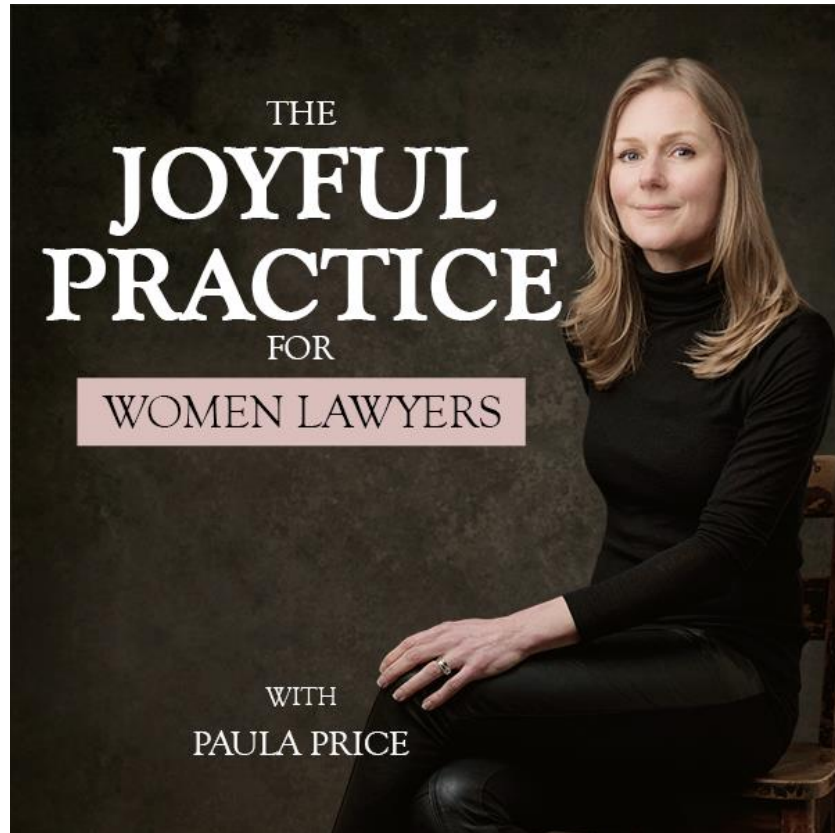


Ep #3: How to Find the Joy in Your Work



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Paula Price

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You are listening to *The Joyful Practice for Women Lawyers* podcast episode number three.

Welcome to *The Joyful Practice for Women Lawyers* Podcast. I'm your host Paula Price, litigator turned certified executive coach. This podcast was created to empower women lawyers just like you to create a life and practice you love. It's your time away from the daily hustle to focus on taking care of you. To see where you're stuck, figure out what you truly want, and learn coaching tools that will help you define and create success on your own terms.

If you're over the overwhelm, done with putting out fires, and ready to create a life and practice that brings you more joy, you're in the right place. Ready for today's episode? Let's dive in.

Hello, and welcome back to *The Joyful Practice for Women Lawyers* podcast. For those of you who are tuning in for the first time, thank you for joining. It's nice to meet you. My name is Paula Price. I'm a lawyer turned certified executive coach, and the host of this podcast. I am so excited to have all of you here today because this is an episode that I think really lays the foundation for a lot of the work that I do with lawyers, and a lot of what we're going to be talking about going forward in this podcast.

Now before I get started on today's episode, I just wanted to circle back to a couple of the things that we touched on in the first two episodes. To give you a little sense of what's going on in my life, we had the unthinkable happen yesterday. The unthinkable being our internet went out. If any of you are working from home or you have a practice that is totally dependent on your connection to the outside world via your internet connection, then you'll understand how weird it feels to be disconnected from others using the internet.

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So what was interesting about this is it really invited me to adopt some of the strategies that I spoke about in some of the earlier episodes. Number one, you'll recall we talked about having a bad day. One of the strategies that I recommend there was accepting reality. Right? Not fighting with what's going on around you.

When this happened, when the internet went down, and I realized this was not just a temporary thing. That we had to have somebody physically come to our house and fix it, you know that did disrupt pretty much everything that I had on my calendar. I was able to look at it in a sense of this is how it's supposed to happen. There's no point in arguing with reality because as Byron Katie says, you will only lose 100% of the time.

The second thing that was really interesting about this experience was that it really put my time management strategies to the test in quite a positive way. I mentioned in our last episode that I have some fairly disciplined time management practices for myself. I typically use a paper calendar for the work that I do. That turned out to be really handy yesterday when I could no longer access the internet. I'm glad I wasn't relying on a Google type calendar, not that there's anything wrong with that. If that works for you, by all means go ahead.

In the circumstance that I had yesterday, it was really great that I could just look at my calendar. What this internet outage required me to do was to shuffle a few things around. It turned out to work actually even better than what I had scheduled for myself before. It means I had to cancel a few meetings that I had today that were Zoom meetings. I didn't see how I could do those without creating a lot of extra work. So I postponed them. That opened up some space to do some other things that didn't require me to be connected, such as recording this podcast for you. So that is a huge highlight for me. I'm so excited to be here with you.

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What was interesting about that was because I already had my calendar ready, I had my action items ready. I knew exactly what I had on my to do list. I was constrained to the activities that did not require an internet connection. Now, there's a lot on my to do list that does require an internet connection. All those activities have been pushed to the afternoon today. But it's Friday morning, and I am sitting here enjoying this conversation that we're having. It is working really well.

So if this happens to you, you have a disruption in your day. You have a file that all of a sudden becomes an urgent file. The wonderful thing about having your schedule created ahead of time is you know exactly what's on your plate. You know exactly what needs to be shuffled, and then you can go ahead and do that shuffling in a way that serves you best. So I just wanted to close the loop on that. Because I was thinking of you as I went through my day yesterday and how this might be something that would be a fun update to our previous discussions.

Now today I am going to talk to you about this concept of infinite joy, the key to infinite joy. That might sound like an impossible dream to you. A lot of the clients that I work with come to me, and the reason that they have come to me is that they are not happy with something that is going on in their practice. This can look so different depending on what your practice looks like.

For some lawyers who are just starting out, they may have had some experience—maybe it's a few months, maybe it's a few years—in private practice. Maybe they've tried something else outside of private practice. Maybe they've gone in house. Maybe they've tried some law adjacent thing. What is challenging them, what is troubling for them is that they just don't feel happy. They aren't able to find the joy in their work.

For others it might be that you are in your work, and you like it, but you don't feel happy. You come to me because you're trying to figure out how

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to be more confident, or you're trying to figure out how to deal with a specific issue. Often there's this underlying sense of unease. The joyful practice, the philosophy that I want to share with you today, I think really helps to contextualize these things and help you reach that level of happiness in your work that you are striving for.

Now when I work with lawyers, I find that there are three things that hold them back. I'm going to talk about those. As I go through those, I invite you to think about how that might apply to you in your practice. So this first thing is that maybe you are looking for happiness on the other side of a milestone.

I think, and I can totally relate to this, as lawyers, we are conditioned to looking for that next accomplishment, that next achievement. It starts young. Maybe you were a really good student when you were in grade school, and that translated into high school. Maybe you were out there getting the straight A's and doing all the volunteer work and sitting on the committees.

That translated into law school as well. You found yourself at law school. You were getting good marks. You got into an excellent law firm. You joined them. You progressed up the ranks. Maybe you keep looking at your future and saying, "When I reach that next milestone, then I'll be happy. When I get a position at a law firm, I'll be happy." When you're in the law firm, you might think, "When I become a partner, I'll be happy." Maybe when you're partner, you're thinking, "When I become the practice group leader, then I will be happy."

You may keep looking at these milestones ahead of you and saying, "I will be happy when." It may be that these are smaller milestones. It may be that you're in the middle of a trial or a really complicated court application. You think, "When this thing is done, I'm going to feel so happy."

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Or maybe it's your personal life. Maybe you are at a stage where you're looking to find a romantic partner and you think, "Oh if only I could find a romantic partner. Then my life would be so much better; then I'll be happy." Or you want to have children. "Oh, when I have children, then I'll be happy." There's nothing wrong with thinking this way except for it puts happiness on the other side of some event that hasn't happened yet.

What often happens is when you arrive in that moment. So you get the promotion, you get the job, you finish the application, you have the children, you may find yourself wondering, "Okay well I did all this work to get here. Now I have done this thing. I have this thing." You may be really excited about it for some period of time, but you can't ride that wave of happiness forever. At some point it dissipates, and then you're left wondering why you're not happy. It happens. If this happens to you, if this sounds familiar, it's totally normal and you're not alone. But I would suggest this may not be the recipe for a joyful practice.

So another area where this can be a challenge, where lawyers, I find, often struggle is looking for external validation as a source of happiness. This comes up in so many different ways. It may be, for example, that you are trying to please your parents. This comes up with lawyers that I work with. It's really interesting. I've worked with lawyers who are at the beginning of their careers who have followed a certain path because that's what was expected culturally in their family. So their parents set the expectations, they followed along. They chose law because it was checking all the boxes.

I also have worked with lawyers who are more senior. A particular woman that I worked with who is nearing retirement age told me a story about how at the very beginning of her career before she went to law school, she was given a choice by her parents of becoming a doctor, an engineer, or a lawyer. By process of elimination, she chose lawyer. It wasn't so much that she wanted to become a lawyer. That was the option that she disliked the least.

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From that, she basically pursued a career in law. She was very successful. She had done all sorts of incredible things. I'm sure there were many moments along the way where she found joy in the work that she did, but this was how she saw herself. She saw herself as doing this work, initially at least, to please others.

You may also find that there's external validation going on in a much smaller way. Smaller ways that add up. So when you have clients, for example, who are very demanding. I've worked with clients like this. The ones who send you the emails and you see them, and you think, "Oh this is going to be hard." I always worked really, really hard to please those clients. I almost wore it as a badge of honor that I was able to get along with so and so.

Because they set these really high expectations, and you worked really hard to please them. It feels good when you're able to establish a relationship with them. When they like working with you. Maybe they give you praise. Maybe they give others in your office praise about you. That feels good, right. It's validating.

Maybe you're looking for external validation in your personal life. Maybe you've got friends who you go to whose approval you're seeking. Maybe it's in the work that you're doing. It's working with the lawyers in your office. You write an email or brief, and you want them to give you that external validation that what you have done is really good. That can give you a bit of a high.

That's fine. It's great to see what kind of feedback you're getting out there from outside parties. I think those are nice clues for you to take in as data. However, I think it is very dangerous if you set yourself up as depending on that external validation for deciding how you're going to feel about yourself.

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If you look for that external validation as a source of joy and happiness, then what does that mean when what you get is not that validation? What happens when you get that criticism? What happens when people judge you? Then how are you feeling? So that idea of looking outside yourself for happiness, for approval, is, again, a bit of a dangerous situation to be in if what you're looking for is unlimited joy.

A third area where I see people really struggling is this idea of trying to be perfect. A lot of lawyers that I work with struggle with perfectionism. You may be one of them. It's not something to be ashamed of or embarrassed of. It's also not something that you need to let slow you down. There are some advantages of being a perfectionist, right? It's that attention to detail. It's wanting to do excellent work. It's wanting to put your best self forward. These are all wonderful things to strive for.

The way that perfectionism becomes a problem is when the standard that you're putting on yourself is an impossible standard to meet. If you tell yourself, "I'm only going to be happy when I write the perfect argument. I win every case. I have the perfect track record. I can get along with every client. I do everything perfectly. I look perfect. I have the perfect relationship. I have perfect children."

If you start looking around your life and striving for each of those elements to be perfect and judging yourself if they're not, then once again you're going to set yourself up in this impossible situation where you're constantly reaching and you're never feeling the joy in the moment. Because you're not there yet.

So these are three ways that you can set yourself up for always looking to the future for your source of happiness. What I'm going to invite you to consider today in this episode is a different way of looking at things that might allow you to experience more joy in the moment.

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So what we're going to talk about today is a different approach. We can call it a joyful practice. You can call it whatever you like. I would invite you to think about how you would want to create your own practice. Before we do that, I just want to share with you one of the inspirations that guides me in terms of this work.

Now for some of you, you may have already heard of Shawn Achor. If you haven't, he's a positive psychologist who works out of Harvard. He has a very well-known TED Talk that came out a few years back. I'll never forget the first time I heard Shawn Achor's TED Talk. I was running to work. I used to run to work as part of my commute. I'd listen to podcasts or TED Talks. What he said in his TED Talk profoundly altered the way that I view the world.

What he talked about in his TED Talk, and he's written a book. It's called *The Happiness Advantage*. What he talked about was this idea of happiness being something that is available to all of us right now. That happiness is not this thing that we need to put off to sometime in the future when we write the test or get the job or have the family. That happiness is something that we get to experience in the moment. He goes on to share some strategies on how we can be happier. It's been a long time since I listened to the TED Talk, but I think they were things like keeping a gratitude journal. Getting regular exercise. Things like that.

The main point there was that it wasn't something that was on the other side. Up until that point, I had really been living my happiness journey unconsciously. I'd never even heard of a theory like this. So I didn't realize I was doing it. But I had unconsciously been delaying gratification to some point in the future, such that I wasn't spending very much time in the gratification point. I was spending a lot more time in the delaying point. That, as you might imagine, doesn't create a whole lot of joy.

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Now what Shawn Achor talks about, and this is what I really want to focus in on, is he talks about this definition that the ancient Greeks use to define happiness. Happiness was this concept of wellbeing. I'll just pause here to note that happiness doesn't mean that you're going to be happy 100% of the time.

I mean happiness really for all of us who are here experiencing life and the challenges that come our way and the sad things that happen and the joyful things that happen. No matter what state you're in, however you manage your emotional life, there are going to be moments where you're not feeling very joyful. That's okay. We can accept that. When we accept that, I think it becomes a lot easier to feel joyful.

Going back to this definition, the ancient Greeks define happiness, the state of wellbeing, as being the joy that you feel when striving toward your potential. I'll say that again. It is the joy that you feel when striving toward your potential. Now, this definition has so much power in it. I'm going to break it down a little bit because I think each of these components is so impactful. I want to make sure I do it justice.

So this first part is joy is how you feel. For so many lawyers, and I 100% include myself in this boat. For so many lawyers, feelings aren't something that we really allow ourselves to experience. We may feel angry that opposing counsel sent us this horrible letter, and now we get to fight them. So maybe we think that's a feeling that we're okay with having. It's a professional feeling to have or it's a productive feeling to have. Maybe we feel really confident. We've written a beautiful argument, and we think this is good. You can feel that emotion.

What I experienced when I was practicing law and what I see among a number of clients that I work with is that the emotions that you have are somehow irrelevant. I talked a little bit about this in I think it was episode number one. This might be the same thing for you. You may view your

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emotions as something to check at the door. When you enter the office, when you enter your workspace, and you are doing things that require you to think at a factual level, at a logical level. You are working in a high-pressure environment. You don't have time for emotions.

What I want to bring us back to—that's why I think it's important to highlight this word in the definition—is that joy is something you feel. When you allow yourself to reconnect with how you feel, that can become a really powerful source of energy for you. It can be a really good source of data for you in terms of where you should be going or the path that you could follow in your career, in your personal life that will bring you more joy. So let's focus on the feeling.

The second word that I want to focus on is striving. Striving is such an interesting word. I looked it up online. I'm not sure of the caliber of the dictionary that I used, but the definition is really interesting. So there were two definitions. One of them being to make effort to achieve something. This is really interesting, right. Making effort to achieve something. To me, this is another way of saying work. It's working towards your potential.

What I think is valuable here is that if you're like me and if you're like a lot of people, work has this negative connotation that it probably doesn't deserve. If you look at the advertising out there, right. Like when you're looking at—Maybe we're not vacationing at this stage because we're in the heart of the pandemic. But pre-pandemic, this idea of taking a vacation, especially when you're a lawyer, right. This idea of taking a vacation where you get to go sit on a beach and do nothing. I mean that really sounds like the dream.

So we have this weird idea, this weird association, that doing nothing is actually somehow better or more enjoyable than working. When, in fact, the work in itself can be a source of joy. So I just want you to try that thought on and think about the moments in your life that you have experienced the

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most joy. What were those moments? What work have you done where you've really enjoyed the process?

If I think of my years as a lawyer, I loved so much of the work that I did. I loved legal research. So being in the cases. I don't know if this happens to you. It used to happen to me where I would spend so much time in there trying to find a decision that answered a particular question that I had been asked.

When I found that case, it was like really just this explosion of excitement. Like here it is. I finally found it. You highlight that passage, and you pop it into your memo. You're really excited to tell the people you're working with, "Hey guys, listen. I found this case. It really helps us." I suppose the opposite can happen if you find the case that doesn't help you, but at least you've got an answer.

Or working as part of a team on large litigation files. I can remember some really late nights that I spent working on a massive trial where it was a number of other associates and me. We were at the office. It was dark. We were the only ones there. We'd already sort of had our takeout meal. We were kind of popping up to the snack room to get peanuts or Skittles or whatever it is that we would snack on well into the night to keep our energy up to be working on the paperwork that needed to be perfect in order for us to proceed the next day to trial.

Some of those conversations that I would have with my colleagues during those periods, those were some of the highlights during my time in legal practice. It was really wonderful. Even the times where maybe things didn't go so well. You turn to a colleague, and you pop into their office for a heart-to-heart chat. The work that you do, when you really think about it, can bring you a sense of joy, a sense of accomplishment.

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So when you are thinking about work, I'm inviting you to think of it in a way that's a source of joy as opposed to this thing that you must do in order to reach this other source of joy, this rest. This so-called vacation where you're not working.

Another part, I mentioned there were two parts to this definition that I found online. The other part, this was really interesting. It was the struggle or fight vigorously. Struggle or fight vigorously. Now, I want to focus in on the struggle piece because, again, I think we often associate struggle with being something negative. Struggle being something that shows that there's a shortcoming in who here we are.

Here, they're saying actually no. Struggle can be a source of joy. So I want you to think about that next time you have a challenge ahead of you. We're going to talk about this so much more in the podcast. To look at it as a source of growth, a source of learning, a source of pleasure, that is a complete paradigm shift. Imagine how much more you would enjoy your practice if struggle was something you could actually wrap your head around and look at as something pleasurable.

The next word that I want to focus on is toward. Moving toward your potential. The key piece here is joy is something that you feel when you're getting closer to your potential. So when you, for example, have these small tasks. Maybe they're tasks that typically annoy you, and you don't like doing them. You may be able to persuade yourself to find joy in them if you see them as bringing you closer to the thing that you really want, this potential piece. We'll get to that in a minute.

Conversely, when you are working in a direction that goes against your potential, that's when you start to get that resistance. That's when you start to feel less joy. It's important to think about that because you can ask yourself as you're working on tasks, "Am I working toward my potential or am I not working toward my potential?" That's another source of joy for you.

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That's another measure that you can use for yourself or a tool that you can use for yourself when you're trying to incorporate that more joyful perspective, if you want to call it that.

Finally, potential. That, again, is a word that deserves a closer look. Going back to my dictionary definitions, potential was defined as showing capacity to become or develop into something in the future. So what does that mean really? It means that your potential, it's the capacity. It's showing capacity to become or develop into something in the future. That means it's not yet realized.

So I ask you to look at yourself and think about your own potential. The wonderful thing is if you ask yourself, "Really what is the potential for my work in the world? What is my potential in my relationships? What is my potential for the impact that I am going to make while I'm here?" It is infinite. It is infinite. Chances are you have no idea today what your potential is. Because five years from now, you're going to be in a completely different position. You may see a completely different potential for yourself.

So this is amazing. This is probably the best news ever for two reasons. Number one, it gives you the freedom to always be moving forward, right? You are always going to have something in the future that you can work towards. That means you have an unlimited source of potential. You have an unlimited source of joy. This idea of your joy coming from the work that you're doing in the world. And your work is joyful when you're working towards your potential and there's no end to your potential. That's wonderful. That means that there is an infinite source of joy available to you right now, and it always will be. You're never going to reach that potential.

The second reason that this is really exciting is that it takes the pressure of all of my fellow perfectionists to be perfect. Because perfect doesn't exist. It doesn't exist. So there's no need to spend your time working towards

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perfection. And more importantly, there's no need to spend your time beating yourself up over not achieving perfection because it's impossible. You're never going to get there. There's no limit to your potential. You're never going to be perfect. So you don't have to worry about it. That, to me, is one of the most liberating things to know. You just get to be out there doing your work working towards your potential feeling joyful.

Now, this is all really lovely as a concept. I hope this is resonating with you, and as you're listening, you're thinking about how this would influence how you practice. I'm going to share with you how I've created a practice for myself that lends itself to creating more joy. There are three pillars to the work that I do. These are really three pillars that underscore my purpose, the potential that I'm reaching toward in my professional and my personal life and underpins the work that I do with clients.

It's not to say that everything is always broken down into these three pillars. It's that I've identified these as pillars that really help me put a framework to how it is that I'm going to go about having a joyful practice. My practice is different from your practice, but I'd invite you to think about what your practice is going to look like. I would invite you to tailor it to yourself. What is going to be useful for you?

So the first pillar that I think about in my practice is this notion of self, of self-concept. Because it all starts with you. You are an individual on this planet. You have unique experiences. You have unique strengths. You have unique skills. You have unique gifts. Chances are you don't even realize how many gifts you have that are unique to you.

So what does it mean to really focus in on yourself? I think it starts with defining for yourself what values you have. What is important to you? If you haven't done this exercise, don't beat yourself up over it. If you have a busy law practice, chances are you're not sitting there. People call it navel-gazing sometimes. I don't think it's really navel-gazing, but it's that

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introspective thinking about yourself, what your goals are, where you are in relation to those goals. It's really important.

I can tell you from my experience, I never consciously sat down and thought about what my values were until I was in my, I think, late-30s/early-40s. Around the time that I had decided that I wanted to become a coach. I was seeking some career counseling. I was asked to fill out this values exercise. I thought, "Values? Like how does that even work." There was this sheet with 100 different values on it, and I had to rate them and talk about what they meant to me. That was the first time I'd ever sat down to do an exercise like that.

I'd encourage you not to wait until you're—Maybe we're the same age. Maybe you're older, maybe you're younger. I would encourage you not to wait to ask yourself what those values are for many reasons. Number one, it gives you a framework to make decisions. It helps you understand yourself better. It is a way of really focusing in on what matters.

So getting to know your values is one of the first steps that I would encourage you to take, especially when you're thinking about your joyful practice. How will you know? Getting back to the definition of joy or happiness, how will you know if you're working towards your potential if you don't know what your potential is? How do you know what your potential is if you don't know what matters to you and what you want to accomplish in this world?

So let's get you into your values. Let's get you focusing on what matters to you. Let's look at yourself and how you're taking care of yourself. A huge piece of this and a huge part of the work that I do with my clients is looking at how you talk to yourself. So many of you, I know this because I hear you. I am with you. I've been in your shoes. So many of us beat ourselves up when things don't go the way that we want them to. We spend so much time doing this. It's not productive.

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So part of the pillar is that work on the relationship that you have with yourself the way that you talk to yourself, the way that you see yourself, the way that you take care of yourself. Your health. What amount of energy are you putting into your physical health? Your mental health? This is the first pillar. It all starts with you. You hear that expression: you can't give water from an empty well. This is part of your well filling exercise. Really how are you going to be serving yourself not in a negative way but serving yourself so that you are able to serve others. It really does start with you.

It also goes to how you choose to spend your time. We talked a little bit about time management last week. Time really is one of the precious resources that you have. It is a finite resource. I invite you to think about how you're going to spend your time, spend your days so that what you're doing in your life is an accurate reflection of what matters to you. So that's really the first pillar.

The second pillar that I like to focus on in my practice is the action pillar. If you imagine yourself, I mean here we all are acting as individuals. We won't really know what outcomes we can create until we actually start taking action. This is where we have the greatest potential to create impact around you.

This shows up in your professional work. It shows up in the way that you serve your clients. It's the way that you write your legal briefs. It's the way that you write emails. It's the way that you speak to others. It's the way that you present. It's what you choose to focus on and share with others. It is the way that you choose to connect with others. The way that you enter into relationships.

In your personal life, it's the same thing. It's looking at the way that you are in relation to your family members, your spouse, your children, your friends. There are all these individuals out there who you are interacting with. Being conscious and intentional about the way that you are acting is, I think, one

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of the ways for you to find growth and to find joy and to find fulfillment and impact in the work that you do. When I say the work that you do, I'm not just talking about your professional work. Yes, I am talking about your professional work, but it's everything else as well.

I had a wonderful client that I worked with. He was a gentleman who had a legal practice, and he had a writing practice. His legal practice was what he referred to as his professional work. His writing practice was what he referred to as his work. This was really the work that he was here on the planet to do. He distinguished between the two.

I adopted that language for myself because I loved this concept of having work mean something more than the thing that you do in exchange for a paycheck. That work can have this really deep meaning attached to it. When you start to look at the work that you're doing and thinking about the actions that you're taking, what is the work that you are doing in this world? It can really change the way that you look at it, and the way that you think about the impact that you're creating.

So there's that first pillar. You're looking at you. You're looking at your self-concept. You're looking at your goals. You're looking at what you want to create in the world. Then you're taking that out into the world. That can be the scary part, right? You're out there. You're acting. That leads us to the third pillar which is growth.

So what happens when you go out into the world, and you start doing all these things is you start getting feedback. Now the feedback will come from multiple sources. The feedback may come from others who are commenting on your work, and the feedback may also come from yourself. The way that you feel about the work that you did, the way that you feel about the feedback that you're receiving.

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In this state, in the feedback situation, you're starting to feel certain things. You may feel a lot of joy, right. Maybe the thing that you did. Maybe you've decided on a particular goal, and you've taken action that you feel has brought you closer to that goal. Then you get that feeling. You think, "That's a good thing. I'm going to do more of that." That will bring you back to that first stage where you're at self.

In a situation like that where you have the goal, you work toward it, you feel like you're getting closer, and you're happy with the result. You do that loop, and then you start again with that sense of direction. Your direction may not change. Nothing needs to change in that situation. Or maybe you find, "Well I did it. I got the result that I wanted, but I think I can do it better next time." That's where you get to tweak. You get to add to your action. You get to build on what already is strong.

You may also find that you go out and you take an action in the world. The feedback that you get isn't at all what you expected in a negative way. Maybe the other people that you were trying to please or that you thought would want to be part of your work, maybe they come back, and they have negative feedback to give you. You take that into account, and maybe it throws you off course. Maybe you decide maybe this is not what I want to do.

There's also the feedback that you give yourself. So maybe in that situation, you think, "Well they didn't really like my idea, but I really like my idea. I'm going to go ahead with it." One example for me comes to mind. I just want to share an example, but I invite you to think about what examples would apply to you.

So, for example, I remember when I first wanted to become a coach for lawyers. I spoke with somebody about it. I just remember them saying to me, "Well you can go and try to do that, but it's not going to work out. They

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told me all the reasons why it wasn't going to work out. Why this was a terrible idea.

So, in a way, you can say I had the idea. I had the goal in my mind. In my self-concept stage, I really was clear why I wanted to do it, why it was important to me. I went out, and I took that action. I spoke. I was speaking an opinion from somebody who I thought had some authority. I got that feedback. "No Paula, that's a terrible idea. Don't do it."

Then I had to ask myself, right. I'm taking in that feedback. I said, "Is this something that I really want to do?" So it caused me to reevaluate. What I decided was yes, I do want to do this. It also required me to recalibrate. It required me to feel the discomfort. Okay, I'm going to go into this knowing this is going to be a challenge for me. That this is not going to be an easy road. Am I okay with that discomfort? The decision, obviously, for me was yes. I'm okay with the discomfort.

Since then, I've become increasingly comfortable with discomfort. In fact, believe it or not I actually enjoy or appreciate discomfort. We'll talk about that more later because I think that's available to all of you to find that for yourself as well. It caused me to recalibrate. I listened to the reasons why this was not a good idea, and I decided to plan around them because I still wanted to make this happen.

So I would invite you to think about times in your life where you've gone out, you've had a vision. You've taken steps in that direction. You've had positive feedback and what's that meant for you. I also invite you to think about a time in your life where you had a vision, and you went and took steps in the direction of that vision and got negative feedback. Whether it's from yourself, maybe it's from somebody else, and what you did in relation to that.

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I would offer to you that when you do the work in that first stage. And this to me is a cycle. You start with yourself. You move to action. You then receive the feedback. That's the growth stage. Then you keep going and you keep growing. That process never ends. Again, we are back to this concept of infinite joy. Because as long as you're growing, as long as you're in this process, you're looking at your goals. You're working towards your goals. You're taking in that feedback. You're adapting. You're evolving. You're getting stronger.

As long as you're in that cycle, you're going to feel the joy. The trick here is to not wait until that someday when. That someday in the future when you reach the goal. The goal is never going to be reached. I mean you'll reach milestones along the way. I know you will. It's shifting your focus from delaying that joy to the point in the future to being able to enjoy the moments and the steps along the way. That is the biggest shift, and that is the secret, the key to finding infinite joy.

Now, the reason that this works, the reason that approaching the practice this way in bringing you more happiness is that it allows you to bring happiness back within your own control. When you set your own goals, you have your own idea of what's going to get you closer. You can ask yourself regardless of what kind of feedback you get from the outside world, did I do the things that I said I was going to do? Did I bring myself closer to the goal?

Even if you go out and you do something and you fail at it however you want to define failure. I don't believe in failure, but let's say you so called fail. You got closer in some way. I bet you can find something that brought you closer to your goal. If you can do that then you can find the joy in that. It means you're no longer looking to everybody else to make you happy. If you were depending on everybody else's approval of you to bring happiness into your life, you would find yourself in an impossible situation. Because everybody has a different opinion. Trust me.

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To give a small example, in my family I have a son and a daughter. I can assure you that they never want to eat the same thing at a meal.

Everybody wants something different. My son likes cheese. My daughter hates cheese. My daughter likes avocados. My son hates avocados. So if I want to make everybody happy, I've got to have cheese and I've got to have avocados. But chances are, they're going to change their mind tomorrow. So nobody's happy.

If I'm looking to them for my own happiness, I can assure you that is never going to happen. I invite you to consider how you can bring that measure of happiness back into your own self.

The other thing that I think is really important or the reason why this approach is going to be able to get you closer to that feeling of infinite joy is that it is a process. You're no longer looking to that milestone event as that thing in the future that you're going to somehow reach. And your life is going to change, and it's going to be this miraculous thing. You can do that, but I think once you get there, you're still going to be the same person, right.

It's like you go on vacation or you move to a new city. Initially everything's really exciting and different. You think this is great. Then some of the old problems start to creep up. When you choose to focus on the process itself to be able to find joy in the journey, there's this wonderful expression. I'm forgetting the name of the woman who said it. So forgive me. There was this idea that you cannot find a happy ending in an unhappy journey.

When I learned that expression, it really sank in with me. It really hit home because I had been accustomed to this idea of really forcing myself. Having these really stressful situations where I was working hard to get the paper written or the application materials filed. Or I wanted to get the job. I wanted to be the best lawyer. I wanted to do all the things. I did it from a place of really putting that pressure on myself in a very stressful and self—

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don't want to say abusive, but I was very critical of myself all along the way. It's absolutely true. There wasn't a lot of joy in the journey, and there wasn't a lot of joy in where I was ending up.

When I started to shift that, I found that I was able to appreciate things a lot more in the moment. I was able to find a lot more joy in the moment, and I was a lot kinder to myself. Am I still able to produce? Yes. I'm producing in a different capacity, but from a much more joyful place. Because I know the joy isn't out in some other place. It's here right now, and the practice, the work, is learning on how to focus on that today.

Another reason that this is impactful or effective is that it brings a big sense of relief. When you know that there is an infinite amount of work that you would be able to work on that indefinitely in a good way. I don't mean for this to sound like this daunting task that you have going forever into the future.

When you know that there is infinite work ahead of you and that you get to choose that path for yourself. And that the closer that you get to your potential, the more joy you're going to feel but you're never going to get there is an enormous sense of relief because you don't have to do it all at once. You don't have to do it all.

The purpose of your life, or at least the way that I like to look at it, is that the purpose of your life isn't so much that you're going to reach that potential. You're never going to reach it. It's that you are always learning. You're always growing. You're always redefining, recalibrating what that potential is for yourself, and you're always working toward it. That to me is one of the most joyful things that you can really experience as a human being that is living their life on this planet.

So as you go through this work, you're going to find your own source of joy. You're going to find your own goals. You're going to find what is going to

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bring you forward and bring you closer to your potential, and you're going to find that there are activities that you're taking that pull you away from that. Once you start noticing that, it will become a lot easier for you to start calibrating and deciding how you want your past to unfold.

There is no need for you to know right now where you need to go because the road ahead is going to reveal itself to you. Your only job really is to keep making that next best step based on what you know is true to you, what is important to you, and where you think your potential is right now.

Now speaking of potential and growth, I'm about to launch this podcast. I'm super excited about it. There's some information in the message that follows the podcast about where you can find me through my coaching website, which is uplevellawyercoaching.com. I just mention that because as you're listening, you may find that you would like to know a little bit more about what I offer as a coach. So if you go to that website, there's a way of reaching out to me directly. There will also be other ways of reaching out to me through thejoyfulpractice.com, but I haven't quite set that up yet. I just wanted to make sure that you were able to find me.

So thank you, again, for joining me today. It has been such a pleasure having you here. I hope that you're able to take some of the ideas that we've talked about today and apply them in your own life.

If you are interested in learning more about the work that I do with lawyers, I do one to one coaching. I also do speaking and training. Then I would encourage you to go to thejoyfulpractice.com website and go to the contact form and send me a note. I would love to hear from you. We can set up a time to chat and talk about what you might like my help with. It's always such a pleasure to hear from you. With that, I would like to wish all of you a wonderful week. I look forward to seeing you next time. Bye for now.

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