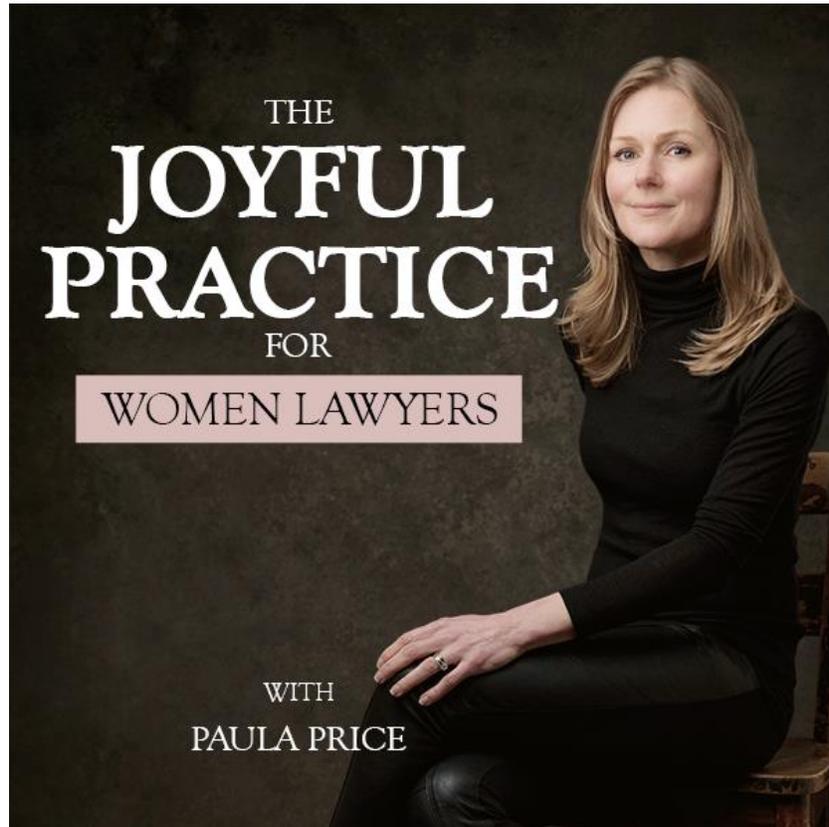


Ep #5: How to "Do" Fear



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Paula Price

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You're listening to *The Joyful Practice for Women Lawyers* Podcast, episode number five.

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, my friends, and welcome back to the podcast. For those of you who are tuning in for the first time, my name is Paula Price. I'm a lawyer turned certified executive coach. I'm really excited to be bringing this episode of the podcast to you because the podcast itself just went live last week. So this week has been delightful. I've been receiving some feedback and some comments and some lovely emails from friends, colleagues, clients, those of you who are listening to the podcast. It's such a delight. It really is the realization of a dream coming true.

The reason that I wanted to chat about fear this week is because last week with the launch of the podcast was this experience of equal parts excitement and fear. The fear that I experienced felt real. I wanted to talk about that fear while it was still fresh in my mind. Because if you have experienced fear, and I imagine you have, I think all of us have. You may be able to relate to this.

Sometimes it feels so powerful in the moment when you're doing something for the first time, when you're stretching yourself outside of your

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comfort zone. Then after a few days or a few weeks, the fear completely dissipates. You don't remember what it felt like. I wanted to record this podcast while that feeling was still relatively fresh so that I could create something that would be more impactful for you, and to create a resource that you can turn to next time you find yourself in one of those situations where you really are experiencing that fear.

I think fear is an important topic to discuss, especially among women lawyers, lawyers in general because fear is not something lawyers go around talking about very much. I think the law culture is very much one where you are in an advisory role. There is an expectation of confidence and knowhow and that you're the person who's going to help somebody else solve their problems.

In the professional work that you do and the relationships that you have with colleagues and with clients, there's not really an opportunity necessarily for you to go and start talking about these things. I think it's really important to recognize that even though you may not see it, other people may not be talking about it, but fear exists in everybody. The question really is not whether or not you experience fear but how you go about processing it. So that's really the focus of today's podcast.

So if I go back to the experience that I had most recently, I just want to set it up a little bit. Because I think that though you may not be able to relate to the specific situation that I found myself in, you will very likely be able to relate to it in relation to something that you have on your plate, or you've had on your plate or a project that is ahead of you.

So the interesting thing about fear is that in this case, it came up in a way that I had anticipated, but that I had not anticipated. When it came to launching this podcast, this is something that I have known that I wanted to do for some time. It has been on my to do list for well over a year. I absolutely planned for this to happen. I went and retained a coach. I've

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been working with an amazing company to help me produce this podcast. I've invested a lot of my time, a lot of my resources in creating it.

The podcast itself is very much in alignment with some of the greater goals that I have for the coaching work that I'm doing, which are goals around making coaching more accessible to individuals by raising awareness about what coaching is all about and how it might be able to help you.

It's about making coaching affordable, creating an offering that is available at no charge. Also creating a resource that you can access without revealing who you are. I think of it as the four A's: anonymous, accessible, awareness, and affordable. So this very much fits in with what I'm trying to do for the people that I want to serve.

That being said when it was launch day, I found myself really stuck. I was to promote the podcast. There were a few things that I was going to do. Post it onto LinkedIn, email it to individuals who are on the email list that I have. I found myself in this bizarre state of true procrastination. I don't know if you ever find yourself there. It doesn't happen to me very often. Mainly because I have children, and I know that if I don't do things within a certain time frame they don't get done. So when it comes to work stuff, typically I'm usually able to get it done. But I was literally frozen.

I started to have these crazy stories running through my head. I was making lunch, and I started having all these very obscure thoughts. I thought, "This doesn't make any sense. This is exactly what I want to be doing. Why am I having such a hard time with it?"

It brought me back, oddly, to the time when I was 18 years old, and a friend of mine and I decided to go to Mexico. We decided for some reason, maybe because it was trendy at the time, that we would go bungee jumping. So we signed up for this bungee jumping experience. We very smartly, so we thought, scheduled our bungee jumping session for the

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second to last day of our trip. So that if something went wrong, at least we would have had our wonderful week in Mexico. I can tell you as a parent looking back on that now, it just gives me goosebumps.

When we got to that experience, it was very much an experience of facing a fear. What's interesting about that and what is relevant here is that when you go bungee jumping or maybe it's some other thrill-seeking adventure activity, what was weird about it was I remember going up onto this platform. It was this sort of metallic green platform that was suspended over the water.

You know I had the bungee harness wrapped around my ankles. I was standing on the edge of it looking down at the water. I knew that I had this bungee contraption attached to me. That I wasn't going to fall to my death. That I was going to fall, and I was going to be caught. This was all going to be just fine. I knew at an intellectual level that everything was going to be okay, but every fiber of my being as I sat there and tried to count myself down three, two, one, push off. It was so counterintuitive. It felt so unnatural.

Weirdly when it came to promoting the podcast last week, this is how I felt. I felt this fear. Even though at a logical level I knew this was exactly what I had wanted. This is exactly what I had set up for myself. This was a large part of me that was just in resistance mode. I wanted to call the whole thing off. It didn't make any sense.

So I just wanted to address this. I just wanted to talk about this in a way that puts this out on the table so that we can figure out how to deal with this because I imagine that this has happened to you. Maybe you've gone out there, and you've got a goal. You've set up the goal. You figured out all the details of how you're going to make it work. You've anticipated the hurdles. You know where you're going to get stuck. You've prepared for those hurdles. You're ready to go.

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Then you get there, and in the moment, it's like you're absolutely terrified. You start to try to talk yourself out of it. This is what I experienced. I had taken all the steps. What was going on?

Now when I practiced as a lawyer, there were moments where I felt fear, especially at the beginning. I know from having worked as a lawyer and spoken with my colleagues. I know now from being a coach for lawyers and speaking about lawyers about all sorts of things that they may not share with other individuals that the fear is totally normal, and that we're all experiencing it on some level.

For some lawyers, there's a very strong fear of networking. For some lawyers, there's a fear of putting their name forward for new opportunities. Maybe you can relate to some of these things.

Maybe you have a fear of going off the beaten track. I see that where lawyers have maybe been on a certain path, and they feel like this is the right path for them. That it makes their families happy. It's what they thought they always wanted to do. They're scared that if they go in a different direction, they're going to let people down. Maybe they're going to disappoint their clients. Maybe they're going to disappoint their colleagues. Maybe their bosses are going to be disappointed.

It may be that you are afraid of making the wrong decision, and I see that a lot. Decisions that maybe are work related or decisions that are career related. There's this idea that if you do one thing and it's not the right decision, it doesn't turn out to be what you wanted then you've somehow failed. That brings us to another example of fear, which is maybe the fear of failure. Which really is what happens when you don't meet the expectations that you set for yourself.

So there's lots of places where fear can come up in a practice. Because nobody talks about it, you might experience it, and then feel very much

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alone. I mean imagine yourself in the course of your day how often do we admit to fear? You can imagine sending a brief over to opposing counsel. Maybe they read it and they look at it and they think, "This is the most beautiful piece of written legal work I've ever seen. These arguments are solid." They're genuinely concerned about their client's position having read the brief that you just submitted.

But that's not what they're going to tell you. They're going to write back, and they're going to say, "Your argument is full of holes. Your client's position is terrible. You know that we're going to win." That's how it plays out. So it's not surprising that when you do find yourself in a situation where fear starts to come up that you might think this is just not how it's meant to be. Something has gone wrong here. You are the only one.

Another element of that is wanting to appear strong. This was something that I remember experiencing as a lawyer quite often. Just wanting to always look like you're confident and you've got it all together. Sometimes you genuinely do have all those things together. But there's sometimes where you don't feel that confident, but you feel like you need to forge ahead anyways.

Having a conversation with somebody doesn't seem like an option because you don't want to have to admit to a colleague or to admit to somebody that you're working with that maybe you don't feel 100% competent in what it is that you're taking on or what it is that you're doing.

So these are places where it comes up. You may feel completely isolated, but I can assure you it's not just women lawyers. It's not just lawyers generally. It's really anybody who is taking a risk to do something that is important to them. That means stepping outside of their comfort zone and putting themselves in a position where they hold themselves out for judgement.

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When you think about what you're truly scared of—and we're going to talk about this a little bit more as we get into it—you might be able to identify that there is some common themes. I know for myself when I was putting this podcast out, and I knew last week I was going to be promoting it. I was really scared of judgement. I was afraid of failing, whatever that looks like. However you define that. So you might ask yourself, and we'll talk about this, what the fear is for you.

So, as I said, the reason I'm doing this podcast is that I just want to acknowledge that the fear is out there. I want to talk about it so that you can understand it a bit better. Instead of feeling all the discomfort around fear, giving you some tools so that you can work with it. Today we're going to talk about fear, how it might show up in your practice, and I'm going to offer you five tools that you can use to help you next time you find yourself in that situation where you're procrastinating or you're not doing something because of fear.

So before we jump into those five tips, I want to talk a little bit about fear and how it might show up for you. So today we're talking about the kind of fear that shows up when you're going after something big. It may be that you're doing something for the first time. It might be a court application. It might be that you are taking the lead with a particular client. It may be that you're out there applying for a new job. It may come up in relation to something that means a lot to you.

I don't know if you've noticed. I noticed it for myself. I feel a lot less fearful in relation to challenges or tasks where I have less of an emotional investment. So maybe the fear is coming up in relation to something that holds a lot of meaning in your work or in your personal life. It may be that you are about to have a difficult conversation.

I know I have this fear sometimes when I'm about to go in for a conversation with somebody where I'm putting myself at risk. There's some

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element of vulnerability or I'm asking for something, and I don't feel 100% comfortable about it. It's almost like you're stepping off the diving board and just diving in and initiating a conversation not knowing how that other person is going to respond but you know you need to do it.

Another example might be when you're putting yourself in a vulnerable position. So, again, this kind of goes back to this idea of putting yourself out there for the first time, stretching yourself. You don't know if you're going to be able to do the thing because you haven't done it yet. It's that conversation. It's maybe putting your name forward for a job interview. It's maybe reaching out to somebody new in a networking situation. Those are situations where you might start to feel some fear.

What we're not talking about today is the fear you feel when your physical health is in jeopardy. For example, if you're about to cross a street and a car whizzes by and you have that immediate fear reaction. Or you nearly fall down the stairs, or you're sitting in your office and somebody opens the door really quickly, and you startle. That's not really the type of fear that we're talking about.

Although at a physiological level, the fear that you experience really feels the same regardless of whether it's a fear because you're going to fall down the stairs or in my case jump off your bungee platform in Mexico, or if the fear is something different. Like the email that comes in from a client where you are anticipating it's going to be a challenging conversation. Or the fear comes in from opposing counsel, and you are worried about what they're going to say about your brief.

When we talk about fear, I also think it's important to acknowledge what is happening within your body. It puts your body in that fight or flight response. I talk about it in earlier episodes.

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One way I like to describe this is it puts you into that reactive state as opposed to the more creative state. I love those two contrasts because it's the same letters but spelling and meaning two completely different things. So when you are in that fearful state, then you are coming from a different energy. You are dealing with things in a more reactive way. It sort of deprives you of that ability to think at a different level.

But fear, as much as it may hold us back, is ultimately serving a purpose. It's an evolutionary advantage because it allows us to survive. It's your body's hardwired mechanism for survival. You can imagine if you've ever had small children running around and you see them running around a playground, for example. I remember I was very grateful that my children had fear instincts so that they weren't throwing themselves off the edge of the playground. Sometimes I wondered.

So when it comes to fear, it does serve a purpose. But sometimes it can become a problem. When exactly does it become a problem? Well, it is just a feeling. So fear on its own probably isn't going to do a ton of harm to you. There's research out there that really supports the idea that fear can be a benefit to you.

There was a course that I took earlier this year offered by Daniel Amen's Clinic. He's an American psychiatrist and a brain disorder specialist. He offered a brain health coaching course, which I will talk about in future episodes. I think some of the learning there was fascinating.

One of the points that he made in his course was that humans with a certain—We kind of talked about this spectrum of anxiety. For those who have no anxiety at all, they are actually at greater risk of death than people who have more anxiety, a healthy level of anxiety. Because that anxiety is what compels people to look both ways before they cross the street and other activities that actually maintain health. So the idea isn't to have no

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fear. The idea is to have a healthy level of fear, and to have tools to manage it properly.

Now, when does fear become a problem then? Well, here are some examples of where fear can become a problem. Number one is fear can become a problem when you allow fear to talk yourself out of doing the things that will help you move forward. So I would invite you to think about what is going on in your practice right now, and to think about where you may not be doing something, where you may not be taking a certain step because of fear.

So it may be that you would like to ask for help with a certain project, but you're fearful that if you ask, then the person you're asking will think that you're not capable of doing that project. Maybe you're afraid of saying no to something. Maybe somebody had asked you for assistance on a file or a project or some other activity, and it may not be something that's fully within your bandwidth. It may be something that you just don't have the capacity for right now. But you're afraid that if you say no, you're going to somehow damage that relationship.

Maybe another way that fear is showing up is that you are not speaking up. I remember when I was practicing, I really had a lot of fear around public speaking. I still have some fear. I try to mitigate that fear because I need to do it. I want to do it. But I remember being very shy, especially as a young lawyer, and not speaking up. I think about the opportunities that I missed out on. I see that in others as well. Where they are talking themselves out of opportunities because of fear.

Another place where a lack of action might create some serious consequences is where there's fear around making a decision. So you may be sitting in a position where you want to move forward, and it requires making a decision. You keep on going back and forth weighing the pros

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and cons, but you're not taking any action towards that decision. As you delay making the decision, you're not making any progress.

Another place where fear can be a problem is where it slows you down. So maybe you are not in the state of inaction, but you really aren't moving forward very quickly. In this case, you might ask yourself how much time are you spending weighing a decision? Or taking action but taking it very slowly? Sometimes it really shows up with decision making. So, again, thinking about and I would invite you to think about what decision you might have on your plate right now that you're not making. What is it costing you to not make that decision?

Chances are if you're stuck with a decision, it's based out of a fear that you're going to make the wrong decision. It's almost like you want to be able to say, "If I make decision Y, then all of these things will flow from that. That must be the right decision. Or I want to decide X because I know if I do X, then all these other things will flow from it."

The reality is when you're at that point in time and you're making the decision, you have no way of knowing exactly what is going to unfold from that. If that unknowing is slowing you down from making the decision and moving forward it is costing you.

I totally understand it. If you are in a legal practice, for example, and you're making a decision that affects an outcome for a client, for example, there may be a decision that truly is a correct decision. I mean there may be some technical guidelines. There's something that you absolutely must do. That there is truly a right and a wrong decision. But for many decisions, especially in a legal practice, you're operating in a shade of gray. It may be that there is no right decision or no wrong decision.

Same goes for decisions that you're making within your practice for your own growth, your own development. It may be that there's no right decision

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or wrong decision. That there are choices to be made, but with each choice that you make you can find a viable path.

So, for example, maybe a decision that you're trying to make is do I go out on my own as a sole practitioner? Or do I stay in the organization that I'm in and work my way forward? It may be that there's no right or wrong decisions. They're just different decisions. You need to make a decision one way or another so that you can move forward and stop spending your mental energy thinking about what option would be better for you.

Fear is also a problem when you allow it to make yourself miserable. You might think about how much time you might spend ruminating or perseverating over something that you fear might happen. There's that expression. I think it's something like 99% of the things that you worry about resolve themselves on their own. But think about all that time that you're spending thinking about something, worrying about something, being fearful of something that may or may not even happen.

Again, let's think about what that is costing you. It's not just the time that you're spending stewing your thoughts. It's also using your pressure time to make yourself miserable thinking about it. One way I just thought of thinking about that time is imagine if you had your time docket, and you had to account for that time that you're spending in fear of something that may or may not happen. What would that look like on your timesheet? 0.25 time spent ruminating over something that may or may not happen.

I say this and try to make light of this, but I have absolutely done this myself. The ruminating, not the recording part. It's just important, I think, to keep in mind that the time that you're spending making yourself miserable isn't serving anybody. It's certainly not serving you. It's not serving your clients. It's just having an impact on your mental wellbeing.

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The next way that fear is potentially a problem is when you fear fear itself. The image that I think of here is when you're watching one of those horror films. I don't know if you've ever noticed. I don't know if you ever have watched horror films. I don't really watch them anymore, but as a younger person I used to really enjoy a good thriller.

What was always fascinating to me was that most of these horror films would involve some sort of a chase scene, right, where the big scary monster is chasing after its would-be victim. The chase itself can go on. Maybe it starts out with like this slow process where you as the spectator can see this relationship forming or the problem about to set itself up. As you continue, that escalates into a chasing scene and ends in the big scary monster, I don't know, eating up the victim. Whatever it is.

What's so fascinating if you think about that is that in the buildup to the actual climax of the scene, it is so nerve wracking, right? There's all this fear that builds up. You're sitting on the edge of the seat. But when the big scary monster finally reaches its victims and everything is done and said and over, there's no fear left.

The reason that I say this and the reason that I mention this is that sometimes you get to that point where you think something is truly fearful. You're scared of it, but you finally get to that moment. And when you're in it, you realize it's tough. Maybe it's uncomfortable, but it's not nearly as scary as it was in your mind. As a lawyer, you've got this brilliant brain and a creative imagination. And I can assure you that the fantasies of what all horrible things that could possibly happen to you are going to happen are far worse than what could actually happen.

So I invite you to think about the fear of the fear and what that is costing you, and what it would be like if you could not go through that process or at least manage it better.

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So we all have reached a certain level of proficiency. You have reached a certain level of professional success. You may have some amazing tools for dealing with fear. I know that there are some strategies that some individuals have tried that maybe haven't been as effective. So, for example, maybe you are really, really good at addressing fear in certain areas of your life but not in others.

So, for example, you may be excellent at confronting your fears in a litigation context, of appearing very strong and making your points and feeling confident. But when it comes to having a difficult conversation in your personal life, you really feel the fear and you are unable to put yourself in that vulnerable position where you need to ask for something. Where you need to express your needs.

Maybe you simply avoid situations where you would feel fear. Maybe you're afraid of going to court, so you simply design a practice around not going. Maybe that's exactly what you need. Maybe that's the right decision for you. But maybe there's a part of you that really wants to go to court, and you're not allowing yourself to explore that because of the fear. Maybe you're avoiding networking. Maybe you're avoiding saying no. Maybe you're avoiding taking risks.

It may be also that you are muddling your way through fear by forcing yourself. Maybe you can really bring yourself to do the steps, but the whole way through you're really doubting yourself. Maybe you see fear as a problem. It's a sign that you're not good enough. That you're not cut out of the job that you're doing. Maybe you say things to yourself like, "If I was the right person for this job, I wouldn't be feeling so scared."

So these are all strategies that you might be using that can get you a certain distance in the short run, but that aren't necessarily going to serve you in the long run. When you see fear itself as something that is really threatening, you deprive yourself of the opportunity to use that fear for

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growth. I would argue, and I think the research supports this, that we're all hardwired for growth.

This weekend I was walking in my neighborhood. It's late spring where I live. There were a number of rose bushes out. They're kind of at the end stage of the blooming season, but I was thinking about it. The roses come back every year. They're hardwired to do it. All these plants around us, the trees, the leaves, the seasons, etcetera. It's all a cycle, and we're all hardwired to grow. You don't see a rose bush saying, "Hey, I'm taking this season off, thank you very much." It's in all of us to want to continue to grow and to thrive.

So as long as we're alive, as long as we're practicing. It goes back to the notion I talked about in episode three about creating a joyful practice. This idea of growth, this continued learning, that is something that motivates all of us.

Each of us has tried to resolve our fears in different ways. But unfortunately, these strategies don't necessarily work in the long run. When we see fear as something that is threatening, we deprive ourselves of the opportunity to grow. For each of us, that desire to grow is really hardwired into us. If you go back to episode number three, I talk about a joyful practice and how the practice itself is in the learning and in the growing and reaching towards our potential. If we avoid things that cause us to feel fearful, we're not truly growing.

So when we let fear run the show, we end up not creating what it is that we want. There are a few reasons for that. Number one is stagnation. When we avoid situations where we feel fear, we're not going to grow. We're not going to learn. We're not going to test. We're not going to make mistakes and learn from those. We're simply going to stagnate.

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I talked about this in episode four in relation to perfectionism. Sometimes we'll put off doing something or we'll not do something because we're afraid that it's not going to be perfect. The result is that we don't create something that is perfect because we haven't given ourselves the opportunity to even try doing it. What ends up is this self-fulfilling prophecy.

So if you're fearful of doing a certain thing—maybe it's the trip to court, maybe it's public speaking, maybe it's networking—then you never develop your skills in that area. So it becomes that self-fulfilling prophecy where you simply do not grow in that area.

If this is something that you can relate to then I would ask you to ask yourself what dreams are you letting drift because you're afraid of what might happen? Another thing that's created if you're not dealing with the fears head on is that you may be creating negative outcomes. So you can imagine, and I know I had files like this, those files that are on your desk that you haven't really touched for a while. Sometimes it may not be fear, it's maybe some other reason. But at a certain point, it may become fear. Like, "Oh what happens if I look at that file? Really what's inside of it?"

The longer you leave that file, the more stale it starts to get. The more prickly it starts to feel. It sits there, and it continues to sit there. Then at some point it goes from being this thing that maybe you were afraid of. Maybe there was something in there that was challenging for you. To like this ticking time bomb. What was once something that was unpleasant that caused a little bit of fear turns into a full-blown fire hazard.

So if this is happening to you, I would invite you to think about where else this is showing up. Is it showing up in your relationships? Maybe it's a conversation that you're putting off that would be really beneficial for you to have. Maybe it's your health. Maybe you are turning a blind eye to it. You're just trying to get through the next month, but meanwhile you're letting your

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health take a bit of a beating. There's something that you could start doing about it if you allowed yourself to simply turn your focus to it.

Probably the biggest cost of not really managing your fear is really that you may be living small. There are consequences to that. Not just for yourself but also for those who would really benefit from seeing you live out your potential. There's a wonderful quote by a woman named Marianne Williamson. She's an American author. She wrote a book called *A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of A Course in Miracles*. There's a quote in that book where she talks about fear. I'm going to read that to you, and I'd really invite you to think about what this means to you.

So it goes, "Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?" A pause here to invite you to ask yourself how many times have you been thinking about taking something on that just seems bigger than yourself, and you've talked yourself out of it by saying something like that. "Who am I to take on that file? Who am I to be doing this work?" Really, think about that.

Going back to the quote, "Actually who are you not to be? You are a child of God." I pause here again. If it's not God for you, it may be some other power, but think about what that means for you. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine.

"We were born to manifest the glory of God that is in us. It's not just in some of us. It's in everyone. As we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

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So the reason that I love this quote, and there are two main reasons. Number one is that the idea here is that we have it all within us to do great things. We ought not let fear hold us back from doing those things. The second thing I love about this quote is that it's not just about us and us accomplishing our own goals and doing our work in the world. It's about being an example for other people so that they then feel the confidence, or they feel inspired, or they see you, and they say, "Well, she was brave enough to go and do this thing. I'm going to be brave enough to try and do the thing I'm truly wanting to do."

So in relation to that quote and if you're thinking about that, ask yourself what dream of yours are you not fully going after because you're scared to make the call? What is that costing? Not just you but the opportunity for you to be inspirational for others who are around you.

So there are better ways to do fear. I'm going to jump into that now. That's really the focus of today's episode. The reason that these tools are going to help you is that they go to the issue itself. They tackle the question of the fear itself. When you learn to drop the fear of the fear, your world can really open up. You no longer hold yourself back. You no longer have to work so hard to push your way through a difficult situation. Let's talk about those five tools starting now.

The first tool is to examine your thinking behind the fear. When you have that fear come up, maybe it's a full-scale fear. It's a big project. You're about to launch, and you're feeling really nervous about it. Or maybe it's a smaller fear. Maybe it's something that just kind of comes as a hiccup in your day. I invite you to pause and think about what is going on behind that fear.

So write down and describe what the fear is. I would invite you to get pretty specific about it. What is it that you're afraid of? Are you afraid of judgement? Are you afraid of embarrassing yourself? Are you afraid of

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letting somebody else down? Are you afraid that you're going to ruin a relationship? Are you afraid that you're going to fail to meet expectations? Are you afraid of failure?

Really getting specific about what that fear is can be really helpful for you for a couple of reasons. Number one, it allows you to get that fear out of your head and onto paper. When you can see that fear written down on paper, it's freeing. It allows you to have that observer perspective. You might look at it and think, "Well, it's a lot less fearful and intimidating than I thought it was. Depending on what the fear is, you might even look at it when it's written down on paper and realize that the fear itself is ridiculous.

So the second benefit of writing the fear down is that it allows you to examine it more closely. Really ask yourself what is it that is behind the fear? What is the bigger implication here? What's really fascinating about that is that often with something that we fear, and I alluded to this earlier. The reason that we feel fear around it is because it's something that really matters to us. If you can uncover what that thing is by doing this exercise, then you can understand what is significant to you and use that to help you move forward.

The second tool that I would suggest is to focus on the big picture. When you start examining this fear more closely, you might ask yourself where it fits in relation to your broader goals. What is important to you about the thing that you're about to do? So in my case, for example, I was looking at the podcast. To me, this is a way of reaching you. This is a way of reaching you and other women lawyers who I want to connect with, who I want to support, who I want to offer tools to. When I look at it that way, then I can see how it fits within the greater context of the work that I'm doing.

When it comes to your example, I would invite you to think about what is the significance of the steps that you're about to take. Maybe you're going to be speaking at a conference, and the reason is that you're trying to help

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develop your relationships with a particular group of people. You want to help inform them about some information that would be really useful to them, and that all of this is part of a practice that you're building where what you're trying to do is create some significant impact. Maybe it's a significant change in a certain practice area.

So I'd really invite you to look at that big picture and to think about how this particular event fits in with that larger picture. This is really helpful for taking the focus off of yourself. When we're thinking about ourselves and we're thinking about the fear that we're feeling, we're not really focused on the person that we're trying to serve.

So let's turn that around and look at them and think about, "Who can I help in this situation? How is this work that I'm doing going to potentially have an impact on somebody else? How is it that I can show up in service to that other person?" Why is this work, why is this thing that I'm doing important to others?

I promise you that when you start to think about the work that you're doing in relation to others, when you start to think about it as being in service, when the focus is taken off of you and how you feel about the fear that you're feeling, it opens up a whole new way of looking at it where it no longer is about you. It's no longer about the fear. You are now involved in a project, an exercise. You're doing something and you're creating in a way that is in service to others that is well beyond yourself. That itself is really empowering when it comes to overcoming the fear that is trying to hold you back.

Another helpful way of using the big picture to help you overcome your fear is to imagine yourself at a point in the future where you've accomplished that thing, the greater objective that you have ahead of you. If you imagine yourself at that point in time, think about what you would be telling yourself at this particular point in time, right? So you imagine you're there. You've

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already accomplished it. What would you be saying to yourself? What would you be saying about the steps that you had to take to get there?

Number three is to adopt a growth mindset around fear. I spoke earlier about Carol Dweck and the research that she's done and her book *Mindset* where she talks about a growth mindset versus a fixed mindset.

At a very high level, the growth mindset is where you believe that through hard work, through exertion, through effort you're able to become smarter. You're able to increase your capacity and your skills versus a fixed mindset where you believe that you are who you are. Your talents are fixed. Effort is a sign that you're not good enough, not smart enough. So you tend to shy away from difficult projects.

Here if you can start to take a growth mindset approach to fear, you can see fear as a signal that you're absolutely on the right path. If something is creating fear for you that means that there is growth here. It means that what you're about to do truly matters, and that if you move through it, you are going to grow. You are going to accomplish something that is meaningful to you.

Here I would invite you to accept the idea that fear is a stepping stone to any big dream that you may have where you're going to be moving out of your comfort zone. Again, nobody really talks about fear. It's not listed on any particular smart goal. Fear is something that comes up in the moment. I'm here to tell you it's not a signal that you're doing it wrong or that there's something wrong with you. If you look at it in the language of the growth mindset, it's a sign that you are growing. It's a sign that you're learning.

Number four is to take one small step. It's like riding a bicycle. Once you get peddling, the momentum builds, and you become more confident. You have more balance, and you're off to the races. But that first step, that first bit, is the hardest.

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In my case when I was sitting there frozen last week, I was able to convince myself to do one thing. It was a post on LinkedIn. I thought, "I'll do this post today, and then I will do the rest tomorrow." That turned out to be a good strategy because I was able to do more steps the following day. I will continue to take steps in that direction. It was just that initial thing, right? Just find one small thing that you can do, and that will help you move forward. From there you can start to build your momentum.

So think about that. Think about the projects that are on your desk, for example, or that are no longer on your desk. You've filed them away in a cabinet. What is one thing that you can do? For some people, that's making a phone call to somebody about a project or a course or something that they're interested in pursuing. It's just that phone call. You don't need to be fully ready. It doesn't have to be a perfect conversation. The key here is just to build some starting momentum so that you are slowly but definitely moving towards your goal.

Finally, number five. Have somebody that you can talk to. In my case, I retained a coach. I love working with my coach. She's amazing. I knew that I wanted to see this project through. I knew that I would have a hard time carving out the time that I needed to make this project happen. I knew that I would have resistance.

So I brought somebody in that I thought would be able to help me. It has been very helpful just for accountability, for talking through some of the decisions that I've had to make along the way. For you, it may be a coach, but it doesn't have to be a coach. I would simply invite you to choose somebody or maybe it's more than one person who you can talk to about the fact that you're feeling fear. About whatever it is that you're trying to do. It could be a friend. It could be a trusted colleague. It could be a family member. It could be your dog.

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The key here is to find somebody who will support you. You can kind of go friend shopping, and you know that there are some people who are going to support you in what you're doing and encourage you and tell you it's a great idea. You know that there are others who might try to talk you out of it because they might be fearful as well. So try to be selective in terms of who you choose to support you.

When you do find somebody, I would add one caveat to that, which would be to not let the conversation that you have with that person take you away from actually executing on your work. So, for example, when I was going through my own sort of drama last week, I did think, "Oh wouldn't it be nice to call so and so and vent a little bit about this project." Not in a negative way, but just in a way to express I'm nervous about this.

But when I thought about that, ultimately, I decided well, that's not really going to move anybody forward. It's not really probably going to move them forward. It's certainly not going to move them forward. I didn't really see it moving myself forward. So I decided against it. So I would just invite you to be mindful of that. Is the conversation that you're having moving you forward, or are you using that conversation as a way of further putting off the work that you want to be doing?

So those are the five tips. Thank you for staying with me. I only have a couple more things to say. I realize this podcast is getting much longer than I had anticipated. I think that this is a really important topic. So I do hope that you are finding benefit in going through this with me.

What you will find is when you start to allow fear, you will grow. You will still feel fear. Before I became a coach, I used to think, "Well, maybe when I'm a coach I'll no longer feel fear." The truth is I still feel it. Obviously, I've just been talking about it. But you can learn new tools, new strategies to move through it. Over time as you continue to move through fear, you'll build up

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what is effectively a muscle. You'll be able to move through the fear more easily, and you'll create more of what you want.

So I would invite you to think about what dreams you have for your practice, what big goals you've been thinking about, and ask yourself whether fear is holding you back. If so, that's actually kind of a good thing because this may be your opportunity to start digging into that fear. You can use the tools that we talked about today.

Number one, examining that fear. Putting it on paper so that you can take a closer look at it. Number two, ask yourself where this thing that is causing the fear fits into the bigger picture. Why must you do it? Number three, adopt a growth mindset. So stop beating yourself up over the fact that you feel fear and start asking yourself what growth can come from this experience. Number four, take one small step, just one small step. From that place, you can build. Number five, find somebody who can support you.

So that, my friends, is what I've got for you today. Thank you so much for joining me, and thank you for being with me during this podcast. If this podcast episode, if the podcast that you listened to resonates with you and you like them, I would love to have your support in helping me to share this podcast with others. I've been told that by rating the podcast, I think a five-star rating is ideal. If you love the podcast, then please invite you to do that. It would be great. I'd appreciate it. With that, I will be signing off. I'm excited to reconnect with you next week.

In today's episode, we talked about fear. Last week we talked about perfectionism. These are both things that can really hold you back. Next week we're going to be talking about a very simple goal setting framework. It's very simple. I use it myself. I teach it to clients. It is a tool that can help you overcome both of those things. So please join me next week. I'm

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excited to share it with you so that you can use it to create exactly what you want in your practice. Thanks again everybody. Have a wonderful week.

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