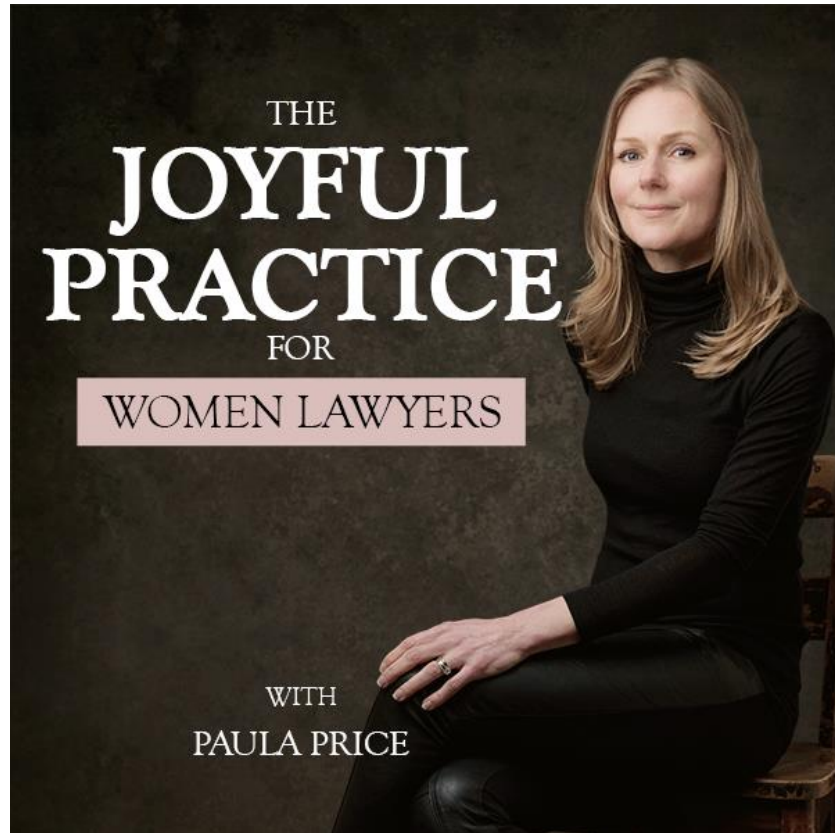


Ep #12: How to Be "Wildly Successful"



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Paula Price

Ep #12: How to Be "Wildly Successful"

You're listening to *The Joyful Practice for Women Lawyers* Podcast episode number 12.

Welcome to *The Joyful Practice for Women Lawyers* Podcast. I'm your host Paula Price, lawyer turned certified executive coach. This podcast was created to empower women lawyers just like you to create a life and practice you love. Join me every week for a break from the hustle so we can focus on you, what you truly want, and how you can create it.

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 everybody, and welcome back to the podcast. For anybody who is tuning in for the first time, my name is Paula Price. I'm a lawyer turned certified executive coach and the host of this podcast. I'm so excited to record this podcast episode.

It's been a couple weeks since I recorded my last podcast. I've been on vacation one week with my family, and one week almost like a staycation. It's not really a true vacation, but my husband took our children over to his parent's place. I've been visiting them, but I've been staying back mostly to get some work done. Also to do something which you may also find really exciting, which is I have been decluttering our house.

A couple episodes ago, episode number 10, I talked about decluttering and how empowering that can be to be letting go of old things and making space for new things. I have taken that to a literal application. Our house is now many, many bags lighter of things that we are simply throwing away, things that we are donating, giving away. I can tell you it feels absolutely amazing.

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Yesterday I did my office space. So I managed to declutter the drawers in my desk that were looking somewhat scary. I couldn't find anything. Now I know where everything is, and I've also managed to get a much more velar view of my records. All of my files where I'm going in my business. If you've done a declutter of your office space recently, you may have had that same experience of just how lighter you feel and how much more in focus things are when you finally have a chance to really sift through what you have and what you're keeping and what it is that you're letting go.

So one of the things I'm keeping, obviously, is this podcast. Being able to connect with you. I have some really exciting plans that I'll be working on over the next few months to really build up on what I'm offering for women lawyers just like you to create experiences for you that I think are going to be so amazing. So stay tuned for that. Yeah, that's really all I can say right now.

When it comes to today's podcast episode, that is also really exciting. The topic today is how to become wildly successful. The inspiration for today's podcast came from a conversation with a lawyer that I had probably about maybe two years ago where we got on the phone. She was talking about this practice that she wanted to create for herself. She said to me, "You know, I just want it to be wildly successful. Wildly successful."

I loved the way that she described that because the coach in me immediately came up with the question, "What does wildly successful look like for you?" The amazing thing about creating a practice that is wildly successful is that it's completely subjective, and you get to decide what wildly successful looks like. Today's podcast episode is all about how you can go about doing that.

When it comes to defining success, for example, I would hazard a guess or a speculation to say that for a lot of us, and maybe for some of you, the idea of success and what that looks like may not be something that you

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have given a lot of deliberate thought to. This is not a criticism. I would consider myself to have lived in this space for most of my life, most of my existence on this planet. Because we are fed a steady stream of information about what success looks like.

I'm going to really focus in on success around your career as a lawyer because that's really what I talk about most of the time in this podcast. That we can say maybe starts in your career at law school, right? What is success at law school? Maybe it's having a 4.0 GPA or whatever GPA is held out to be the benchmark or the ideal benchmark at your university. Maybe wildly successful was getting on the Moot competition team. Maybe wildly successful was becoming a clerk. Maybe wildly successful was getting that job that you were always looking for.

Chances are what success looked like to you was something that was maybe not something that you were creating for yourself based on your own set of values. So what would that potentially look like? Well, maybe it's your friends or your parents or somebody who has influence in your life telling you that this is what you need to do. This is what is successful.

Maybe it's your parents telling you, "We think you should become a lawyer. Or here are some of the job possibilities that would be open to someone like you." Someone who's a strong student, who gets good grades, who's diligent. I've had a client say this to me. Her parents gave her the option of being a doctor, an engineer, or a lawyer. Of those three options, the one that was most palatable to her was becoming a lawyer.

So when we start out, the definition of success may be something that is fed to us that we may accept. Maybe it aligns with what we truly believe. Maybe it doesn't. We are looking at these outward definitions of success based on what other people are telling us.

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So some examples that you may have will be something like when I make a certain amount of money, that will be my definition of success. Starting at an earlier stage, maybe it's getting into law school. Graduating from law school. Like I said, getting a certain GPA in law school.

Maybe your definition of success is when I get that job. Maybe it's your first job. Maybe it's a promotion from the job you have. Maybe it's a job in a different field. You might be defining your success as an attainment of a job, something that will happen. It may be getting a good performance review. It may be making sure that your clients are happy. Maybe when your clients give you certain accolades and validation, that to you feels like success.

Maybe it's isolated. Maybe it's winning a certain case. Maybe it's closing a deal. Whatever it might be, there's an endless list of things that you might identify, milestones, markers that you correlate with having achieved success.

Now the trouble is that if you are defining success as an event or something that happens outside of you, it may not allow you to really feel that success that you're longing for. That success that you're really craving. First of all, there is no end to the number of milestones that you can achieve on your pathway to success.

If you listened to episode number three where I talked about creating a joyful practice, I make a reference to Shawn Achor. Shawn Achor is a scholar and a speaker. He works at Harvard. He was the first person I learned from on the area of success and happiness and the correlation of the two.

It was in a talk that he gave where I first became aware of this idea that when you put success as something that will happen, something you will feel when you achieve a certain marker. You may initially feel a sense of

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happiness, a sense of achievement when you sense that thing. However, it's not permanent. There's always going to be another marker. There's going to be another milestone.

So if you're attaching your sense of success to the occurrence of that one thing, you're always going to be chasing success. You're always going to be chasing happiness. So defining your success based on those external markers will unlikely give you that sense of fulfillment that you're really longing for.

Another reason why having success as something outside of yourself not being the most effective way to set yourself up for it is that you become hooked on external validation. I know that for me, this was something that really was motivating. When I was younger, I wanted my parents to be proud of me. I wanted to get into law school. I wanted to become a lawyer.

Once I got wrapped up in the law school experience, then I wanted to do what my friends were doing. I wanted to get a job at a large firm. I wanted to do the type of work that other students were doing. When I got into the law firm itself, then it was all about making the other lawyers happy, achieving, making the clients happy. My focus on what was successful was very much defined on these external circumstances that were really outside of me. So much of it depended on external validation.

As much as it might feel good in the moment when you get a positive performance review, when you really help out a lawyer or a client and they give you that sense of accomplishment. They thank you. They tell you you've done a great job. You feel so good in the moment. However, then the next moment comes.

I can remember quite vividly going to court and going in, having my application heard, having prepared really a lot to get up there in front of the judge. There's that moment where I would get the order that I was seeking,

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and I would feel so good. The minute that I left the courthouse and was on my way back to the office, all of my feeling of success, if you want to call it that, dissipated because I was already thinking of the next thing.

Another drawback in putting your sense of success in the hands of external validation is that then you also become more vulnerable to the validation or lack of validation that may come from those external sources.

So let's say that trip to chambers doesn't end up with the order that you're seeking but some other thing. Then you may find yourself more vulnerable to feeling like the opposite of success, right? Maybe you feel like a failure. Or if you do something and you work really hard and you're really trying to please somebody, and they don't give you that sense of validation, then you may find yourself really disappointed. I think I've also found myself in that situation.

As I'm recording this podcast, I'm sort of thinking out loud about situations where I've worked for individuals who by their nature would never really... Their sense of validation or their giving of validation or feedback was varied very much, varied. So one day you might be giving a lot of praise, and you may feel really validated for the work that you're doing. On another occasion they may give you the opposite of praise, and that can have also a really negative impact on your own feeling of success.

So what I am suggesting here—and I think we can all agree that it feels great to have positive feedback. It's definitely a learning experience when you get negative feedback. If you're basing your sense of success on other people, then you are in a very vulnerable position. So it doesn't really work. If what you're doing for your success formula is simply adopting the markers that have been assigned in your industry and working towards those and hoping that you're going to reach that next level and feel successful.

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I think it's a really tough way to achieve success because the goal posts are always moving, and you have very little control if you're looking to others to validate you.

So what then is the formula for finding success? What does it mean to create a practice for yourself where you are wildly successful? What I would offer to you is for you to create your own definition of success. To do that, you need to ask yourself what you would consider to be wildly successful. You may be surprised to learn what that means to you.

So I'm going to talk about ways that you can define wildly successful. Some of the questions that you might want to ask yourself. I'm going to talk about my own definition of wildly successful, and what clients of mine have also considered to be success in their practice.

As I go through the discussion, what I would really invite you to think about is your own practice, what success looks like to you, and how your definition of success might evolve over the course of your practice. Because I can assure you that what I consider to be successful 15 years ago is quite different from what I consider to be successful today. For you, you may also experience that your definition of success evolves over time.

So I recently worked with a client who was not at all happy in her position. She was working as a lawyer in a law firm. She was looking to do something quite different. She was really describing a lack of resonance with the work that she was doing. What she described that she was doing was quite different from what she wanted to do.

You might think about your own practice, right? If you have a desire to become a partner at the law firm that you're working at, what is it about being a partner that would be successful to you? You might really break it down. Is it the financial component of it? Is it the leadership component of it? Is it having more contact with clients? Really get down to the nitty gritty

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details because that's really doing to help you define what success looks like to you.

If you were to create your own practice, what does wildly successful look like to you? Again, what I'm really inviting you to do is to focus less on what other people's success formula might look like and really look inside your own mind to decide what it is that would be successful to you.

When it comes time to define what wildly successful looks like to you, ask yourself questions in relation to a number of different areas. So you might ask yourself what's important to you about your work. Is it the substance of your work? Is it really that you're compelled to do work in a very particular area?

This is what happened with the client I mentioned a moment ago where the nature of the work that she was doing was completely out of alignment with what she truly wanted to do. So there was a big disconnect. Working harder and trying to reconfigure the way that she worked in the place that she was wasn't going to solve that problem for her. There was no way she could reconcile the substance of her work with what she truly wanted to do. So maybe that's where you find yourself.

Maybe it's relationships. Maybe to you being wildly successful means having relationships within your organization whether it's a law firm, whether it's your own firm, whether it's some other organization that does legal work. Maybe that's really important to you. It's a mentorship. It's collegiality. You don't have that.

Maybe it's learning and growth. Maybe for you a huge part of what you define wildly successful is being able to look at your career trajectory and to forecast out five years, ten years, and see yourself on a path where you continue to learn and grow, where you continue to take on more responsibility, where you continue to redefine yourself as a lawyer. So if

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that is lacking in your current position, you can't see your way forward. Then that may mean you're not wildly successful where you are right now.

It may be the amount of impact that you're making. So wildly successful to you might mean that you are making an impact in a very specific way with your clients at your firm in your organization. I've had clients who felt so strongly about the work that they did.

A conversation is coming to mind right now about a lawyer who was helping with policy creation. For her, she was designing workplace policies. It meant so much to her that she was able to play a part in creating workplaces that were creating and fostering safety for a number of individuals in the province that I live in. So you might think about what is the impact that you're making through your work. Is that impact in alignment with what you truly want?

It may be lifestyle. You may define wildly successful as a job where you are not only able to perform at the level that you want professionally, but you've also reserved time so that you can pursue things that are important to you outside of the office. It may be that you have family that you are wanting to spend time with. It may be that you have friends. It may be that you have your own hobbies, your health, other commitments.

That may mean that wildly successful to you means that you're looking at your practice in relation to does it allow you to do the other things, the non-practice things, that you want to do in your life.

Finally it may be how are you seeing yourself in relation to the work that you do, and are you modeling for others something that is important to you? I know this was something that was not initially anything that was on my radar when I was younger. Not that I wanted to not be a role model, but I wasn't on my list of criteria. Now I find that as a parent, I feel a sense of responsibility to create for myself a career where I can really model for my

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children something that is meaningful and significant to me. In part, that might be the work that I do.

It also might be the way in which I carry out the work. Not to say that I could not or was not doing this as a lawyer but modeling now has become so much more important to me. So you may look at the work that you're doing and say, "Am I conducting myself in a way that I serve as a role model for other lawyers?" Maybe it's a role model for your children. Maybe it's your friends. Are you really proud of the way that you are doing your work?

So these are a list of characteristics or themes that you might think about as you go and create your own definition of success. If you do that, I would encourage you to take out a sheet of paper or open a blank document on your computer. Really just brainstorm. Brainstorm ideas. What does wildly successful look like to you? Come up with all of the ideas that speak to you. Because that really is your way of creating your own path to success.

I mentioned that for myself, my definition of success has evolved over time and that yours very much likely will evolve as well. I also mentioned that I was going to share a little bit about my own experience in creating my definition of success. So when I was a lawyer just starting out, what I looked for was quite different, I think. Well, in some ways different and in some ways the same as my criteria are now.

When I was looking for my first real associate position, I was really concerned about the people that I was working with. To me more than any other factor whether it was litigation or whether it was commercial work, what I was most interested in is am I going to be surrounding myself with a group of people that I get along with?

Another consideration for me was how busy is the firm? I had an experience where I worked in an environment where there wasn't a lot of work. I found that to be very uncomfortable. It happened to be that the

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economy was slow. Some of you may have experienced that in the COVID pandemic. That there was a period where work really became scarce. To me working in an environment where there was a lot of competition among lawyers for work projects didn't sit well with me.

So I was really interested in going into a practice that was flourishing where I would be working with individuals that I really liked. There was an opportunity to learn. Looking for an opportunity where I could learn more, that was really important to me. Where I could be exposed to a broad practice and really get experience.

Those were things that initially were really important. What I was less concerned about as a junior lawyer was balance. I had really hands down preferred to be in an environment where I had less what we might call work-life balance. I was more than happy to put in the hours and to do the seven day weeks and the late nights and the early mornings because I was learning, because I was growing.

All of that was really important to me as a very junior lawyer starting out. The caliber of lawyer that I was working with, I wanted to be surrounded by lawyers that I could learn from who could teach me things. So that was really what I was focused on in my early years of practice.

Now as time went on, this was not something that I necessarily did with the same intentionality that I would bring to the exercise now. Now that I'm a coach, I spend so much more time evaluating success, evaluating goals, figuring out how to motivate, figuring out what is motivating, getting aligned with values so that you're creating in alignment with values. There's a whole bunch of considerations that I'm now aware of that I wasn't aware of when I was practicing as a lawyer.

If I look at where things shifted for me when I decided to shift away from law as a practice, move into a coaching practice, there were a number of

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factors that were at play there. One of them was just simply something that I had mentioned before, which was that long term view.

There came a point in my legal career path where I stopped seeing myself as wanting to advance further in the practice that I was in then. A large part of that was driven by the fact that I had discovered this thing called coaching where my interest all of a sudden was just drawn. It was like a magnet. I couldn't get enough of it. I was listening to all things coaching. I started reading up on coaching. I was looking into training programs.

Something like this might happen to you too. Maybe it's something that is outside of law. Maybe you become really obsessed, frankly because I would describe myself as obsessed, in something outside of your current practice. Or maybe you're in your practice, and you find something within it that all of a sudden really triggers your interest. That you really want to develop a skill much more intensely. I would invite you to really look for that as your practice evolves. What is it that you're drawn to? Because that's an indication of something that you might want to factor into your success formula.

So I mentioned also that I'm going to share with you some of the criteria that I now have from my own practice. I recognize that my practice is a coaching practice. So it's different from a law practice. However, I would argue that a lot of my criteria that I have from my own success may be similar to some of the criteria that you would have in your practice.

So number one is am I in integrity with myself? I did a podcast recently about integrity. It's episode number nine. I've, since recording that podcast, had the benefit of finishing the book that I've mentioned. It's Martha Beck's book called *The Way to Integrity*. It is such a great book, and it really was an opportunity for me to do a deep dive of that question. Am I living in integrity with the things that I value? I would encourage any of you who are remotely interested to read that book. It was a very powerful book.

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What it did in a way was reinforce the significance that I feel that the work that we do in the world should very much align with what we feel is right and true for us. So the work that I do now, I never question whether or not it's in alignment with who I am. I'm often thinking about how the work that I do is really an expression of what I value and what I want most for others in this world, in this practice.

In a nutshell, what I'm most obsessed with, what I really want is to help others using coaching, using the work that I'm doing, using this podcast to find within themselves the seeds of what they truly want to accomplish. The work that they want to do. The purpose that they see for themselves while they're on this planet, not to get too philosophical. To help them to do that work.

So, for me, I feel like I'm 100% in integrity because I'm doing that, and I'm doing that with a group of individuals which is lawyers and this podcast, specifically women lawyers. In my practice, I work with men lawyers as well. So I feel like I am 100% in integrity with being an aid for all of you who are really looking to live out your purpose, to find alignment in your work. So number one is integrity. Do I have integrity between who I am as a person and the work that I'm doing?

Number two is am I showing up in service? So I consider a practice that is wildly successful to be one where I am showing up in service to others and creating an impact. Am I creating an impact in the world in the way that I want to create an impact? For all of us, our impact is going to look different.

To me, some of the questions that I might ask myself are: am I helping lawyers create the experience of being wildly successful in their work? Through this podcast and this episode in particular, I hope I'm getting you closer to that point. Where I'm inviting you to ask yourself the question of what wildly successful looks like to you, and hopefully setting you up on a

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path of inquiry and a course of action that will help you get closer to the definition of wildly successful as you see it.

Other things that I'm aspiring to in my practice, the impact that I'm hoping to create, is to increase self confidence among lawyers. Among all lawyers that I work with. Here I find, again, maybe tracing back to the conversation about success being defined by external markers is that in that process. I know I felt this way for myself, and a number of the lawyers that I've worked with have felt the same way. Where the definition of success, having been defined by some other entity. If you're not reaching that success, you may start to doubt yourself because of that.

I've seen that among lawyers who have talked about how law school even was the beginning for them of losing their sense of self confidence. Because they weren't necessarily "measuring up" according to the standards that were popular within their law school. Or lawyers who maybe decide that they don't want to practice, or they want to practice in a reduced capacity and feeling like that is not okay because that is not what is celebrated within the legal community or the community that they happen to be in.

So I think that by redefining success on your own terms, by really questioning what is the norm around you. Maybe it's the working culture, for example, right? If you work at a law firm where the culture is 2,000 plus hours and you're billing 1,500, you may see yourself as less successful. You may doubt yourself.

These are ways that the external validation mechanisms in place. If you're comparing yourself to those things that you may be feeling self-doubt. Part of the work that I do with lawyers is I want to bring that locus of control back to each of you so that you are measuring yourself by your own standards and building confidence based on what's important to you. Not chipping

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away at your own confidence because you're not living up to someone else's definition of success which may not even align with your own.

So when it goes back to impact and when I'm assessing am I creating the impact that I want to create in this world, then that's one of the things I look at. Am I helping others build their confidence and allowing them or helping them find for themselves what their own internal values are and helping them to meet those values?

Another question that I might be asking myself is have I set big goals for myself? Am I pushing myself every day to work towards my goals in my practice? I would say as a coach, 100%. As a lawyer, yes, I absolutely pushed myself. I would say that most of the time when I was pushing myself, I was pushing myself to meet other people's expectations and to satisfy the client and to take on challenges because those were the challenges that were presented to me.

It's not to say that I wasn't aligned with those challenges. Part of this comes with the distinction of being an employee, which I was, versus a self-propelled entity, which is how I would define myself now. To me, the work that I'm doing feels so important that I am constantly challenging myself to find new ways to get my work out into the world so that I can help people just like you. To do that I have to really force myself out of my comfort zone. I'm doing it with this podcast. There's an episode I recorded about fear, and it was all about the fear of pushing myself into creating this podcast for you. I think it's episode number five.

I think it's constantly trying to reach new levels. I'm taking on projects that I never would have dreamed of taking when I was practicing as a lawyer. The reason that I'm doing it is because I really want to grow my practice. I want to create more impact. So that's another criteria for myself. Wildly successful to me means that I'm constantly pushing myself to create new things, to push myself out of my comfort zones to create more, and to

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effectively be an example of what it is that I'm doing, the work that I'm doing with lawyers.

So another criteria that I now have for success is that I'm creating a balance. I mentioned when I first started practicing law, I was very not interested in finding work-life balance. To me when I was interviewing for a law firm and they were marketing themselves as, "This is a hard working firm. We run a lean ship. We expect everybody to contribute." I loved that. That was exactly what I wanted. I wanted the opportunity to work as much as I possibly could while I could do that.

Now that I am a parent, I've got two kids. They are currently almost seven and nine. I can't believe it. The years have gone by so fast. Part of who I am today is a parent. My job needs to allow me to have flexibility. Part of the reason why I am a self-propelled entrepreneur, whatever you want to call me, is I wanted a job where I had flexibility to be able to respond to some of the childcare needs in our family. That's just the way that my husband and I have set up our life. Everybody sets their lives up differently. That's part of ours.

It's not just because I want to be here to make sure that somebody is at home with the kids when they're sick or there's a professional day or whatever challenge might come up. It's also because I want to be here to support them and to be a present figure in their life. Everybody has a different path. Everybody's family dynamic is different. In some cases, one parent will be the sort of primary person that is out of the house when the other person stays back. There's all different shapes and sizes, and there's not a one size fits all. That's what I chose for myself in the context of my family.

Another element of that too is not just the physical presence but also the mental presence. What was interesting when I practiced as a lawyer, I found that I had a lot more mental chatter that was taking me away from my

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family. That was largely based on the setup that I had, and my ability or inability to set boundaries. So I would find that it was quite easy for me to be even on a weekend out with my family.

I remember once picking stuff up at Walmart and having this email land in my phone and just seeing that. It basically took me away. I was no longer in the car driving back from Walmart with my family. I was now a million miles analyzing a situation that had come up at the office.

So for me that was something that I wanted to create. I think between me being better able to establish and create boundaries for myself and enforce those boundaries and also by shifting the nature of the work that I'm doing and the relationships that I have, I mean it's a much different practice that I have now. I was able to create more mental space to be present with my family.

So that, to me, is part of my definition of wildly successful. It doesn't mean that it's going to be part of your definition, that it should be, or that need be. That is something that I now evaluate is, is this working with my family dynamic.

Another question that I ask myself is am I modeling for my children what I think is important? I alluded to this a few minutes ago. What is important to me? What is important for me to show to my children that I want them to learn? Number one is never giving up.

So as a self-propelled entity, what I'm doing here and the work that I'm doing is novel to me. It's creating a practice based on nothing having existed before. I talked to them about that. The most fascinating thing is how they pick up on that. Doing work that is meaningful to me. So being able to share with them what I'm doing and feeling like when I'm taking them to childcare or I'm not spending time with them that I feel like the work

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that I'm doing matters to me, and that I'm choosing to do this because it's really important.

One thing that I wanted to mention here that's really fun, especially because I work as a coach and I'm always giving pep talks. Every once in a while, my daughter—actually my son will do this too—they will give me pep talks. One example that comes to mind is I was driving them home one day. There were fireworks going on. There was a bunch of traffic all over the place. It was tricky to navigate our way back home.

At one point I was turning onto a street and there were a lot of pedestrians there. I didn't want to run anybody over. So it took me a while to make this turn. The guy in the car behind us yelled something really rude to me. I can't remember what it was, but it contained some language that I don't really want to repeat on this podcast. My children were sitting in the backseat. All of a sudden, they started cheering me on. They're like, "Go mom. You're not a bad driver." Because that was part of what he was saying about me.

It was this really amazing moment where all of a sudden, my children were supporting me much in the same way that I support them. I have other examples where I've been talking about a webinar that I was putting on or something that was happening in my practice where it was a challenge. I was telling my kids about this. My daughter would turn around—and she's done this on multiple occasions—and she gives me these crazy pep talks. They are so inspiring. They are better than mine.

So in the practice that I have now, I'm looking at the qualities of the work that I do, the characteristics that I'm bringing to them. Am I serving as a model to my children? Is this something that I want them to learn? Another thing is hard work and feeling in integrity with your work and appreciating your work and the importance of your work.

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So these are all things that I think about in my practice, and you probably are thinking about in yours. Maybe it's your children, maybe it's your community, maybe it's other lawyers that you work with. There's so many ways in which you can model and role model for others, and maybe that's something that is part of your definition of what constitutes success.

I have a few more items on my list. So I'm going to go through those. So questions I might ask myself as well for a wildly successful practice is am I continuing to build my expertise through training and through practice? So, again, I am doing that. I am always trying to upgrade and learn more about the work that I'm doing, the coaching work that I'm doing, the neuroscience behind it, the brain health science behind it.

These are things that I'm always interested in. I'm very interested in learning what other coaches are doing, the techniques that they're using and working with their clients. I'm working with my clients. I'm always trying to create an experience for them that is getting them the results that they want. So am I continuing to grow as a professional? That's, to me, a criteria for success.

Another is am I meeting my financial goals? Am I on target for my growth? So that's something that I evaluate. I imagine it's something that you're evaluating too. It's looking at the compensation that you are earning through your work and deciding if that's what you want. Is that in alignment with the goals that you have for yourself? Are you on your way toward creating the type of growth that you want?

I can tell you right here that for some people that is really important. That the bottom line matters and what they're really after is dollar figures. There's nothing wrong with that nor is that the only way to measure your success. Because I have other lawyers who are maybe interested in a job that may pay less but that offers a different type of opportunity to them that allows them to have some other measure of success. Whether it's growth

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in a certain area, learning in a certain area, maybe it's more balance in a certain area.

So your financial peace is certainly, or maybe not, but I think it is part of the equation. It's not the only part of the equation. That's something that I consider in my definition of successful is am I meeting the financial goals that I have for myself?

Another area is more about the people than it is about the work itself. I mentioned when I was first starting out that it was really important to me to find a group of lawyers to practice with that I wanted to practice with. As a sole proprietor or whatever it is that you want to call me, a sole practitioner, as a coach I don't have a community that I work with on a daily basis. I, for the most part, do my work one to one with clients.

However, I do collaborate with others when it comes to speaking engagements, and I collaborate with others when it comes to some program design. I have mentors and colleagues who I love talking shop with. I'll just give you an example.

One individual, her name is Bena Stalk. She is a lawyer turned counselor. She works in Vancouver like me. She's a mentor, a friend, a colleague. She is all things. I had the benefit of being able to see her in person yesterday for the first time in well over a year and a half, certainly since the pandemic started.

We went for a walk in the woods. I got to meet her new puppy Jack, who is absolutely adorable and obviously very much loved by his owners. We had all sorts of wonderful conversations. She works as a counselor for lawyers. She and I were talking about all of the things that we love about the work that we do.

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One of the things that I wanted to share with you about Bena is the story of when we first met. I reached out to her when I was still practicing as a lawyer, and I had first started exploring the possibility of becoming a coach. She had already made the transition to counselling. A mutual friend put us in touch with each other.

I remember I wanted to know everything about her. She was also a litigator before she became a counselor. One of the things that she said to me in our conversation was that when she was doing her work as a counselor, she had this moment where she was pinch me happy. This idea of being pinch me happy at the time just seemed too foreign to me. I thought, "Oh, you mean I can go and create work for myself work," I use that term, I guess professional work, "in a way that I am pinch me happy."

Don't get me wrong. I really enjoyed my legal practice. There were elements of practice that I loved that I really enjoyed. I'm not sure that I would have used the words pinch me happy to describe it. So that conversation with Bena opened my eyes to the possibility that I could potentially create a practice for myself where I was pinch me happy. So as you are going through your definition, creating your definition of wildly successful, I would invite you to think about, "Oh okay. What would pinch me happy look like for me?"

All of this in the context of something that I consider in my definition, which is who are you surrounding yourself with? If you are in a firm, maybe it's the people that are in your law firm. It doesn't have to just be those people though. It's who in your community are you surrounding yourself? Who are you learning from? Who are the mentors that you're learning from? Who are you seeking out as your mentor? What is the relationship that you have with these individuals? It goes both ways. Maybe you are in the leadership position and you're working with others, and you love leading your team and you love being the mentor to more junior lawyers.

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So what I would invite you to do here is really just to ask yourself what component or what components of relationships are important to you in your definition of wildly successful? It could be that you don't need relationships in your definition. Those are not a factor that you consider. For me, that's something that I consider in my own definition of success in my practice.

Finally my last note that I have here is am I living my message? I've alluded to this already when I've talked about setting big goals for myself and working towards this and trying to be an example of the work that I'm doing. This final question of am I living my message, I mean it also wraps up in this idea of integrity. Do I feel in alignment with the work that I'm doing? So that is a question that I ask myself in my own personal definition of wildly successful.

One of the sort of fascinating side benefits of creating this podcast for you is that I have been listening to episodes. I'm reviewing my work. I'm trying to find ways to be more effective in my podcast recordings. Often when I'm listening to the words that I'm saying, I'm thinking about the examples that I'm sharing and the lessons that I'm offering and the examples of other lawyers. I have these moments where I get to ask myself am I truly living out the messages that I'm sharing?

I would say yes. I try not to practice what I would not preach myself, but not always all the time. So, for example, when I was speaking about decluttering, I was thinking oh my gosh. I just really want to apply that in my own house right now. When I finally had the opportunity, the time and space opened up and I was able to do it, I felt so good, right?

So I'm constantly advocating in favor of doing work that aligns with you, pushing yourself out of your comfort zone, finding ways to declutter, pushing through fear. All of these things. Networking, I get asked a lot of

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questions about networking. Am I doing the things that I am teaching others? That, to me, is really important that I am living that message.

Sort of going back to that podcast, one of the reasons that's so interesting is that as a coach when I'm working with lawyers, I see patterns. You probably find this too. When you're speaking with other individuals, it's so much easier sometimes to see from an objective perspective what is truly going on for them. You may have friends or colleagues where it's almost like you could repeat the message over and over again. The facts might change but the story remains the same. It's so much easier to see that in others than it is to see it in ourselves.

So being able to have that objective frame of reference, which is kind of how I feel when I listen to a podcast episode. Even though it's me speaking, there's a certain level of objectivity that comes along with hearing it. It really allows me to then ask myself, "Okay. Am I practicing what I'm preaching here? Am I really living that message?" That to me is a sign of success. That yes, I believe in the work that I'm doing. I am a patron of the work that I'm doing. It really helps me to feel confident in how it can help others because I see the difference that it's making in my own life.

So those are some of my own criteria of success. So I just looked at the time, and I'm really taking my time. One of my goals was to record shorter podcasts, but I guess today I'm not going to be reaching that goal. Sorry. Hopefully in the future I will. I wanted to share some clients and how they have defined success. So I will do that because some of this might be relevant and applicable to your practice.

So one client that I have is a family lawyer. One of the criteria for her success is that she's practicing family law in a way that is focused on collaborative resolution as opposed to litigation as a resolution. So for her that to her is a criteria of her practice being successful.

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Another client that I worked with was working on creating a freelance practice for herself which allowed for autonomy. So being able to be selective in terms of the work that she was doing, how much work she was doing, the variety of the work that she was doing that allowed her to have mobility. So she wanted a practice where she didn't have to be in one physical location to do her work.

She wanted balance. She wanted time to be able to pursue outside interests, to have time to spend with her partner. They had a project that they were working on. She wanted to be able to have more time doing that. Also having a practice where she was independent enough that she was able to take on some learning opportunities and projects that were outside the scope of a traditional career or lawyer work. So that to her was her definition of success.

Another lawyer wanted to become a partner at a law firm, and that was for her a true measure of success. When she came to see that that wasn't really something that would happen where she was, she went to a different firm and became a partner there. So sometimes it's evaluating your circumstances and deciding. Is this environment that I'm in right now going to enable me to reach the goal that I want, or do I need to find another place where that opportunity is going to be there for me?

Another example of finding success might be leaving, for example, a private practice situation or the situation that you're in now in order to find a practice that allows you to do the kind of work that you want to do. So that might be, for example, leaving private practice and going and working in the nonprofit sector. For some people, that might be wildly successful because it allows them to do work in a way that they were not able to do the work in a private practice environment.

It might be that wildly successful means moving away from what you may have been told is a successful practice. So maybe you have always been

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told that a successful practice must be at a firm of a certain size in a certain location doing a certain type of work and serving a certain type of clients. Maybe for you carving out success means focusing more on your local community.

Maybe it's focusing on a type of client that is not served by a traditional law firm. Doing that in a way that resonates with you. I know I've had a number of lawyers who have spoken to me about doing that in some way or another. That either they have done that, or they want to do that. It's entirely possible, and that might be your definition of success.

Another example of wildly successful might be, for example, where you take over a practice and you want to grow that practice, but you also want to be very mindful of relationships within that practice. So keeping the vibe or the dynamic that exists among staff members and making sure that that is all consistent while establishing yourself as a leader in that environment.

Taking on that leadership role with confidence. Learning how to manage your relationships with clients, how to manage conflicts that might arise, who you want to show up as a leader. So that might be your definition of success is showing up as a strong leader and leading in a way that is in alignment with what matters most to you.

Success might mean overcoming self-doubt that you have about yourself when it comes to your personal relationships and body image. I've had clients who have come to me to work on those attributes because what they have found is number one, I don't know anybody who wants to experience that. Experience the self-doubt. To have that harsh view of one's own body and be able to liberate themselves from that from a personal perspective but also to feel more confident in their professional environment. So that might be success for you.

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It may also be learning how to manage conflict in a workplace so that you can thrive in your environment. I've worked with lawyers who have had challenges in that regard in terms of their interpersonal relationships. That has held them back from attaining more advancement, for example, in their environment. So being able to manage that may be part of your or other lawyer's definition of what success looks like.

So whatever it is that wildly successful looks like to you, you get to define it. I've given you a number of ideas here in terms of things that may or may not resonate with you. Again, going back to my suggestion earlier. I would encourage you to take out a sheet of paper, open a Word document, and just really be expansive and brainstorm about all the different criteria that would help you feel like you're achieving success.

Now, the reason that an exercise like this will work. So we're now comparing this approach to success to what you may have done before or what many lawyers do. Which is to really allow success to be this thing that other people define for you. When you take ownership, you get to become the artist in your own life. You get to decide what you're working toward. This is really powerful as a coach.

When I started my training, one of the first things I was taught was not to tell my clients what to do. That is a directive coaching where you are telling people, you're instructing people. A non-directive type of coaching is where you actually invite them to come up with their own ideas, come up with their own strategies, come up with their own solutions. There is much more attachment to those ideas than there is to something that I could ever tell anybody else.

If you have young kids, you've probably experienced that when you've instructed them to do anything. Maybe it's just me. When you instruct, I mean some people will just do it. Some children will simply comply. If you work in an office environment and you request that your assistant does

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something or somebody who reports to you that they do something, you may be able to be directive and they will follow. When it comes to you creating your definition of wildly successful, it's a lot more compelling if you come up with your own ideas than it is if you try to attach yourself to somebody else's definition of success.

So another reason why creating your own definition of success is effective is because it allows you to focus your mind and energy on what you want instead of what others want for you. So if you go back to the example, let's say it's your parents that want you to work in a law firm. I'm just using that as an example because it's easy. I suspect many of you are well past that stage. Although maybe not. I mean I know when I left practice that was one of my big concerns. I was I think in my very late 30s at that stage, but that was still a consideration for me. Wanting that approval.

When you are looking at that validation, again, it really is taking away your power because you are now looking outside yourself for that source of approval. So when you turn that around and you create your own definition, you're not looking at your own criteria for success. It's a lot more satisfying to measure yourself against those criteria than it is to measure yourself against somebody else's criteria.

It also means that you get to create success based on your values. What carries meaning for you. I think it puts you in a much more creative state. I've talked about that in earlier podcast episodes, the idea that being creative and being reactive. These are the same letters just arranged differently. Creative tends to come from a place that is more expansive, where you're more open versus the reactive state where you're coming often from a place of fear, of doubt. It's a much less expansive place to be coming from.

So I think when you invite yourself to imagine what success looks like and to create from that space, it's a lot more empowering. You'll come up with

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some pretty compelling ideas. Another reason why it's effective is that you give yourself clarity. So once you've defined for yourself some of the attributes that are success to you, you can get more granular and break those down more specifically. Then you have a clear road map for yourself. You know what it is that you're looking for. That gives you a roadmap to follow to create your own version of success.

Moving on to the skills that you'll need. I've identified four skills here. I think we're almost at the end of the podcast. I'm so sorry, again, that I'm not adhering to my own self-proclaimed goal of trying to keep these podcasts a little bit shorter. The skills that you'll need, four of them I've identified. There are others, but they all start with the letter C if that's at all convenient.

Number one is courage. When it comes to creating your own definition of success, courage I think is probably the skill that you'll need the most because you'll need the courage to define something that may not be the definition of success that's popular among your surroundings, among the people that are in your current environment. It also means courage of letting go of things, right? You might have to let go of certain things that you thought were important to you in order to make the space to create more of what it is that you want.

Another skill you'll need is curiosity. You're hopefully doing that here on today's podcast is really asking yourself what it is that is meaningful to you. To get outside the box and ask yourself the questions about what would be wildly successful to you.

Another quality or skill that you'll need is commitment. So once you get the courage to start making some changes, when you've got the curiosity to start asking yourself what would be success to you. You start to do that; you're going to need to commit to that on some level. That can be really challenging. I have a podcast episode. It's all about making a decision and going all in on your decision.

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It can be quite terrifying if you are letting go or saying goodbye to options that you thought were important to you. But there is so much power in going after what it is that you want. So your level of commitment here if you're able to assess what is in alignment for you, for your definition of success, and commit to doing those things, that's really how you're going to start to achieve the success that you're looking for.

Finally another skill you'll need is calibration. Once you start putting yourself on a new path, once you've decided, "Okay, I'm going to define success in this particular way. These are the things that I'm going to do. I'm now committed." Then you get to assess as you go along and adapt where you need to. So those are four skills that you'll want to bring to this challenge.

Finally what is going to be created as a result of you taking these steps? So creating your definition of success and then doing the steps necessary to bring those things to life. You'll create more confidence. As you start to redefine success, as you take control over that definition and look at it in a way that matters to you. As you take risks and as you build, you'll start to develop that inner sense of confidence that you can create anything that you want. That you have the power to make these choices. That will start to build on itself. It's like a snowball in a very positive way, right? It just continues to build on itself.

You'll be creating more of what you want. If you are the person who is deciding what success looks like and then you're intentionally going out and seeking that, you'll find that the proportion of activities in your life or where you're spending your time will increasingly reflect what's important to you.

Your practice will increasingly reflect your values. Again, this kind of goes to that point of creating more of what you want. Ultimately that will create

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more joy as you are working more in an area that is satisfying to you, that feels good to you. You're just going to feel better.

I worked with a lawyer who was so in love with his practice. When he described it, he described it almost as a game. Whenever I saw him at the office, he was so happy. He was working longer hours than anyone else, but he loved it. I feel this way about my practice now. I will put myself through the ringers to get things done, and I'm so joyful about it.

You have that as well. Clients have that too when they find what works for them. When they find what clicks and they find themselves working in alignment with what is truly important to them, there's a joy in that. So as you pursue your own definition of success, you will feel more joy in your practice.

Finally what do you create? Well, you'll create a practice that is wildly successful. Wildly successful on your own terms in the way that you define it. Thank you so much my friends for joining me today. That's what I have on offer is creating your own definition of success and becoming wildly successful. I'm so delighted that you are here sharing this with me today. I hope that each of you comes away with some ideas about things that you want to build more of in your practice.

I've mentioned before, throughout this podcast actually, that I work with lawyers one on one doing coaching. If that's something that interests you, I would encourage you to reach out to me. My contact information is on the joyfulpractice.com website. So send me a note. I'd love to hear from you.

If this podcast resonated with you and you have your own success story that you want to share with me, I'd love to hear it. I'm always interested in feedback from my listeners. I have received feedback since starting the podcast. Every piece of it just brings so much joy to me. I appreciate it. Feel free to reach out on LinkedIn. Feel free to send me an email. You'll be

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able to find me. I think there will also be some links in the show notes to this episode. So there's another way that you can find me and get in contact with me.

So thank you all of you. I wish all of you wild success in your practice. I'm so excited to be back and to see you in next week's episode. Bye for now.

If you enjoyed today's show and don't want to miss an episode, subscribe, and follow the show wherever you listen to your podcasts. If you haven't already, please leave a rating and review. Your feedback will help me create a podcast that's tailored to your needs and goes straight to the heart of what matters to you. For instructions on how to subscribe, rate, and review the podcast, visit www.thejoyfulpractice.com/podcastlaunch. See you next time.

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