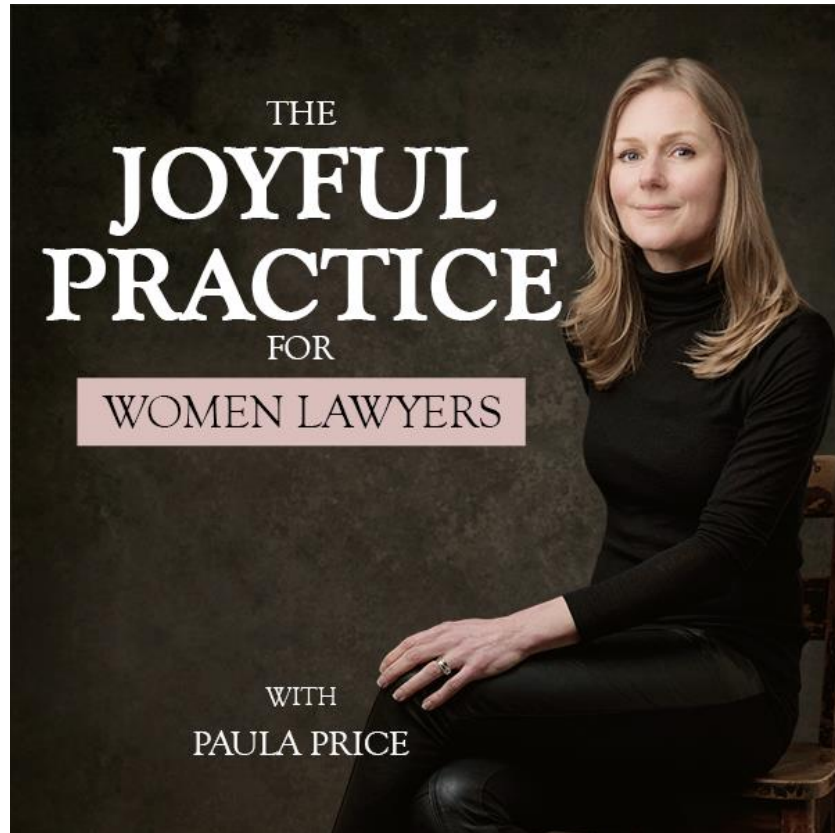


## Ep #17: How to Deal with Loneliness



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Paula Price**

## Ep #17: How to Deal with Loneliness

You're listening to *The Joyful Practice for Women Lawyers Podcast* episode number 17.

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, my friends and welcome back to the podcast. For those of you who are joining for the first time, welcome. I'm delighted to have you here. My name is Paula Price. I'm a lawyer turned certified executive coach, and the host of this podcast.

In today's episode, we are going to talk about what it's like to feel alone and disconnected. I'm going to offer you some strategies to help you go from a place of feeling alone and disconnected, maybe awkward, to a place where you feel maybe more connected, supported, and empowered and confident in the relationships that you have with others. The reason that I'm talking about this particular subject is I feel like this is something that we don't really want to acknowledge. That we don't openly talk about with others.

So this is a great opportunity for me to share some of my own experiences, some experiences that I've heard from others, and to offer some insights that might help you if you are feeling lonely to help you turn that around. If that does come up in your professional life and your personal life to offer some strategies and tools that you might be able to use to help turn that around.

## Ep #17: How to Deal with Loneliness

So as I go through today's podcast episode, I would invite you to think about times where maybe you have felt a little bit alone. It may be that you are feeling that way in a professional environment. I have certainly had the experience of being surrounded by people and yet feeling lonely. This has happened to me in an office environment. I remember when I first started working in an office, it was a very foreign feeling to me to be in that professional environment.

Even though I was surrounded by a group of other students—I was a student at the time—and lawyers and staff, I still felt very disconnected. I could have benefited from having a more intentional approach to my relationship building absolutely. I have felt that way in particular environments, maybe social environments where I felt like I didn't really know anybody or where I felt a bit out of place in that environment. I also felt like that in a professional environment when things in my personal life had shifted.

So I think I spoke about this before. I certainly spoke about it in last week's episode, episode number 16, where I talk about being a working professional. When I returned to my office job after having children, I felt like there was a bit of a cultural shift on my part. I had less time available that I could socialize with my peers at the office.

So even though I was at an office working with hundreds of others, I had this feeling of being disconnected and feeling isolated and feeling lonely. So I think it's an important thing to address because some of you may be feeling that way right now. I want you to know that you are supported, and that there are things you can do to empower yourself.

Sometimes feeling lonely may also show up in social situations. So there are professional situations like networking events where you walk into a room. I'm thinking of pre-COVID times or post-COVID times depending on where you're located where you walk into a physical space. You may not

## Ep #17: How to Deal with Loneliness

know anybody, and you may not know how to start out. It can be awkward. It can be embarrassing. So hopefully some of the strategies that we talk about today can help you in that environment.

So before we jump in, I'd invite you to think about what loneliness looks like to you. Situations where that may have come up, and what you felt in that moment. Maybe you felt exhausted by trying to fit into a situation or environment where it was a lot of work for you. Maybe you felt embarrassed because you didn't quite know what to say, or you felt like when you did say something you just said the wrong things. Maybe you felt awkward because you really didn't even know where to start. You might have felt completely out of your element.

Maybe if this is a working situation where you're starting to feel like that, you may have felt that the lack of social connection started to impact on your performance. You may have stopped progressing at the rate that you wanted to progress. You may have shied away from opportunities or relationships that could have helped you advance professionally, files that you wanted to work on, projects that you wanted to work on.

It may also be that you reach a point in a professional context or maybe it's a personal context where you feel like you no longer fit in, and that maybe it's no longer salvageable. So I would invite you to think about how this topic may play out in your life, and to think about how some of the strategies that I offer would be useful or beneficial to you.

Now if you feel lonely, if you feel isolated, if you feel disconnected, I just want you to know that you are definitely not alone in this. That a lot of us have felt like this or feel like this right now. If you feel like that, it is not your fault. It doesn't mean that there is something wrong with you. People generally do not talk about being lonely or feeling isolated.

## Ep #17: How to Deal with Loneliness

One of the reasons that I am creating this podcast is because I want to create a discussion around this. I want to invite you to feel like you can talk about this openly. I had a conversation with a woman that I met this summer. I'd never met her before. We were talking about our children, our husbands, and how our husbands travel for work and how sometimes there will be days where we're at home managing the kids and their activities.

She said to me that she sometimes felt really lonely during those periods. I thought oh this is so odd because this isn't something that people generally volunteer. Certainly not with people that they don't know very well. I found it refreshing. I appreciated her honesty. When she said that to me, I thought you know what? That's such an interesting point you made. Actually sometimes I feel lonely too even though I'm sitting at a table, for example, with my children having dinner, having conversations. I still feel like maybe I'm not connecting with others in relation to topics I really feel I want to connect on.

So this can happen at any stage in any context. So, again, this is totally normal. It doesn't mean that something has gone wrong. It is just how things go sometimes. It could be that there are circumstances that give rise to that situation where you start to feel lonely. The pandemic, I think, is a wonderful example. Itself not being wonderful, but the example being something that a lot of us and a lot of you can relate to.

Because virtually overnight we as a world pretty much shut down and moved towards a much more isolated way of working with each other. Especially lawyers and others working in office environments where they were able to transition their work from something that took place in an office environment to something that many of you were doing remotely from your homes.

That transition from being in an office environment to one where you were not more isolated was one that I know took a toll on a lot of you. There was

## Ep #17: How to Deal with Loneliness

a lot of talk about feeling isolated, about missing the social comradery of an office environment, mentorship opportunities, social opportunities. For extroverts especially I think this hit quite hard. I know for some of the introverts, I consider myself to be one of you, the move to home in some ways was comfortable, but it still was isolating.

So I think as a society, we really experienced all at once what it felt like to be isolated. I certainly felt that transition when I initially moved from an office environment to doing the work that I do now. I do most of it from home. The contrast between being surrounded by people to being isolated was a change in circumstance that really required me to be a lot more intentional about how I build up and how I built up my relationships professional and personal.

It may be that the reason that you're starting to feel isolated isn't necessarily a change in your outside circumstances but something that has changed within you. So in my case, I experienced quite a shift when I became a parent. I had new responsibilities and a completely different timetable after becoming a mom. I talk about that in last week's podcast episode, episode number 16 where I talk about balancing work and kids. There was a big shift that went on for me.

One of those shifts was that I had to be a lot more efficient with the time that I spent at the office, which meant that I was no longer able to engage in some of the social activities that I had engaged in prior to that. I'm thinking about lunches with my colleagues, casual conversations in the servery with my colleagues or in the hallway or in my office.

Formal evenings where there were organized drinks or dinners with members of my law firm or professional organizations that I belonged to, and I wasn't able to go because I didn't have childcare available, or I felt like that would be too much time away from my children. So that was something that shifted within me that resulted in me feeling more

## Ep #17: How to Deal with Loneliness

disconnected from those who I had previously been connected to. I felt very lonely.

It may also be that you feel disconnected because of the nature of your work. When I was practicing as a lawyer, a lot of my work was research. I did a lot of research. That was a process that requires a lot of alone time. I would get thick into the cases. I would shut my office door, and I would spend hour after hour digesting and writing and reading. That was a process that was very much isolating.

So I found at particular times that I really did feel alone. I felt lonely. I welcomed the opportunity to have tasks that were more dynamic where I was involved in maybe I was drafting materials that required the review of other lawyers or I was engaging with clients more. Whatever that looked like. There were times where the balance of my workflow was much more in the nature of alone time work versus work as a part of a team. So that can also contribute to how you're feeling in the office.

Now what happens sometimes when you start to feel lonely or isolated or alone or disconnected is that sometimes you might try harder in some of the relationships that you have to force more of a connection. Sometimes that can work, but sometimes it can feel forced. Sometimes you may resort to people pleasing where you are not truly aligned with what you're trying to do. You might be trying to please others to your own detriment.

It may be that you try to deny what you're feeling. You might not want to acknowledge that you feel lonely. So you kind of stuff it into the emotional closet if you were and try to ignore it and just force yourself to carry on. It may be that you retreat inward. I know this has happened to me sometimes where I just shut off a little bit. I retreat into myself. Of the result of doing things like that, of trying to force relationships for example or retreating and turning inward is that you then pull away from the relationships that you

## Ep #17: How to Deal with Loneliness

have. That only increases the feeling of isolation that you may already have. That's one of the reasons why that as a strategy doesn't really work.

It can also be that if you're trying to fit into a situation, an environment, or a relationship where you are no longer aligned. Maybe the circumstances have changed, or your values have changed. It can be really exhausting because you are effectively trying to fit a round peg into a square hole or whatever that expression is.

To do all that work really can wear on you. It can leave you feeling really tired. It can leave you feeling defeated. Those relationships may not work out because you're not really coming at them based on a genuine connection. So then you start to feel like it's not really working anyways. That only contributes to feeling more exhausted and more isolated.

Another side effect of that is if you are withdrawing, if you are not being as successful as you want to be in the relationships that you're trying to form, you may then find that your confidence starts to drop. Maybe your attempts at building relationships aren't working. So then you start to blame yourself and judge yourself and think that you're not good at it. So then you stop altogether. Again, that only further contributes to your feeling of isolation and further disconnects you from people and relationships.

What happens is if you go down that cycle, if you go down that path, eventually you reach that point almost like a breaking point where something needs to change. Maybe it needs to be something quite drastic. Maybe if you caught this at an earlier stage, there would be an opportunity to build relationships without having to change a lot around you or change a lot of what you're doing. If you leave it, you might find that you kind of reach this point where it's all too much.

Other things that might happen if you're not proactively building relationships is that as you start to feel disconnected, if you're losing



## Ep #17: How to Deal with Loneliness

confidence, you may stop showing up professionally in the way that you want. You may not show up with that confidence. You may not take on the opportunities that you want.

There may be a ripple effect outside of your professional work so that maybe you're showing up at home with less energy or you're defeated or you're exhausted when you're interacting with your partner or your children. It may be that you also miss out on opportunities at the office with your family because you simply don't feel up to them. It may also be that if you let it go to that point that you're going to have to make some pretty drastic changes to get back on track.

So in today's episode, I want to offer four strategies that you can implement, that you can try out to help you reconnect whether you are at that stage where you truly do feel disconnected. Or if you're noticing that you're starting to feel that way. It's not terrible, but you're starting to feel a little bit disconnected.

These are some ideas, some strategies that you can use to reconnect with others and to build up an environment where you feel supported. So ideally you can go from feeling isolated, alone, disconnected, awkward, or drifting from the people who are around you to feel more connected, more supported, purposeful in your relationships, and overall more confident in your work, your relationships, and your personal life.

So the first step that I will offer to you is to take a step back and think about what is most important to you. I mentioned earlier in this podcast that last week I talked about balancing kids and work. The first strategy that I offered there was to do a values assessment. I would encourage you to really think about what is most important to you. I will focus on your professional work. You could do this in relation to your personal relationships as well, but right now we're really focusing on the professional.

## Ep #17: How to Deal with Loneliness

So what is it professionally that matters to you right now? I would encourage you to think about your values in terms of how you practice. So what feels in integrity with your values whether it's honesty or service or something that is in the nature of how you practice. I would also invite you to think about your values in terms of what you practice. So is there a particular subject area that you want to be practicing in that you're not practicing in? Are there certain types of work that you want to be doing that you are not currently doing?

So in this exercise I would really invite you to think about what's important to you right now, and create a list and an inventory of what it is that really drives you. As you do this list, the reason that I think it's important to do it and to do it potentially often. The reason being is that those values, the things that are important to you, may shift over time.

So you may find that the relationships that were completely fulfilling and satisfying and reciprocal three years ago no longer are because of shifts that you've had in relation to your interest and shifts that the other person has had in their values and what's important to them. So this is an ongoing exercise. I would invite you to reconsider and revisit what's important to you as the years go on.

So the second step once you've identified what's important to you is to start taking stock of the relationships that you have. Again, we're focusing here on your professional life. So think about who it is in your professional world that you're close to, and really ask yourself whether or not these relationships are ones that are in alignment with what you have just identified as being important to you.

There's this expression out there that you are the average of the five people that you spend the most time with. Here I would encourage you to think about who it is that you are spending the most time with. Think about their qualities, their attributes, what you have in common with them, what

## Ep #17: How to Deal with Loneliness

you do not have in common with them. Ask yourself if these are individuals who are supporting the values, the interests that you want to develop in your own life.

It may be that if you are spending a lot of time with individuals where your values simply are not in alignment that that will leave you feeling disconnected. So there you are. You're around people, but you may not be around the people who you're connecting with. You then feel lonely or out of place because of that. So that is step two. Assessing your relationships and assessing whether those relationships are supporting you in fulfilling the values that you've identified as important to you.

The third step is to identify areas in your life where you want to build relationships. Now I mentioned here we're going to focus on the professional aspects of your life, but here I would encourage you to create a list of all the areas in your life where you want to have relationships. That may be that you are looking at your social life, so your friendships. It may be your family, members of your more extended family. You can evaluate how your relationships are in those respects.

It may be looking at your health. Do the relationships that you have support your ideals of health? Maybe thinking back to you being the sum of the five people that are closest to you. Are you spending time with people whose habits and lifestyles supports the habits and lifestyle that you want for yourself?

It may be that you're looking at the relationships that you have with your children or with your children's friends or the families that you share children with. I know that's important with me. I've got two young kids. They have friends. I have a community of parents that are really important to me. So that's part of my assessment is how am I doing in that relation to that element of my life? Am I building those relationships? Am I maintaining those relationships?

## Ep #17: How to Deal with Loneliness

Finally look at the broader community. I mentioned looking at professional relationships, and we'll talk about those in more detail in a moment. What relationships do you have there, or do you want to build there that will make your professional life feel more complete? That may be reaching out to individuals in your practice area or at your firm or at your organization.

So we're going to talk about that more in step four. The first step here, this step three, is to simply identify the categories. Once you've identified the categories, you can go back and do the next step in relation to each of those categories if that's what you choose to do.

So moving on to step four. We're going to look at each of those areas and be intentional about how you build up the specific relationships that you have within that area. So we're going to talk about your professional relationships starting with your professional relationships inside your office.

So I'm going to assume that you work in some sort of an organization or some sort of an office where there are multiple people. For each of you, the relationships that you want to build within that organization will look different. I'm going to offer up some suggestions, and I would encourage you to think about what suggestions might apply to you specifically or which ones I haven't covered which you would include in your list.

So starting out when we're speaking about an organization, I would invite you first of all to think about whether structurally the environment is conducive to you thriving. An office environment, that might mean looking at how the firm or the organization is set up. Is it one where you can see yourself growing and evolving in a way that you want to grow and evolve? If you are looking at the leadership in your organization, is it one where you could see yourself advancing to that level if it's something that you're looking for?

## Ep #17: How to Deal with Loneliness

Culturally, do you share similar values to those that are within your organization? Maybe you shared values five years ago, but now you're seeing things differently or they're seeing things differently. Do you still fit and connect with those values?

Another thing that you might be thinking about is whether or not the practice areas that are offered to you in that environment are the ones that you want to practice. So it may be that you want to shift the area that you want to practice. Is that possible within your environment? Is it something you could create? Or is it something where that practice area is already established, and you can continue to thrive?

So there may be structural circumstances that you want to evaluate before you even start looking at the specific relationships within that organization. It may not just be within your organization that you want to do this. I mentioned that you can run a similar exercise in relation to other areas where you have relationships.

I had a very interesting conversation over the weekend with a lawyer who I respect, I admire. I adore her. She was talking about a move she had made from one neighborhood to another. She mentioned that in one neighborhood, she felt very much like the odd person out. She was a working professional mom in an environment where the families that she was with, they did not have other professional working mothers. They were mostly not working. She felt like there was pressure to not be working outside of the home.

I certainly don't want to diminish what it means to work at home. I am a mother. I know that that type of work is difficult. It's challenging. There's a lot to it. In that environment, this particular person I was speaking with felt disconnected from that community because she was the only one doing a certain thing. Conversely in a different neighborhood in a different

## Ep #17: How to Deal with Loneliness

environment, she was among many mothers who were working inside the home and outside the home. That just felt like an easier fit.

It's not to say that one is right and that one is wrong. It may simply be that in your personal context, it may be that the environment that you're in is going to make it more difficult for you to feel connected. So that's the first thing that I would invite you to look at regardless of whether it's in your professional context or your personal context is how do you fit in terms of the existing structure?

Next, I invite you to think about who it is within your organization to fill different roles? So I'd invite you to think about mentorship. I'd invite you to think about mentorship from three different perspectives. Number one is do you have mentors in your organization that you look up to? Mentors who will help you develop your career. Mentors who will help you establish relationships, who will stick up for you, who will go to bat for you, who will promote you? Do you have those individuals in your organization?

Another area where you may find mentoring is peer mentoring. These may be colleagues, peers who are at a similar level to you who you can rely on to help you and who you in turn will help out. So I would encourage you to think about who do you have in terms of peer mentors who you can support and who will support you as you move forward.

I would invite you to look at who you are mentoring. I think that's one of the areas where we may underestimate how much fulfillment and connection we can have by mentoring others. So more junior lawyers who are coming up the ranks who you can support where you can share what you've learned with them.

Having those relationships are also really important. You would then be able to help them, act in service for them. That not only helps them, it also helps you. It helps you feel fulfilled. It helps give meaning and purpose to

## Ep #17: How to Deal with Loneliness

the work that you're doing in a different way. So mentorship is one area where I'd encourage you to think about who you have in your environment that fills these roles for you.

The next area that I would invite you to consider is the support area. So who do you have within your organization that is supporting you? In larger organizations there may be staff and professionals that are dedicated to supporting you in the roles that you're in. It may be a professional development director who is there to help you with challenges that come up in your practice. It may be HR that is supporting you.

It may also be your staff. So there may be an assistant that reports to you, paralegals, clerks. Who is it that is helping you in the running of your practice and making sure that you are having support that you need in areas where you require it? So that's another area that I would encourage you to look at and think about do you have adequate support in your firm at a structural or professional level?

I would also encourage you to think about the relationships that you have with the individuals who provide you work. Those would be your clients. Maybe they're clients that are internal to the organization. Maybe it's more senior lawyers who are giving you work. Lawyers from other departments who are sending files your way.

So how are your relationships with those individuals? If the clients are outside of the office, how are your relationships with them? Do those relationships go beyond the mere transactional aspects of the work that you do with them, which may be all that you want and need from them? Or do you want to cultivate a deeper relationship with them?

Finally, when it comes to evaluating the relationships that you have within your professional organization, I would also invite you to think about whether you have the social relationships that you're looking to have in the

## Ep #17: How to Deal with Loneliness

office. As I mentioned earlier, the social interactions that you have within your workplace can be so meaningful. They can be so impactful. Sometimes those relationships are the ones that start to get sacrificed when you have competing demands on your time.

I would encourage you to think about who you have in your professional organization who is a friend to you. There may be overlap between the different categories—the mentors, the peer mentors, the support, all those different roles. Your clients. They also may serve a social role within the relationships that you have. I would encourage you to be intentional and think about whether or not you feel truly socially engaged at a level that you feel is right for you in your professional context.

So those are some of the categories that you might think about inside your office or working environment. Mentorship, support, professional, so who's giving you work, and social components. When it comes to your professional work, I would also encourage you to think about who it is outside of your organization who is supporting you. Here I would encourage you to look at some categories that are very similar actually.

So one is mentorship. The mentors that you have, the mentors who are more senior, the peer mentors. People who you mentor do not have to be people who are in your organization. They can be anywhere. Frankly, with LinkedIn and the world being so digitally connected, your mentors could live anywhere. They could be anywhere. They could be lawyers. They could be non-lawyers.

I would invite you to think about what kind of mentorship you would like to have, what kind of mentorship you would like to give, and to ask yourself whether those roles are being filled. If not, what types of roles do you want to fill? Who do you think would be ideal to fill those roles?



## Ep #17: How to Deal with Loneliness

It may be that you also want to think about what professional organizations you are part of outside of the office. So if you're a lawyer, I'm here in British Columbia, Canada. Some of the organizations that are available to lawyers are ones that are run through the Canadian Bar Association. There are some excellent sections that are run through that organization. I would invite you to think about what organizations exist in your part of the world that you would like to be a part of where you can find a community of likeminded professionals who you can support and who can support you in the advancement of your professional work.

In that regard, you may not want to limit yourself to legal circles. You may want to reach out to entrepreneurial groups or other types of associations that have values or that are working on things that are in alignment with what you value and what you're interested in developing.

The next category of person that I would encourage you to be proactive about is thought leaders. In this regard, I go back to that five person idea. That you are the sum of the five people that you spend the most time with. When it comes to thought leaders, I think it's really important to be surrounding yourself and immersing yourself and doing research in relation to leaders who you admire and learning from them. Even if they are leaders that you will never meet in person.

So it could be that these are authors of books that are really interesting to you. Maybe they're business books or leadership books or coaching books, in my case, that you resonate with. It may be podcasts that you're listening to. It could be this podcast. I listen to dozens of podcasts. It's one of the ways that I love to get information. I feel very connected to the people who are creating the podcasts. I feel like I learn a lot, and I'm able to take action based on what I learned from them.

So I have a lot of relationships with podcasts where I will likely never meet them, but I consider their messaging. I consider what they're sharing with

## Ep #17: How to Deal with Loneliness

me as a part of my practice in terms of keeping my mind focused on the things that matter to me and feeling supported in the pursuits that I have professionally and personally.

It may also be articles that you read. So there may be individuals on your LinkedIn feed, for example, who regularly post articles that you enjoy. It may be certain publications. The Harvard Business Review often has wonderful articles that I really enjoy, and I hope I got that name right. I read it from time to time. Not regularly enough to know the title though apparently.

There's sometimes articles that are really helpful that are on point to something that's going on in your practice that you can connect with. You may find that there are thought leaders there that you want to connect with, that you want to learn more from. So you might incorporate them in your regular newsfeed.

Finally, there may be webinars out there that are very interesting to you. I personally spend a lot of time listening to or watching webinars put on by various thought leaders in a number of different areas. Some of them in relation to my professional work, some of them in relation to parenting or health or areas that I'm very interested in where I want to have access to that information. I want to feel connected to others who share that common interest.

So that might be another source of connection where you're not actually connected with the person necessarily on a one to one level, but you're connecting at a level of interest and alignment in terms of what you value, what's of interest to you. That can really help you along in your journey.

Next in terms of the out of the office relationships you might want to focus on are friends and family. Of course your friends and family are the people you spend your non-working time with. How are those relationships? You

## Ep #17: How to Deal with Loneliness

may have a partner that you want to connect with. Are you doing that in a way that you want?

I mentioned in my last podcast episode that my husband and I recently celebrated our 10 year anniversary. For us, carving out the time to spend together where we're just focused on having a conversation without—no offense to my children—being interrupted or having the conversation totally sidelined to talk about Netflix or Fortnite or some other thing. That is important. So creating opportunities and the time and the space to build those relationships.

Finally, the last relationship I would invite you to consider external to your professional environment, professional organization is to think about what kind of support you have for anything that is outside the home. So as a parent who has professional work, I really appreciate having support within the home.

So that may be somebody who helps us with cleaning. We put a long pause on that over the pandemic. We recently had our team back to help us tidy up, and it has felt incredible to be back into that. It may be that the team isn't in your home per se. We have an afterschool program that we have our children signed up in that is enormously helpful to allow more balance in our personal and professional lives.

So think about who it is in your lives who is supporting you. Maybe it's a nanny, maybe it's the daycare, maybe it's the cleaning service. Whatever that looks like for you, I would encourage you to think about what roles there are that are available. Are those roles being filled in a way that is helpful for you? Those relationships, they are in themselves often very fulfilling.

Because I know with those who are supporting me and our family, I really appreciate them. I'm delighted to have those relationships in my life, and

## Ep #17: How to Deal with Loneliness

they know that. I hope they know that. Those are some really good relationships. There's a level of fulfillment that you may get from those relationships that is different from the relationships you'll have with others.

So to summarize the four steps or strategies that I've just mentioned are number one, to assess what's important to you. To get reacquainted with your values and your interests. Step two is to have a look at your existing relationships and evaluate how those relationships align with your interests, and whether they support the advancement or the fulfillment of your values. The third step is to simply identify the categories of your life that are important to you.

The fourth step is with respect to each of those categories to do a deep dive into the different roles that are available, and to ask yourself whether or not those roles are being met or filled. If not, who would you like to invite into your world to create those relationships? When you've done that, then you can go about the work of building those relationships, seeking out the individuals that you want to fill those relationships.

So when you follow these four steps, you will be able to see where you have the relationships that you need, that you want. The relationships that will help you feel more connected. And you will be able to see where there are gaps where you need to do a little bit of work. I would encourage you to do that one step at a time. When you follow a process like this, I believe it will help you feel less alone, less disconnected, less isolated because you will now be intentional about the relationships that you are forming. Those relationships will be in line with the values that are important to you.

As you approach individuals whose values are in alignment with yours, whose interests are in alignment, I believe that you'll be able to approach those relationships from a place of authentic connection. You won't be trying to fit the square peg into a round hole. You will now have things in

## Ep #17: How to Deal with Loneliness

common. So you will be able to form relationships based on those things that you have in common.

As you build those relationships and as you see the opportunities that are available to you, you'll start to feel more in control. You'll start to feel more optimistic. As you start to build those relationships, your confidence will grow. As your confidence will grow, you'll start to feel better about yourself. You'll start to hopefully put your name forward for those opportunities you were previously shying away from. You'll become more connected, and you'll start to attract into your world those who are drawn to the values that you are now embodying. They will see that in you, and they will come to you.

As that starts to happen, that will build in a positive way. You'll start to feel less like you are at the mercy of what is going on around you and much more powerful in terms of being able to build the relationships that you want in your life. As you do that, you may find that you are building new relationships or strengthening relationships with individuals that you already have.

You may find that you start letting go of relationships that are no longer really working the way that you want them to be working, and potentially how the other person wants them to be working. That may be a difficult transition. It may be something that you simply let relationships drift, or maybe you need to be a little bit more forceful about that. It really depends on the relationship and the context.

As you let go of the relationships that are no longer working, you may feel lighter. You may feel that you're not trying so hard to force the relationship. That, in itself, can be really freeing especially when you are then filling those relationships with ones where you feel so much more in alignment with who you are today.

## Ep #17: How to Deal with Loneliness

To do this work to rebuild your relationships in a way that is more in alignment with who you are and what is important to you, you will need to have courage to take action, to approach people, to build relationships, or to develop more strongly the relationships that you already have. You may need to have willingness to be rejected if you're going out there and inviting people into your world. You may find that some people are not responsible. That's okay, but part of this process is being willing to be rejected here and there in order to build up your relationships, your community overall.

You will also need to be committed to the longer view. That may mean that you go through a period that is awkward where you're not really sure where you fit, where you're kind of struggling to build your new relationships. That's okay. Part of this process is remaining committed to the long term objective, which is to build up the relationships in the areas that matter to you so that you feel connected, so that you feel empowered. So that ultimately you can create relationships that will last you a long time.

Finally to do this work, one of the skills that you'll need is to be honest. That means being honest with yourself about what is important to you right now, being honest about who you are, what you stand for, what you don't stand for, and what relationships you truly want to develop. Over time if you do this work, you will eventually build a community that you love and where you attract more of these people and find them coming into your life.

So to recap, the steps are to identify your values, to take an inventory of your current relationships and assess how they are in relation to your values, to identify areas that you want to grow, and to get specific about who you want to bring into your life and the roles you want them to fill. Based on what we talked about in this podcast and based on what's going on in your world currently, I would invite you to consider what step you might take this week that will get you closer to the goal that you want in terms of your professional and personal relationships.

## Ep #17: How to Deal with Loneliness

So that is what I have for you this week. As we sign off, I would invite you to help me. Help me build my community. I am really, really delighted and amazed by the community that is forming around this podcast. I can't tell you how much that means to me. I was checking on the podcast stats. As of today, I'm at nearly 1,000 downloads, which to me is incredible.

It is amazing to me to think that there are people just like you who have tuned in who are listening to this podcast. To me, you are my people. You're the people who I resonate with, who are interested in talking about these topics, who are doing this work. I really appreciate you. I am so excited to have you in this community.

If you are resonating with what I am talking about in this podcast, if you like the topics, if you find it helpful, I would encourage you to reach out to others within your community and to share this podcast with you. Maybe it's this episode, maybe it's another episode that really connected with you. I would invite you to share it. I would be very grateful if you would do that.

It helps me to spread the word, and ultimately to build a community of likeminded professionals. So that we can support each other, so that we can grow together, and so that we can give life to the dreams that we all have as professionals, as women, and as individuals who are out there seeking to build lives that we love, relationships that we love. To do that with purpose and to do that with intention.

So that is what I have for you, my friends. I will also mention I continue to do coaching one on one. If you are interested in working with me, I would encourage you to reach out to me whether it's on LinkedIn, whether it's on [thejoyfulpractice.com](http://thejoyfulpractice.com) website. I would love to hear from you. So I would encourage you if you like to do that, please reach out. We can set up a phone call where we can talk about what that might look like. Even if we don't work together, there's no pressure. It's always rewarding and

## Ep #17: How to Deal with Loneliness

delightful to hear from members of this community. So absolutely please feel free to do that.

On that note, I wish all of you a wonderful week. I wish you a week full of connection building. I am so delighted to have you here and much look forward to connecting with you next week. 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](http://www.thejoyfulpractice.com/podcastlaunch). See you next time.

Thank you for listening to this episode of *The Joyful Practice for Women Lawyers Podcast*. If you want more information, visit [www.thejoyfulpractice.com](http://www.thejoyfulpractice.com). See you next week.