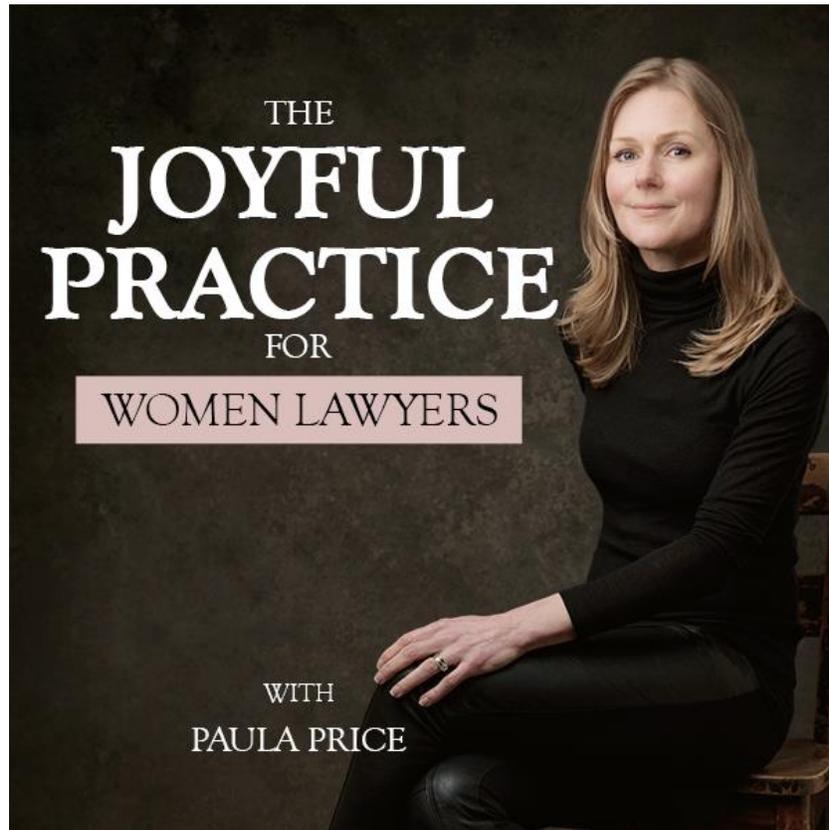


Ep #44: Delegating Without Drama



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Paula Price

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

Ep #44: Delegating Without Drama

You're listening to *The Joyful Practice for Women Lawyers* Podcast episode number 44.

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. I hope that all of you are having a fabulous week. Thank you so much for joining me here today. I'm delighted to have you here.

Today is a little bit unusual for me. I'm recording this podcast episode on a Sunday afternoon, which is not my normal podcast recording window. But my family and I are actually taking a vacation. We're going to Mexico, and our flight leaves tomorrow morning.

I don't know about any of you, but we have basically not left the province since the pandemic started. Which interestingly was exactly two years ago today. It's March 13th on the day that I'm recording, 2022, which is a full circle. Two years from the date where we first heard the announcements that things were shutting down.

I remember at the time, it was actually a Friday, Friday the 13th. Our kids had just been let out for spring break. The announcement was made that they would probably have an extra two weeks of spring break. At the time, I thought oh what are we going to do? Like two weeks is a long time to be on break. Sure enough that two weeks became a two year pandemic.

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

Ep #44: Delegating Without Drama

Things where I live are looking like they're starting to open up again. So it's kind of neat to be at the stage where we're starting to feel like we're returning normal, touch wood. Not sure what the new normal really is. There's lots going on.

But really appreciating when I look back over what we've all been through over the past two years, what we've all experienced, the challenges that we've overcome, the ways that we've come together, the ways we've managed to connect. I think it's really incredible. I'm more than excited to be going away tomorrow with my family.

We're go to a place we went to before. I actually talked about it a little bit in my podcast episode about confidence that I released the other week. I mentioned a karaoke scene, and it's for going back there. So maybe we'll be doing some karaoke. I don't know. I don't know if that's still the setup. But there's something quite magical about the possibility of just going away and changing your scenery for a little bit.

And a side benefit of planning a vacation, which I haven't really experienced a long time because I haven't gone on a true vacation. I've always brought my laptop with me wherever I've gone. I don't plan to do that this time. I can tell you I have been so efficient in packing up to get ready. By packing up, I mean packing work. Getting all the things, all the scraggly loose ends like my taxes and updating my credit card information on all the different subscriptions that I'm a part of, and emails. All the things.

So if you need to find some motivation to get things done more efficiently, schedule a vacation. It's a wonderful way to do that. But today, we're not talking so much about vacations, although I'm sure it's a fun topic. I would love to talk more about vacations, but we're talking about delegating.

Ep #44: Delegating Without Drama

The reason that we're talking about this is because it's come up a lot in conversation recently. I think it's one of those topics that we could definitely explore a little bit further. To give you an idea of how it's been coming up, there's a few places. It's come up in discussions with clients. Clients who have questions about delegating, who may have reservations about delegating. I'm going to get into some of the reasons why I find that the lawyers that I work with aren't delegating. I'm going to provide some ideas in respect to each of those.

But the other place where I saw it show up was in a compensation study that was conducted by the Canadian Bar Association's Women Lawyers forum. It was a study that really looked at the compensation for women in law firms. I haven't read the study in full yet. That's something that I plan to do.

But in the summary, they talk about some of the criteria that are used to evaluate compensation. One of those criteria, right up there with the work that you do is actually the work that you delegate. So if there are not enough reasons already to think about why delegation is important, that piece, I think, is quite interesting, right? That it's something that is going to be evaluated in terms of how you are compensated through your work.

So without further ado, I'm going to jump into the episode. I'm going to talk about what it is that seems to be holding you back or that may be holding you back when it comes to that delegation. I'm going to talk about four of those. Then I'm going to offer solutions in respect of them. So let's jump in.

Delegation is one of those things that comes up a lot in conversations that I have with lawyers. What often happens or the way it comes up is the lawyers I'm working with are finding that they are very busy. They're really stretched. They have a lot on their plates, and they want to find ways to delegate more of their work, but they're not really sure how to go about that.

Ep #44: Delegating Without Drama

One of the main reasons that lawyers that I have worked with are not delegating is the drama, right? It is the feelings associated with delegating the work. You may feel like it's your job to do certain things. You may feel really guilty or uncomfortable about asking other people to do things for you.

Some examples that come up are the experience maybe of having an assignment that comes in from a client late in the week, maybe on a Thursday or a Friday. You know that asking somebody else to help you with that means that they're going to need to set aside a part of their weekend, maybe their whole weekend, to help you with that. That might feel really uncomfortable for you.

It may be that you have somebody that you want to delegate to, but you feel like there's something about the dynamic of that relationship that just doesn't seem right. Maybe you see them as being on equal footing to you and that it's not your place to be asking them to help you. Or maybe there's some other reason that is preventing you from seeking out the help that you need. So the first thing that we're going to talk about is talking about that drama, about the emotional challenges that we might have when it comes to delegation.

So another reason that clients or lawyers or you may not be delegating is that it's just not on your radar. So what you might find is that in your practice, and this really depends on what stage you're at, but if you're really just starting out, your first objective is likely just figuring out how to do things. You're taking on work from all different directions. You're learning. Your learning curve is very steep. You're learning how to do all sorts of different things. So you're not being all that discerning most of the time in terms of what's coming in. You're really just learning and trying to keep up and make relationships with the lawyers in your firm, with your clients.

Ep #44: Delegating Without Drama

What can happen is that you then reach a point where you've now accumulated so many clients and you've attracted so much work that you need to start pushing work down. So that might be one area where the delegation piece comes in. This can happen at any point along the road. It may be that you are a more senior associate, or you've reached the partnership level, or you are a partner. What you want is to be refining your practice further.

So you may have had already several stages where you've reached a new level. You've started to delegate more, and then you've climbed up a little bit further, and you're continually building your team. So you might think about where you would situate yourself on that spectrum. If you're looking at this as almost like, like you're climbing up a hill, right, and every few meters there is a bit of a pause. So you might think about where you are in relation to delegation and where you're looking to go moving forward.

It may also be that you're so used to doing the work that is on your plate, you're really efficient at it. You're really good at it. That it doesn't even occur to you to hand it off to somebody else.

Here I'm going to make a little sidebar. The trip that we're going on, as I mentioned, it's a place we've gone to before. The last time that we were there was two and a half years ago. One of the reasons I'm so excited to go back to the same place we went to before is because I think it will really signal to us just how much our family has evolved over the past two and a half years. How much older my children are, how much more independent they are.

One of my personal objectives of our family vacation is that I want to have this be a catalyst for them to reach a new level of autonomy. Now, they're not going to be fully autonomous. My kids are nine and seven. But the last time we were there, they were five and seven. So this is going to be quite a jump for them. I'd love to see them feel more independent. I think

Ep #44: Delegating Without Drama

especially with pandemic living, we've spent so much time at home with our family. I think that there's an opportunity here for them to really develop their skills and build their confidence.

So I'd invite you to think the same thing in your practice. What are the things that you've been doing, perhaps because it's just what's on your desk? If you really think about it, is it what you want to keep doing? Or have you reached a level where maybe it's time to start delegating some of the work that you're doing and reaching forward for new work for yourself? So that's the second reason, and we'll talk more about what the solution is or some proposed solutions. It's just not on your radar.

So the third reason why you may not be delegating is time. We all know that delegating ultimately saves time. However, in the moment, the first time you delegate something especially or if you're developing a new relationship with somebody that you'll be working with, that is an investment in time. That can present a hurdle that just seems insurmountable when you're feeling the pressure to get things done quickly. So we're going to talk a little bit more about that as well.

Finally, another reason why you may not be delegating is that element of control. So if you are currently doing everything, you may be overloaded. You may be overwhelmed, but you have 100% control over the quality of the output. It may be that you're so efficient at doing things, and you're so efficient at doing them a certain way that you know that if you delegate it to somebody else, you're not going to have that same exact result, and you may not like that.

For all of the type A's that are listening, I fall into that category sometimes. I think I'm sometimes type A, sometimes I might be type B. But there are things you may like done a certain way. When you delegate it, then you no longer have control over that. So that's another thing that we're going to talk about today.

Ep #44: Delegating Without Drama

Now, the reason why it's important to talk about delegation is that what you may have been doing to try to deal with this may not have been working all that well. So in some cases, you may find that you simply just don't try to delegate. So you try to do it all. What that results in is a very busy practice. A practice where you're so busy, you don't end up having the time that you need to take a step back and decide if this is how you want things to be running or if there are changes that you'd like to make.

Another thing that might happen is that you try delegating. Maybe you have a project, you give it to somebody, and the product that comes back is not usable. You end up working even harder to correct the work, and then figure out what you're going to do with the time that they may have recorded on that file. So it could be that you've had negative experiences, and you just don't want to go back to that.

But if we never really take on that delegation, ultimately it doesn't create what you want. It may on many levels impair your practice. So first of all, it may mean that you're taking on really more work than is sustainable. You might find that you're feeling overwhelmed. You may find that you start to feel burnt out. You may feel scattered. You may start feeling resentful about work that you used to love, and now you feel like there's just too much of it. Why does it always have to be you?

If you don't delegate, what you may also find is that you don't end up building a network of support for yourself. People that you can delegate to when you need them. You don't end up developing that team. That really affects you at different levels.

I think where I've seen it affect lawyers quite a bit is as they increase in seniority, and they want to really move into more of a leadership position. That, in itself, is really where you're going to be wanting to strengthen your team. So the sooner you are minded toward team building, the more naturally you're going to flow into that position as a leader.

Ep #44: Delegating Without Drama

Other reasons why not delegating doesn't work is that if you keep doing the work that you're doing and you don't push it down to more junior lawyers or others, then you may not be taking on new work that's going to grow your skill set. That's going to put you in more challenging situations where you're going to find yourself evolving in your practice.

So those are some reasons why not delegating, it may not be the way that you want to go that. So this is something that you may really want to focus on. When you don't delegate, then what can happen is your practice reaches a bit of a plateau where you are the bottleneck. You cannot physically take on more work. You cannot grow your skills because you're so bogged down with your current workload, and you can't grow a team.

So we're going to talk about some solutions to these challenges. Starting with the first one, the drama. The solution that I propose here if the hold back that you have is that you're concerned about delegating, that you don't want to be seen as bossy. You want to be asking other people to do things that you think that you should be doing yourself. Then the trick here is to have a second look at how you perceive delegation because I think this will really inform the conversations that you have with people that you delegate to.

I had a conversation very recently with a lawyer who, in real time and during our call, was grappling with the issue of delegating. This particular lawyer was already maxed out. There was a lot going on in their practice, and a new file had literally just come in. They wanted to get started on the file, but they couldn't. They had already had plans to work over the weekend, and they had to ask for help.

They did not want to do that because a few reasons, but the main reason being they didn't want to be the person who kind of goes in and ruins other people's weekends, right? Ask them to work on this file. They felt

Ep #44: Delegating Without Drama

embarrassed and sheepish almost about having to do this. If you can relate to this, it happens.

I can relate to this. I can remember being in private practice and having to be the one who goes and rallies up a team of lawyers and says, “Hey guys, here's what we're going to be doing this weekend.” It's not always the conversation that you want to be having with others. So if that's something that you can relate to, then this exercise, this approach that I'm going to offer to you, may be really helpful to you.

What I would offer here is to reframe, in your mind, the way that you think about the task that you are delegating because it will have an impact on how you communicate about it to those who you end up delegating it to. So imagine here, I suppose that we're looking at a situation where you're asking a team of junior lawyers to work on a mandate over the weekend. Maybe that's an example that you can relate to. If it's not, I invite you to think about what it would look like in your practice.

So what are some of the reasons that delegating to them might actually be a good thing? I've got a few reasons. Number one is it's an opportunity for others to gain experience. So if you think about what you're doing in your work is you're always learning. So by giving others an opportunity to work on a file with you potentially, that is an opportunity for them to learn and to grow.

Another reason why it may be a great thing is that people like to help. Think about how much you enjoy it when somebody asks you to do something, and you're actually able to help them. So by asking them or delegating a task, you're actually giving somebody else an opportunity to perform an act of kindness. I can tell you. So many lawyers that I speak with, when I ask them why they went to law school, the number one answer that I receive is because they want to help people. So this is an opportunity for them to help.

Ep #44: Delegating Without Drama

Number three is it's an opportunity for you to share your knowledge and to develop yourself as a mentor. So every time that you're working with somebody, you have an opportunity to, in effect, mentor them. Everybody loves that ability to learn from somebody who is more experienced than them.

Number four is when you bring other people into the mix, you get more brains on a problem. I can remember delegating to junior lawyers back when I was in private practice. Sometimes the work product that would come back would be done in such a unique way, and it would be a way that I never would have imagined doing it myself. It was excellent. It was so good.

So you may have a wonderful, efficient way of doing things, but there may be other ways of doing things as well that you find are just as good, if not better. You now have access to all those different minds. So more brains on a problem can mean better outcomes.

Another reason, again, kind of going back to this idea of more brains on a problem is better is you may end up with an overall well, you may. Chances are you will end up with a better quality output overall if you have more members of a team working on a problem. Each member can focus on a specific aspect of that, and then you can come together. Whereas if you're doing it all yourself, you don't have that ability to really go so deep into all the different areas. So ultimately, the product that you're creating is one that will be a better quality product.

Another reason is that when you ask somebody to help you on something that's really important, it shows that you trust them or that you're willing to take a risk or try to develop a relationship of trust with them. One of the things that I believe to be fundamental in professional relationships, whether it's the relationship that you have as a lawyer with other lawyers or as a lawyer with your clients.

Ep #44: Delegating Without Drama

Or in my case, the relationships that I have with my clients as my clients as coaching clients, is that relationship of trust. I think being able to know that you can have that relationship with somebody where you ask them for help, and they're able to help and you're able to communicate and rely on each other is probably one of the biggest gifts that you can create or give to somebody in your professional work. So I think that is such a wonderful opportunity.

I've got a few more. Another reason why delegation can be a wonderful thing is it's an opportunity for you to start building your team. So as you're delegating, you're bringing more people into that support network and that growth network because as you're growing, so are they. Then finally, it helps other people feel like they're part of something. So you're building a team, and then they're feeling like they're part of the team. So there's a certain level of collegiality that is really fostered when you go about delegating work.

So these are some ideas. You may have other ideas in terms of what it is that is amazing about delegating. So when you go to have that conversation with somebody about delegating, I would invite you to think about what some of these reasons might be for you. On this note, I would recommend an earlier podcast episode that I did about boundaries. It's called How to Set Boundaries with Ease. It's episode number 37. I also have an episode about having difficult conversations, which is episode number 15.

If you want some suggestions on how to approach conversations where you feel maybe a little bit awkward or uncomfortable having those conversations because you're setting boundaries, because you're asking people to help you, because you're delivering a message that may be uncomfortable for you. I recommend listening to those episodes because it might help you in terms of how you approach those conversations in a way

Ep #44: Delegating Without Drama

that feels empowering and authentic and allows you to ultimately improve your skills at doing that.

Now, before we move on to the next section, I wanted to give you an example of a complete reframe on delegation that comes out of a movie that my family discovered during the pandemic. It's called *Don't Tell Mom the Babysitter's Dead*. It's kind of a ridiculous movie. My kids, for some reason, loved it and sort of watched it a few times over the past two years.

Part of the story is Christina Applegate plays like this older sister who ends up getting a job downtown, I think they're in Chicago, at this fancy firm where she's doing fashion and she's working with this wonderful boss. If you ever watch it, the boss is like, I just think she's amazing the way they portray her. Christina Applegate's character gets this job through not the most honest way. She doesn't really know what she's doing. So she starts asking this other person who's working at the same firm as her to take on some of her work.

Anyways, there are these two individuals at the office. I think one is young David Duchovny. So they're trying to get Christina Applegate character into trouble. So they one day, they rat on her. They go to her boss, and they say, "Hey, did you know that," whatever her name is, "has actually been asking this other person to do her work for her?" There's this moment where you think, oh no. She's going to get into trouble because she's been sending her work off to somebody else that she was supposed to do it herself.

But then the boss in the movie turns to Christina Applegate's character with this huge smile on her face. She says, "Wow, you are so brilliant. Look at you. I was wondering how you're going to get all that work done. Look at you delegating. That is such a great use of her time."

Ep #44: Delegating Without Drama

So when you see it that way, it really does invite a different reframing of what delegation means. Is it you shirking your responsibilities or is it you being efficient with your time and giving others the opportunity to learn? So that's just a little anecdote. It's a really silly movie, but there's some scenes in there that I think are actually really sweet.

So now we are on to hurdle number two. That is that delegating just isn't on your radar. So this is the example where you have just kind of been going along. You're busy. You don't really have time to think about where you're going. You don't really have time to think about delegating. So if this is something that you can relate to, what I would invite you to do is to take a step back. Give yourself an hour or some period of time to think.

I would think about where you want to be in five years. If five years isn't the number that works for you, maybe it's two years or one year, but where do you want to be? Who do you want to be working with? What kind of work do you want to be doing?

The reason that I'm inviting you to think in terms of the future is because that will then serve as a framework for how you make decisions today. So when you think about where you want to be, what kind of work you want to be doing, then look at what you're doing currently and who you're working with currently, what work do you want to keep doing? What work do you want to start delegating to others?

Think about who it is on your team. Are there others who support what you want? I think this works in both ways. It applies looking forward, who is it that you would like to have as a mentor? As somebody that you learn from, somebody who might be able to help you move up the ladder, up the learning curve? Who is it that you want to have on your team?

Maybe you're at that stage where you're already quite senior in your organization, and you've got junior lawyers that you're wanting to bring up

Ep #44: Delegating Without Drama

with you. So who are they and how do you need to start working in relation to them to create the momentum and the team to get you to where you want to be?

Also, not only thinking about who you need to be bringing with you, but maybe there are individuals that you may need to let go of. This will look so different depending on the organization that you're in. If you're in an organization where you have sort of a set team. There are others like an HR department that decides who gets hired and who no longer remains with an organization, that's quite different from if you are somebody who has your own firm or if you're in a much smaller firm or you have more say in terms of who you bring on as your own support. So that will look so different for everybody.

But in either case, it may be that there are individuals who aren't necessarily going to help you. That you don't really have the best working relationship with. If that's the case, if this is somebody that you just need to maybe move away from a little bit, if that's your option, or if you have control over that, is your support adequate? I think that is something that can really come up for lawyers is you may not have somebody who's able to perform in the way that you need them to. Is that a relationship that you want to try to improve on, or is it a relationship that simply isn't working? If that's the case, how would you like to proceed in relation to that person?

Now, the other thing I'd invite you to consider here when you're looking at how you want to build your team and how you want to build your career is to consider what kind of support you might also need outside of the office. So if, for example, you are like me and you've got kids, school aged kids at home, do you need to build up the support that you have at home in order for you to free up some time for your professional work? Also maybe to free up some of the time that you spend with your family.

Ep #44: Delegating Without Drama

So it may be that you're doing things at home that you might want somebody else to help out with so that you can spend more time with your family doing the things that aren't falling into that category. I know for a lot of you, and I know for myself, sometimes it can be really hard to ask other people for help. You might feel like they're your kids. So you should be doing everything. But, unfortunately, I think when we put that pressure on ourselves, it does limit us, and it's really, really hard to maintain.

So moving on to step three. Sorry, one last point. When it comes to this being intentional about delegating, about thinking about where you want to go and how you're going to get there, there is no right way. So there's all different ways of doing this.

Using the family as an example, it may be that you want to be more hands on. That you want to keep doing certain things. Whereas another person in your shoes might decide that they want less of those responsibilities and more of a different type of responsibility. So there's no one way to do this. The key here is to think about what you, want what's going to work best for you.

So step three is that you do not have time to delegate. So the suggestion here is really to think about how investing your time in the short run is going to lead to long term benefits for you. If you are able to have others help you out, then you will have more time to take on more challenging work. You will have more time to ease your schedule. So you may have more free time that you can use either to maybe take some time off or do other things to build your practice.

When you have that support, there's less of a panic if you're not physically present in your office. So there's a lot of benefits to making that upfront investment in time in order to have that network that you can rely on. So if you are completely bogged down in your practice, you may be holding up your practice. You might be the bottleneck that is keeping things stuck.

Ep #44: Delegating Without Drama

So what can you do to bring people on in a way that doesn't cost you an enormous amount of time? Here I think one of the things that you might want to consider is how can you make the process of delegating run more smoothly? I did an episode, I think it's episode number 36 about systems checklists for saving time. Checklists are pretty great way of being able to delegate in a way that is relatively objective.

You might be the one to create the checklist. If there's a task that you do, and you do it repeatedly and you know it inside and out, it might take you some amount of time to write out your checklists. Maybe you dictate it and ask somebody else to copy it for you. Maybe you write it out on a day where you have a window of time to do it. Maybe you do an initial draft, and then you ask somebody else to help you with that.

If you can start creating systems and checklists, then it may become a lot easier for you to delegate work to other people. Or at least start bringing them up the learning curve in terms of what it is that they need to know so that they can help you. So that really, I think, is my main comment for the time is to really just give yourself the time and look at it as an investment to create more time going forward.

Finally, there's the fourth area, which is giving up control which can be so hard, right? Especially when you know that if you were to do it, it would take you 10 minutes and it will be done exactly the way you want. But over time those 10 minutes add up. So wouldn't it be great to have somebody that you can start delegating that to?

So you'll ultimately need to make a choice, right? The choice is you can do it all your way on your own and get exactly what you want, or you can start growing your team and start growing your practice. If you decide to start delegating more frequently, there will absolutely be times where you do that, and things don't turn out the way that you would do them. Maybe it's

Ep #44: Delegating Without Drama

even ways that you would not like them to be done. You'll need to decide what to do.

So I've got a couple of ideas here. Number one is to take a step back and look at the big picture, right? Do you want to be doing this all by yourself until the end of time? Or do you want to start at least experimenting with what delegation can be like for you at a greater level? And if the answer is that you do want to do it all yourself, then that will take you in one direction. But if you decide that what you really want is to delegate then it becomes a question of well, how are we going to manage this going forward?

So I've got an idea that you can try when you've delegated something, and it doesn't come back exactly the way that you want it. I'm borrowing this idea a little bit. If you listen to the podcast episode that I did with Maggie Reyes, it's episode number 29. It's all about relationships and building. She specializes in marriages for type A women.

One of the tools that she offers her clients is something that she calls the anger scale. So the way she describes it is that if something goes wrong or if there's a situation where you find yourself feeling angry or frustrated, you can ask yourself how angry or frustrated you are on a scale of one to 10.

Then you give yourself, a because not everything is going to be the same, right? If somebody loses your key versus if somebody, I don't know, doesn't pay the mortgage. I'm trying to think of examples in a marriage situation that might make somebody frustrated. They're going to fall. There's going to be different, leaving your socks on the floor, for example, is different from forgetting to pick the kids up from school.

So you get to decide where you're going to rank yourself on a scale of one to 10. Then you give yourself a threshold, right? Maybe it's five. If it's less than a five, you do nothing. If it's more than a five, you do something. So that's the way that the anger skill works per Maggie Reyes.

Ep #44: Delegating Without Drama

So here in this context, if what we're doing is we're looking at delegating and the job that somebody else did is not the way that you would do it. Then you can look at that and ask yourself on a scale of one to 10, where does this fit? In terms of my level of satisfaction with how this has been done. Where it maybe 10 is this just is not acceptable, and number one would be this is first rate. This is exactly how I would do it. I mean, you get to decide how you're going to set up your spectrum.

Maybe your cutoff is five, right? If it's more than five, then you will do something about it. If it's less than five, you'll do nothing. That might give you a way of measuring and assessing. Because what can happen if you start delegating and then micromanaging is that you end up exhausting yourself by trying to get everything to be the way that you would have done it yourself.

You may need to start accepting that there's a level of doneness, of good enoughness, that once you accept that, your life will just operate a lot more smoothly and you'll be freed up to do other things. So give yourself that threshold, and then decide. If it's more than this then I will do something. If it's less than this, I will just thank them and move forward.

So if it reaches the threshold, what I would recommend doing is to use this as an opportunity to provide feedback and to help that person learn how to work with you in a way that you're both achieving the result that you want. If you have listened to the podcast about giving feedback, which is podcast episode number 41, then you'll have learned some ideas and suggestions about giving feedback. Giving feedback to others and also learning from feedback. So I'd encourage you to think about how you might go about delivering feedback in a way that builds that person up and also allows them to act on their growing edges.

If you haven't listened to that episode, then I encourage you to do that. Again because what you want to do here is learn how to manage effectively

Ep #44: Delegating Without Drama

that relationship. Manage that person, manage the work so that you are better able to delegate to that person, better able to rely on them to do things in a way that is going to work for you. So those are some suggestions that I would offer in terms of what to do if you delegate and the work that comes back to you isn't what you had hoped for.

As you do this, as you develop your skills in giving feedback to others, as you become more of a leader, I would invite you to think about how it is that you want to show up in that role, to show up in that role as leader. There's an expression that comes to mind. It is that people will rarely remember the words that you say, but they will remember how you made them feel.

So when it comes to working with others, when it comes to delegating, I invite you to think about how it is that you want those people to feel when they work with you. Use that as your starting point for how you're going to approach conversations with them.

So those are the suggestions that I have for you. So just to recap, number one is to deal with the drama of delegating is simply to reframe the way that you look at delegating so that you don't see yourself as, you know, punishing somebody. You don't see yourself as imposing on them. You don't feel guilty. You don't have that same reluctance to delegate because you're looking at delegation in how it is of service, not only to yourself but also to the person that you are delegating to.

And, of course, the recipient of the benefit of your work. So I imagine that would be your client. It might be another lawyer in your firm. Whoever it that's going to benefit from your work, this is all for the greater good. Asking for help isn't something that you need to shy away from.

Step number two that we discussed is to put delegation on your radar. So if it's just something that you haven't really been conscious of, let's just bring

Ep #44: Delegating Without Drama

that into focus and think about where you're going, where you want to go, and how delegating to others can support you in getting there.

Number three is that challenge of not having time. There it's really all about thinking about okay how is it going to save me time in the long run to start delegating more frequently in my practice? What can I do and who can I get involved in order to streamline the delegation process so that it takes less time to do it, and so that the results that are coming back are more consistent?

Then finally, the last challenge is giving up control. So I've offered, you know, a couple of ideas that you can use to allow for the fact that the work that comes back may not be the way that you would have done it. That's okay. If there are performance issues that you really need to address, that you can think about how you want to deliver that feedback. I've offered some tools on how to do that in another episode.

So when you start doing this more frequently, delegating will just start to feel more natural. As you do it more often, you will be able to grow and build a team. You will be able to pull yourself up the learning curve not only as a leader, but as you start delegating work to others, you'll be able to take on other work yourself. What you'll find is that it's like the whole ship, the whole team, is moving up together. You're all learning together.

You'll start to feel more confident. You'll start to see yourself as a leader, and those who you're working with will also start to see you more as a leader as well. What you'll also find is that the work is getting done faster and potentially better than if you were to take this on all by yourself.

To do this, you'll need a few skills. Number one, you'll need to have patience with yourself and with others. Especially if it's something that is new for you then it may feel really awkward at the beginning. You may not be very good at delegating. It might take you a while to find your stride. I

Ep #44: Delegating Without Drama

know I've worked with lawyers, bless them, where some of the delegating has not been the clearest.

Sometimes that's how it is right? Lawyers end up getting really busy. They have a pile that comes in from a client, and there's all these explosive pieces. They're just trying to get people to help them. So they might explain things in a haphazard way. It may not be clear at that stage what the issues are. I mean, it can look any number of ways.

The point here is not to judge yourself, not to give up, not to say, well clearly I shouldn't be delegating. The exercise here is to have patience, and to start really thinking about how you're improving. Time after time, how are you improving as a delegator as a leader?

Another skill that you'll need is to manage expectations. So you'll need to manage your own expectations. It may happen that you delegate to somebody, and the work product that comes up or the way that they approach a situation is totally different from how you would do it.

I've had conversations with lawyers about this where they may feel frustrated because the way that they would approach a problem is quite different from the way that somebody else would approach a problem. So that may be a question of managing your expectations and also of managing their expectations.

It may also be that you will need to learn how to provide feedback in a way that helps others grow. That might be really uncomfortable for you. If you're not used to providing feedback then this may be a new role for you. Developing that skill will ultimately help you get better at that. The wonderful thing about being able to deliver that feedback is that it helps you form your relationship with that person. I think it also helps you develop that relationship that you have with those that you are reporting to.

Ep #44: Delegating Without Drama

Now you understand when somebody does something and it's not quite what you'd ask for, you know what that feels like. So when you're reporting to somebody else, whether it's a client, whether it's another lawyer, you now have another frame of reference in terms of how they might be feeling.

So ultimately, once you do all this, once you get over the initial hurdles of delegating and delegating more in your practice, you'll start to feel empowered. You'll start to build up your team. You'll be able to navigate workflows without the same level of exhaustion and overwhelm. You'll open up opportunities for others to learn and opportunities for yourself to learn. You'll ultimately start creating stronger relationships with those around you.

I don't know if this happens to you, but I find sometimes when I have been very busy or when others have been very busy, and especially in a post pandemic or a pandemic situation where individuals are working remotely. Your inclination might be to shore yourself up alone, lock the door, and just get everything done. It doesn't really foster relationship building.

But what if the opportunity to delegate was also an opportunity to really open up your world and to develop a team? People that you can connect with more frequently. People that can support you, that you can support, and have those stronger relationships. You'll also have a backup plan for when you get jammed.

So when things start to come in from all directions, you can now take a step back and look at what's on your plate, look at the members of the team that you have now created, and think about where the workflow would go best. That is something that you can only do when you have a team of people that you can rely on to work with.

You'll no longer be the bottleneck to your workflow, right. You'll not have all these things on your list and not be able to move things forward. You can now get things started while you're working on other things. Ultimately,

Ep #44: Delegating Without Drama

everything will just move a little bit more smoothly. You will be able to take on potentially more interesting work as you grow your practice in a more strategic way. Finally, you'll get better at giving and receiving feedback.

So, my friends, that is what I have for you today. I hope that you enjoyed this episode and that you have some fresh ideas about delegating. I hope it's something that is helpful and useful for you as you grow and build your practice.

For all of you who have been joining me, I just wanted to thank you again. I love having you join me every week. It's so much fun to be recording these episodes for you. I would love to hear from you. Please feel free to reach out on LinkedIn. Please feel free to send me an email. If you like the podcast, I would love it if you would rate and review the podcast. It helps others find the podcast, and whenever I see a new review I just get so excited. I love hearing from you.

So with that, I'm just going to say a big thank you. I am going to now get back to packing and getting ready for a big trip tomorrow. Next time I record one of these episodes, I will be back on Canadian soil. I can't wait to tell you all about it. Perhaps I'll share a few highlights and just get a chance to check back in. So have a magical week. Thank you again for joining me and take care everybody. 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.

Ep #44: Delegating Without Drama

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.