Aug. 6, 2024).

We have organized our fifty tips within this framework.



SPIRITUAL

Leading a meaningful life and mindfully saving the present.

Touch grass. – No, really. Being in nature helps restore neural pathways—the parts of our brains that control focus and attention. A moment in nature, even a quick walk, can improve your working memory and improve your mood. Alongside mental rest and rejuvenation, creativity and overall performance improve after moments outside. Being in nature can also bring a sense of presence to a hectic day, as you try to place your human life in the context and perspective of something as grand as say, Lake Michigan. Even in winter, taking in the stillness of the cold (or snow) can bring perspective and calm. So, get out there.

E. Stedman

Contemplate, Journal, and Explore. – You do not have to be religious to have spiritual wellness. Although church, a community of shared beliefs, and spiritual texts are the keys for a lot of folks, other things can be useful too. Such as: engage in reflective journaling, or vision work (What do I hope to be doing in five years from today?). Find community in giving back—community service and other volunteer opportunities. Participate in traditional rituals and ceremonies, or: create your own. Engage in deep listening and compassion. Explore creative expression. A sense of spiritual wellness helps you connect with your inner self, find meaning, and cultivate presence and purpose.

E. Stedman

Meditation – *“Meditation is not a way of making your mind quiet. It’s a way of entering into the quiet that’s already there...”* – Deepak Chopra

Our brains process 70,000 thoughts each day, using 100 billion neurons that connect more than 500 trillion points through synapses that travel 300 miles per hour. Buddhists describe the human mind as a “monkey mind” with monkeys jumping around, screeching, chattering and carrying on swinging from limb to limb. Studies have shown that mindfulness meditation can deactivate the areas of the brain that trigger mind chatter. In addition, meditation has been shown to actually change your brain structure in ways that have the ability to turn off any mind chatter.

There are many benefits to meditation. It can relieve stress and anxiety and increase the volume of your brain associated with focus, concentration, attention, and memory. Meditation also has many health benefits such as improving your blood pressure, your metabolism, your brain activity, alleviate pain, promote sleep, and increase your life span.

Even 5 minutes of meditation a day will give you healthy brain benefits. There are many apps to help you get started: Calm, Headspace, Ten Percent Happier, and Healthy Minds.

J. Spoke

Take a Mindful Walk in Nature – *“When you walk, arrive with every step. That is walking meditation. There is nothing else to it.”* – Thich Nhat Hahn (Zen Master)

As lawyers, we have cognitively and emotionally demanding jobs. Taking a break and going for a mindful walk outside can be restorative and give us a break from the constant mental chatter, help us arrive in the present moment, connect with our breath and the sensations in our body, as well as the nature around us. Going out in nature can pump your brakes on stress and help you feel chill. As an additional benefit, according to Andrew Huberman, an American neuroscientist, viewing sunlight (even if it is cloudy out) in the morning and the afternoon positively influences your immune system, metabolism, and your ability to focus and stay alert during the day. Mindful walking is more about the journey and less about your destination. It can take place anywhere from a busy street in the city along a busy street, to a country road, to a path in the woods. Mindful walking can decrease stress and anxiety, improve sleep, improve your overall mood, help you express appreciation and gratitude, and allow our minds to slow down. Tips for implementing a mindful walk: 1) Make a conscious effort to stay present and take in all five senses: sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste. Pay attention to the sky, the trees, the leaves, the grass, the different colors, the sounds, any people or wildlife that crosses your path. 2) Pay attention to how you walk, how your feet touch the ground, your breath, different sounds and smells, the breeze on your skin. If your mind starts to wander, take a deep breath, and start again.

Cultivate gratitude. – List what you’re thankful for, no matter how small. A gratitude challenge calls participants to list five things each day that they are grateful for. At first, this is often a lot harder than you might anticipate. “I have a great life.” “I’m thankful for everything.” So, start small: I’m grateful for a warm cup of coffee. I’m grateful for a comfy bed. I’m grateful for my child. And build from there. See if you can tap into the “why” of the gratitude. What does that cup of coffee make you feel? How does a comfy bed help you? What does your child do to bring them to mind when thinking about gratefulness? A gratitude practice helps you focus on the good things in life, instead of dwelling on the negative. This can lead to greater calm and relaxation and builds positive emotions. It also trains your brain to notice and appreciate all the little things in life.

E. Stedman

A Gratitude Journal – *“The miracle of gratitude is that it shifts your perception to such an extent that it changes the world you see.”* – Dr. Robert Holden

Studies have shown that those who are consistently grateful are more energetic, emotionally intelligent, forgiving, and less likely to be depressed, anxious or lonely. When researchers have trained volunteers to be more grateful over a few weeks they become happier, more optimistic, more socially connected, and enjoy better quality sleep. See, *The Happiness Advantage*, Shawn Achor.

Shawn Achor suggests that the best way to train your brain to be more optimistic is essentially to keep a gratitude journal, to write down a list of “three good things” that happened during your day. Humans has a network of neurons located in their brain cell called the reticular activating system. The RAS filters out unnecessary information so that the important stuff gets through. By focusing on what you are grateful for you in fact train your brain to be more skilled at noticing and focusing on positive experiences in your life. By maintaining a daily gratitude journal and

continually scanning your world for good things to write down, the more good things you see, without even trying.

Another variation, would be to write a daily short journal entry about each positive experience that you have during the day. In a study, volunteers were asked to write positive experiences they had in a journal for 20 minutes three times per week. Those who participated in the study experienced higher levels of happiness and, in three months, even had fewer symptoms of illness.

J. Spoke

Acts of Kindness/Compassion – *“Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them humanity cannot survive.”* – Dalai Lama

Those who are kind and compassionate are more content with their lives, have better physical and mental health, have less stress, feel less isolated, and have stronger relationships. Kindness positively changes your brain by boosting your levels of serotonin and dopamine, which will lead you with feelings of satisfaction and well-being. A study by Sonja Lyubomirsky, the author of *The How of Happiness*, found that individuals who were told to complete five acts of kindness over the course of a day reported feeling much happier and, in fact, this feeling lasted for many subsequent days afterwards. Shawn Achor, author of *The Happiness Advantage*, found that a key behavior that significantly improved one’s happiness was as simple as sending a 2-minute “thank you” email or text every morning as soon as you get in the office.

How can you incorporate kindness and compassion in your life:

- Pay it forward;
- Send thank you notes;
- Post a sticky note with a nice message around your house or in public;
- Volunteer;
- Donate to a charity;
- Greet strangers with a smile;
- Practicing a loving kindness meditation.

J. Spoke

Enlightened Reading – *“Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body and what prayer is to the soul.”* – Matthew Kelly

Reading not only is good for your mind but can also act as an important spiritual exercise. Many authors share their painful stories, awkward life moments, and their personal experiences. They welcome us into their life and in doing so provide assistance to our own. Reading books on spirituality and philosophy, or even personal growth, can open our minds to new ideas, beliefs and world views. It can also provide us with hope, resilience, and motivation. Often reading can also help validate our feelings and encourage us to engage in self-discovery. Books can also assist us in finding meaning and purpose in our lives.

And, if you don't have time to read, listen to podcasts for spiritual growth and wellness. Podcasts can assist individuals with coping strategies and deepen their sense of self-compassion. They can also help reduce stress and anxiety, provide emotional support, and help individuals gain new perspectives on life.

Some recommended books for spiritual growth include:

- The Power of Now, Eckhart Tolle
- The Seven Laws of Spiritual Success, Deepak Chopra
- The Alchemist, Paulo Coelho
- Man's Search for Meaning, Viktor E. Frankl
- Untamed, Glennon Doyle
- The Book of Joy, Dalai Lama
- The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari, Robin S. Sharma

And, some podcasts on health and well-being:

- Huberman Lab
- Happier with Gretchen Rubin
- Ten Percent Happier
- The Mel Robbins Podcast
- The School of Greatness
- Achieve Your Goals with Hal Elrod
- Rich Roll
- On Purpose with Jay Shetty

Combat Negative Thoughts - *"Whether you think you can or you think you can't either way you are right!"* - Henry Ford

A negativity bias is hardwired in the brain of all mammals and is a critical component of our survival instinct. Lawyers are extremely susceptible to negative thinking. The minute they enter law school, lawyers are taught analytical analysis. Law schools teach students to look for the flaws and holes in arguments. Lawyers are taught to be hyper-focused on the negative. They are taught to be critical, rather than accepting. These thoughts do not remain in a lawyer's professional life but leak into their personal life as well. Lawyers start to "overestimate the significance and permanence of the problems they encounter" and develop a pessimistic mindset which is the fastest route to depression and anxiety, stress, poor physical health, and substance abuse. See, *The Happiness Advantage*, pp 92-93, Shawn Achor. The good news is that you can rewire your brain and cultivate a positive mindset through simple, repeated practices.

Ways to combat automatic negative thoughts:

- Challenge the thought – Ask yourself, is this thought true? A majority of our negative thoughts are not even true.

- Engage in positive self-talk - Replacing negative thoughts with positive statement in order to shift your mindset. If you do this on a continual basis you will start looking at things with a more positive mindset.
- Engage in visualization techniques.
- Write down your thoughts and reframe them in a positive light.
- Engage in self-compassion.
- Develop a positive support network.

J. Spoke

PHYSICAL

Caring for the body and tapping into the mind/body connection.

Establish a Morning Routine – *“Each morning we are born again. What we do today is what matters most.”* – Jack Kornfield, meditation teacher and psychotherapist

Having a morning routine is one of the single fastest and strongest tools to motivate you and set you up for a productive day. Many high performers establish ritual morning habits to help them do their best throughout their day. A morning ritual helps build the right mindset to fuel your next 12 hours. By engaging in small wins – right away when you wake up – you put yourself in a peak physical, mental, and emotional state every single morning. According to Hal Elrod, author of *The Miracle Morning* and one of the world’s top success coaches,

“How you wake up each day and your morning routine (or lack thereof) dramatically affects your levels of success in every single area of your life. Focused, productive, successful mornings generate focused, productive, and successful days – which inevitably create a successful life – in the same way that unfocused, unproductive, and mediocre mornings generate a mediocre quality of life. By simply changing the way you wake up in the morning, you can transform any area of your life, faster than you ever thought possible.”

Robin Sharma, author of *The 5 AM Club*, promotes a 20/20/20 formula to start your day. The first 20 minutes of your morning move, engage in intense exercise that makes you sweat and get your heart pumping. Exercising helps you become focused and productive, optimizes your brain, provides you with energy, and lessens your stress. The second 20 minutes of your morning reflect, journal, meditate, or contemplate. Reflecting will help you have greater positivity, decreased reactivity, higher creativity, and stronger performance during your day. And, the last 20 minutes of your morning grow, read books, listen to podcasts, or study. Growing will help you obtain personal growth and inspiration.

J. Spoke

“Exercise Snacks” – *“Physical fitness is not only one of the most important keys to a healthy body; it is the basis of dynamic and creative intellectual activity.”* – John F. Kennedy

Medical literature has shown that a 30 minute workout in the morning leads to better focus, decision-making, organization, and planning. It delivers an all-day mind and body benefit by making you feel active for the whole day. Plus, exercise has been proven to promote better brain function; it improves your attention, leaves you feeling more serene, and helps you better handle stressors throughout the day.

But, what if you don’t have time to exercise in the morning, or to even exercise for 30 minutes?

Dr. Martin Gibala, a muscle physiologist, professor, and Kinesiology department chair at McMaster University, just removed the greatest excuse you have not to exercise, that you don’t have time. In 2022, Dr. Gibala studied British non-exercisers who engaged in three one to two minute sessions of vigorous physical activity throughout the day. He found that those that

engaged in small bursts of physical activity throughout their day had similar health outcomes and a lower risk of developing many chronic conditions, such as obesity, heart disease, and Type 2 diabetes, than those engaging in moderate exercise. So break up your day by doing 1-2 minute “exercise snacks” 3-4 times per day. This could consist of high knees, burpees, stairs, jumping jacks, air squats, lunges, push-ups, wall planks, etc.

J. Spoke

Brain Foods – *“What most people don’t realize is that food is not just calories; it’s information.*

It actually contains messages that connect to every cell in the body.” – Dr. Mark Hyman

Our brains are running 24/7 and essentially maintains all functions of our body, from our thoughts and movements, to our heartbeat, to our breath. Our brain requires a constant supply of fuel. See, <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/nutritional-psychiatry-your-brain-on-food-201511168626>. Recent studies have shown a strong link between your diet and cognitive functions and mental health. Unhealthy diets, high in simple carbohydrates and sugars, including processed and fried foods, have been shown to be associated with reduced memory and learning, major depression disorders, anxiety, bipolar disorder, stroke sleep problems and Alzheimer’s disease. To the contrary, those who ate a balanced diet, a diet high in fruits, vegetables, and protein were more likely to have better mental health, cognitive functioning, and overall well-being.

What foods should you eat for brain health:

- Probiotic foods, such as yogurt, kefir, kombucha, and kimchi;
- Prebiotic foods, such as asparagus, apples, bananas, oats, onions, and garlic;
- Green leafy vegetables;
- Coffee or tea;
- Lean protein;
- Citrus;
- Fatty fish (omega-3 fatty acids);
- Whole grains;
- Eggs;
- Beans;
- Nuts;
- Olive oil;
- Berries;
- Dark chocolate.

J. Spoke

Sleep – *“The way to a more productive, more inspired, more joyful life is getting enough sleep.”*

– Arianna Huffington

Sleep is your superpower. It is linked to both your physical and mental health and enhances your performance throughout your day. According to Dr. Matthew Walker, a leading expert on sleep and author of *Why We Sleep* (2017), sleeping helps us physically heal, recover from illness, deal

with stress, solve problems, consolidate memories, and improve our motor skills. Most of us need on average 7-8 hours of sleep, at a minimum. If you do not get enough sleep it can impair your cognitive functions and can impact your competence, diligence, ability to communicate effectively, and your decision making abilities. Without sleep, you look through your fearful or primal lens and you may make decisions you normally wouldn't make on a full night's sleep. You may also make more problematic ethical decisions and behave in a selfish manner.

Matthew Walker's 12 Tips for a Good Night's Sleep:

- Stick to a regular sleep schedule;
- Don't exercise 2-3 hours before bed;
- Avoid caffeine and nicotine;
- Avoid alcoholic beverages;
- Avoid large meals and beverages late at night;
- Avoid medicines that delay or disrupt your sleep;
- Don't nap after 3 p.m.;
- Leave time to relax and wind down prior to bed;
- Have a dark, cool, gadget free bedroom;
- Get exposure to sunlight during the day;
- Don't stay in bed if you can't sleep.

J. Spoke

Restorative Breaks – *“Each person deserves a day away in which no problems are confronted, no solutions searched for. Each of us needs to withdraw from cares which will not withdraw from us.”* – Maya Angelou

Like a muscle needs rest before it can grow, so does your brain. You wouldn't work a muscle all day long, past fatigue, without giving it rest. The same is true of your brain. If you are constantly working your brain you will eventually burn out, lose productivity, and lose focus. Taking breaks from work will actually help you work better. First, you will work hard before your break because you will feel the pressure of getting your work done before you need to set it aside. In addition, you will be more productive after you get back from break because you will feel refreshed and renewed. Don't spend all your time trying to make a living so that you actually forget to live. Have fun and enjoy life. Then, when you do sit down and work you will be more productive and focused to get your work done.

We all have the mindset that if we are spending more time on tasks we will get more done. However, constantly working without taking any breaks is not sustainable and will end in burnout. Taking micro-breaks during your work day is beneficial for both your well-being as well as your performance. Micro breaks will help you recharge so you are more focused and productive and less likely to feel depleted or stressed out.

Brendon Burchard, a high performance coach and author of *High Performance Habits*, suggests taking a mid-day boost which consists of:

- A short walk;
- Meditate or breathe for 5 minutes;
- Engage in a 1 minute energizer – anything that will get your heart pumping; and
- Do a 30 second intention for the rest of your day.

J. Spoke

Recognize the Physical Signs of Stress/A Body Scan – *“Your body holds deep wisdom. Trust in it. Learn from it. Nourish it. Watch your life transform and be healthy.”* – Bella Bleue

When an individual is chronically stressed, they constantly release stress hormones throughout their body, including cortisol. Think of cortisol as a corrosive agent running through you, which breaks down your immune system. You start having long term colds and flu, which can easily lead to heart conditions and even cancer. You are physically ill, your body sends all its resources to these areas, and brain goes on “low power mode.” You essentially start running on autopilot. Most often, we don’t even notice what is happening to our body. We are so caught up in our stress that we don’t even realize what it is doing to our body. Essentially our mind is attempting to numb us from the pain. The best way to slow down and pay attention is to engage in a mindfulness exercise, called a body scan. The purpose of this exercise is to sit in silence and simply notice what is going on in our body. By performing a body scan, you can develop an awareness of the physical signs of stress going on in your body so you are better able to notice when you are stressed and overworked and, hopefully, can learn how to manage your stress. Body scans are also a great tool to help you improve the quality of your life and can even help you regulate your emotions and reduce depression and anxiety.

Body Scan Script (Kabat-Zinn, *Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life*, p.155 (2009):

TRY: Tuning in to your breath when you find yourself lying down. Feel it moving in your entire body. Dwell with the breath in various regions of your body, such as the feet, the legs, the pelvis and genitals, the belly, the chest, the back, the shoulders, the arms, the throat and neck, the head, the face, the top of your head. Listen carefully. Allow yourself to feel whatever is present. Watch the sensations in the body flux and change. Watch your feelings about them flux and change.

J. Spoke

Take a Cold Plunge or Shower – *“If I jump in that plunge first thing in the morning, I can pretty much be guaranteed that nothing I will face that day will be nearly as challenging as that chilly water.”* – Seamus Mullen

A cold-water plunge has been shown to have a profound impact on your overall health. It can increase your resilience to stress and significantly improve your mood. Immersing yourself in cold water increases norepinephrine which helps you focus and gives you a natural high. Studies performed at Stanford have shown that those who took a cold plunge had a significant decrease in negative emotions, such as tension, anger, depression fatigue, and confusion, In a further

study, adults were asked to immerse themselves in cold water reported feeling more active, alert, attention, and inspired.

And, if you don't have access or feel like engaging in a full plunge, a cold shower has been proven to have many of the same benefits of cold therapy, including bolstering your immune system, combatting depression, improving your circulation, increasing your metabolism, and reducing inflammation and muscle soreness.

J. Spoke

Mobilize Joints – Go through all joints and rotate/pivot/hinge their entire range of motion.

Lawyering is a sedentary job. We sit, type, talk, stand sometimes, maybe walk around a little, but all of this involves limited ranges of movement. Our bodies are configured to perform a wide array of functions, but long periods of idle activity can make us feel a bit stale.

An easy and fast win that involves near-zero exercise is to mobilize all of your joints. Most of our voluntarily mobile joints are lubricated with synovial fluid that circulates and feels good when a corresponding joint is moved. Try separating your fingers as far as they can go, extending them out as far you can, then curling them up into fists. Rotate your wrists 360 degrees, flex and extend your elbows, rotate your shoulders, and so on all the way through your body. What likely follows is a modest but immediate and pleasant sense of physical relief.

M. Shin

Strategically Enjoy Carbs – If you tend to crash in the afternoon, evaluate your lunches.

If afternoons are a struggle, consider what you eat for lunch. The standard American diet often emphasizes simple carbohydrates—enriched breads, hulled grains, pastas, and syrups that are quickly broken down into sugar when digested. Bodies tend to overcompensate for sudden blood sugar spikes after eating such a meal, and an energy crash is often experienced as a result.

As such, consider lunches that are digested more slowly to produce a more steady, metered release of digested sugars. Protein and fat are digested through slower processes and various forms of fiber are digested more slowly than simple carbohydrates or not at all. In short, if you find yourself struggling to be productive in the afternoon, consider lunches with more plants and proteins, and less in the way of white breads, rice, pasta, confections, and pastries.

M. Shin

Anything Is Better Than Nothing – A perfect plan is unnecessary. Any plan might be unnecessary.

Many of us do not move our bodies enough. But there is also an overwhelming amount of both legitimate and dubious information on workout routines, programs, and strategies for all kinds of physical goals. Long distance running, yoga, powerlifting, team sports, combat sports—all of these undertakings have training programs that differ widely and have purportedly been finely

honed to maximize gains and performance. It may seem as though we need to pick an optimized program and follow it to perfection otherwise it will be a waste of time.

But the reality is, anything is better than nothing. Literally any bodily movement is better than no bodily movement. Body weight squats in the office. A few pushups. Even walking is widely recognized as one of the best things we can do. Some days will be full of activity and some days we will hardly move at all. It is all fine and absolutely does not need to be perfect. It just needs doing.

M. Shin

Embrace Discomfort – When you want to quit, focus on the physical sensation of discomfort.

Lawyers tend to have a tremendous tolerance for mental and emotional discomfort, but what about physical discomfort?

When attempting to take on a new physical activity, there's usually a pain period where new muscles are being engaged, we are feeling less than capable, and perhaps generally struggling with developing a foreign skill. But often what really makes the undertaking difficult is the psychological distress that immediately follows physical discomfort. A typical reaction to that distress is to do whatever is necessary to make that physical discomfort stop, or preclude it from occurring in the first place. As a result, we quit.

But upon a close examination of the actual physical discomfort itself, it's usually not that bad (unless something is actually wrong). The feeling itself is usually dwarfed by the weight of a defeating inner monologue and a sabotaging desire to escape. In response, consider specifically focusing in on the physical discomfort and ask yourself what is it about this feeling that I simply cannot tolerate?

M. Shin

INTELLECTUAL

Engaging in deep learning and opening to experience.

Time Blocking – create space for deep work.

Time blocking is a productivity technique that involves dividing your day or week into dedicated time slots or “blocks” for specific tasks or activities. Instead of working reactively from a never-ending to-do list, you can proactively schedule your priorities into concrete blocks of time on your calendar. This approach helps you maintain focus, minimize distractions, and ensure that important tasks receive the attention they deserve. By allocating specific intervals for tasks, you create boundaries that protect your workflow and increase your chances of accomplishing your goals within the designated timeframes.

E. Stedman

Set Recurring Reminders – free up space in your brain.

Related to time blocking is being diligent about docketing deadlines and reminders on your calendar. For example, there are certain administrative tasks I do every week. By putting a recurring calendar reminder on the books, I don’t have to “remember” it on my own. And, over time, it becomes automatic. I do this for updating my master case chart, sending client updates, certain business development outreaches, and more. I control my calendar—instead of it controlling me—and, in turn, I create space in my brain and in time for other things.

E. Stedman

Opening + Closing Rituals – set yourself up for success and close out your day with purpose.

Consistency and setting your mind up for work and to end work is another productivity and time management tool. An opening ritual is a set of actions or practices performed at the start of the workday or before beginning a specific task or project. It helps transition your mindset into a focused and productive state. A closing ritual is the opposite - a series of actions done at the end of the workday or after completing a task to signal closure and allow for mental disengagement.

Opening and closing rituals are important because they create boundaries between work and personal life, making it easier to fully immerse yourself in the task at hand when working, and then detach from work when it’s time to recharge. They can reduce stress and increase productivity by prompting your mind to shift gears. Examples might include reviewing your schedule for an opening ritual or tidying your workspace for a closing ritual. Consistently following these rituals can help you stay centered and avoid burnout.

E. Stedman

The Pomodoro Method – Timers are your friend.

Time for deep work—for uninterrupted focus—is increasingly hard to come by. The Pomodoro Technique helps in two ways: (1) you can take advantage of short blocks of time and (2) you can get over the hump if stuck on something or procrastinating.

The Pomodoro Technique is a time management method that breaks work into intervals of focused effort separated by short breaks. Work is divided into 25-minute stretches called “pomodoros,” followed by a 5-minute break. After completing four pomodoros, you take a longer break of 15-30 minutes.

This technique helps combat procrastination and mental fatigue by introducing regular periods of rest, making sustained focus more manageable. It trains your brain to work intensely for short bursts while respecting its need for a break. It also allows you to focus and get deep work done, in as short as 25 minutes. It is also customizable. You can create longer pomodoros (or shorter) and longer or shorter breaks, as you prefer.

I keep timers on my desk at all times. If I’m struggling to focus, I might turn on a timer as short as five minutes and tell myself to “just work” or “just write” for five minutes. That’s usually enough time to push me over the hump of procrastination and build momentum to keep working.

E. Stedman

Eliminate Distractions – the world wants all of your attention in all the ways.

- Turn off notifications—or turn on “do not disturb.”
- Close email.
- Use website and app blockers to block distracting websites.
- Be creative with out of office messages.
- Remove clutter.
- Take breaks.

Technology can be both a blessing and a curse when it comes to distractions and time management. On the positive side, productivity apps, website blockers, and digital calendars can help us plan our days, minimize distractions, and stay on task. However, the constant pings of notifications, the lure of social media, and the temptation to multitask can severely undermine our focus and concentration. While technology provides tools to enhance our productivity, it also introduces a host of potential distractions that require conscious effort and self-discipline to manage effectively. There’s a great book by Cal Newport called *Digital Minimalism*. That and his other book, *Deep Work*, provide valuable insights on how to better manage your time, create space for deep work, and build checks and balances on social media and other tech-distractions.

E. Stedman

Learn to say no. – A yes in one area, is a no in another.

Saying no is also an important time management tool and well-being strategy for attorneys, even though we are often trained to take on every request.

By saying no to non-essential tasks or unrealistic deadlines, attorneys can protect their time and energy for high-priority matters and avoid burnout. Saying no allows us to maintain control over our schedules and set healthy boundaries. However, it should be done tactfully and professionally.

When declining a request, attorneys can express appreciation for the opportunity, provide a brief explanation if appropriate, and offer an alternative solution if possible. We can also counter with availability for a later date or suggest someone else who may be better suited to the task. I call this the, “Yes . . . but.” “I’d love to help you but I have XYZ on my plate. How would you prioritize or can we adjust the deadline?” By saying no judiciously and politely, attorneys demonstrate self-respect and effective time management skills.

E. Stedman

Learn when and how to delegate. – Asking for help is not failure, it shows you’re not giving up.

Effective delegation is crucial for attorneys to manage their time efficiently. First, they should identify tasks that can be delegated, such as legal research, document review, scheduling, and administrative duties. Clear communication of expectations, deadlines, and priorities is vital. Providing proper training and resources ensures tasks are completed correctly. Yes, this takes time up front, but that upfront investment will create space and time on the flip side.

Attorneys should also trust those to whom they delegate and resist the urge to micromanage—which is a timewaster for both parties. Regular check-ins and feedback loops help maintain quality control while fostering accountability. Ultimately, delegating tasks frees up attorneys’ time to focus on high-value work, improving productivity and work-life balance.

The Eisenhower Matrix, pictured here, is one tool to decide when and whether to delegate a task.



See “The Eisenhower Matrix: How to Prioritize Your To-Do List,” Asana, <https://asana.com/resources/eisenhower-matrix> (last visited Aug. 6, 2024).

Read for fun. I was never an avid reader—for fun at least. College and law school required so much reading, and then so did my job. In 2019, I set out to read 19 books. I’ve added one book a year to that goal ever since. To start this habit, I started very small: I set a timer and read for 10 minutes in the morning. At night, before bed, I tried to read 8 pages of a book. Now, it is habitual, and each day I read a little for fun. This helps me feel like I have some choice over my day—and what I’m putting in my brain. From non-fiction, to historical fiction, and cozy murder mysteries, reading for fun is a healthy escape. And: audiobooks count too.

E. Stedman

Embrace experiences over things. Studies show that having a trip, concert, wine-tasting—or really any kind of experience—on the horizon and on the calendar builds hope and anticipation in a way that improves mental health and wellbeing, decreases burnout, and more. At the same time, the memories of the experiences can recall those feelings, bringing joy, fun, and gratitude to otherwise stressful moments, when you envision or harken back to those memories. Experiences bring happiness and dopamine, and also reduce stress and burnout, and increase connection with others. It also improves productivity following the trip or experience. Buying material goods, on the other hand, brings fleeting moments, not lasting memories or optimism.

E. Stedman

Cultivate a growth mindset. A growth mindset is the belief that one’s abilities, intelligence, and talents can be developed and improved over time—through hard work, dedication, and learning

from failures (resilience). With a growth mindset, we see challenges as opportunities to grow—rather than threats to our competence.

To foster a growth mindset: (1) embrace challenges and persist in the face of setbacks; (2) view effort as a path to mastery; (3) embrace feedback; and (4) find lessons and inspiration in others' success (rather than as competition). This includes:

- Reframing challenges as opportunities instead of obstacles;
- Focusing on learning and experience rather than just the end result;
- Practicing and improve self-awareness;
- Changing language from “I cannot do this” to “I don’t know how to do this *yet*.”
- Setting goals—to learn more, not just perform well; a focus on personal and professional development.
- Celebrating all progress, no matter how small.
Learning from failures and practicing mindfulness.

The benefits of a growth mindset include: (a) improving adaptability and resiliency; (b) continuous improvement in skill and knowledge; (c) enhanced problem-solving skills; and (d) better relationships with clients and colleagues. You can implement a growth mindset in your practice by:

- Keeping a growth journal to track challenges, efforts, and progress;
- Forming a peer accountability group for professional development and mutual support;
- Seeking opportunities to step out of your comfort zone (embrace imposter syndrome as you take opportunities just beyond your current level);
- Attend conferences and CLEs to broaden your perspective;
- Mentor and learn from new and younger attorneys.

Developing a growth mindset is itself a growth process.

E. Stedman

RELATIONAL

Nurturing a constructive relationship with self and others.

Get to know yourself

Invest the time to explore yourself. To have healthy and meaningful relationships with others, you must have a meaningful relationship with yourself. Get to know your personal likes, dislikes, values, and morals. Consider the question “what drives me?”. Try journaling as a way to express yourself and then review to uncover themes you may not have previously recognized about yourself.

Try new things in a context without external pressure. You may not like or enjoy everything you try, but you just may find something new that you don’t expect to enjoy. Find a routine and schedule that works for you and go with it. This allows for better awareness of what your needs are and allows the time to dedicate to those needs.

E. Veenendaal

Increasing social engagement at work

Do you have a best friend at work? Those who said “yes” to this question were reported to be more engaged and productive than those who said no. Try implementing scheduled social time where work is not discussed. Encourage cross departmental socialization (shadowing, lunch or coffee). Eliminate siloed thinking. Everyone should be aware of what other teams and departments are doing and how they may be contributing to the project so that you can be more understanding of the pressures they are under.

The attached article highlights the importance of social connection at work. It stresses the importance of working through hardships and stressors as a team. We win together and face adversity together.

[Stop Framing Wellness Programs Around Self-Care \(hbr.org\)](https://hbr.org/2017/07/stop-framing-wellness-programs-around-self-care/)

E. Veenendaal

Keep in regular contact with your friends and family

Don’t sit around and wait for someone else to reach out. They are busy too. Be more mindful of the relationships you value and want to keep. Be proactive in those relationships. Send a simple check in text to say “I care about you and you are important to me”. Be mindful of important events and dates (birthdays, anniversaries, job changes) and reach out during those times. Celebrate the wins. Be an ear and a helping hand during tough times.

E. Veenendaal

Be an empathetic listener

Have you ever been in a conversation with someone and at the end you have no idea what the other person said, or did you find out later that you misinterpreted their message? This is not only uncomfortable, but also unproductive, and it devalues the other person. I recommend being intentional about listening to understand and connect with the other party. Try to reflect back on what you heard to make sure everyone is on the same page. Remember the acronym WAIT: Why Am I Talking.

E. Veenendaal

Increase opportunities for socialization

This doesn't have to be anything formal. Passive socialization can be just as beneficial. Isolation is a strong risk factor for mental health struggles such as depression and anxiety.

- Consider joining a gym or going to a new fitness class.
- Attend an interest group or meet up.
- Take a community education class.
- Volunteer somewhere that feeds your passion and brings you joy.

E. Veenendaal

Relationships are about quality, not quantity

It shouldn't be about the number of friendships and relationships you have built. Find ways to deeply connect with people by having a better understanding of who they are. This requires you to be inquisitive. Ask the deep questions and listen with empathetic ears. This shows others you are interested and engaged and will help to develop a more meaningful relationship. When you find people with similar interests, values, and morals you can be more open and vulnerable, which then fosters close connections and quality relationships.

Increase opportunities for generosity

Generosity is a positive feedback loop. When you give to others it makes you feel good, which makes you want to give more. You are also making others feel good, which makes them want to give more, and the cycle continues.

E. Veenendaal

Stop feeling selfish for taking "me" time

Taking the time to prioritize yourself and your personal wellbeing pays dividends in all areas of your life. Do not feel guilty saying no to something so that you can take care of you. Remember the old adage that you can't take care of others if you aren't taking care of yourself. It's true. Running yourself into the ground will lead to burnout at a minimum but can lead to serious health issues. We all need to support each other in this and encourage those around us to engage in their own selfcare time.

- Practice mindfulness or a relaxation practice of some kind
- Schedule time for physical activity
- Engage in a hobby or something you enjoy

E. Veenendaal

Set healthy boundaries in relationships

Giving too much time and energy to negative people and situations will rob you of that time that could be used more efficiently and effectively if focused on yourself. Don't let negativity and entitlement drain your battery. You only have so much to give to yourself and others in a day. Use that energy wisely. It's ok to recognize that a relationship is no longer serving you in a positive manner and to take a step back. Take the time to evaluate relationships and consider the amount of time and effort that relationship is worthy of. Giving yourself some time and distance from negativity allows more space for positivity and healthy activities.

E. Veenendaal

Be kind to yourself

We are notoriously harder on ourselves than those around us. Take the time to question "would I have the same negative thoughts about someone else in the same situation?". We must work towards acceptance and forgiveness of ourselves.

The proverbial phrase 'To err is human; to forgive, divine.' – Alexander Pope. This should not only apply to others but more importantly to ourselves.

E. Veenendaal

Give yourself the permission you need to feel whatever it is you are feeling

Feelings aren't inherently good or bad, they just are. Instead of pushing feelings and emotions away, pay attention as it may be a message. For example, you are feeling very anxious, nervous, and even scared about a new situation. Ask yourself why. Is there something to be legitimately nervous about? Would other people in your situation feel the same? Use this as an opportunity to get to know yourself on a deeper level and to show yourself grace and acceptance.

E. Veenendaal

EMOTIONAL

Feeling all emotions, reaching towards resilience and positivity.

Note your feelings. And let them go. Noting is a technique used in mindfulness meditation that involves labeling (or “noting”) experiences as they arise in the mind, in the present moment. When you mediate, your brain will not shut off. Thoughts will come and go. So, see (or hear) them and label them: that’s thinking, that’s feeling, that’s sadness, that’s joy. Noting sharpens your ability to recognize the different aspects of your experience. It helps you create space between you and your thoughts, reducing over-identification with thoughts or emotions. Noting can also interrupt habitual thought patterns or reactions. This practice can make it easier to let go of thoughts and feelings, rather than dwelling on them. And: this skill can be applied daily, without any equipment, money, or other investment.

E. Stedman

Disconnect – Find time to disconnect to encourage emotional recovery.

One of the most important elements of emotional recovery is disconnecting from things that cause emotional strain. We are all accessible via email, text, and calls that route straight into our pockets, bags, desks, and nightstands, which causes an ongoing emotional drain resulting from being on call around the clock. When you are at lunch, spending time with family, taking in a movie, vacationing, getting a workout, or even trying to sleep, the threat of an anxiety cascade stemming from a dreaded notification causes an ongoing emotional tax if left unchecked. In view of this, making a conscious choice to disconnect yourself from any one or thing that causes you work-related strain is critical for a proper recovery. There is no one-size-fits-all approach for doing this, and it is often not as simple as deciding to avoid your phone and emails for a period of hours or days. It instead takes planning and commitment. It can be a matter of a long weekend, an afternoon, or even a half hour. Set expectations among your clients and colleagues, set up automatic notifications, arrange for backup coverage, and commit the time to yourself.

M. Shin

Find Meaning – Identify what provides a sense of meaning and seek enrichment accordingly. What if I were to tell you that I am an evil genie, and that after I snap my fingers nothing you do in your life will ever provide you with a sense of meaning or satisfaction? In turn, what if I was a good genie that will snap his fingers and imbue everything you work towards with meaning and satisfaction? Consider how different life would be in either instance.

We as people need to feel a sense of significance and meaning in our lives, whether at work or at home. When we fail to experience something as fundamental as meaning over a long period of time, feelings of hopelessness, powerlessness, and depression set in, and shortly afterwards, we burn out.

This is why identifying those things that give us meaning and finding ways of enriching our lives with it is so crucial to our emotional well-being. It's crucial to our ability to perform at work, show up for our families and friends, and to lead fulfilling lives. Even if you feel stuck at work, there is support in research literature that finding enrichment in our personal lives can pull us out of workplace burnout. This is something we have to do for ourselves.

M. Shin

Seek Mastery – Seek opportunities to learn/achieve something new to give a sense of mastery and accomplishment.

After a tough week, weeks, or months, it might seem that all we want to do is absolutely nothing and for a long time. But perhaps you have experienced a long weekend or time off where you did not actually do much, and yet you come back to work feeling just as emotionally drained as you were before you left.

There is research supporting the idea that doing something difficult and achieving a sense of mastery helps us with emotional recovery. To try something hard or new, struggle through it, and achieve a sense of capability gives rise to a restorative sense of satisfaction. It does not need to be grand or impractical, it could be something as simple as a new workout, a new skill that could be tried at home, or even working through any one of these 50 tips for the first time. Try engaging yourself with something new, unusual, difficult, interesting, or strange.

M. Shin

Slow Down – Catch automatic thoughts that tend to weaken emotion regulation, and practice slower regulation strategies.

We can be thought of as having two brains: a fast, reflex-driven automatic brain and a slow, elaborate, reasoning brain. Both have their functions and their place. It does us no good to closely and slowly examine a task that has been done a thousand times before, and it might be even worse to make a hasty call in a new and ambiguous situation. But there are times when we use the wrong brain in the wrong circumstances, such as with emotion regulation.

We all have our pet peeves. Some of us bottle things up. Many of us ruminate. Often times we are exhausted and have had our fuses cut short. All of these things can cause us to more heavily rely on our automatic brains to process and experience emotions that can give rise to expending more energy than what may be appropriate or making decisions that are later regrettable. When you are feeling emotionally activated, consider which brain got you up there and leverage your slow brain to bring you back down.

M. Shin

Be Flexible – Watch for black-and-white, all-or-nothing rules and expectations that are easily and often broken, and revise them to be more flexible.

Speaking of fast and slow brains (per the Slow Down tip), a hallmark fast brain behavior is thinking in all-or-nothing terms. The problem here is that more often than not, the “nothing” criteria are more easily and frequently met than the “all” criteria, and you therefore pay the exaggerated nothing cost more often. But the reality is, there are almost always shades of gray and smaller successes that go unacknowledged. Consider whether and to what extent all-or-nothing, inflexible rules and expectations are influencing your experiences and how you can loosen them up.

M. Shin

Un-minimize Wins – Celebrate wins to promote recovery.

A degree of self-criticism is likely a part of your motivation to achieve. We absolutely could have done [that thing] better. The losses hurt more than the wins feel good. The mistakes teach us how to perform better next time, but the things that were done right slip by our awareness.

While yes it is noble and important to improve and so doing is intrinsic to the practice of law, the value of celebrating wins tends to be grossly unrecognized. Sure there is a bit of self-indulgence in it, maybe a ding to humility and humbleness, but celebrating successes that we and others achieve is a necessary part of career sustainability no matter how small. It does you no good to be the most skilled lawyer in history if you have no will or interest in practicing. Consider the potential good in celebrating your achievements, cheering for your colleagues, and basking in collective glory.

M. Shin

Let It Happen – If time and place allows, allow elevated emotions to run their course.

It will probably surprise you that there is research support for the idea that an activated emotion can run its course in a matter of minutes. Of course we have experienced anger, sadness, and happiness for hours, days, or even weeks, so how does that make any sense?

The reality is, we tend to do things in response to emotions that propagate them, sometimes indefinitely. A common example is the working professional’s tendency to bottle, ruminate, avoid, and suppress. Many of us have somehow arrived at the conclusion that even if we are completely alone, we cannot express negative emotions.

There is of course a time and place for everything. While cutting loose and foregoing emotion regulation in front of clients, colleagues, judges, and juries may not be advisable, it is worth finding a safe and appropriate place to do just that. One of the most significant components of the human experience is to feel. Sometimes it is best to give in and allow yourself to experience a universally felt emotion and let it run its course.

M. Shin

Let It Go – Sometimes a stressor cannot be changed. Let it go and work a different problem. Lawyers are rewarded for their creativity and problem-solving skills, but sometimes there are things in life that cannot be changed no matter how much we work the problem. Regardless, some of us continue hammering it, completely undeterred by a complete lack of progress or

improvement with a white-hot, pure conviction that the problem still exists solely because it has yet to be worked enough.

But there comes a point in our due diligence where the same damaging citations keep coming up and the team call falls silent, but the drive to continue hammering the screw remains. The problem with this type of singular focus is that our attention and resources are finite and can only be allocated to one issue at a time. If you have firmly established that a problem cannot be changed, perhaps it is time to let it go and focus your energy on something that can.

M. Shin

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
<p>Reflect on your daily and/or weekly goals. Pick three. Write them down, in order of priority. Schedule time today and this week to work on these goals. This “achievement strategy” will help you connect with what’s important and limit your to-do list in order to achieve these goals.</p> <p>Reflect on your ability to focus (or even your tendency to procrastinate). If you need help in this area, consider the Pomodoro Method. This productivity hack requires: picking a task, setting a timer, working on that task only, taking a break, and repeating.</p>	<p>Consider your phone usage. Can you make your phone work for you (instead of being mindlessly attached to your phone)? See also Phone Breakup.</p> <p>Check In: Review yesterday’s goals. What went well? What would you do differently? Write out today’s top three goals and schedule time to do them (and time to move on your three weekly goals).</p>	<p>Studies show that a consistent gratitude practice changes your brain. Journal: What three things are you grateful for today? This week? This year?</p> <p>Have you moved today? Whether standing, sitting, or on the go between meetings, your body needs attention. Consider these “at your desk” options:</p> <p>Yoga stretches at your desk.</p> <p>Yoga poses at your desk.</p> <p>Desk stretches (“deskercise”).</p>	<p>Journaling for well-being increases self-awareness. Take a few minutes to consider what you hope for your life in 1, 5, 10, or 20 years. Write a journal entry (perhaps setting a 5-minute timer) to or about your future self. Consider revisiting this exercise weekly or monthly.</p> <p>Is there a book sitting on your shelf, unread? What about an article or blog post you’ve been wanting to write, but haven’t found the time? Set a 10-minute timer and read or write for fun. Consider scheduling this into your calendar daily.</p>	<p>“No’ is a complete sentence.” -Anne Lamott // Boundaries are the tools we use to govern our professional and personal relationships. Too often, we do not review or adjust our boundaries. Consider auditing your boundaries. What daily, weekly, or monthly activities and interactions do not serve you and your goals (personally and professionally)? Can you set limits around those? Can you seek help? Can you practice saying, “No.”?</p> <p>At end of day, review this past week: list three things that went well. Look ahead to next week. Start planning your big three goals for week.</p>	<p>Notice your breath. Mindful breathing reduces your heart rate, blood pressure, and stress levels. It sounds simple: notice your inhale, notice your exhale. But, your mind will wander. That is okay. Mindfulness increases over time, with practice. Try this short guided meditation or check out an app, such as Headspace. Our jobs depend on our minds, so we ought to learn to be kinder to our brains.</p> <p>Tell your family and friends about the well-being habits you tried this week. What worked? What didn’t? What will you try again?</p>	<p>As you’re winding down for the day or preparing for the upcoming work week, pull out your journal or a piece of paper or your legal pad and “brain dump”: free write your thoughts, feelings, ideas, dreams, hopes. This “technique” allows you to put “over thinking” to pen and to paper and frees up space in your brain. There are no rules, just let it out.</p> <p>Give thanks: reach out to a friend, colleague, employee, family member and tell them, “Thank you.”</p>

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
<p>Review last week’s big three goals. Replace completed goals with new goals. Schedule time in your week to work on these goals. Repeat for your three daily goals.</p> <p>Review your calendar for the week. Are there times you can block off as “white space”? Set a boundary—a calendar appointment—around this time to work uninterrupted on important tasks. This practice increases productivity and allows your schedule to work for you, not against you.</p>	<p>Take a break: Can you fit a micro-break into today’s schedule? Or, simply notice how long you’ve been working today (and how you feel). Research shows that small breaks (outside of lunch and in addition to longer breaks) increase productivity and creativity. Set a timer. Walk away from you desk. Let your mind and body relax.</p> <p>Are you hydrated? Set an alarm in your phone. Hydration improves health and well-being. Make sure you’re supporting yourself with water.</p>	<p>Reflect on your morning. Do you do the same things every day? Is it planned? Or a reaction to everyone else? Consider creating a morning routine. This not only helps productivity but creates a habit around YOU and what is important to YOU at the start of each day. Set aside 10 minutes, plan tomorrow morning, put that plan by your bed. Jumpstart your day.</p> <p>How are you doing? Really? Take two minutes and reflect on your mood, happiness, and life satisfaction. Is there a friend, coworker, or family member you can reach out to and ask, “How are you doing? Really?”</p>	<p>What’s for lunch today? Step away from your desk/computer/phone. Eat lunch. Really, eat lunch. Use this time to take a break from your day (and from technology). Bonus: Invite a friend, coworker, or family to joint (virtually or in person).</p> <p>Reflect on your night. Do you do the same things every day before falling asleep? Is it planned? Or a reaction to everyone and everything else? Consider creating an evening routine. This not only creates a habit around YOU but also helps your mind unwind and separate from the day you had. Set aside 10 minutes, plan your evening, put that plan by your bed. Unwind your evening.</p>	<p>Reflect on this work week. How did it go? What would you like to stop doing? What would you like to start doing? What would you link to continue doing? This method can be used individually and with teams to analyze performance and provide feedback.</p> <p>Between tasks, walk around the floor, building, block. These short breaks allow your mind to rest (and process) and can increase creativity and improve your mood. Even a little movement goes a long way.</p>	<p>What are your values? Consider taking this simple (and free) assessment. Reflect on the findings. Are you living aligned with those values? What can you stop doing, start doing, or continue doing to better align your life with your values?</p> <p>Tell your family and friends about the well-being habits you tried this week. What worked? What didn’t? What will you try again?</p>	<p>As you’re winding down for the day or preparing for the upcoming work week, pull out your journal or a piece of paper or your legal pad and “brain dump”: free write your thoughts, feelings, ideas, dreams, hopes. This “technique” allows you to put “over thinking” to pen and to paper and frees up space in your brain. There are no rules, just let it out.</p> <p>Reflect on your long-term goals. Pick three. Look at your calendar over the next week and month. Plan time, block it off, take action towards these three long-term goals.</p>

Additional Resources for Lawyer and Personal Well-Being

- National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being, <https://lawyerwellbeing.net/> (last visited March 26, 2024).
- Well-Being Toolkit for Lawyers and Legal Employers, https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/lawyer_assistance/ls_colap_well-being_toolkit_for_lawyers_legal_employers.pdf (last visited March 26, 2024).
- Task Force on Wisconsin Lawyer Well-Being, <https://www.wisbar.org/formembers/wislap/pages/wisconsin-lawyer-well-being-task-force.aspx> (last visited March 26, 2024).
- Selfcare Society, <https://www.ilovescs.com/home> (last visited March 26, 2024).
- *The Productivity Pivot*, Jay Harrington
- *50 Lessons for Lawyers*, Nora Riva Bergman
- *50 Lessons for Women Lawyers*, Nora Riva Bergman
- *50 Lessons for Happy Lawyers*, Nora Riva Bergman & Chelsy A. Castro
- *Burnout: The Secret to Unlocking the Stress Cycle*, Emily Nagoski, PhD and Amelia Nagoski, DMA
- *The Gifts of Imperfection*, Brene Brown
- *The How of Happiness*, Sonja Lyubomirsky
- *Essentialism*, Greg McKeown
- *Deep Work* and *Digital Minimalism*, Cal Newport
- “Science of Well-Being,” Yale University, <https://www.coursera.org/learn/the-science-of-well-being> (last visited March 26, 2024)
- The Grace Period (My Podcast)
- The Science of Happiness (Podcast)
- Ten Percent Happier (Podcast)
- The Happiness Lab (Podcast)
- The Anxious Achiever (Podcast)
- Women at Work (Podcast)



50 Lawyer Wellbeing Tips in 50 Minutes

Matt Shin, Owner of Sidebar Counseling, LLC, Wausau

Julie Spoke, Deputy Director at Office of Lawyer Regulation, Madison

Emily Logan Stedman, Partner at Husch Blackwell LLP, Milwaukee

Emily Veenendaal, Psychiatric and Mental Health Nurse Practitioner at Western Wisconsin Health, Baldwin

1



Matt Shin

- Psychotherapist for Wisconsin lawyers
- Former large firm IP prosecutor and litigator, in-house counsel, and solo practitioner
- Find support, research, and other resources at www.sidebarcounseling.com

2



Julie Spoke

- Deputy Director -- Intake, Office of Lawyer Regulation
- Former Litigator -- for 19 years
- Lawyer Wellbeing Advocate at Local and National Level

3



Emily Logan Stedman

- Partner + Commercial Litigator at Husch
Blackwell
- Anxious Achiever -- Exacerbated by Big Law
- From Burned Out to Lawyer Wellbeing Advocate
- Follow Me on LinkedIn and Twitter (X)

4




Emily Veenendaal

- Psychiatric and Mental Health Nurse Practitioner
- Curiosity Driven
- Practices Healthcare Through a Lens of Prevention and Collaboration

5


Wellbeing Generally



“Wellbeing generally is the experience of health, happiness, and prosperity. It includes having good mental health, high life satisfaction, a sense of meaning or purpose, and ability to manage stress. More generally, wellbeing is just feeling well.”
– *Psychology Today*

6

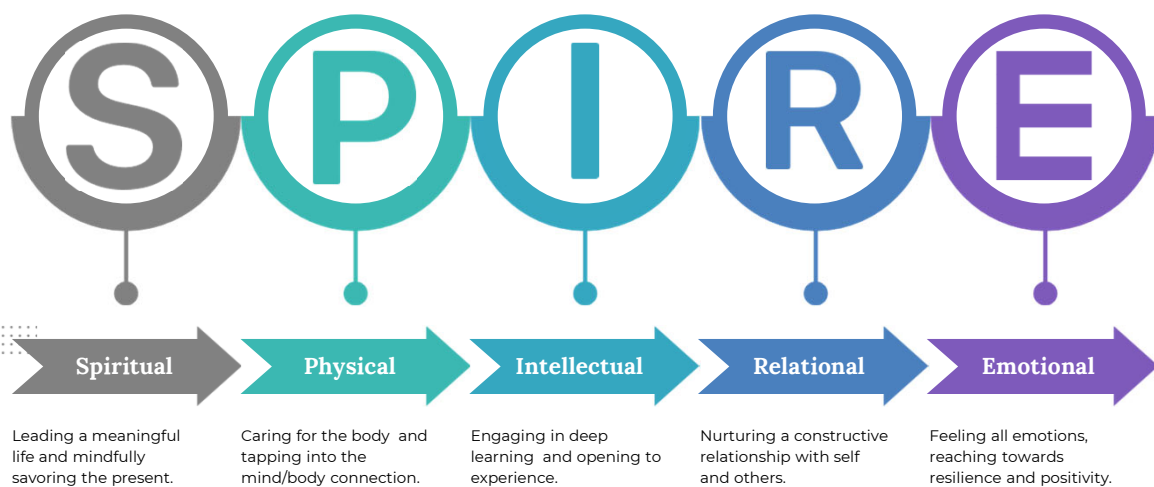
Lawyer Wellbeing



“Lawyer wellbeing is a continuous process whereby lawyers seek to thrive in each of the following areas: emotional health, occupational pursuits, creative and intellectual endeavors, sense of spirituality or greater purpose in life, physical health, and social connections with lawyers. Lawyer wellbeing is part of a lawyer’s ethical duty of competence.” – American Bar Association

7

Wellbeing is About the Whole Person



8



Spiritual

Leading a meaningful life and mindfully savoring the present.

Take a Mindful Walk in Nature -- J. Spoke



Spiritual

Leading a meaningful life and mindfully savoring the present.

A Gratitude Journal -- J. Spoke

GRATITUDE JOURNAL

3 THINGS I'M GRATEFUL FOR TODAY...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

TOMORROW I LOOK FORWARD TO...

WHAT I'M EXCITED ABOUT...

TOMORROW IS A NEW DAY AND ANOTHER FRESH START AFTER A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP.



Physical

Caring for the body and tapping into the mind/body connection.

Establish a Morning Routine -- J. Spoke

The 20/20/20 Formula
DECONSTRUCTION

- MOVE**
 - Exercise, Learn, Hydrate, Breath Deeply
- REFLECT**
 - Journal, Meditate, Plan, Pray, Contemplate
- GROW**
 - Review Goals, Read Books, Consume Audiobooks, Listen to Podcasts, Study Online

Start your day with this formula and spend 20 minutes to each phase. Your life will change if you continuously practice it for 3 months.

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Physical

Caring for the body and tapping into the mind/body connection.

Mobilize Joints -- M. Shin



Engage your full range of movement.

- Quick easy win
- Promotes circulation
- Can be done anywhere
- Feels good

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Physical

Caring for the body and tapping into the mind/body connection.

Sleep -- J. Spoke

The Ideal Bedtime Routine



- 01 Make your room comfy: A dark, quiet, and cool room is conducive to sleep.
- 02 Ditch the **gadgets**: Avoid phones, tablets, and computers at least an hour before bedtime.
- 03 No **caffeine**: Avoid large meals, caffeine, and alcohol close to bedtime, as they can disrupt sleep. Opt for a light, healthy snack if you're hungry.
- 04 Set a **bedtime**: Set a Try to go to bed at the same time every day, even on weekends.
- 05 Engage in **relaxing activities**: Read a book, take a warm bath, practice deep breathing exercises, or gentle stretches.

VENNGAGE

Read the full blogpost at: venngage.com/blog/bedtime-routine

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Physical

Caring for the body and tapping into the mind/body connection.

Restorative Breaks -- J. Spoke

GOT TIME FOR AN EXERCISE SNACK?



YOGA
10 MIN



STRETCHING
5 MIN



PUSH UPS
5 MIN

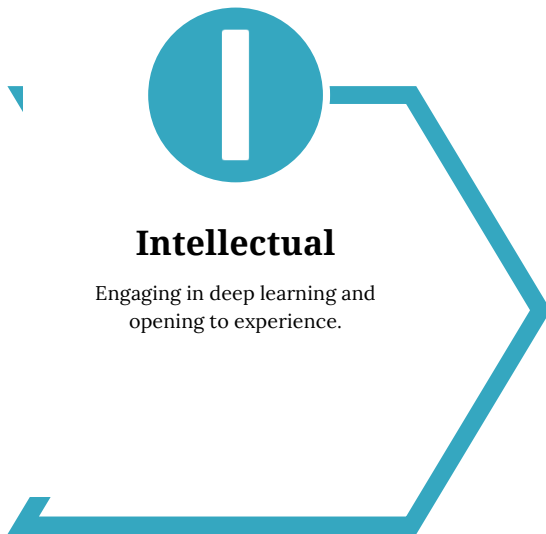


AIR SQUATS
5 MIN



WALKING
10 MIN

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Intellectual

Engaging in deep learning and opening to experience.

Time Blocking -- E. Stedman

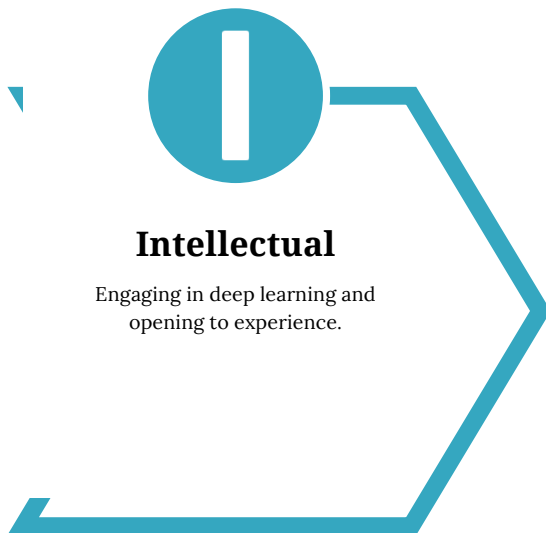
Divide your day and week into blocks for specific tasks or activities.

01 - TASKS

02 - ACTIVITY

03 - DEEP WORK

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Intellectual

Engaging in deep learning and opening to experience.

Opening and Closing Rituals -- E. Stedman

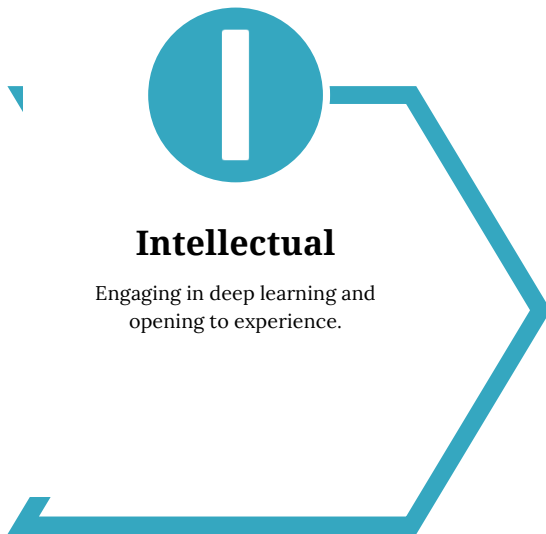
OPENING

- Clear Space
- Review Calendar
- Triage Emails
- Update To-Do List

CLOSING

- Tidy Space
- Review Day's Completed Tasks
- Enter Time
- Create Tomorrow's To-Do List
- Review Tomorrow's Calendar

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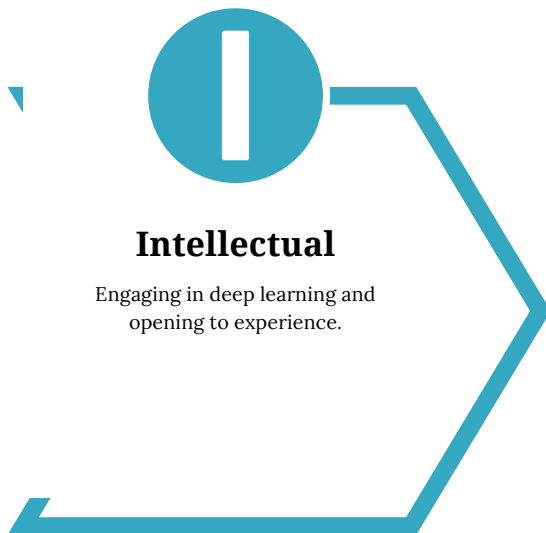
Intellectual

Engaging in deep learning and opening to experience.

Learn to Say No. -- E. Stedman

- A yes in one area is a no in another.
- Build autonomy.
- The “Yes, but . . .”

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Intellectual

Engaging in deep learning and opening to experience.

Learn to Delegate. -- E. Stedman



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Relational

Nurturing a constructive relationship with self and others.

Get to Know Yourself -- E. Veenendaal

- What drives me?
- Journaling without set expectations of what to write.
- Try new things--how does it feel?

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Relational

Nurturing a constructive relationship with self and others.

Increase Social Engagement at Work -- E. Veenendaal

- Friends at Work = Increased Engagement and Productivity
- Schedule Social Time
- Mingle with Other Departments

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Relational

Nurturing a constructive relationship with self and others.

Be an Empathetic Listener -- E. Veenendaal

- Be Intentional in Listening
- WAIT: Why Am I Talking?

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Relational

Nurturing a constructive relationship with self and others.

Increase Opportunities for Generosity -- E. Veenendaal

- Volunteer
- Small Ways to Give to Others
- Generous of Time

22

Stop Feeling Selfish for “Me Time” -- E. Veenendaal



Relational

Nurturing a constructive relationship with self and others.

- Prioritize Yourself
- Schedule “Me Time”
- Increase Capacity for Others

23

Find Meaning -- M. Shin



Emotional

Feeling all emotions, reaching towards resilience and positivity.

Your life needs to be meaningful.

- Emotional depletion is a greater burnout risk than high workload.
- Meaningful experiences outside of work matter.

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Emotional

Feeling all emotions, reaching towards resilience and positivity.

Let it Happen -- M. Shin

Your emotions can last 2-4 minutes.

- Suppressing, ruminating, re-exposure, avoiding, etc. extends their duration.
- When appropriate, let the emotion run its course.

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Emotional

Feeling all emotions, reaching towards resilience and positivity.

Disconnect -- M. Shin

It's one of the best means of recovery.

- Could be a week, a weekend, a day, an hour, or 30 minutes.
- Plan for it, defend it, and embrace it.

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Emotional

Feeling all emotions, reaching towards resilience and positivity.

Be Flexible -- M. Shin

Stop thinking in all-or-nothing terms.

- Slow down.
- Harvest your wins.
- Experience your losses and grow from them.

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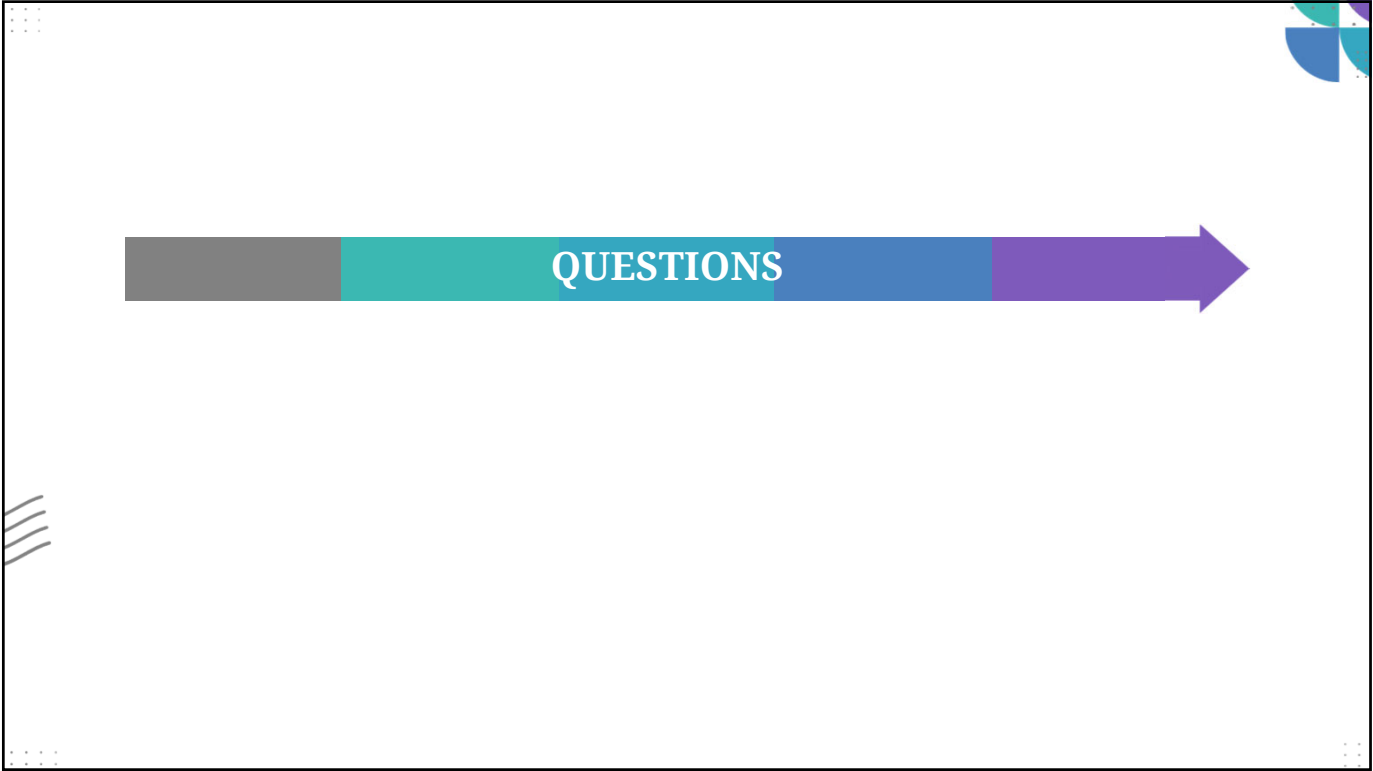
Emotional

Feeling all emotions, reaching towards resilience and positivity.

Note Your Feelings -- E. Stedman

- Your brain will not shut off.
- Your thoughts will not stop.
- Meditation is about mindfulness, meaning awareness.
- Noting interrupts patterns.

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