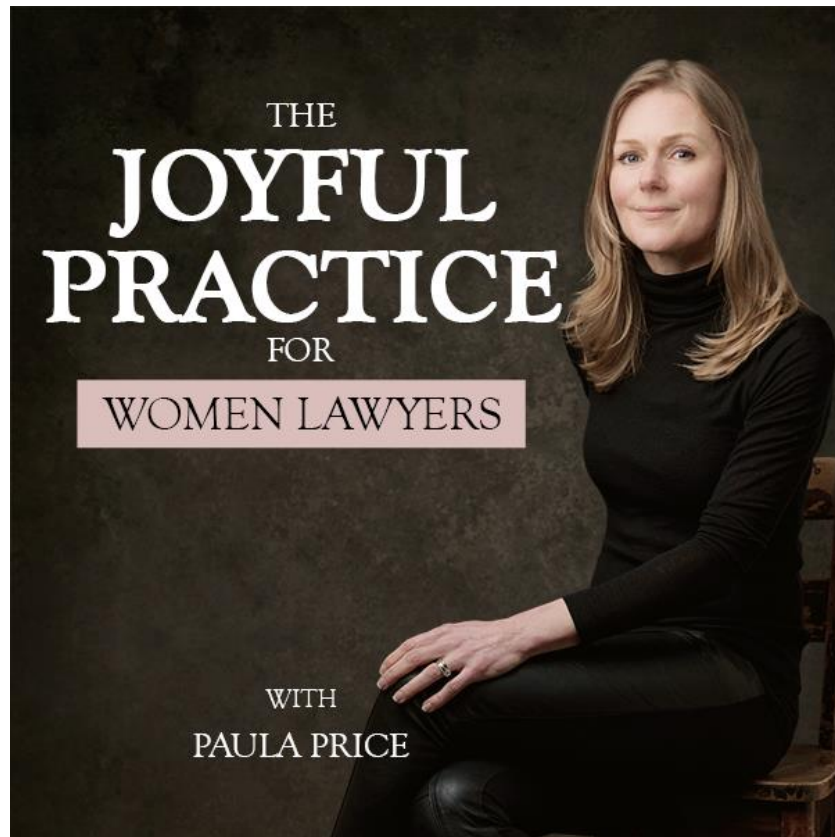


**Ep #45: Integrity, Excellence and Freedom:  
Beyond the Rut of "Good Enough"**



**Full Episode Transcript**

**With Your Host**

**Paula Price**

## **Ep #45: Integrity, Excellence and Freedom: Beyond the Rut of "Good Enough"**

You're listening to *The Joyful Practice for Women Lawyers* Podcast episode number 45.

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 you are having an amazing week. We just got back from Mexico. I'm still recovering from the jetlag and the enormous piles of laundry that we generated while we were away.

It was a wonderful vacation. It was sunny. It was all inclusive. It was fun. And I am so happy to be home. I don't know if you can relate. But there's nothing quite like going away on a trip, and there's nothing quite like coming home, stepping foot into your own house, sleeping in your own bed, and getting back to the usual routines.

So I'm very happy to be back in Vancouver. I'm happy to be wearing a jacket. It was raining earlier today, and I was even happy to have the rain. It's sunny now, and it's a blessing. We live in a beautiful part of the world, and I'm grateful for that.

Today's episode, I'm probably going to keep it brief because it's been a bit of a whirlwind getting back. What I really want to talk to you about today is I

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think it's a fairly simple straightforward point, but one that is often overlooked.

The inspiration for this podcast episode actually is my iPhone, which kind of died while we were on vacation. It was dying perhaps when we left in the sense that it had a giant crack on the screen. A crack that had gotten worse over time. I just hadn't gotten around to fixing it.

While we were away, I think because of the humidity, it started to really peter out. The screen wasn't working anymore, and I was quite concerned when that started to happen that I would need to replace my phone. Which isn't so much a problem except dealing with all the data and transferring stuff over just overwhelms me for some reason. So I was quite nervous about that.

Yesterday, I took my kids to the cell phone repair shop and was more than pleasantly surprised that a wonderful gentleman named Ethan was able to fix the screen very quickly. Within two hours, I had my phone back good as new. He was so great that I wanted to find more things for Ethan to fix. Because it was such a weight off my shoulders not only to have my phone intact, but also to have this crack, which I just kind of gotten used to gotten, gone.

Now when I look at my phone, it looks brand new. I got a new case for it. It's fully functioning. I no longer have that nitpicking thing on the back of my mind telling me Paula, go fix your phone. So as I was chatting with Ethan, I said, well you know what else? I thought, oh my laptop. I've got a MacBook Pro and some of the keys are coming loose. I said the keys. Can you help me with the keys?

He said, "Of course I can help you the keys." But then he went on to tell me that there was actually a way of having it done for free because apparently

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there's a massive recall on my model of MacBook Pro. Maybe the same applies to your MacBook Pro.

So not only did he help me fix my phone, which I did pay for, but he also offered me a way of having a free renovation or whatever you call it, refurbishment of my laptop. So it just got me to thinking how there are these things that happen in life, these things that break, for example my phone, which ultimately lead us on a path to something that is so much better than what we had were it not for the thing breaking.

So if my phone hadn't completely decided in Mexico that it was no longer going to function, I'd still have my crack screen, and I wouldn't have an appointment set up to get my laptop fixed. But it broke, and I'm better off for it.

The reason why I think this is an important lesson is because it comes up with clients in their practice. It doesn't look the same. Nobody's calling me to help them with tech problems. You don't want me helping you with your tech problems. But people call me, and they're in pain. They have a weight on their shoulders. They are struggling with something, and usually it's fighting for keeping something as is when what they know is that they want change. So they may be at different stages of that journey.

Examples that come to mind are, for example, lawyers who have been in an organization for a long time, and they're looking to grow. They just don't feel like that organization is going to be the right environment in which to make those changes. That they are seen in a certain way. They're never going to be able to push past that. Not that they're seen in a negative way. but where they want to go is different from where they are.

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If you've ever made that transition then you know it's often a painful one, right? Because you're mourning the loss of something that you've built. And at the same time, looking forward to creating something brand new.

I had a conversation recently with a lawyer who was wanting to go out on her own. The first conversation that we had was one where she just seemed really down, almost like in a very negative space like the weight of the world was on her shoulders. By the next time that we had spoken, she'd made a decision. The energy was completely different. It was one of looking forward and building into a vision that she had for herself.

Variations of these conversations happen. They happen. I'm so grateful and blessed to have these conversations because people come to me when they're at that point when they see that they want to move forward, but they also don't want to break something that they've worked so hard to build.

So today's podcast is really about exploring your practice, looking at what's going on around you, looking at your relationships with your clients, with your colleagues, within your firm, within your organization, within your professional area of expertise. Looking at what you've got, looking at your systems, and asking yourself where are there areas where things are kind of breaking? What am I tolerating here, and how can I do it differently?

The reason that I think this is important to talk about is that it may be like the crack on my iPhone. It may be something that you've gotten so used to that you don't see it anymore. Yet you're expending your energy dealing with it at an unconscious level. The reason that you may not be dealing with it is because you're busy, right.

You might be in a job that is no longer a good fit, but it keeps you busy, and you just don't have time to come up for air. It may be that you are

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uncomfortable, but you're telling yourself that that's fine. That you can handle it, and that you've committed to it. You're not going to concede that this is not for you. I know I've, myself, been in that situation. Maybe you can relate to that where you're holding on for the sake of holding on without necessarily asking yourself if that's exactly where you need to be.

It may also be that change is what you need, but it just hasn't occurred to you yet. Right? I mean maybe it's somewhere in the back of your mind, but that possibility of change just doesn't seem like it's available to you, but maybe it is. What I have seen with clients who come to me is that you may have tried for a long time to make it work. You have may have spent years trying to repair a relationship or to flourish in a particular organization.

You may have worked really hard to find satisfaction in a particular practice area, and you just have reached a point where you realize that this is no longer going to work for you. Maybe you have been working for a boss and trying to please that person, and you just realize there's no way that's going to happen. Or you realize that no matter how much you try, litigation just isn't your thing or private practice just isn't your thing.

Unfortunately, what you may try to do is just keep pressing ahead, and it becomes unsustainable. What you're doing is you're putting so much energy into trying to hang on to something that you've built, something that you've worked so hard for, but it's not working for you.

What I'm inviting you to think about today is what if you were to re-channel that energy? Instead of fighting to hold on to things aren't actually working for you, you chose to use that energy to grow something different, something for you.

So what I'm really asking you to do in today's podcast episode is to look around. Look at your practice. Maybe there are things that are obviously

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broken. Maybe there are systems that are not working. Maybe those are the places that you want to start. If it's time management, I've done podcast episodes about time management. If it's that there's not the right opportunity there, maybe it's about creating opportunity for yourself.

Another thing I'd invite you to look at is what are you tolerating? Now, I have to say approach this with caution. I have done this exercise myself in terms of what are some of the things that I am tolerating? Whether it's technology, again, I go back to my phone or my keyboard. These are things that they don't bother me enough to do something about it, but I'm still wasting energy trying to manage it. What is happening for you that you're wasting energy trying to deal with something that you could actually fix?

When you start looking around and asking yourself whether it's client relationships, whether it's work that you're doing, whether it's your office setup, and you start to really examine it, I just have to warn you that you can put yourself in a pretty grumpy mood. This has happened to me where when I start making a list of all the things that I'm tolerating, in a way it's a little bit triggering.

That makes sense, right? When you're out in the world looking at all the things you're grateful for, for example, it brings up that peace of mind where you start feeling really good about things. When you do the opposite and you start looking for flaws, sometimes it can be an eye opener that you didn't even realize that there were areas of your life that weren't really operating to your satisfaction.

But it's such an important exercise to do every once in a while. Because when you recognize that it's there, it gives you a place to start. Somewhere to grow from. Another question to ask yourself is where do you feel out of alignment? If you go back to a podcast episode I did about being in integrity



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with yourself, there was a discussion about wholeness, right. Being in an alignment with your values, the things you love.

A lot of it stems from a book that Martha Beck wrote recently about integrity. I would invite you to think about where you feel out of alignment. Because it feels terrible and you know what it feels like. If you've had conversations, for example, with individuals where you're not being 100% truthful. I don't mean that you're lying. I don't mean that you're being deceitful. I just mean that you're not really being truthful, most likely with yourself.

So where might that come up? If you're working on files, for example, in a practice area where you really have to force yourself to get into that thought process, into that mindset to find things you like about it. If that's a lot of work for you to do, that's a sign that you're out of alignment.

A conversation comes to mind with a lawyer that I spoke with recently, who had tried a number of different organizations, who was trying to find the right fit for herself in a private practice environment. It just wasn't clicking. So she went and found something else. Then it clicked.

So for you, if you find that you are just not able to feel energized and good and excited about the work that you're doing or the clients that you're working with or your colleagues at work, I would just invite you to start noticing what is happening there. What is feeling out of alignment for you? Similarly, where do you feel like things are a bit forced? Are you feeling like you're having to force yourself to do things?

Now if you have a practice or business or any type of job, I would say chances are there are going to be things that you will have to force yourself to do. Believe me, I have to force myself sometimes to sit down and do emails. I have to force myself to sit down and send out invoices. It's not



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always sitting down and life is a bed of roses, and you want to do everything 100% all the time. But what are the ratios?

I mean, how often are you sitting down and just feeling like you're forcing yourself to show up in the morning and you're forcing yourself to stay there? How was it feeling for you? Because it may be that you are forcing yourself to do something that just isn't right for you.

Another question, what no longer works for you? So, again, thinking about where you are in relation to where you were two years ago, five years ago. Maybe there were things that you became really good at. Not because you wanted to, but because that was what happened. You no longer want to do that work. Well, what does that mean for you? Does that mean that you can delegate that work? Does it mean that you can ask for new work? Does it mean that you need to change things up altogether? Can you do it within your organization? Do you need a new one?

But what I'm inviting you to do here is instead of running along with the status quo, instead of accepting that you've got a phone with a cracked screen that works well enough, it's good enough. What if there was something better? That's what I want you to ask yourself.

Instead of looking at what you have and saying well it could be so much worse. What if I try to get a new job and I fail at that? What if I try to get a new job and I take it, and it's worse than where I am now? What if I do start to build my own practice? What if I go out on my own and it's a total failure? You might ask yourself these questions. Like what if I do X, and the result is worse than I'm at right now?

Yes, it is entirely possible that you make a decision and you take action and it is worse. But what if you take that action and what is on the other side is so much better? What if your screen on your phone breaks in

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Mexico and you go to get it fixed? And not only do you get your screen fixed, but you also get your laptop repaired for free.

What if you actually go out and you start your own practice, and not only do you get to do the work that you want, but you are working with clients that you love and you have autonomy? Or you leave the organization where you feel like you've been pigeonholed and you get into an entirely new practice area. One that you love.

Or you stay in your practice area, but you enter at a much higher position. You have more control, more autonomy. You finally get to create the practice that you dreamed of creating, but you couldn't create where you were before. What if yes, leaving private practice would be challenging for you because you've invested so much to be there, but it turns out that finding a job in a nonprofit is actually where it's at for you.

So these are just some examples. Maybe these aren't the examples that speak to you. But I know for most of us, there are areas where we're living at a six out of 10, and we could bring it up to an eight or a nine. Maybe even a 10.

So what I'm proposing for you is simply to start noticing. Asking yourself these questions. What's broken? What are you tolerating? Where do you feel out of alignment? What feels forced? What no longer works for you? If you were to make a change, what could that possibly look like? What is the best thing that could happen?

Here's what I would suggest is when you reach that point where you realize that there's something going on that you need to fix, you need to deal with it. Either fix it or change it or do something about it, and you accept that potential downside. You see the potential upside, and you accept the potential downside.

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What that does is it puts you in a position of fearlessness. By that I don't mean so much that you have no fear. Because I think we can all say that, when we make big choices, when we make big moves, bold moves, new moves, fear comes along for the ride a lot of the time. But what I mean here by fearlessness is that you're ready to have a conversation, one that might not end the way that you want it to or that you think you want it to.

Maybe it's a conversation with a client, where you ask for what you want, whether it's higher fees or you want better boundaries, and you're ready for the risk the client will find somebody else. That they will not want to go with you. But you're okay with the result because that means you get to move on to clients who will pay you the rate that you're asking for or who will respect the boundaries that you're looking to set for yourself.

Another reason why this is something that I recommend doing is that you can shift your focus from the things that you're trying to fix, right. It's like keeping your eye trying to patch up the things that are breaking versus focusing your energy on building and creating the future that you want for yourself.

I've talked about appreciative inquiry a number of times on this podcast. It's that idea of building on strengths instead of trying to resolve what's broken. These are two completely different paradigms, right?

You can imagine a leaky roof where you're sitting there trying to patch a hole in the roof versus redesigning, right. That would be sort of problem solving versus appreciative inquiry. Redesigning and creating a new, maybe it's a completely new roof structure, right. It's not just patching a hole. You're rethinking how you've structured the roof so that the hole is no longer a problem. What you create is different from what currently exists, and something that you can only really build by taking those steps forward.

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When you do this, when you decide that you're not going to limit yourself to trying to maintain the status quo, trying to fix what you think might be broken, there is an amazing feeling that goes along with that. So when my phone was fixed, for example, and when I realized that I could finally deal with the sticky keys on my MacBook, it's this weightlessness. It's like a weightlifting off your shoulders.

Maybe you've had conversations like this at your job where maybe you've had a client who was very difficult and you had a conversation with them where you were just honest. There's that weight that literally lifts from your shoulders.

I had a conversation like that recently where it's a relationship where I'm the client, and I've decided to go with a different service provider. I've given a lot of opportunities to the person to help me in the way that I need help, to support me. When I finally had that conversation to let them know this was no longer it's going to be a working relationship, I just felt free.

I would invite you to think about what conversations will be freeing for you. I can tell you having had clients who I helped through those types of conversations, the difference between how they present before a difficult conversation and usually that comes with some anxiety. It comes sometimes with grief, sadness, that they are unhappy, that they feel somewhat helpless. Sometimes they feel angry because they feel like they're trapped in a situation they don't like.

When I speak with those very same clients after they've had conversations, after they've decided on changes they want to make, they are like completely different people. There has been a shift in their energy that is palpable in just speaking with them.

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So when you decide to let go of the things that are broken and create something that is modeled after your truest desires for what you want, there is a freedom and a weightlessness that comes with that that is more than just the cognitive realization that you are making a change. It's a physical feeling that what you're doing is right. That's when you feel that sense of integrity and that sense of power that you are in the driver's seat. You are calling the shots. However tough that road ahead might be for you, you are ready for it.

So to make these changes, there are some skills that you'll need. Number one, this is really an exercise in your attention. It is looking around at your practice, at your professional relationships, and asking yourself the questions of where you want to go. What do you want to bring with you into your future? What do you want to leave behind? So it's attention. It's awareness. It's simply asking yourself questions and observing.

Another skill that you'll need is courage, right? We talk about courage a lot on this podcast because when you are growing, when you're transitioning to something new, when you're taking a risk where you might lose something that you've worked hard to build or that you value, but you know that you need to do that to get to that next level, it takes courage. It takes that feeling of having the fear and moving forward anyways.

Finally, it requires action. This can be so hard, especially if you're a cerebral person, and you lose like to think things through. You like to think through every possible scenario before you act. Sometimes the only way to really figure out what the path forward for you is, is to take action before you know exactly what the consequences will be of that action.

Maybe it's a conversation with somebody where you're trying to negotiate a better position, a different position, and the potential fallout from that conversation may seem huge. The potential upside may also seem huge.

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But having that conversation in your mind will get you nowhere. But having that conversation in real life may get you somewhere, or it may not get you where you think you want to go. But regardless of how that conversation does unfold, what you have on the other side of it is information. Information about what you want to do next.

So when you do this, when you are honest with yourself, when you reflect on where you are, what isn't working for you, and you start to develop plans and take action, the results that you create are in particular strength. You build the strength of knowing that you have more control over the outcomes in your life than you may have truly given yourself credit for. When you take risks and you take on challenges and you move through difficult conversations or transitions, what you develop is strength.

It's like weightlifting, right. You lift weights, and it tears the fibers of your muscles. What happens is the muscles themselves as they reform get stronger. That is you. The more you press forward toward what you really want and the more you exercise that muscle of taking risk and dealing with disappointment and leveraging into success, the stronger you feel and the stronger you become. You end up creating more of what you want in your practice. More relationships that you want, more work that you want, more of the nature of what it is you're trying to create. You create more of that.

There's less clutter. As you move away from the things that no longer work for you, you let them go, and they no longer distract you. When the cell phone is fixed and your eyes aren't turning to the crack and wondering, when should I get this fixed? What if the phone breaks even more? What if the screen completely stops working? When you get rid of that clutter and you no longer have that mental dialogue going on about it, it frees up your energy to focus on creating what you want.

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You have more clarity. Again, you're able to focus in on what it is you're looking for. Ultimately, you feel so much more powerful and in control of your practice.

So, my friends, that is what I wanted to share with you today. The ultimate message here being that sometimes things that are broken are a gift. That they actually lead you to better outcomes than if that thing never broke in the first place. Sometimes that rupture will come from an external force. Sometimes you will be the one to initiate the rupture.

If that's something that is happening for you, I just invite you to think about how you want to navigate your way through it. What questions you can ask yourself to generate the outcomes that you want, and to imagine and appreciate just how much stronger you are on the other side of all of it.

So thank you for joining me this week. It's, again, such a pleasure to connect, and I'm so grateful for all of you tuning in every week. If you enjoy this podcast, please rate, and review it wherever it is that you listen to your podcasts. It helps other people find the podcast, which ultimately will help us create a community.

If what you would like is coaching, I would encourage you to reach out to me on LinkedIn, by email, through my website, and let me know. We can have a chat and see if I can help you. With all of that, I just wanted to say thank you again and wish you a fabulous, challenging, and exciting week. Bye for now.

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