



Attorneys: Finding Your Bliss, and Why Does “Why” Matter?

By Terrie S. Wheeler, MBC

I know your law practice is demanding. You put pressure on yourself to not just succeed, but to be the best (your key practice area) lawyer there ever was in the history of the world! Generally, people who choose to go into a profession like the law have a deep need to be successful. You worked hard, put yourself through law school, then plunged headlong into building a lucrative and personally rewarding practice. But it's important to stay connected to one vital part of your psyche that will sustain you now and into the future. It's the big question of *why* you are doing what you do.

Why Matters

As you become more and more successful, ask yourself, “Why am I doing this?” Is it to make a lot of money? Have more

time for travel? To provide for my family? Why you get up every day and go into the office to work hard should directly correlate with *why* you are doing it all in the first place. Work for the sake of work gets old in a hurry. There must be another reason – a driving passion or a burning desire to achieve – to reach the pinnacle of your profession, and have others seek you out for your sage wisdom and advice. I've always been of a mind that the reason I work so hard is to provide openings of time where I can enjoy the fruits of my hard work – to experience my own bliss.

You Need Bliss in Your Life

Bliss is as defined in the dictionary, so it must be a real phenomenon, not just something we all aspire to, but never quite reach. The dictionary defines bliss as “per-

fect happiness; utter joy or contentment; pleasure, delight.” Think for a moment about the last time you felt bliss in your life, and remember that bliss can be found in moments. Maybe it was sitting around the fireplace with your family, or cooking dinner with your partner. Maybe it was that hiking trip to the top of the world where your view of the lake and snow-covered mountains filled you with a sense of utter joy and inner peace. Wouldn't you love to experience this level of happiness each day? I think most of us would. But what happens? We allow the stress and pressures of “being a great lawyer,” to get in the way of our bliss. But what's the best news of all? It's that if you remind yourself *why* you are working so hard, you will be so much closer to letting yourself experience bliss each day.

Tips for a Blissful Workday

Not every one of these tips is designed to replicate that trip to the top of the world, but it will help you keep your mind focused on why you work so hard:



- **Set your computer background to a picture that inspires you.** Mine happens to be the picture at the bottom of this page.



- **Don't walk into a sterile office.** Personalize your work space with things that make you happy including pictures from trips, of your partner, your children, or works of art your children created just for you. When you walk into your office, you should feel you are walking into an oasis – your own personal space. Everywhere you look you should see something that will make you smile, not just the diplomas you have hanging on your wall. Just looking around my office now, I see family memories, the beautiful vase my siblings gave me when I finished my master's degree, lots of books and other artifacts given to me by special people. A little reclined Kewpie doll sits front and center in front of my monitors, reminding me every day to chill out and relax.



- **Mind map anyone?** Bear with me here. I know we're not in grade school. Consider a family project of gathering old magazines and spending time cutting out pictures and phrases that mean something to you – that resonate with you. Take those photos and paste them onto a piece of cardboard. Display this mind map either at work or in your home office to remind yourself why you do what you do.



- **Plan your day and work your plan.**

I think a lot of busy professionals become overwhelmed with the sheer mass of work they must accomplish. Make a realistic plan of what you want to do in a given day, and know when enough is enough. The longer you work, the longer your colleagues will expect you to stay. Draw lines and boundaries for yourself. You want to work to live, not live to work.



- **Breath.** While you may not be an advanced yogi, deep breathing is a proven technique to help you relax. If the stress is mounting, close your door, then close your eyes and take a slow, deep breath in through your nose. Hold that breath for a couple of seconds before slowly exhaling. Repeat at least five times. I promise you will have a better outlook on life.



- **See the light.** There are many of us who deal with some form of seasonal affective disorder (named SAD for a reason). As the days get shorter, if you find yourself losing energy, feeling tired or even lethargic at times, the answer might be as simple as using light therapy in your work space. Light therapy replicates the rays of the sun and helps you through those cold and dark winter months.

While most of my articles are about specific things you can do to market your law practice, my message is for you to recommit every day to *why* you are working so hard. Don't assume that working long hours will translate into anything other than not seeing your family (guilt, guilt, guilt), and feeling left out of the biggest reason you should be working – to *enjoy* your life.



Terrie S. Wheeler, MBC, is the founder and president of Professional Services Marketing LLC. For over 30 years, Terrie has worked with individual lawyers who want to grow. Much of Terrie's work focuses on the "inner lawyer," by helping lawyers achieve and maintain the right attitude to succeed. She earned her master's degree from the University of St. Thomas. Need help or motivation? You can reach Terrie at Terrie@psm-marketing.com or (320) 358-1000.