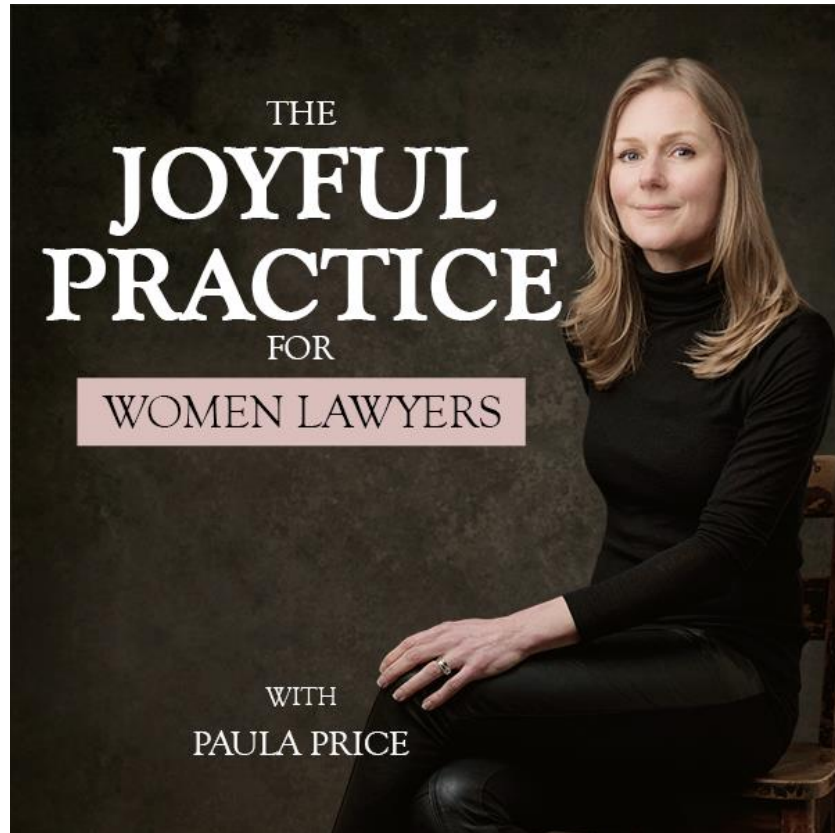


Ep #31: Is it Time to Move On?



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Paula Price

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You're listening to *The Joyful Practice for Women Lawyers* Podcast episode number 31.

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 dear friends, and welcome back to the podcast. I'm so excited to have you join me here today. By the time this episode goes live, it's going to be Wednesday December 22nd, which is just a few short days away from Christmas. It's a big day in our family. The kids are very excited to see what's going to be under the tree for them.

Whether you're celebrating Christmas or Hannukah or another holiday, I hope that wherever you are, you are in a holiday festive mode. That you're surrounded by loved ones. That you're taking a break from work and using this time to really enjoy yourself, enjoy your family, enjoy your friends. Reflect on the year that we've just had, and the year that's coming up.

So glad to have you all here today. This is going to be a really special episode, especially for those of you who will be able to relate to this, which is when it is time to leave your job. Now if you tuned into last week's podcast episode, you'll know that I did an interview with Natalie Fisher. She's a career and mindset coach. We talked a lot about the job search process.

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Natalie is amazing. She has so much to offer in terms of how to know when it's time to leave your job, how to navigate the job process, how to network, how to interview. There's a lot there. If you haven't listened to that episode, I encourage you to go back and listen to it.

The reason that I wanted to follow up on that episode with another episode about job searching and knowing when it's time to move on is because it's a topic that comes up quite a bit in conversations that I have with lawyers. It's one that has come up quite a bit relatively speaking recently.

I'm not sure if that's because we're approaching the new year or because we're reaching almost the two year mark in this global pandemic. But for some reason, there seems to be a theme among lawyers who are reaching out to me where they're really thinking about leaving the position that they're in and curious about how they might move forward.

For some of them, this is a decision that they have not yet made. For some of them, it's a decision that has been weighing on them for a number of years. So I think it's really important for us to take a deep dive into the question of when is it time to move on? What does that look like? What does that even mean? Because that might be something that you're thinking about right now. You might save yourself some time. You might save yourself some mental energy if we spend the time now to talk about it.

I'm going to offer six strategies for you. So this is a good episode to have a pen and paper handy, hit the pause button if you need to to answer some of the questions I'm going to be asking you. Because the more you answer these questions, the more work you do in terms of figuring out what you want and what your strengths are, I'll be getting into that. The better positioned you're going to be to make a decision as to whether you should stay where you are or whether you should move on.

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So with that, I'm going to jump into the episode and get started by talking about what this question looks like depending on where you're coming from. So when we think about leaving our job, often the first thing that comes to mind is the idea of being in a job with one organization. Maybe it's your law firm, maybe it's an organization where you practice as a lawyer. Maybe you're in house, maybe you're in government. The idea is maybe there's another job out there in another organization that would be better for me.

That is certainly one of the types of situations you might find yourself in where you would be moving into a new job. But for the purpose of today's podcast, I invite all of you to think about the new job as being a job that might be potentially within your organization or a job, like I've just described that's outside of your organization.

Even if you're not looking for a job right now, even if you're not interested in leaving, I would encourage you to still listen to today's podcast episode and still ask yourself the questions that I'll be asking you. Because what you might find is that you can use the information that you're going to learn about yourself and what it is that you want to better align yourself in your current position with your strengths and your desires. That will make a little bit more sense as we go into the questions, the strategies, I'm going to offer in just a few minutes.

So what could this look like? You might be in a law firm; you might be in another organization where the transition you want to make isn't necessarily outside of your organization but it is within. The classic example is if you're in a law firm and you're an associate, maybe you want to make that transition from associate to partner. If you're a non-equity partner, it might be that transition into equity partner.

It may be that you're within the law firm organization, you want to move into management. It may also be if you're a student listening, you might be

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wanting to transition into an associate position. So there's all different areas in a law firm where you may be wanting to transition into another role. Those are some of the classic ones, but there are also other ways that you might transition in a law firm or an organization.

So in law firms for example, I've seen a lot of lawyers who transition into what were previously less traditional roles. So it may be that you're transitioning into an associate counsel role. You don't necessarily want to be a partner, but you want to stay on in a more senior capacity.

It may be that you don't want to practice, but you're interested in joining the firm's professional development team or you want to join their marketing department or you want to become involved in project management. So there are all sorts of different roles that may be available to you within your existing organization. So those transitions, I think, would be applicable here if that's something you're looking to make.

Now a number of lawyers who come to me are interested in continuing their practice but potentially continuing their practice in a different environment. So it may be that they're working in a law firm, and there's something about the job they have currently that is not working for them.

So they see themselves moving into another firm, and are looking for a different culture, for example. A different work culture, a different sets of balance. Sometimes it's the practice group. Maybe there are other issues. So that might be something that you can relate to. You're practicing and you want to go and practice in a different environment.

It may also be that you're in private practice and what you want is to transition out of private practice into something else. This is often motivated by the billable hours. So if you find you're not wanting to record every six minutes, and the expectations and the pressure to do that just doesn't align with you, may look at other opportunities. Maybe it's in house. That seems

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to be the first idea that comes to mind for a lot of lawyers that enjoy the practice of law in a law firm environment who want to do it in a different way. So that's one potential area that they might want to move to.

Other lawyers are interested in joining government or other organizations. It could also be that you're interested in joining a non-profit or some other shape. It may also be that you're looking to create your own law firm. So there's all these different ways that you might be wanting to continue on your practice, but to continue it on in a different environment.

There are also the job seekers who are looking for law adjacent work. So these are lawyers who come to me who are interested in staying connected to the practice of law, but they no longer want to practice as a lawyer. So that could be, as I mentioned, an adjacent job within your organization like professional development. Or it could be something outside of your current organization that is law related but not necessarily practicing.

Then finally there are lawyers who approach me who are really curious about what it's like to leave law all together. That, I think, is the topic for a whole separate podcast. We'll touch on it a little bit today, but that is also a transition that requires a lot of thinking and planning and, I think, a lot of exploration of what you really want and why you're leaving and what you're looking for.

So hopefully if any of these examples is you, today's podcast will help you get clarity around what that transition might look like for you and when to know when it's time to make that transition.

So what I've noticed about lawyers who approach me with questions about transitions they're thinking of making is that by the time they reach out to me, this has been something that has weighed on their mind for quite some time. Maybe this is something that you can relate to.

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I have a few theories about why that is. I think there's a lot of resistance for lawyers to want to make changes to begin with. I would consider myself in this category back when I was in practice. There are a number of lockstep mechanisms in place from the time that you're a student to the time that you are a lawyer.

So starting with law school, you need to do your LSAT application. You get into school. You get good grades. Then you apply to jobs maybe at law firms, maybe in government. You go through a recruitment process. You get hired on as an articling student, at least in Canada. It's different if you're in the U.S. or elsewhere. You do your articling year. You get hired on as an associate. Then for many organizations, you enter into a lockstep system.

So for most of that, especially during those initial years, most of that time you're really in a system where there's a framework that's already been established for you. So much of what you're doing is following that framework. I think number one that can create this idea that there are paths that you can take, and a belief that maybe there aren't as many off the beaten track opportunities that there might be available.

So that's initially one of the ways of thinking that I think can really hold you back from making your next move. That you're in the lockstep, you've done it, and you don't really know what would exist for you outside of that lockstep system.

Another reason that I think lawyers are reluctant to make a change is because you're so invested in where you are right now. You ticked all the boxes, and you feel like you should be happy where you are. That this should be the answer. That you should feel a certain way, and you don't. So it's really hard to come to terms with that.

Maybe you keep thinking, "Well, if I just stay a little bit longer, if I maybe take on a different kind of work then this will really start to gel with me." But

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overtime, you may find that that's not actually happening. You may feel guilty for leaving.

So it may be that you want to leave a particular organization. They've been really good to you. You have mentors there. You have colleagues that you love, and you feel like leaving would leave them, in a position where they wouldn't have the benefit of working with you. You feel like they've invested in you. There's a lot of guilt attached to making that transition.

If you want to transition out of law all together, I know that's a feeling that comes up a lot for lawyers who feel like they're very heavily invested. Their family has invested in them. They've invested the time in law school. They've invested the money in law school. They've invested in all the steps to get to where they are.

So they feel and you may feel that you can't leave because you've already invested so much of your time, so much of your energy. It would be a waste to let that go. So these are all ways in which you may be talking yourself out of taking any steps even though you have that feeling like the place that you are right now just isn't right for you.

In addition to that, there's a practical component to it. The practical component comes up too. If you're used to a certain income level, you have a skillset that you've developed. People are willing to pay you for that. Sometimes they're willing to pay you a lot of money for that. There may be other people who depend on you for the income that you're bringing in.

So there are all of these practical considerations that come into play. Sometimes those weigh really heavily in favor of staying where you are. Those may be reasons to stay where you are, but it may also be that there are ways to overcome that. That there are other options for you. you're just not able to see them right now.

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It can also be for a number of lawyers that they initially were very happy where they were. So this might be you. You might be in an organization where initially it was an area where you felt like you were really growing. You really loved the culture. You resonated with your team. But then things change.

Maybe the lawyers that you work with, the teams that you work with. Maybe people have left and you no longer feel connected to them. Maybe things have changed for you. Maybe you've started a family and you find that you were able to be more engaged before, and now you have more constraints on your time and you're finding you're not able to keep up with the culture as much as you were before. There are all sorts of ways that this might be happening in your life. So what you find yourself in is a situation where you really want to make it work, but something just doesn't feel right.

For a lot of lawyers when you reach that stage, one of the tendencies that I've seen is for lawyers to simply avoid dealing with the problem. Maybe you can relate to this where you just keep your head down, you keep working. Maybe you're overworking. You try even harder. Maybe you think, "Well, if only I was working a little bit harder then maybe this would resolve itself."

You maybe try working to a certain deadline or trial being finished or something's going to happen in the future when you tell yourself, "Maybe I'll be happy when I make partner. I'll be happy when I become an associate. I'll be when." I mean there's all these different situations where you might look to the future and say, "This is eventually going to get better."

What I've also seen happen for lawyers who are in this position is that they start to unconsciously seek permission to do what they really want to do. I can see this coming out in a couple of ways. One is where you start complaining about your work. This might be complaining to others within your organization.

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It might be complaining to your loved ones, to your partner, to your spouse, to your mother, whoever has a compassionate ear. Really what you may be doing there is complaining because what you want at some level is for them to tell you that it's okay to leave. Maybe there's somebody like that in your life. Somebody who's saying, "This has been going on for quite some time. You've been unhappy where you are. Have you thought about leaving your current job?" So this might be one way where you're unconsciously seeking that permission.

Another thing that I've seen happen is for lawyers who are in a position and they know they don't want to be there. They really don't feel like being there. So they start to actually undermine their own performance. They start to act in ways to sabotage themselves. So if this is something that you think you might relate to, I encourage you to listen to an episode that I recorded for this podcast, episode 27, where I talk about self-sabotage and self-trust.

Sometimes what we can do is at an unconscious level, we've already decided that something is no longer for us, but we're not ready to make that explicit decision. So we act out against ourselves in these subtle ways. Overtime, that can really add up.

These strategies typically do not work because you're not dealing with the problem. What's really happening here is you're ignoring that part of yourself, that voice inside your head that keeps coming back to you to tell you that something isn't wrong. As long as you ignore that or try to outwork that, it's going to continue to be there.

You can imagine if you were sitting in a room for example. I'll give an analogy. If you're sitting in a room and you're watching TV and you've got the volume on, and someone comes in and they've got a really loud stereo. So they start playing their music. It's drowning out the sound of your TV. So you turn up your TV, and they turn up their radio. Next thing you know

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you're dueling to see who has the loudest system. You end up in a situation that's kind of explosive almost.

So this can happen for you. If you're ignoring that voice then it just keeps getting louder. It's going to continue getting louder until you finally do something about it.

By the time you've got there, you may notice for example if you're complaining a lot to your friends, if you're complaining to your family. They might start wanting to see you make changes. They may express that to you in different ways.

It may be that you start to feel really anxious about your work, and maybe you turn to unhealthy coping mechanisms. maybe you're having an extra glass of wine with your dinner. Maybe you're watching more Netflix than usual. Maybe you're feeling lethargic. Maybe you're procrastinating at work and you're not getting into your files the way that you used to.

If those things are happening, if you're really finding yourself in a place where you think your mental health is starting to suffer, I highly encourage you to reach out and seek professional help. Seek the help of a counselor, seek the help of a therapist who can help you get to the position where you'll feel better and be better able to take next steps. Which is really to take decisive action and do something about the situation that you find yourself in.

Now it may also be that you create by avoiding the situation. It may be that you create some sabotage in your current work environments. So I mentioned that as an example. Maybe you find that because you're not approaching your files the way that you used to, you're starting to have performance issues. People in your organization are noticing that, and you're having some conversations around that.

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So what I would encourage you to do is to really pay attention to what's going on, and to take action. Take a decisive step or action before you get to that point. What I'm going to offer to you today is six steps that I would encourage you to take wherever you are along this journey, and use the information that you gather by taking those steps to decide whether it's time to make a move and to think about certain steps that you might take to get yourself into a better position.

So the first step that we're going to talk about is to take 100% responsibility for the situation that you're in right now. Now I mentioned earlier that for a lot of lawyers, especially in the early years, the place that you're at is the result of having followed what is very much a lockstep system.

In that type of environment, it can be really easy to look outside yourself and say that you're a part of a system. That this is just you following the rules. Maybe you're, looking at it at a more micro level, maybe you're in an organization and you think, "Well the reason that I'm unhappy is because I work with this person. That person's really difficult to work with. The files that I'm doing, I'm not interested in them."

So you're looking outside and almost blaming the system, blaming others for where you're at right now. You may not be doing this consciously. It may be unconscious. But regardless I would invite you to first of all, take 100% responsibility for your job, for your career, for where it is that you are right now.

The reason to do that is because it is so much more empowering when you see yourself as making decisions then when you see yourself following along in a stream where you have no control and you're just trying to tread water. So number one is really let's own this. Let's take 100% responsibility and go through these questions with that lens in mind.

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Now the second step that I encourage you to take is write out a list of what you don't like about what you're currently doing. This is a step that actually Natalie and I talked about in our conversation last week. It is, I think, the best place to start because it's the easiest place to start, especially if you've been complaining about your job for the last few months, the last few years. These ideas, these things that are bothering you should be pretty top of mind. It should be pretty easy for you to put together that list.

So I would encourage you to be creative. If you're really going through this right now, pause the recording and make your list. Really write out all the things about your work, about the people that you work with, about the opportunities for the future. Everything that is a negative in your world right now. I encourage you to just get that out, put it all on paper so that you can see it. That is step number two.

Now step number three is to create a personal inventory. So this is really the opposite of the exercise that we just did. I'm going to encourage you to take an inventory in three categories. Your strengths, your interest, and your values.

So number one is to really look at what your strengths are. For many of you, this might not be something that you do often. It's an exercise that I do very often with clients. I do it with myself. It's looking at where you're already strong. That might come up in a number of ways.

Maybe it's your writing. Maybe it's your ability to solve problems. Maybe you're really good at connecting people. Maybe you're really good at explaining complicated concepts to people in a way that is more understandable. Maybe you're excellent at time management, organization. There is all these different strengths that you may find. You may find that you're creative.

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There are all these different strengths that you're exemplifying through your work, but maybe you've never really given yourself the time to think about what those are. So don't be shy about what you're good at, and make a list. Write out all the things that you're good at, and think of all the times that you've received compliments. What have your teachers in the past complimented you on? What do clients compliment you on? What do other lawyers compliment you on? Make a record of those. Make a list.

If you want an additional resource to assess your strengths, I'd invite you to check out an online test. It's free. It's the VIA strengths assessment. We'll put a link to that in the show notes. That's a really nice way of being able to take an objective test and see what some of your strengths are. You might be surprised when you take that test to see what ranks at the top.

Before I move onto the next topic, I just wanted to reemphasize this idea that we grow where we're already strong. It's actually established at a neurological level. The way that our brain is wired is that we grow where we're already strongest. So knowing where you're strong is a great place to start. So knowing that is giving you that heads up.

The next thing that I want you to think about is your interests. So you know what you're good at. You may also be able to sense or tell what you're interested in. Maybe you've not asked yourself that question before. Maybe you do ask yourself that question. If you do, you've got a head start. This is really important. Think about what you do day to day in your work that you are interested in. Those tasks that you get started and it's like time just slips by in a good way.

If it's writing, maybe that's one of your interests. Maybe it's advocacy. Maybe it's getting into court. Maybe you love that process. Maybe you're a deal lawyer and you love the thrill of the M&A deal, the closings. Maybe you're a family lawyer and you really love being able to help humans, individual humans with their family dynamic.

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They're all different things that may be happening in your job right now that you're really interested in. I would encourage you to make a list of what all of those things are and hopefully what we want to do is to align your strengths and your interests in your position.

Now finally the third category that I want you to take note of and to write out some examples is some values. Now normally I think values go at the top of the list. I think we're all better served when we know exactly what our values are because it gives us a framework, it gives us a north star so that when we're making decisions, we're making decisions in alignment with what really is important to us.

I put it third here because I thought as an exercise, it might be easier to start identifying your values after having looked at your strengths, after having looked at your interests. So we're putting it there. Values can be a number of things. To orient yourself, to have some clues about what your values are, look at where you're spending your resources. Where you're spending your time, where you're spending your money, where you're spending your energy. That would be a pretty good indication of things that really matter to you.

So if you spend a lot of time with your family, that might be part of it. If you spend a lot of time speaking with your colleagues, connection might be something that you really value. If you enjoy polishing your argument, excellence might be a value to you. So think about what all the values are, and you can google values and you'll come up with a list of values. If you want a list, send me a note. I'll send you a table of values.

The idea here is to really identify what it is that matters to you. Everybody's values are different, and everybody's values can change over time. What might be really important to you when you graduate from law school might be quite different from what you really value five years into practice, ten years into practice. So get clear on what those are.

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I recommend making a fairly short list after you do your initial collection of values. Narrow it down to maybe five. That will just make it easier for you to make decisions going forward because you have fewer filters that you'll need to use for those decisions. So that's step three.

Moving onto step four, this is a really fun exercise. This is where you get to be creative. I encourage you to create a dream job for yourself. So imagine you were creating that job, just like an employer would make a job description. I invite you to make your own job description. This is whether you want to leave your job or not. Just go and set out what those bullet points look like.

Start with where you are right now. Start with some of the things that you've identified as tasks that interest you, things that you enjoy. Don't stop there. Go out, look at some job postings, and pay attention to the bullets in the job descriptions that catch your eye. This happens to me, and I know it happens to clients that I work with when they go and do this exercise. There's going to be a few bullets there that really stand out to you, and those are the ones that I invite you to pay attention to and to add to your dream job description.

Now your dream job description, maybe it's an electronic folder where you file all these different job descriptions with those key points highlighted. Maybe you open a Word document. You actually create a job description. Maybe you've got a folder that you print these job descriptions, highlight those bullets, and shove them all into the folder.

Whatever it is, I encourage you to create that job description whether or not you think that dream job is actually possible, whether it exists. Don't limit yourself. Really just get curious about yourself, curious about what you love, and start creating that job for yourself.

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Once you've done that initial research, I encourage you to go out and start connecting with other individuals, other lawyers, other professionals who are doing jobs that align with this type of job that you've been dreaming up because you will gain more information. You might be able to and some of what you learned to your ideal job description. It may be that you start to learn that things that you thought sounded really appealing maybe aren't so appealing and vice versa.

So let that be part of your search. Start talking to people. You don't have to let them know that you're looking for a job or anything like that, but you can approach people and ask them what it is that they do and how they got to where they are, what a day is like for them at the office. Maybe it's people within your organization.

Maybe you're really interested in what the professional development manager is doing at your firm. So you can ask them questions. What's that like for you? Or maybe there's somebody at another firm. Maybe you're in litigation and you see somebody who does document management and that seems like something that you'd be interested in or research.

There are all different opportunities that could follow where you are right now. I would invite you to understand who out there is doing those things, and to really start getting granular about what you would like to incorporate more of in your current position.

So moving on to step five. Now that we've gathered all this data, we've got data about the things that you don't like. We've got data about your strengths, your interests, your values. We've created a dream job. Now it's time for you to be really honest with yourself about what it is that you might need to change in order to get closer to that dream job, to really align your strengths, your interests, your values with the work that you do.

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There's a number of considerations that are going to come into play here. So number one is look at the job that you're in right now and ask yourself whether or not it's possible for you to create a new job out of the job that you have that incorporates more of those things. That might be an option for you.

So questions that I would ask yourself if you're in that situation are number one, where do you see yourself in one year? Where do you see yourself in three years? Where do you see yourself in five years?

I recommend playing with those different timelines because you'll be surprised, I think, at the answers that you get. That's really going to help guide you whether you stay where you are or whether you take on a new job. Thinking about what is the long term goal for you, the longer term, the five year plan, the ten year plan. What do you need to do today to get there?

That might help you contextualize the work that you're doing right now. It might help you see that oh wait a minute, maybe this isn't exactly what I want to do for the rest of my career, but this is the best thing for me to do right now.

So I think the first thing that you'll want to think about is where you are right now. What are some of the changes that you might make that you haven't already thought of that will make this job better for you? Because there may be more wiggle room within your existing role than you initially thought you had. So some questions that you might be asking yourself. So maybe it's your existing role with a few modifications. Maybe it's a different role all together. If that was the case, what would that role look like? What can you start doing today to get closer to that role?

Let's say you did want to carve out a role that doesn't currently exist in your organization. Let's say that you have a really good relationship with your

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organization and you think that they would be amenable to potentially creating something new for you. Who would you need to talk to about that position? How would you raise that topic as a conversation? How would you define the role that you're trying to create? What would that even look like for you?

If that's something that appeals to you, I would invite you to think about what that conversation could look like. I have a podcast episode. It's episode number 15. It's about elegant approaches to difficult conversations. This conversation might not be difficult in the sense that you're expecting...

It's not like a conversation with opposing counsel where they're being aggressive, but it may be a conversation that's difficult because you're kind of putting yourself out there. You're trying to create something that doesn't currently exist or you're asking for things that you may not have a favorable answer to. So you might look at that and just think about what a conversation could look like for you if you were to approach an organization and suggest a modification to your existing role or a different role all together.

Another thing that I would invite you to think about under this step five, which is really being honest with yourself about changes that you need to make, would be to look at the outside jobs and see what it is that you're looking for.

So for example, it may be that something that you don't like about your organization, it can't be changed. It may be that there is a limit to how far you can grow. You want to grow and the options just aren't there for you. It may be that you want to become a partner, for example, and there is a limit on the number of partners in your practice group, and they're at cap. That is not going to change for a while, and your timelines are shorter than that.

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So you may need to go to a shorter organization where there are opportunities earlier.

It may be that there is a dynamic within the group that you're in. There's a firm culture that you simply don't resonate with and you want a different type of culture. Maybe it's the expectations in terms of billable hours. Maybe you want really more of a part time practice and that's not available at the organization that you're in right now.

So there are certain situation where you're going to say okay the thing that I really want simply is not available to me where I am. So I need to make a change to get there. That really is these external situations, external factors that you'll be looking for in the next role that you take on.

I would also invite you to think about what the internal changes are that you may need to make. So if you go through your list, for example, and you see that a number of the things that you don't like about your current job are relationship oriented. Maybe you're getting into conflict with people. Maybe you find that you're attracting a certain type of individual that you work with where you're feeling bullied or you're feeling like you're being taken advantage of. You might look at that and see are there any patterns here and is there anything here that I need to change for myself?

I would encourage you, if you haven't already, to listen to a podcast episode that I recorded recently about blind spots. It's episode number 28. Because sometimes we can actually fall into these patterns and not even see them. So I would encourage you to really take this opportunity to look for those. It may be that this is not a reason to stay in a job where you're really unhappy, but it's good to be aware that these problems are coming up so that you can start taking steps to make internal changes that would prevent this from happening again.

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So for example, if you find that you're always at the mercy of other people, that you're working crazy hours, that you're not able to assert boundaries and it's leading to problems. Then I would encourage you before trying to move somewhere new where you get to set your expectations up brand new.

I would encourage you to start working on that wherever you are. Start working on your boundaries. Start working on the conversations that you're going to have that will set those boundaries up for yourself. They may be difficult conversations. You may think well what's the point? I'm leaving. But we want to get you thinking about what some of the internal changes are that you will need to make in order to be successful where you are or if you decide to move to a different position all together.

So those are five steps. The sixth step that I'm offering is to give yourself permission. This is one that, I mean I can relate to this myself. When I was in private practice and thinking about becoming a coach, I really felt like I needed permission. I don't know who I was expecting to get that permission from whether it was my partner, whether it was my parents, whether it was.

I've told this story before I believe where I really wanted to go see a well-known speaker about the time I was thinking of leaving private practice to become a coach. I remember saying to a friend of mine I'm like hey, do you want to go and see this person speak? It's going to be in Seattle. She was asking me like, "What's so important to you about going to see this person speak?" The answer came to me, and it was obvious. What I really wanted was permission. That I was given permission that I could stop practicing law and I could be a coach. I just knew it in that moment.

So for you, it may be that there's something that you want to do, but you feel like you need permission from your partner, feel like you need permission from your parents. Maybe you do need to talk to them about

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some of the implications that would happen for you financially if you're in a relationship where you depend on each other financially. It may also be that the permission is entirely on that you need to give yourself.

So you might think your parents will be disappointed. Your spouse will be disappointed. Your friends, your colleagues, whoever will be disappointed. You're effectively living for them when really what you need is to give yourself that permission to make a decision and to make some changes. So making a decision also may mean accepting some pretty uncomfortable tradeoffs.

Just a short list of what some of those uncomfortable tradeoffs might be. Number one is your income. Maybe you're looking at a different position that would have a lower income. That would be uncomfortable for you. Maybe you're looking at a position that's a higher income, but it may also have a higher billing expectation. That's another tradeoff that you might need to make.

Time, again, that could go either way. It could be that you're looking for a position where you're going to be more invested, more challenged. You're going to spend more time working. Or it could be that you're going to have more time available to you. That could be a different situation all together.

It may be that you're going to have to trade for what is familiar for what is unfamiliar. Chances are if you are making a transition, you're going to have to trade a lot of that. If you're working in a law firm, for example, there's all the systems. The email system, the timekeeping systems. All that will be new. All the people will be new. So accepting that whatever decision that you make, there may be some loss of familiarity and giving yourself permission to be okay with that.

And guarantees. You may decide to take a leap of faith, and there's no guarantee that the position that you go into will be any different or better

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than the one that you're in right now. So giving yourself permission for that to be okay.

Finally you may disappoint other people. It may be that you disappoint your current organization because they really wanted you to be there. You're going to have to be okay with that. It could be that you disappoint your partner. It could be that you step into a new role, and maybe you disappoint somebody there.

So it's just being okay with this idea that you're okay. You don't need to please everybody. Really what you're doing here is making a decision based on what is best for you, what is best for the organization that's going to bring you into their fold. To get there is really an exercise of going through this process and making a decision with that information in hand.

So to recap the steps, number one is let's take responsibility. 100% responsibility for the decisions that you make right now in terms of staying in your job or creating a new one or finding a new one. The second step is to make a list of all the things that you don't like about your current job. We know that's going to be useful information so that you can avoid situations where you're stepping into more of that. It's going to help you identify some of those things that you don't like that are potentially the result of an internal problem, and now we can start working on that as well.

The third step is to identify your strengths, your interests, and your values and get really clear on what those are. That's really going to help you figure out what your next steps are going to be. Then number four is to make that vision, that dream job description so that you have an ideal to work towards. Maybe you don't land or find a job that matches that dream job exactly, but at least now you know what you're looking for.

Then step five is to think about the things that you need to change, right. So that goes back to the external changes, to the internal changes. Be

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honest with yourself about what that looks like. So that when you go into that decision making, when you go into the process to find a new job if that's what you decide to do, then at least you're clear on what you need to modify.

Then finally step six is permission. So giving yourself permission to let go of all the things, especially if you're leaving law. That you are giving yourself to say okay I spent X number of years in law school and articling and working as a lawyer, and now I'm moving forward. Allowing yourself to do that and to see how you're building on what you've already established as opposed to feeling like you're losing out or you're missing out on something.

So those are the six steps. When you follow those six steps, then you will be in such a better position to know whether or not you should leave or whether you should stay where you are. So that is what I offer. These are questions, these are exercises that I do with clients that I work with. It really helps them to navigate the next phase of their career because now they're going at it with a much clearer intention and much better information. You've now learned a process that you can do more than once.

So you may find a year or two years into a new position or you've stayed in your position. Things change for you. So you can ask yourself these questions all over again and set yourself up for that next stage of your career.

Now the reason that this process is so effective is because it brings to locus of decision making back within yourself. I had a conversation recently with a lawyer who is looking for a job. We had a discussion about what coaching is all about. This lawyer said to me how it would be so much easier if I was able to simply present the plan, right. Here it is, here's the things that we do, here's what you need to do to find that next job.

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There is some of that. There is guidance. There is offering suggestions. There is accountability. There's all those things in the work that I do with lawyers, but ultimately it's you. It's you who does that work. It's you who decides what's best for you and who then goes out and creates that for themselves.

So I just think this process is one that really puts you back in the decision making position, and it is so much more empowering when you're looking at it from this perspective as opposed to saying, "Okay, I'm really miserable where I am. I don't really know why. Why don't I just pull up the job board here and see all the postings and apply to wherever because it can't be worse than where I am now."

It's a much different approach. Obviously, it's much more thoughtful, it's more deliberate. You learn so much about yourself, and then you get to make decisions about what is going to resonate with you.

So there are a few skills that I think you'll need to execute on this. Number one, you're going to have to approach this exercise with curiosity instead of judgement. So when you're listing out all the things that you don't like about your current position, ask yourself why. What is it about that situation? Maybe it's a relationship with a person that you work with. What is going on there?

Get really cruise. Don't judge yourself and try not to judge others. Just really try to figure out what's going on there because that's where you're going to uncover the information that you need to arrive at resolutions.

Another skill that you're going to need is, of course, what we've been talking about, which is taking responsibility instead of going with the flow. I can tell this is really challenging for a lot of lawyers. There is so much flow in the legal profession in a positive way, right? There's a community of lawyers. You're all in this together. You're sharing information. You're

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collaborating on projects. You're part of a firm. You're part of a team. You're part of an organization. So it's really inviting to be part of something.

But if being part of something means putting a mute button on the voice inside you that's saying this is not the right path for me then going with the flow can really have some negative consequences for you. So here what you're really going to do, what I'm really inviting you to do is to take responsibility to own this process for yourself because you'll actually contribute more effectively when you do that.

So you may think it's selfish to spend all this time thinking about what you like and your interests and what you want to do, but I can tell you the lawyers and other professionals who are most successful in their respective fields as far as I've witnessed it is the ones who follow their calling. Maybe that calling is practicing law. Maybe it's not.

Whatever that calling is for you, that thing that you're drawn to, those skills that you just keep wanting to get better at it. You're going to serve your clients so much more effectively when you are invested at all levels in the work that you're doing. So this is not a selfish executive. This really is an exercise that will allow you to serve better.

Finally another skill that you're going to have to develop is that skill of walking into discomfort in exchange for growth. You may not even be walking into discomfort. Maybe you're going to be running into discomfort. If what you're going to do is make a transition into something that is more challenging than where you are right now or it's different from where you are right now. Chances it's going to be really uncomfortable to get from where you are right now to where you want to be. That is totally okay.

If you are making this transition and you want some help navigating your way through that discomfort, by all means reach out to me. That is what I do and I can help you with that.

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So when you do these things, the results that you'll create, you will be able to make a decision. That decision may be to do nothing. That's perfectly okay, but you will own that decision.

When you own that decision to stay where you are and you now have all this new knowledge about yourself, about what you like, about what you don't like, you can optimize who you are in your current role and see the effect that that has on how much you enjoy your work, how much your relationships at work improve, the satisfaction that you get out of your work. That will be a benefit to you. That will be a benefit to everybody who comes into contact with you in your professional capacity.

It may also be that when you do this, you make a decision to move into a different position, and if you've done this work then that transition is going to be so much more effective. You're so much more likely to end up in a spot that you truly love as opposed to ending up somewhere because you panicked, you didn't want to be where you were. So you jumped into what seemed like the next best opportunity.

The long term effect of that, of course, is that now you're setting yourself up in a professional context where you can really thrive. That, of course, is a place we all want to be. We all want to be thriving in the work that we're doing. Doing it with this information is a wonderful way to get there.

Finally another thing that will happen when you do this work is that you will really cultivate that self-trust. So if you do this work, you take responsibility, you get to know yourself so much better, and then you make a decision with that information in hand, now you can really trust yourself.

Maybe that voice was calling to you and you've done the work now, and you've decided, "You know what? I thought I needed to leave my job in order to be happy. What I really see is that I can stay where I am. I just need to shift things around a little bit. Maybe I need to cultivate a little bit

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more work in this particular area. Maybe I need to leverage these relationships a little bit better. Maybe I need to set up some boundaries because really what I've been doing here is I'm the architect of my own misfortune. Maybe I haven't been saying no. I haven't been deliberate."

So there may be things that you can do to set yourself up better. So it's not that you're denying that voice. It's that you're now telling that voice, "Okay, let's give this a shot. Let's make these changes and see what happens."

It may also be that that voice inside your head was right, and that the place that you are now is not the place for you. That it does not offer the opportunities that you need to get to where you want to go. Now you're listening to yourself and you're actually following through and taking steps. That builds self-trust. That's ultimately what we all want. We want to build that trust with ourselves so that we know that we are accountable to ourselves. So that we know that when we say we're going to do something, we can do it. It takes so much of the pressure off. I promise you.

So that's what I have for you today my friends. For any of you who are looking for a job, who are looking to enhance the job that you're in, I hope this has been a helpful exercise and episode for you. There are transcripts that come along with each of these episodes. So if it helps to have a transcript, you can go and check that out.

I will be accepting new clients in the new year. So I'm currently working one-to-one with lawyers. If that's something that interests you, by all means please feel free to reach out. You can find me on LinkedIn. You can find me on my uplevellawyercoaching.com website. Of course you can find me through The Joyful Practice. So for all of you, please feel free to reach out.

Thank you. Thank you for tuning in every week. I love this opportunity to connect with you. Wherever you are, I hope you are having a magical holiday. All best wishes as we wrap up 2021, and I'm excited. I think we

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have one more episode before the new year. Just really excited about this podcast and being able to speak and connect with you every week. So bye for now. I will look forward to seeing you again next week. Have a fabulous week.

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