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Grow Your Gratitude

Because how you think about yourself and everything around you is more important to your happiness than your actual objective circumstances, increasing your attention to all the good things in your life can significantly enhance your happiness. Multiple studies have shown the positive power of gratitude (e.g., Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Lyubomirsky, Sheldon et al., 2005; Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006). People who are consistently grateful are happier; more energetic; and less depressed, anxious, and envious (Lyubomirsky, 2008).

THREE GOOD THINGS

One well-tested activity is to take time once a week to write down three or more things for which you're grateful. Studies have shown that people who do this activity for six weeks markedly increase their happiness (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon et al., 2005). It's also important to vary your gratitude activities so that you don't get bored. The good effects can wear off if you do the same activity all the time. Below is a list of different gratitude activities for you to try. Pick one day each week to do your gratitude activity (e.g., Thankful Thursdays), and then pick an activity. Try one for three or more weeks and then switch to another.

GRATITUDE JOURNAL

Once a week, think about everything – large and small – for which you are thankful (e.g., was well prepared for a meeting, family member made a delicious dinner, tulips are blooming). Think about things you're good at, advantages you've had, people who care about you and have touched your life. Then pick three to five things and write a brief note about them. Try out a gratitude journal website or smartphone app (e.g., Gratitude Journal by Happy Tapper), which will send you regular reminders.

APPRECIATIVE ART

Engage in something artistic to express your gratitude to another. Draw or paint a picture, make a collage, sculpt with clay, or write a poem, a song, or a story. Studies indicate that art creation boosts mood (Dalebroux, Goldstein, & Winner, 2008). Evidence suggests that art-making that depicted something happy was more effective at improving short-term mood than using art to vent negative emotions (Dalebroux et al., 2008).

Evidence also indicates that a variety of different art-making activities (e.g., drawing, painting, collage-making, clay work, etc.) may reduce anxiety (Sandmire, Gorham, Rankin & Grimm, 2012). So engaging in an appreciative art activity may give you benefits both from artistic engagement and from your grateful thinking.

GRATITUDE PHOTO COLLAGE

Taking and sharing "selfies" is popular, but try this, too. For a week, keep a lookout for everyday things for which you're grateful (e.g., your dog, a warm garage in winter, dinner with friends, your family) and take photos of them. At the end of the week, post them all on your favorite social networking website with fun notes. Research shows that sharing good things with others (the more the better) actually increases your enjoyment of them (Gable, Reis, et al, 2004; Gable & Gosnell, 2011). So share your photos with friends and explain why they represent something for which you're grateful.

GRATITUDE LETTER

Think about the people for whom you feel grateful – a family member, old friends, a colleague, a good boss. Write a letter expressing your gratitude and, if you can, visit that person and read it aloud or call them on the phone. Describe in detail what they did for you and how they affected your life. You might even write a letter to people who are helpful everyday but whom you don't know – e.g., postal carriers, garbage removers, bus drivers, politicians, authors. You might also choose to write a letter and not deliver it.

One study showed that participants who spent 15 minutes writing gratitude letters once a week over an eight-week period became happier during and after the study (Lyubomirsky, 2008).

GRATITUDE JAR

Designate a jar or other container as the Gratitude Jar and invite others to drop notes in whenever someone does something helpful. Then read the notes aloud once a week. Use this activity with your coworkers, family, friends – any group that spends significant time together.

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32ND ANNUAL DINNER FOR LAWYERS AND JUDGES IN RECOVERY FRIDAY, MAY 15, 2020 • 6:00 P.M. TO 9:30 P.M. HOTEL MONACO, PORTLAND, OREGON

Watch for more information in the next issue of in Sight. If you would like an email reminder about the dinner, email jeanneu@oaap.org.

Life Never Stops

Life is good and life is full, but there are days when it is just hard to stay focused and days when it is hard to find appreciation for the richness that is my life. And that is what it looks like to be on this journey following my divorce. But with intention, strength, sometimes vulnerability and support, I am mostly doing well.

When my ex decided to leave our long-term marriage, it was first a shock, but then, upon reflection, perhaps not so shocking at all. The relationship had fallen into unhealthy patterns, and it was best for the two of us to part ways.

In order to recover, I needed to know what I was recovering from. I also needed to do lots of work, so I signed myself up for therapy and began a new look at old patterns. I strengthened bonds with friends and gave up some unhealthy friendships, too. Being intentional about using my free time became a priority as some of my free time was being taken up by logistics of divorce, i.e., separating out our stuff, talking to lawyers/mediators, and processing loss. I had less time and energy for all of the people in my circle and soon realized that I needed to clarify and prioritize friendships that were mutual and fulfilling and with give and take. I cultivated some friendships into closer bonds and then was able to give up those relationships that weren't as healthy. There just wasn't space for me to give attention to as many people when I had a full-time job and needed space to process my own emotions and crossroads. I needed to take care of my brain, body, and soul and focus on intentionally eating well and exercising when possible. I tried to give myself breaks when I ate the wrong thing or couldn't get out of bed to do my morning workout. I nourished myself with good friends and lots of travel and activities.

Grief was overwhelming at first, but soon I was able to contain it. I needed to grieve the loss of marriage, family structure, and the death of the dream of our future together. I kept thinking, we built so much, how do I dismantle it? I soon learned that I could keep the good memories and knowledge and find places in my heart/head for the unpleasant ones. I processed grief by allowing space to cry and remember, by talking with friends and a good therapist, and by even talking with my ex.

While the grief was ebbing and flowing, I needed to sort through where I wanted to live, how I was going to spend my time, and what things large and small, from furniture to photos to knickknacks, that I wanted to keep. The sorting process took time and sometimes expertise. I used a realtor friend to explore living options and read a book about clearing space. I also asked my friends for help, which caused me to be vulnerable, as I was accustomed to being the helper.

I needed to physically change things externally as well as internally. I created a new look to my home and had a girlfriend party where I gave away stuff to them, they helped me pack and clear, and then we gave items to charity and the dump. I saved stuff in my crawl space that were mementos, figuring I could re-sort later. In the end, I reclaimed my house and made it my home.

The reclaiming didn't stop there. I started to intentionally go to places "we" used to go but went with friends and made sure they helped me do some small ritual to shift the place for me so that I would feel renewed appreciation for places and make new memories.

I have learned to discern what to do next by training myself to answer the question honestly as to what do I want and need for me today? I try not to overdo it and forgive myself when I do. When I have tough moments, I am quiet, go for a walk, remind myself how fortunate I am to have a good life, job, friends, and family.

I am currently working on new dreams for the future, too. I like to travel and began planning and enjoying more trips. I am able to explore possibilities for where I want to live and what I would like to do one day if/when I retire. At first, I could not even see beyond today. And speaking of today, I try to live intentionally and presently most days, too.

By Anonymous



3

Technology and Mental Health:

How Lawyers Are Affected by Devices and Social Media and What to Do About It

A few years ago, I was sitting in a partner's office discussing what he described as the "good ole days." He told me that without question the thing that made practicing law take a nosedive in terms of lifestyle and stress was the invention of the fax machine. I was amazed to hear him describe those days and to consider how the fax and other technologies have changed practicing law in the past few decades.

If you really think about it, everything is different today. Prior to the modern era, we spent thousands of years being outside most of the time and hunting or gathering or doing physical work – not sitting sedentary at a desk stressing out over deadlines and paperwork.

Now, Americans sit behind desks and stare at screens for an average of 10 hours and 39 minutes each day. Americans are watching more than seven hours and 50 minutes per day of television per household.

Likewise, people are averaging 24 hours per week on the Internet³ and three to four hours per day on smartphones.⁴

SPEAKING OF PROCRASTINATION

In a professional world of deadlines and time-sensitive commitments, habits of procrastination and avoidance often plague the lives of many otherwise productive lawyers. Beginning in February 2020, OAAP will present a workshop focusing on learning about procrastination and developing techniques, strategies, and healthy practices to successfully address it. The workshop is free and confidential. Space is limited. The 4-session workshop will meet on Tuesdays, 12:00 - 1:15pm. It will be facilitated by OAAP Attorney Counselor Doug Querin. To reserve a place, contact Doug Querin at 503.226.1057 or 1.800.321.6227, ext. 12, or at DougQ@oaap.org.

For lawyers, a group already burdened with extraordinary anxiety and mental health challenges, the impact of these uses of technology could be the straw that breaks the camel's back. Lawyers already have a high rate of depression, as compared with other occupational groups in the U.S.⁵ We also experience depression 3.6 times as often as the general population.⁶ Furthermore, we have staggering substance use numbers (21% of all attorneys and 32% of those under 30). In 2015, 46% of 13,000 attorneys admitted struggling with depression while practicing law, and most attorneys (61%) have suffered symptoms of serious anxiety disorders.⁷

RESEARCH: HOW TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA AFFECT MENTAL HEALTH

Several recent studies have examined the impact of technology and social media on mental health. The results are alarming. A 2010 study established a relationship between depression and text messaging and emailing.8 There is also a link between Facebook and depression due to increased social comparison and envy or disappointment in one's status.9

Lawyers are the ultimate multitaskers, but research indicates that multitasking is very damaging to our mental health and can be a cause of depression.¹⁰

Nokia conducted a study back in 2011 that found the average person looks at his or her smartphone 150 times per day¹¹ and there is little doubt this is worse for lawyers.

Consider these statistics regarding technology:

- 58% of adults and 68% of young adults do not go an hour without checking their smartphones;
- 73% feel panicked when they misplace their device;
- 54% check it in bed; 39% check it while using the toilet; and

• 30% check it while dining with others. 12

A 2011 study showed that young adults averaged 109.5 text messages per day and over 3,200 per month.¹³ In 2014, adult Americans sent an average of 32 text messages per day. Three years later, teens and adults sent 94 text messages per day.¹⁴ We clearly have a serious problem.

Time Spent on Screens per Week

- 26-36 Hours on Television
- 19-28 Hours on Smartphone
- 25+ Hours on a PC in the Office

WEEKLY: 71-89+ Hours Staring at Screens

DAILY: 10-13+ Hours Staring at Screens

FIVE STRATEGIES FOR LAWYERS TO MAKE HEALTHY CHANGES TO THEIR USE OF TECHNOLOGY

1. Set Limits

Setting some boundaries around the use of technology may be the most effective first step to establishing reasonable limits to the impact technology has on an attorney's mental health:

Check email two to three times per day: If possible, check email when you get to work, around the lunch hour, and again toward the end of the day. This is a great way to disconnect and become more productive while also giving your mind a break from the technology overload.

Limit social media to 10 minutes per platform per day: One recent study indicated that limiting use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc., to 10 minutes per day per platform decreases your sense of loneliness. ¹⁵

Monitor your use with Screen Time or another application: As ironic as it sounds, in the case of making change in the overuse of technology, the Screen Time app may just be a good thing.

2. Disconnect

While setting limits may be helpful, cutting technology off completely for periods of time is essential to good mental health.

OAAP/OWLS
13TH ANNUAL
WOMEN'S
WELLNESS RETREAT
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Oregon Women Lawyers and the OAAP will hold the 13th annual Women's Wellness Retreat for lawyers and judges on April 17 and 18, 2020, at Sunriver Resort, Sunriver, Oregon. Watch for more information in the next *in*Sight and in broadcast emails, or contact OAAP Attorney Counselor Shari R. Pearlman, LCSW, JD, at 503.226.1057 or 1.800.321.6227, ext. 14, or at sharip@oaap.org.

Use Do Not Disturb: When you go to the gym or for a walk, use it. Give yourself a break from the constant interruptions from text messages, emails, and updates.

Turn off notifications: A lot of lawyers do not even know that all the "breaking news," texts, Facebook notifications, etc., that pop up on the locked screen of a smartphone can be easily turned off. On an iPhone (and most Android phones), you can simply go to settings and select notifications and turn "off" notifications for any application you choose.

Do not charge your phone beside bed: Lawyers can't sleep, remember something they forgot, and end up on a rabbit trail and losing more sleep. Try to charge your phone in a place that would require you to get out of bed to look at it.

Continued on page 6

3. Manage the Apps

Instead of trying to "moderate" your use of apps, you can delete the applications you waste the most time on, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Likewise, you can improve your smartphone experience by installing healthy apps, such as some of the self-care apps like Calm, Headspace, MyFitnessPal, etc.

4. Unfollow the Unhealthy

Everyone that I know has at least one or two friends on Facebook who are train wrecks. Instead of being inundated with negative messages from these people on a daily basis, unfollow them! Replace them by following new resources and people that are uplifting.

5. Plug in to Self-Care

Do you deserve 4% of your life? Four percent of your life is about one hour per day. Most lawyers I know do not take an hour per day for self-care. If we do not put it on our calendar, we usually exhaust all of our time and energy taking care of our clients and our families. For these reasons, I challenge attorneys to calendar three things a week for self-care and to explore some of the many things that can make a difference in an attorney's wellness, such as mindfulness,

MOVING FORWARD: SUPPORT GROUP FOR AFTER A RELATIONSHIP ENDS

Beginning in January 2020, the OAAP will offer a support group in Portland for lawyers experiencing the challenges of relationship endings. Participants will process loss, healing, and new beginnings. This 8-session group will meet at the OAAP, 520 SW Yamhill St., Ste. 1050, Portland, OR 97204, from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Wednesdays. The group will be facilitated by OAAP Attorney Counselor Shari R. Pearlman, LCSW, JD. There is no fee, but advance registration is required. Attendance by video chat/phone might be possible.

To participate in this group, set up a meeting with Shari R. Pearlman at 503.226.1057, ext. 14 or sharip@oaap.org.

gratitude journaling, service work, exercise, creative art, and more.

By Chris Ritter, Director of the Texas Lawyers' Assistance Program

This article was originally published by the American Immigration Lawyers Association. Reprinted with permission.

As we continue to strive to find a healthy balance in our lives in how we relate to technology, it is important to remember that this is only one area in which lawyers struggle. If you or a colleague are a lawyer, law student, or judge and need help, the Oregon Attorney Assistance Program is available to provide guidance and support. It's confidential and free. Call us at 1.800.321.6227.

Notes:

- 1. See Jacqueline Howard, "Americans Devote More Than 10 Hours a Day to Screen Time," *CNN* (July 29, 2016, 4:22 PM), https://www.cnn.com/2016/06/30/health/americans-screen-time-nielsen/index.html.
- 2. See Alex C. Madrigal, "When Did TV Watching Peak?," *The Atlantic* (May 30, 2018), https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2018/05/when-did-tv-watching-peak/561464/.
- 3. See Charles Hymas, "A Decade of Smartphones: We Now Spend an Entire Day Every Week Online," *The Daily Telegraph* (Aug. 2, 2018, 12:01 AM), https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/08/01/decade-smart-phones-now-spend-entire-day-every-week-online/.
 - 4. Id.
- 5. See Lawyrence S. Krieger & Kennon M. Sheldon, "What Makes Lawyers Happy? Transcending

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6. See William Eaton, et al., "Occupations and the Prevalence of Major Depressive Disorder," 32 *J. Occupational Med.* 1079, 1085 tbl. 3 (1990).

7. Id.

- 8. See Mohamed Farouk Allam, "Letter to the Editor, Excessive Internet Use and Depression: Cause-Effect Bias?," 43 Psychopathology 5 (2010).
- 9. See Helmut Appel, Jan Crusius & Alexander L. Gerlach, "Social Comparison, Envy, and Depression on Facebook: A Study Looking at the Effects of High Comparison Standards on Depressed Individuals," 34 *J. of Social and Clinical Psychology* 4, 277-289 (2015).
- 10. See L.D. Rosen, et al., "Is Facebook Creating 'iDisorders'? The Link Between Clinical Symptoms of Psychiatric Disorders and Technology Use, Attitudes and Anxiety," 29 *Computers in Human Behavior* 1243-1254 (2013).
- 11. See Ben Spencer, "Mobile users can't leave their phone alone for six minutes and check it up to 150 times a day," *The Daily Mail* (Feb. 10, 2013, 2:49 PM), http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2276752/Mobile-users-leave-phone-minutes-check-150-times-day.html.
- 12. See C.S. Andreassen, T. Torsheim, G.S. Brunborg & S. Pallesen, "Development of a Facebook Addiction Scale," 110 *Psychological Reports* 2, 501-517 (2012).
- 13. See Aaron Smith, "How Americans Use Text Messaging," *Pew Research Center Internet & Technology* (Sept. 19 2011), https://www.pewinternet.org/2011/09/19/how-americans-use-text-messaging/.
- 14. See Kenneth Burke, "How Many Texts Do People Send Every Day (2018)?," Text Request (November 2018), https://www.textrequest.com/blog/how-many-texts-people-send-per-day/.
- 15. See Melissa G. Hung, Rachel Marx, Courtney Lipson & Jordyn Young, "No More FOMO: Limiting Social Media Decreases Loneliness and Depression," 37 *J. of Social and Clinical Psychology* 10, 751-768 (2018).

RETIREMENT TIPS

Approximately one of every five practicing Oregon lawyers is age 60 or over. The graying of our profession in Oregon is largely mirrored by that of the profession nationally. For those considering retirement, there are the inevitable questions - When is the right time, how best to prepare, who to talk with, how to find meaningful activities in retirement - and myriad others. One of the most helpful starting places for those considering retirement is hearing from other lawyers who have already retired. To this end, we recommend you take a look at inSight's March 2019 article, "Perspectives on Retirement" (https://oaap. org/perspectives-on-retirement/), where a number of Oregon lawyers have shared their retirement experiences.

Douglas S. Querin, JD, LPC, CADC I OAAP Attorney Counselor

PROGRESSING TOWARD RETIREMENT

In spring 2020, the OAAP will be facilitating a group to assist lawyers preparing for retirement, examine ways to wind down, and find creative ways of planning for the next phase of their lives. Participating attorneys can expect to look at important retirementrelated issues and topics, including developing new perspectives on their lawyer self-identity, the art of letting go, visions for the future, managing emotions, and creating a selfcare plan. This six-session group will meet on Thursdays, 3:00-4:15 p.m. The workshop is free and confidential. Space is limited. The workshop will be facilitated by OAAP Attorney Counselor Douglas Querin, JD, LPC, CADC I. To reserve a space or get additional information, please contact Doug (503.226.1057, ext.12 / DouglasQ@oaap.org).

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FINDING MEANINGFUL WORK

The OAAP holds a periodic six-session networking and support group for lawyers making job or career transitions called "Finding Meaningful Work." The sessions assist lawyers in creating a personalized job search plan; developing a mission statement and elevator speech; learning and practicing networking skills; and honing job search skills. The group is facilitated by OAAP Attorney Counselors Shari R. Pearlman (Gregory), LCSW, JD and Karen A. Neri, JD, MA-MCFC Candidate. To participate, please contact Shari at 503.226.1057, ext. 14, or at sharip@oaap.org, or Karen at ext. 11, or at karenn@oaap.org.

CAREER SELF-ASSESSMENT

The OAAP attorney counselors can help you assess your career path and career opportunities. If you would like information about self-assessment, contact OAAP Attorney Counselor Shari R. Pearlman (Gregory), LCSW, JD, at 503.226.1057, ext. 14, or at sharip@oaap.org.

LAWYERS IN TRANSITION PRESENTATION CALENDAR

A "Lawyers in Transition" guest speaker is featured quarterly on Thursdays at noon at the OAAP, 520 SW Yamhill, Suite 1050, Portland, Oregon 97204. These presentations are open for anyone to attend. See the calendar below for scheduled speakers.

April 2, 2020 Speaker will be announced via broadcast email

For current information on upcoming Lawyers in Transition speakers and topics, please visit the OAAP website at www.oaap.org and click on Events.