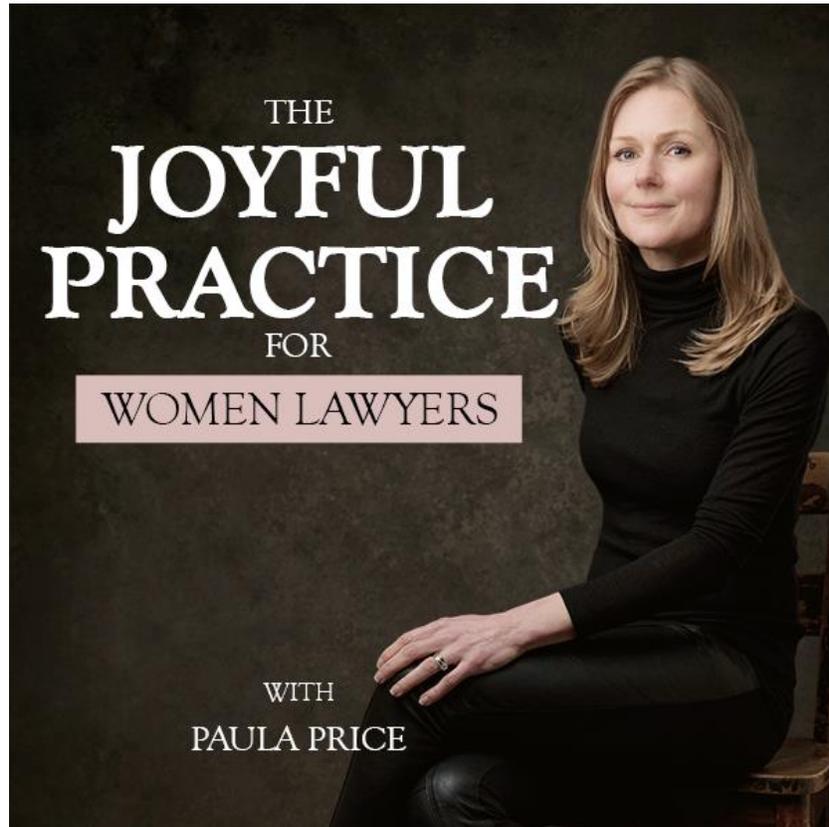


Ep #35: The 4 Pillars of a Joyful Practice



Full Episode Transcript

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Paula Price

[The Joyful Practice for Women Lawyers](#) with Paula Price

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You're listening to *The Joyful Practice for Women Lawyers* Podcast episode number 35.

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. Welcome back to the podcast. Welcome to this week's episode. I hope you are all having a great week. That your year is off to a fabulous start. That the first few weeks of 2022 are setting you up for a wonderful year. I know it's all very exciting over here. For me, the kids are back in school. I'm back to work and really just delighted to be able to connect with all of you today, and to chat with you about something that I've been working on and something that I think is going to be really helpful for all of you in terms of creating more joy and more ease in your practice.

So for those of you who have been listening to the podcast for a while, you may know that I picked a word of the year for 2022. That word is streamline. The reason that I mention it at the beginning of this episode is that I have been working on a process to help streamline the results that you get in your practice.

In today's episode, I'm going to share with you a tool that I've developed. I think it's going to be really helpful for you. Because what I'm seeking to do is to help you solve any of the problems that come up in your practice by applying a four part framework to the problem so that you can solve the problem more quickly and more easily.

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Before we do that, it talk about four steps or a four part framework or four pillars to create a joyful practice. I'd love for you to consider what a joyful practice would look like for you. Because for each of you, It's going to look different. So what does that mean? Does that mean that you feel on track? That you're managing your time better?

Maybe you feel really fulfilled in the work that you're doing. It may be that you're able to see your future really clearly. You know exactly where you're going. You're not feeling stressed. You're not feeling overwhelmed. Your work might feel easy. You feel balance between your work life and your personal life. Whatever that looks like.

What I want to share with you are tools, pillars, a framework that is based on the experience that I have coaching lawyers just like you. It's based on my own experience back when I was practicing law. I believe that having a formula like this will help you save time. It will give you a more simple formula, and it will make all of your problems just seem that much more solvable.

So I'm going to use examples as I go through the process. Again, I would invite you to think about how these examples might apply to you. How maybe the example I'm describing isn't exactly what is happening in your practice, but there's something similar. So just like you would put something in your own words, try to put it in your own context. Try to see how each of these strategies or each of these pillars helps you.

So the reason that I wanted to create something like this is that I talked to a number of lawyers. They come to me often when they're feeling out of sorts. They feel overwhelmed. Sometimes they feel stuck or frustrated. Sometimes they have worked so hard, right? You may fall into this category. You've worked so hard. You've done all the things. You've got the grades. You've got the law school. You've got the degree. You've got the job. You're in the position you want to be in.

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Yet somehow you feel like something is missing. Like you're unhappy. Maybe you feel stuck. Maybe you feel trapped. You're trying to figure out how to fix it. You really don't know where to start. It feels like an insurmountable challenge. Having a framework will help you narrow things down and make it feel simple.

So the analogy that I thought of was when you have a client that comes to you and they want to know if they can do something, right? Is the law on their side? Are they going to get into trouble? One thing you might do is go out and research the problem. It may be it's a really thorny complicated challenging question and you have to do it or you have to ask somebody to do dozens of hours of legal research. There's thousands, maybe not thousands, but there's dozens or many cases that need to be read and synthesized and summarized and all of that.

What the client wants is not necessarily for you to hand them a 50 page research memo and to ask them to figure out what the answer is. What they want from you is your professional opinion. They want to know where they stand. That is similar to the work that I've tried to do for you here.

You come to me with your problems and I try to help you as a coach. To help you, the best way for me to help you is to make things simple for you, not to make them more complicated. That's what I'm trying to do here. The reason why I think this is really important and maybe the reason why you're not able to do this on your own is that you are trained as a lawyer. In that training that you've had, in the work experience that you've had, you're not necessarily trained on how to be happy or how to thrive in a job that's really stressful. Or how to pick a career that suits you.

For many of us, many of you who went through law school, there is a recruitment process that is weighted often in favor of large firms, government positions, sort of the more common positions. That's not a bad

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thing. Those are opportunities that are the perfect opportunities for a good number of students.

But the downside of that process is that it's not necessarily what's going to fit for everybody. You may get caught up in a process thinking that that's what you want because that's what's going on around you without really turning inward and asking yourself if it's what truly resonates with you. So you may not have all the tools or the skills or know the questions to ask yourself to get yourself back on track.

What often happens is lawyers find themselves in these wonderful jobs. They're getting paid lovely salaries. They're doing interesting work. They're working with wonderful lawyers. They're learning. They're getting challenged, but something doesn't feel right. Rather than take a close look at the problem at the outset, you may try to ignore the problem.

You may try to switch jobs. Maybe you think if it's one firm, maybe another firm would be better. Maybe if you think that leaving law altogether might be an option or doing different versions of the job you have. Maybe you go from private practice to in-house or from in-house to government. Maybe you go from litigation to solicitor work. I mean there's all sorts of things you can do to try different things.

But what can sometimes happens is you still don't solve the problem because you don't really know the problem that you are trying to solve. You may get temporary relief, but you find yourself getting stuck once again.

So what I'm teaching you today is a framework. What I'm hoping for you in applying this framework is that you can take the problems that you're having, the challenges that you're having in your practice whether it's time management, whether it's feeling out of alignment with the work that you're doing. Look at the problem using this framework so that you can solve your

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problems more quickly and more precisely and create more joy in your practice as a result.

So with that, I'm going to offer you a four pillar framework. I will start out by saying that these are pillars that I have developed based on the challenges that lawyers come to me with in my practice. What you will find is that a challenge that you have may show up as one of these pillars primarily, but you'll see that there are elements of other pillars that also apply. So this will make a lot more sense when I actually tell you what they are.

In fact, I'll do that right now before we jump in. The four pillars are number one, mindset. Number two, alignment. Number three, process, number four, growth. So that's mindset, alignment, process, and growth. When you look at your problems from this perspective, it will make things a lot easier to solve. So we're going to start with mindset.

Now I can tell you as a coach that I have probably never had a lawyer call me and say, "Paula, I have a problem with my mindset." It doesn't happen. Maybe it happens to others. It hasn't happened to me. The reason that I think mindset is not something that you would necessarily identify is that it's so subtle.

It's something that I hear when I speak to lawyers. It comes out in the way that they describe their problems, but it's not necessarily something that is conscious for them. I can hear what your mindset is when you describe the situation you're in. When you talk about your workplace. When you talk about a problem in a certain way. When you talk about the reasons why you haven't done something about it.

To me, mindset is really comprised of two main things. Number one, it is your beliefs. This really captures, I think, the way that we talk about mindset. I've talked about growth mindset, for example, on the podcast before.

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If you're not familiar with what that is, growth mindset is a concept coined by Carol Dweck. She is an American psychologist. She's written a book called mindset. It's all about how you perceive problems and growth and learning. So she developed her work while working with students. She was trying to figure out why some students are more successful than others. One of the key pieces that she identified was mindset. It's how you think about problems.

So for students who have a fixed mindset, so fixed mindset is distinguished from growth mindset. If you have a fixed mindset and you go to do a task and you find it challenging, you look at that challenge, that discomfort as being a signal that you're not smart enough. That you're not capable of figuring this thing out.

Versus a growth mindset approach would be where you come up against a challenge where you start to feel that discomfort. You see that discomfort, you see that challenge as a sign that you're learning and a sign that you're growing.

The key difference here is really in the messaging. With a growth mindset, you are told and you believe that hard things help you grow. That you are capable of getting smarter. In a fixed mindset, you see your capacity as being limited. So that's one of the ways that your mindset effects how you approach the world around you.

Another mindset that I talked about on the podcast, this was back in episode number 24 when I talked about how to thrive under pressure, is a concept called a stress mindset. There's a wonderful TED Talk by a woman named Kelly McGonigal. She talks about how stress and the way that you perceive stress will affect how stress shows up in your body and the consequences to your health as a result of your belief about stress.

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So your belief here is really critical. If you believe that stress is not a big deal, that it's something that it's something that helps you heighten your performance when faced with a challenge. Then stress will have fewer negative consequences on your health than it would if you were to think that stress is bad and to be avoided at all costs and something that is inherently harmful to you.

So in this first sort of flavor of mindset, we're really looking at what you believe to be true. These are some examples, some mindset. Beliefs, I think, also go much broader than that. Your beliefs are really what you believe to be true about the world. So these include beliefs that may have been passed down to you from your parents or beliefs that are imparted to you from your colleagues at work, for example. It's how you see the world, and it may or may not be true.

Another part of the mindset piece is interpretation. As lawyers, you are very familiar with interpretation. For any of you who are litigators in particular, you know that when a judge is faced with making a decision, they are given a set of facts. They are asked to apply the law to those facts. They may come up with a decision that sees things one way based on their interpretation. But if that decision is appealed, then it may be decided another way. If it's further appealed, another way yet again.

In these cases, the judges who are making these decisions are all very capable. They're all very familiar with the law. They have studied the facts. Despite all of this, they are able to see things differently from each other. It's a question of interpretation.

So what I'm suggesting to you is that in your day to day looking at the world around you, your interpretation is so critical in how you experience the world around you. This is why you can have two people who are in exactly the same situation, and one of them will see it as a good thing, one of them

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will see it as a bad thing depending entirely on how you're interpreting those circumstances.

So what I'm inviting you to think about in this first pillar is what is your mindset in relation to a certain problem? One of the ways that you may be able to recognize what your interpretation is, what your mindset is is the way that you tell a story.

I mean you might notice that you are the victim in a lot of your stories. Well, maybe that says something about the way that you see the world. Maybe that says something about your interpretation. Maybe that you always see it as somebody else doing something wrong. It may be that you always see it as yourself doing something wrong. What I would ask you to do is to start thinking about your interpretation to become more aware of it. Because that will be a really good indication of where you may have some work to do.

There's a podcast that I recorded not that long ago. It's episode number 28. It's all about uncovering your blind spots. In that episode I really give you some tools to really see the way that you're thinking. There is an analogy that's used in the coaching world. It's the idea of being a fish in water and being able to see the water. That's really what I try to guide you through in that podcast episode. So I would encourage you to check that out.

The last point I want to make about mindset here is that that way that you interpret the world, the beliefs that you have about the world around you, those things really govern that internal dialogue that you have with yourself. So when you start watching for those things, you might start to see that you're talking to yourself based on assumptions that you're making on the world around you based on the way that you're seeing a set of facts that isn't neutral. It's your interpretation.

Now I want to add a little bonus here while we're talking about mindset. That is brain health. The reason I talk about this is that your brain is your

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most valuable asset. Yet I would ask you to consider how much time you spend taking care of it.

The reason I mention this is if you look at what is going on, I mean the care that you take of yourself, self-care. The care that we're encouraged socially to take, right. This idea of veneers for your teeth or cool sculpting for your body or getting a personal trainer so that you're healthy. Whatever that looks like.

There's a lot of emphasis on those things because that's what we see. That's what we see of other people. That's what we see when we look in the mirror. Our brains are hidden away. We can't see them unless you have some sort of scan done. So it may not be top of mind to be focusing on the health of your brain. And yet, you are able to care for your brain through nutrition and exercise in a way that supports it's health, that supports its growth and learning.

So what I would invite you to think about is that caring for your brain is a very important part of this process. I took a course last year. It was for brain health coaching through Dr. Amen's clinics. I learned a number of things that you can do to support the health of your brain. Happily a lot of those things coincide with the care you would take for the health, for your body. So things like proper nutrition, drinking lots of water, getting regular exercise, getting enough sleep. All of those things.

I would encourage you to think about that consciously, right? When you're thinking about how you're approaching your day, how does it look different when you get enough sleep versus when you don't get enough sleep? How do you manage stress when you're being mindful, when you're getting proper nutrition versus when you're running on caffeine? So these are some things that I'd invite you to think about under this category of mindset.

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The very last piece, sorry, my notes aren't very clear today. Sorry about that. I'm trying to make things simple, and yet am I making them more simple? What I want you to think about here as well is that your mindset is something that you practice. I've talked in this podcast before about neuroplasticity. You may already be familiar with neuroplasticity.

The point here is that you become what you practice. Your brain becomes efficient in the thoughts that you think frequently, the practices that you do frequently. So if you have a practice, for example, of always seeing the glass half empty, and for many lawyers you really are highly trained in this skill.

There's a negativity bias among lawyers. This is a skill that you're rewarded for. It's a skill that you practice in your work. It's a skill that helps you spot the issues in contracts. It's the skill that helps you assess when a witness it maybe not being truthful. These are skills that are useful. However, they may not be the types of skills that are going to help you figure out how to create a more joyful practice.

If you're convinced that there's no way that you can enjoy the work that you do, you're likely going to prove that true to yourself versus if you start looking for the things that you love about your work. That's a very different exercise.

So this is the first pillar is mindset. What I encourage you to think about here when you're faced with the challenge in your practice is how am I thinking about this? How am I interpreting the facts around me? What are my beliefs in relation to this? What are my practices? What am I routinely thinking? What are my default ways of thinking? How are these potentially holding me back? Finally this brain health piece. How am I taking care of my health in a way that supports my operation?

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So I mentioned at the beginning that mindset is not something that lawyers will typically come to me for. But it is something that often almost always comes up in our work together. It is something that is almost always an issue. Again because we're not able to see it, it's not something that we're aware we need to be working on.

What I'd invite you to think about as we go through the other pillars is that mindset shows itself when it is being exercised in relation to a problem. So what you'll find is you realize when you go to do that challenging thing, for example, that you're seeing that challenge as a sign that you're not smart enough or experienced enough or some enough category. That's an example of where the challenge allows you to see your mindset. So I just want you to keep that in mind. That it may not be inherently visible, but how you assess your mindset is how it shows up, how you assess it when facing a challenge.

So the second pillar that I would like to share with you is the alignment pillar. Now alignment is where I start to see more lawyers contacting me. This is when they call me and they say, "You know, I have been practicing for a few years. This is no longer working for me. Something just doesn't feel right."

This is something that you might be able to relate to. Maybe you were in a job, everything felt great. All of a sudden you came to a bit of a crossroads. It may be that you had a job straight out of law school. Initially it was great, you were learning. You were getting qualified. You started learning all the skills. Then it reached a point where you realized that job just wasn't right for you. There was something about the practice area. There was something about the way that things were being run in the office. You knew that you needed a change.

For some people, for myself included, it can happen with an external life event. So for me when I had children, when I started having a family and it

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changed the way that I was able to practice. It started to also shift what I wanted from my career. So whereas as a young lawyer I used to love going and working on big cases. I really enjoyed. There were some trials that I was involved in. They were huge trials. They made the morning newspapers.

I was the happy beaver back in the office who was working until very late hours. That's exactly what I wanted to do at that point in my life. But it wasn't exactly what I wanted to do when I had small kids at home. So you have to ask yourself what is working for you and what isn't.

Typically the cause of an alignment issue is that there's a disconnect or a lack of alignment between your values and the actions that you're taking day to day. So you very much, I'm almost certain of it, have values whether or not you've sat down consciously to think about what those values are.

You may be one of those people who's just very in tune with who you are. You've intuitively chosen a path that aligns with your values. You may have already gone through an exercise of really thinking about your values, what's important to you, and chosen a path on purpose. If not then you may find that you drift into a position where you feel conflicted. You may feel stuck in your current position. You may feel like you're really suffering. You don't necessarily know how to get out of it.

Some people come to me that they know that they are out of alignment. They tell me they've been in private practice. That it was really great for getting the experience that they wanted to get. They really enjoyed it. If they were going to stay at a law firm, this is exactly the firm they'd want to stay at. But this isn't what they want for themselves in the long run, and they know it. So what they want to do is find something that is a little bit more in alignment with what their goals are, what their values are.

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You know that you're out of alignment when your days feel really hard. When it's difficult for you to get started on your tasks. When you might feel lethargic or resentful of the work that you're doing. The goal here in the alignment category is to get really clear about what your values are, to get really clear about who you are, and to then align your actions and your work with those values.

I've done a podcast about integrity. It's where I talk about integrity not just in the sense of the professional integrity. The way that we think about integrity as a professional being honest and trustworthy and forthright. Doing the right thing even when it's the hard thing to do. There's that notion of integrity. There's also this notion of integrity that relates to wholeness, right. When you are in alignment.

I talk about a book written by Martha Beck which is all about integrity where she likens integrity to the structure of an airplane, right. When all the pieces are fit together and they're in alignment and that airplane can fly the way that it's meant to versus when things aren't in alignment and things get shaky and it's not quite the same experience. So the same applies to you. When you are in integrity with yourself, things just feel that much easier. You feel that clarity. You feel that lightness. So I would encourage you to check out that podcast if you're interested. It's episode number nine.

Another episode where this came up was a very recent episode that I recorded with Juanita Ingram. In that conversation with Juanita, she talks about...She's this wonderful lawyer who has worn many hats—entrepreneur, author, philanthropist, actor. She talks about how part of her journey really involved doing some soul searching and coming back to what she was passionate about, what she really cared about. Really figuring out what her purpose was.

Again, it's that alignment, right. Aligning your values with the actions that you're taking so that you feel that sense of fulfillment, so that you feel that

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sense of peace. When you're in alignment, that's when you tend to feel flow. Your work starts to feel easy. It's still challenging, but it feels easy. You enjoy it.

What is hard about alignment, and this is what you'll find when you start to really dig into this part of the work and when you try to align yourself is that what it means is that you're going to be making choices about different values that are really important to you. So I'll give you an example that applies to me at least recently and for many of you who maybe working from home at the pandemic who have children at home, school aged children at home.

What I found during the pandemic is that there have been days where I'm in my home office working and my children are in another room doing something else. There's a moment where they come in and they need something from me. What ends up happening is I'm choosing. I'm choosing between two things that are very important to me, my children obviously. My children come first. But they are very important to me and so is my work. So there's that conflict there, right?

So what is hard isn't the work and what is hard isn't caring for my children. I love doing both of these things. The conflict, the discomfort is when I have to choose between the two. That may be what's happening for you in your professional work. It may be that you love your job but doing your job the way that you want to do it now rubs up against another value that you have. What you're trying to do is solve for that. So the discomfort that you're feeling is the result of a conflict.

On that same example, you may be with your family. It's a Sunday afternoon and all of a sudden you receive an email that is about a work related issue. Maybe it's something that has gone wrong that you now need to deal with. So then there's that conflict. There's the conflict of number one, having to deal with the issue which may be challenging in itself. It's

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also managing that in relation to your family. Maybe you really want to spend that time with them and that's what you promised them, and now you're having to make that choice.

So pillar number two is really looking at alignment and figuring out is there something that's happening in your practice that you need to resolve, right? It's getting clear about what your values are, what your priorities are. Looking at the work that you're doing, looking at how you're allocating your resources, your time, and your energy. Are you doing that in a way that aligns with what you want? Because the more you can align those two things, the better you're going to feel.

So we have now covered pillars one, mindset, pillar two, alignment, and that brings us to pillar number three. That is process. Process is where I would say most of the calls come in for me. Lawyers call me because they have a process problem.

They want to know how they can better manage their time. They want to know how to set better boundaries. They want to know how to find a new job. They want to find out how to get along better with their colleagues or their assistant or their clients. They want to find out how to balance their life with their work. They want to find out how they can ask for more money. These are all how to questions that people come to me with.

I mentioned earlier in relationship to mindset that sometimes you can't see the mindset problem. Likewise sometimes you can't see the alignment problem. The reason you know there's a problem there is because of the way it shows up in the process.

So process is an interesting one because you will look at the problem that you're facing, and you come to me because it's a process. Yes I can offer you strategies. If you come to me and you say I'm having trouble managing

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my time, I can absolutely share with you a number of time management strategies that can help, right.

Like the pomodoro method where you break up your days into 25 minute sections and you work really hard for those 25 minutes. That helps you with momentum and procrastination. I mean that's a tool that you can apply. It's how you structure your days. I have a whole podcast episode, episode number two where I offer up some time management strategies. These are all really useful strategies that are helpful and they work. They work when your mindset is where it needs to be, where you're aligned, and it doesn't necessarily work if those other pieces aren't necessarily taken care of.

One analogy that I think is really relevant here is in the whole weight loss industry. I've heard this said before. I think it's really a good example to think about here. There being an obesity epidemic in North America. We also know that there's an enormous industry that supports that, right. There's no shortage of exercise programs or recommended ways of eating. You can find any of these, thousands of these by looking it up on your computer.

So if the question were as simple as knowing what to do, if the question were as simple as me telling you how to manage your time then nobody would struggle. Nobody would struggle with their weight. You wouldn't struggle with your time. The issue isn't so much that. It's the implementation. So when people come to me with process, I'm all for coaching on the process. I'm all for helping you figure out what steps you can take to solve your problem.

However coaching really goes beyond that. It goes to who you are. It goes to how come this process challenge is there in the first place? What is it about mindset? What is it about the alignment? We're also going to talk about growth. How is in relation to these other pillars that this has become a problem for you?

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Like I said, process is usually something that people come to because it's an obvious problem for them. It may be that that problem is pointed out by somebody else. It may be that they're working at a law firm and somebody within their organization has requested that they get some additional help or they've suggested it could be really helpful for you to get some coaching around time management or to get some coaching around communication or get some coaching around boundaries. I mean these are things that happen frequently in law firms or other organizations,

So it might be really obvious to you because somebody tells you that this is something you might want to get some help with. It may also be family members. I remember at one point my husband pointing out to me, I hadn't even noticed it. This was when I had one child. He said, "You know, have you noticed that you're spending at least one day every weekend at the office." I had not noticed.

Sometimes other people point it out to you. It makes you then have to ask yourself some questions about is this what I want? Is this the right thing for me? I would encourage you to ask those questions.

So think about what your friends and family are saying recognizing that what they say to you, they may not share the same views. You may have friends who say, "Oh you know you work all the time. You really should quit your job." You may be thinking I do work all the time, but I love it. I don't want to quite my job. That's totally a possibility. You may also hear messages from other people where you agree with them. It may inspire you or lead you to make some changes in your practice or elsewhere.

It may also be that you notice something that is a challenge for you. So you may notice that you're missing deadlines. You may feel like you always have too much on your plate. You may feel overwhelmed and stressed throughout the day. You may feel like you're always in a hurry. These may all be signs that you're having trouble with time management.

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It may not be that this is just a calendaring issue. This maybe a mindset issue where you have a relationship with time where you feel like there's just not enough of it, that you're not able to manage it. You may have trouble setting boundaries because you're afraid of the consequences that might flow from setting those boundaries. Chances are the reasons for the struggles that you're having go beyond the systems that you have in place.

It may also be that you feel stuck or unhappy or trapped in your career. Again it maybe that it's not so much that you need to go and get a new job. That might not be the problem. That's where you might start looking at another pillar, for example alignment. Is the work that you're doing aligned with what you really want? If that's not the case, then how do we get you back on track?

So that my friend really covers the third pillar, which is process. Like I said, this is where most lawyers will be compelled to reach out to me, to ask for help in relation to a specific problem they're having. Often related to a process. What I offer is that this process is part of the problem, but it is more effectively solved when we look at it in relation to the other pillars.

So the last pillar that I want to share with you is growth. Growth is a pillar that I do see clients come to me with. They come to me because they have a big goal that they want to work on. They're in an organization. They want to advance within that organization. They want to be strategic about their business plan, their marketing, their networking, their growth. They want to be strategic about the way that they lead within an organization, their goals for themselves and their colleagues. So they are proactively going after something that is a growth for them.

I have clients who have aspirations maybe outside of their current work. Maybe it's a big promotion. Maybe it's stepping into a big position. It's something that might take more than a year. Maybe it's two years. They seek me out. What they want from me is to help them look at that big goal,

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to help them break it down into phases, to help keep them accountable. To have the support, to have somebody who is there solely to help them and support them in working towards their goals. So for some people, growth is the reason that they come to me.

What I'm offering to you today in this podcast episode is that without growth, it's really hard to find the joy in your practice. If you have listened to podcast episode number three, it's how to find joy in your work. I talk about Shawn Achor. I talk about his work around happiness. The idea that for so many of us, we were initially told or we were initially led to believe that you work really hard to get your goal, to get the A, to get the promotion, to get the job, to have the family. Whatever it is.

What you're almost told is that once you get there, you're going to be happy. What can be really disappointing is when you reach that goal and realize initially you are really happy. It's the equivalent of winning the lottery. You got there and you feel really good about it. But overtime your happiness level kind of dips back to where you were before. There's almost a baseline level of happiness that you go back to.

What I would offer to you in this growth area is that growth is truly what will bring you joy in your practice. There's an expression that the Greeks came up with. Roughly it is that happiness is the joy that you feel in working towards your potential. If you can learn how to do this then you are going to be able to tap into an unlimited source of joy. So if you can learn to love the process, like truly love the process, there is no end to the amount of joy that you're going to experience, right?

Rather than putting all your happiness eggs in one basket and that basket lives at the end of the rainbow where you've done all the things and accomplished all the goals and overcome all the challenges. If you don't defer happiness to that point, if you're able to find happiness in the growth,

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in the challenges, in the day to day, that is when you come up with that unlimited source of joy.

It sounds a little bit cheeky, right. If you can fall in love with working really hard, yes you're going to be happy, but there's so much truth in it. When the work that you're doing is in alignment with your values, when you have a mindset, that discomfort is a sign that you're going in the right direction. When you put in place processes that help move you forward in your work and you feel yourself growing. Then guess what? Those are the days where you go to the office, you work really hard, and you feel so good. That is joy that is available to you anytime.

So what I'm offering here is when you're looking at a challenge that you're having in your practice, and this applies to the challenges outside your practice as well. I'm really focused here on getting you happy at work. When there's a problem in your practice, look at it from this lens. Is there an opportunity for you to grow?

The desire for growth, the human need for growth, I think, is innate for all of us. If you look at nature, all things grow, right. Trees grow and people grow. It's really uncomfortable if your growth is capped. The analogy that I'm thinking of here is your shoes. If you have young kids, I do, they grow really fast. They grow out of their pants really quickly. They grow out of their shoes really quickly.

I don't know if you remember this from being a kid. Now that I'm a grownup my shoes are uncomfortable sometimes if I choose uncomfortable shoes, but I no longer grow out of them. When I was a child, and I imagine the same for you, you would reach a point where your shoes just physically become uncomfortable. You can maybe imagine that, right, when your toes get all scrunched up towards the end of the shoe. It's time to get new ones. That is a feeling of discomfort because you're being trapped. You're no longer able to grow.

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What I would offer to you is that in your professional work, if you're in an environment where you cannot grow, you don't see where you can grow. You start to feel trapped. There's no next for you. There's no goal to look forward to. There's no expansion for yourself. That can be really unsettling. It can be really deflating. It can be really limiting.

So what I invite you to think about here is is there room for you to grow? You can think about it as like a potted plant. If you've got a plant and it's in a pot and it's growing and the roots are growing. It's getting bigger. At a certain point, you're going to have to take that plant out and put it in the garden. Somewhere where it has more room to move.

That's exactly what I want you to think about when you're thinking about your career and where you are right now. You may be perfectly aligned with the mission statement of the organization that you work for. The role that you're in is capped. There's no where else for you to go. What I would invite you to think about is whether or not you need to find something that is going to allow you to expand.

This may vary depending on the stage of life that you're at. It may be that you have young kids at home. You don't want to grow in your business right now. You don't want to grow in your practice. You want to stay put. You want to maintain. I would invite you to think about whether or not that's the case or whether you really do want to push forward and expand and move beyond where you are right now.

So that really summarizes the four different areas that I would invite you to think about to solve any problem that you're having in your practice. Number one is to look at your mindset, your thinking, your beliefs, your interpretation of what's going on around you. Number two to look at how you are aligned, whether or not you are aligned with the work that you are doing.

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Number three is to really look at the process. Yes there are systems and ways of doing things that are more efficient. Process also comes up in the practice of law, right. There are certain procedural things that you need to learn how to do. Ask yourself is it a process questions? Are those processes in place in relation to mindset and alignment? Finally that fourth category, which is growth, is there opportunity for you to expand? Is there opportunity for you to grow into the professional that you aspire to be?

So I know I've taken some time to explain each of these categories. I mentioned in the beginning of this podcast episode my word of the year is streamlined. Really the objective here is to narrow down your problems into one of these four categories, one or more of these four categories. The reason why I think this is going to help you even though it's a bit much to take in all at once in today's podcast episode.

The reason why I think this will help you is that now you're looking at your problems from four different perspectives. You can ask yourself four questions. When something happens, is it a mindset problem? Is it an alignment problem? Is it a process problem? Or is this a growth problem?

When you narrow it down to those four questions, then you're able to see that problem and the solution so much more easily. This will save you time. You're not going to have to sit there wondering from an unlimited number of questions. You can ask yourself those four questions and start to get some clarity. Start to see where you need to focus your work.

To do this there are a few skills that you need. Number one is the discipline to sit down and to ask yourself these questions. You'll need the curiosity to get to know yourself better, especially when it comes to mindset and alignment. This is really a deep dive into who you are and how you think. Are you curious enough to ask yourself those questions and to do that work?

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It's going to be your commitment to do the work, to experience the discomfort. Particularly if you're choosing between different options that raise values for you. Things that are really important to you. If you're going to have to start to rank those in terms of what's more important, that can be really difficult.

If you're going to have to start acting in order to be more aligned with something that's really important to you, you may have to have a really uncomfortable conversation with somebody and tell them that you're not going to be able to do something that is important to you but isn't as important to you as something else. So these are all skills that you're going to need to have in order to apply this framework.

When you do apply this framework then what you'll do is you'll be able to solve your problems faster. You'll feel better because you'll understand yourself better. You'll understand how you think. You'll be able to find peace of mind and freedom from knowing that you're doing exactly what you want to be doing. You're doing exactly what you've chosen is important to you. That will feel like what you should be doing in that moment.

You'll have the alignment of your action with your values. You'll have confidence that comes with knowing that whatever it is that comes your way, you will be able to figure it out.

Finally as you grow and as you make it a point to ensure that the path that you're on provides for your growth, you'll start to really feel that joy. The joy of moving towards your purpose, of moving towards your potential. Of working hard and getting closer. Through that work, you will create excellence in your practice at the highest level in a way that only you can create it.

So my friends, that is what I have to share with you this week. It is the four pillars to a joyful practice. I hope that you love it. I hope you're able to ask

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yourself these questions and apply the pillars in your practice. I would love to hear from you. I thank you all for tuning in each week. It is just delightful to have you here. I really look forward to recording these podcast episodes for you.

I continue to do coaching one-on-one. If that's something that you are interested in, I would invite you to reach out to me. Send me an email, contact me on LinkedIn. My contact information is with the show notes that accompany this podcast recording.

If you like the podcast, I would encourage you to please rate and review this podcast. It helps other people just like you to find the podcast. The more people we can share this work with, the more of a community we'll be able to create. So I invite you to do that and thank you in advance for doing that.

Finally I just want all of you to have an excellent week. So I hope you are all having a great week. I hope you go out there and have so much joy in your practice this week. I would love to reconnect with you again 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. 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. See you next week.

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