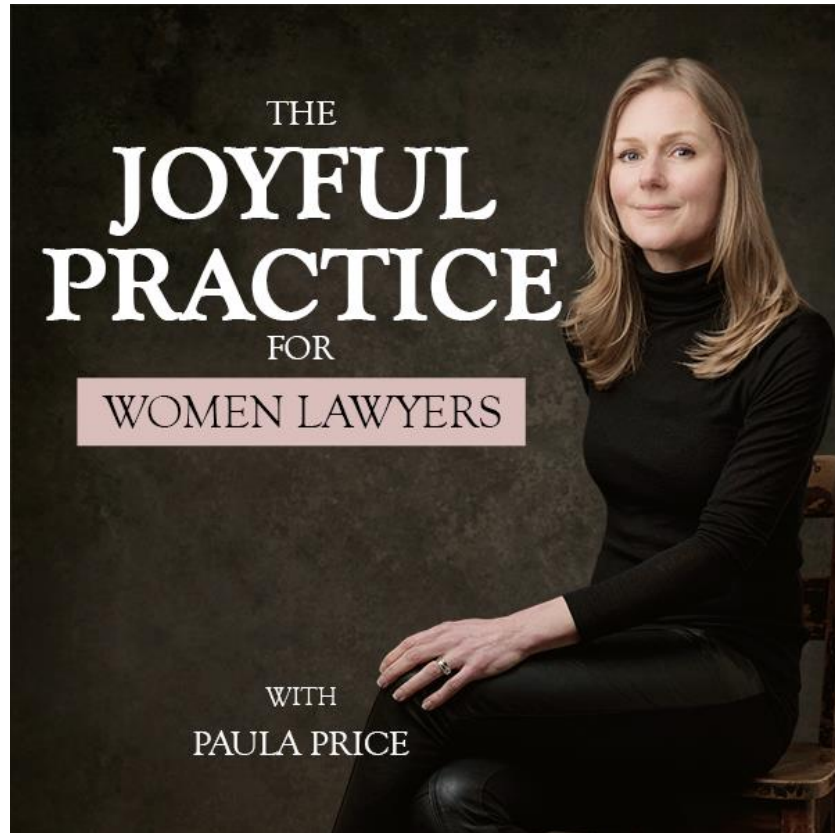


Ep #60: Time Guilt: How to Rest in a Culture of "Busy"



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Paula Price

Ep #60: Time Guilt: How to Rest in a Culture of "Busy"

You're listening to *The Joyful Practice for Women Lawyers* Podcast episode number 60.

Welcome to *The Joyful Practice for Women Lawyers* Podcast. I'm your host Paula Price, lawyer turned certified executive coach. This podcast was created to empower women lawyers just like you to create a life and practice you love. Join me every week for a break from the hustle so we can focus on you, what you truly want, and how you can create it.

If you're over the overwhelm, done with putting out fires, and ready to create a life and practice that brings you more joy, you're in the right place. Ready for today's episode? Let's dive in.

Hello my friends and welcome back to the podcast. It's Paula here, and I'm excited and delighted to be connecting with you this week. Thank you again for joining me. It is a beautiful July week here in Vancouver. The boys in my family have gone away for the week. My son is in camp and my husband's away at work. My daughter and I have been having a staycation here in Vancouver. For any of you who have had a staycation recently, you may appreciate just how restful it can be.

Now, I'm still working, and my daughter is still with me. We are just kind of doing our thing. She's pretty self-sufficient during the day. Right now she's just watching some TV and keeping yourself entertained. Over the course of the week, we've done some adventures. Last night we stayed at a hotel downtown and went out to dinner and just experienced what it's like to be a tourist in our own city.

We went to Playland the other day, which is an amusement park. It's super fun. We went on a bunch of rides. We stayed until really late. We got home well past midnight, which is quite a bit for a seven year old girl and me as well. We've just really been enjoying our time together. It's her first week off of school. So I'm glad we've been able to do that.

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It's been a real break for me to have a half empty house. So able to declutter a lot of what's been going on inside the house, able to declutter my home office workspace, which has felt amazing. So it really is a shift. The rest has been wonderful. It's becoming a little bit of a recalibration time for me, just being able to rechannel my energy, refocus on what my goals are professionally over the next few months, in particular, for the rest of the calendar year.

So just wanted to kind of fill you in on what's been going on here. All is well. I hope wherever you are, and whenever you listen to this podcast episode, that you are doing well that you are having a good week, and that you are also incorporating some rest into your everyday.

Today's topic is all about that component of incorporating rest into your practice, of dealing with that feeling of constantly needing to be productive. This is a topic that has come up quite a bit in coaching sessions that I have had with lawyers. It comes up in different formats. I'm going to be talking about that during today's podcast episode. I'm also going to be offering you some strategies, some takeaways that you can apply to hopefully come to terms with this problem, or at least manage it better than you may be managing it currently. If you struggle with this, you are not alone. Trust me.

So jumping into today's topic. What we are talking about today is really that challenge that you might feel when it comes to taking time off or doing something that does not feel productive. The way I've had clients describe it to me, and the way that I have felt about it in the past is feeling really guilty when you're not being productive. What this might look like is you are judging yourself.

So I have clients who judge themselves because they feel like they're working too hard. That they're recording too many billable hours. That they're involved in too many projects. So they kind of beat themselves up over the fact that they are doing too much. Sometimes it shows up as not

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doing enough. They feel like they aren't hitting targets that they have set for themselves that their firm has set for them. They feel like they're underperforming, and they don't want to take on other things.

Maybe it's the nature of the work. Maybe you're not taking on certain non-billable activities that would further your career because it would happen at the expense of something else like a billable project or family time or some other thing. So you find yourself in this state of conflict where you feel like you should be producing more, and it's really hard to take time off.

What this might look like for you is that you feel like you should always be working. If you find yourself with a few idle minutes then you look to do something productive. If you do take time off, you might tell yourself that you're being lazy. This is something that comes up a lot in terms of have self-talk.

One analogy that came to mind is it's almost like a sunny day syndrome. I don't know about you, but when I was growing up if there was a sunny day outside, maybe it's because I live in Vancouver and so many days are rainy, and you don't really feel that motivated to go outside in the rain. But when it's sunny, it's like okay. You cannot sit home and watch TV on a sunny day. You absolutely must get outside.

I still at 45 years old feel that way. If it's a sunny day, I feel compelled to be out there. Whether I'm at home doing productive work, or whatever's going on, it's like I need to be outside. It's almost like I'm driven by this internal sense of obligation. It's guilt. It's shame even if I don't take advantage of that day. It's like that with productive time. We feel very, very compelled to always be doing something productive or constructive.

So if this is something that you can relate to, you're absolutely in the right place. I would also encourage you to think about what that looks like for you. Because we all have our telltale ways of perceiving productivity,

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perceiving what we should be doing. So I'd invite you to think about what that looks like, and have that in mind as we go through today's episode.

So why does this happen? Why is it that so many of us are struggling with this idea of time guilt, of not really feeling comfortable taking time off, and feeling like we always need to be productive.

Sometimes it comes from your family of origin. You may have grown up in a household that really valued hard work. If you were sitting and watching TV, maybe your parents said to you, "Hey, you really need to be doing something more productive. There's the lawn that needs mowing. There's homework to be done. There's projects you could be involved in." You may have this ongoing message. Maybe your parents modeled that kind of work ethic. So you have adopted that you've internalized that for yourself.

In addition to your family of origin, it may also be the culture that you were educated in. So if you, for example, were in a university environment, high school environment, or in your law school, for example, where you felt there was this culture of working really hard. So that is something that you have adopted and taken on for yourself.

That may have been even escalated when you joined the professional organization that you're in right now, whether you work in a law firm, whether you work in house, whether you are working for government, whatever the organization, you're in whether you have your own practice, right.

I mean sometimes if you have your own practice, you may feel that even heightened a sense of needing to be productive because you are your own boss. I mean I've had the experience of working in a firm. I have the experience now of working for myself.

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I can tell you that the level of motivation and desire to be as productive as possible did not go down when I started my own practice. In fact, if anything, it is more so because I don't see myself as ever taking a vacation away from my work. Because my work, it's mine. It's so integrated into my life, especially now with working from home.

So that may be something that you can relate to. If you're building your practice or if you have a very independent practice within your firm, you may feel like you are so connected to it that it's just part of who you are and what you do. You are busy. It's part of your culture.

It may also be your disposition. I mean chances are if you were attracted to law and you're attracted to law school, you are there because you're ambitious, you're hardworking. You probably really like working hard. You probably like the feeling of working hard, and what it feels like when you accomplish something, when you achieve a really challenging goal. So it's part of who you are. It's part of your makeup.

It may be that you feel really good and really important when you're busy. I know I have that way. I have spoken with many lawyers who feel that way. Where in the heat of the moment when you're in trial or when you're on a closing and everything's happening really quickly, and you're there and you're helping out, that can be a really exciting part of your job.

It may also be that you under value rest. So that's not at all uncommon. I think as a society we tend to have that work hard play hard expression, but the play hard, I question how much of that we actually do. I think we really are emphasizing achievements, accomplishments. That's what gets recognized. That's what people talk about when at the end of someone's career oh here's all the great things that they accomplished. They don't typically talk about all the time off that they took. It's just not something that we necessarily have on our radar to value.

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So what have you been doing, for example, to try to cope with this, right? It's not like this is something that is coming as a surprise usually. I think we can all sort of self-assess that we know okay I've been really busy. I really struggle to take time off. How am I going to deal with this?

It may be that you've been taking cues from others. So you may have family members, for example, who are constantly telling you, you work too hard. You need to take time off. You need to get more rest. It kind of feels like they don't really understand you. They don't really understand what your world looks like. They don't really understand how difficult it can be to take some time off.

It may be that you have been told you should meditate. I love this because I very rarely meditate. I have a couple of meditations that I do. They're on my phone, and I really enjoy them, but they're guided meditations. The idea of sitting and meditating, for me, just does not resonate. It's not something that I find relaxing. So if people are telling me that to relax or to rest I need to meditate, that's never going to work. You might feel the same way.

Maybe that people tell you to take a vacation. So you take a vacation. The next thing you feel even more stressed out because you're constantly checking your emails, but now you can't really do anything about it because you're not in your workspace. So you don't have access to the things you need.

It may be that people tell you to relax. Of course, that's like impossible. If somebody ever tells you to relax, that is going to lead to the opposite result. You might try to book a spa treatment, for example. You set yourself up for a massage. You take time away from the office. There you are sitting there, and all you can think about is the to-do list that's running through your head, and the things that haven't been done at the office, and the phone calls you need to make to your family members that you haven't spoken to,

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or the things you need to organize for your children. I mean there's all this it's like almost like spinning, right?

So the other thing is that you might try to do is to say no. So you try to set boundaries to try to say no, and then you just end up feeling guilty and thinking that you should have taken on the project. Maybe you're following up and checking in. Did they find someone else to do this thing that they asked you to do?

So by the end of it, instead of feeling rested, you feel uncomfortable. You still find yourself having spinning thoughts. You can't truly rest, right? Like I said, you say no but then you feel super guilty because you've said no instead of saying yes. Like I said, maybe you take the time off from work, but you can't get it out of your mind.

So if this is something that you can relate to, I would invite you to think about what results and outcomes that creates for you. It may be that you overwork to avoid looking or feeling unproductive. Maybe you are a leader within your organization, and you want to set a good example for junior lawyers, for your support staff. You want them to see you being productive, so that they in turn will be productive.

Maybe you're a more junior lawyer, and you want to show the more senior members of your organization that you are committed, that you're hardworking, that you'll get the job done. In either case, you might be carrying around this fear about what other people are thinking about you, and what they will do if you are not working all of the time or perceived to be working all the time.

What else might be created for you. You may find that you are judging yourself, that you are speaking quite harshly to yourself. You may feel that if you do take time off that you then need to almost punish yourself and work even harder to compensate for having taken time to do something like

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go to bed early or go to dinner with your friends or go to the gym or go for a run, whatever that time off might have looked like for you.

It may also be that you judge others because they're not working as hard as you do. I've seen this come up a lot with clients. Maybe you can relate to this where you look at others and you say well, I was at the office until such and such time. I'm recording these hours. I'm getting my portion of the work done. Why aren't my counterparts? Why aren't my colleagues? Why is my staff, why are they not performing at the same level? Then you may find that you become resentful because here you are burning the candle at both ends and others aren't. So you may really resent that they're not doing that.

It may also be that you are so busy trying not to waste time that you actually end up wasting time. So, again, maybe you're burning yourself out by perseverating over what you should be doing. You may be exhausting yourself by working really, really hard and not giving yourself a chance to rest. You may find that you're so tired that when you are working, you're making mistakes that you ought not to be making. These are simple mistakes. They are clerical mistakes or things that you wouldn't make where you better rested. You may find that it takes more time to fix that error than if you had done it better rested in the first place.

It may also be that you find that you're wasting time by complaining. Maybe you're complaining about being tired, or you're complaining that other members of your team aren't pulling their weight. So instead of using your time to either be productive or to take some time off you find that you're actually kind of wrapped up almost either in a conversation with somebody about it or you're thinking about it on your own time. That, in itself, is time that is not truly being spent doing something that likely is bringing you a great deal of value.

So if this sounds like something that you have struggled with in the past, then you're in luck because today I have some ideas. I've actually got

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seven ideas, and that actually sounds quite a bit when I was preparing. I thought oh, that's seven pointers. It's a lot to keep track of. There are show notes that come along with this podcast episode. There's a transcript if you want to go back to that.

If you are listening to this in an environment where you can jot down some notes, I would encourage you to do that. Mostly because what I would love for you today is to take away some actionable items that you can act on, that you can implement in your day to day that are going to help you when this problem comes up. Because if you are like me, if you're like clients that I have worked with in the past, this is a real challenge.

It's something that once you get your head wrapped around it, you can work on improving the situation so that you can actually start to get more rest, so that you can not feel so guilty about your time, so that you could not feel like you must be productive at all minutes of the day in order to feel justified and like you are a valuable member of your team.

So seven ideas. I'm going to start with number one. Number one is to gain awareness of your relationship with rest. So if you are one of those people who really struggles with wanting to be productive all of the time then I would invite you to think about what your current beliefs are about resting.

So I mentioned initially that as a society, and perhaps this is something that you feel yourself, is that we can sometimes really undervalue the importance of rest. Or looking at it from a different angle, you may perceive rest as being lazy or unproductive or something that must be earned, right? You can only rest after you've done X, Y, and Z. Or maybe rest is something that comes after you have completed everything on your to-do list.

If you're anything like most of us, then your to do list probably is a never. It will never be a done list. There will always be new items that crop up day to

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day. So if you're waiting till you're finished to give yourself that chance to not be productive with every minute, you will never reach that point. So if this is something that you struggle with, number one, I would invite you to just become aware of that voice inside your head that pipes up when you go to do something that is not productive.

So number two is to decide on purpose what you want to think about rest, what do you want to make rest or non-productive time mean for you. Some ideas here. You might look at rest or non-productive time as a chance for you to recharge. You may, if you need to, think about rest as something that can actually enhance your productivity.

So I think this is a nice trick for those of us who really want to feel like we're being productive. If we can tell ourselves that rest will actually make us more productive when we go to do our work, that might be the selling feature that we need to get ourselves over that initial hurdle of even taking rest in the first place.

It may be that you need to tell yourself that you are allowed to enjoy your life. You may actually need to give yourself permission for that. If you need permission, I am giving you permission. You are allowed to enjoy your life regardless of your professional commitments, regardless of what your clients expect of you, regardless of everything else, you are allowed to enjoy your life.

Another thought you may choose to believe about rest is that your rest, your self-care, your time away from being productive is absolutely essential for you to show up as your best professional self to be able to serve others in the way that you want to serve them, in the way that you are capable of serving them. So step number two is to be intentional about how you choose to think about rest.

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So the third step is to go to that notion of balance, that notional idea of balance that everyone's always talking about, work-life balance, and decide what that looks like for you. I mentioned earlier you may have a family that is always kind of making comments or asking you are you okay? You seem to be working a lot. Is this working for you? You may feel like the level of balance in your life is absolutely perfect for you.

So think about it. How much do you want to work? If I asked myself that question, I like to work at a level where I have a little bit more on my plate than is comfortable. I find when I'm a little bit more than busy, I feel energized. I'm excited to work on my projects. I am efficient. I am able to get through most of what I want to do in a day and with some spill over the next day.

If it goes to the point where I'm really struggling to keep up then I feel a bit overwhelmed. I feel the uncomfortable. I can still manage my way through it, but it's not how we want to be all of the time. I'm totally okay with doing that in waves.

So that goes to another question that I have for you, which is what is realistic in your practice? Do you have a practice that is very steady? Do you have a practice that runs in cycles? Do you enjoy having cycles? My point here is that, again, going back to my example of how I like to be engaged, I like to be generally a little bit more than busy with cycles that come and go, right.

I know that if I've got presentations coming up, if I've got a very full schedule that I may be running into an area where I'm sustaining a work level that I don't want to sustain for more than a few weeks, and that may be the same for you. If you're a trial lawyer, you may find that that's when you pop into trials. If you are a solicitor that works on corporate closings, you may find that you have transactions where there's a peak, and you

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know that that's going to be your busy time. If you are a transactional lawyer, again, same idea.

If your practice kind of cycles with the time of the year, maybe there's a tax season, for example, where you're particularly busy, maybe there's year end for companies that you represent where there's going to be a lot of activity at a certain time of year. So for each of you, you're going to have a different way of looking at your year, and there may be periods that are very busy. There may be periods that are very slow. So for each of us, the question then becomes what kind of a practice do you want?

If you find that the practice that you're in is no longer compatible with your needs, right? This happens often when lawyers have families, and all of a sudden they find the hours they were able to keep in private practice are no longer sustainable. Sometimes they are, right? Maybe the lawyer makes accommodations so that they have the support that they need for their growing families so they can do extreme cycles. By extreme what I really mean is, those peaks and valleys, right, where you're required to be at the office longer.

If you have a childcare situation where you need to absolutely pick your kid up from daycare at 5:00 or they call Child Services, that's a different story than if you have a spouse or a partner who's at home who can help sort of trade off on the days that you need to be late, etc. So I guess what I'm trying to say here is you need to evaluate the level of productivity, the level of busyness, the balance that is ideal for you, and what you currently have, and does that work?

Sometimes it will not, which may require you to then either shift things in your personal life or to find a different job. This happens. So all I'm inviting you to do here is to be realistic about that. What does balance look like for you? What feels right to you? Is the current setup that you have amenable to that?

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I really want to emphasize here that for everybody, it will be different. There is absolutely no judgment if you choose to be on the higher level of the productivity spectrum, or if you choose to be on the lower end of the productivity spectrum. I think this is where we can get into a lot of trouble thinking oh, I'm building too many hours. I'm not building enough hours. My career isn't moving fast enough. Oh, my career is moving too fast. There's a whole range of things that you can be feeling and experiencing.

What I'm inviting you to do here is to simply ask yourself what feels right to you and to allow that to be your guide. It doesn't have to be what other people say is recommended. It's you who gets to decide.

Once you've done that, so that's step three. Step one was gain awareness of your relationship with rest. Number two is to decide on purpose what you want to think about rest. Number three is to be intentional and choosing what work-life balance looks like to you. Number four is to choose what rest looks like to you.

So much like everyone is going to have a different threshold for the levels of productivity that they ultimately desire to have. By productivity, I guess I should—it's a bit late in the game, but I should clarify when I think of productivity, it really is that I'm talking about professional productivity. So your work environment.

There's also productivity in other areas of your life in terms of if you have children, getting things done at home, keeping a house that's relatively organized, making sure meals are on the table, etcetera. There may be other elements of productivity for you. Maybe it's a business that you run on the side. So there's lots of ways of being productive. Right now I'm just really focusing on that professional work.

So going back to step four is to choose what rest looks like to you. Again, this is going to look different for everybody. So, as I mentioned, the idea of

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sitting and meditating for me does not feel like rest. I don't enjoy it. It does not bring me all that much pleasure. Like I said, I'll listen to meditations when I'm falling asleep sometimes.

But, to me, rest is being outside. It's going for a walk. It's spending some leisure time with my kids. It's having dinner with friends. It's having a phone call with my mom. Like there are things that are restful to me that don't necessarily involve me being inert and sitting and recharging like a cell phone that's plugged into the extension cord.

So for you I would invite you to think of what rest looks like for you. Is rest going to the spa? Is rest having a meal with friends? Is rest having whitespace where you can just have a nap? It's going to be different for everybody.

So your job is to define that. If you do have a pen and paper handy, and if you're listening to the recording, which I guess you all are, pause the podcast and jot down two or three, five, I don't know, ideas for yourself. What does rest actually look like? Because when you know what that looks like then you can start building it into your day a lot more easily than if you don't even know what that looks like for you.

The reason that this is important is because we are going to have these ideas that we should be productive at all times. So you are going to have times when you are absolutely productive. That's important. That's important for your professional work. It's important to feel good.

One way to start being able to pull yourself away from the idea that you always need to be productive is to start blocking in rest and non-productive time. That actually is number six on my list, but we're gonna get to that. But here I just want you to be aware of some of the activities that constitute rest or non-productive time for you that you enjoy. So that's number four.

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Number five is to manage your to do list. Now, if you are a longtime listener of this podcast then you know I've got lots of episodes on time management. There are episodes about scheduling your time. There are episodes about how to create efficient systems at work. There's an episode about time scarcity and rethinking your relationship with time in a more expansive way. There's a recent episode about how to do less and be more. What I'll do is I'll just put links to all of these episodes in the show notes. There's also an episode that's about planning, more long term planning.

So what I recommend doing here is you will feel so much more comfortable taking time off from being productive when you have a framework in place, when you know that you can rely on yourself to get the things done that you need to get done. I highly recommend having a very structured and methodical way of managing your practice, of managing your time so that you know what projects you're working on, you know roughly when you're going to work on them.

I know you've got a busy practice where things come in out of the blue, and your whole day gets completely disrupted. That is part of having a practice. You still need to have a time management system because you want to have structure in your day so that when you do get those interruptions, you're able to recalibrate.

So for all of you listening, if you haven't already listened to some of those time management episodes or if you want to really elevate and recalibrate the way that you manage time, I would highly recommend tuning into those episodes and thinking about how you can apply those ideas in your practice.

So managing your to-do list. What I would recommend here specifically for being able to enjoy your nonproductive time is to be very cognizant when you wrap up your day of what items you need to do the following day. So

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before you leave your workspace, I recommend having a list of the things that you want to do the following day.

I had an interview with Estelle Winsett that aired last week. She had a brilliant tip. I think I mentioned this was in an earlier episode of lining up your items for the next day. Then creating a paper stack, if you use paper, to stack your papers in a way that you are tackling your assignments or that you're set up to tackle your assignments in exactly the same order that you have on your to do list. I thought that was such a brilliant time saving hack.

So what you want to do here is just set yourself up so that mentally when you leave your workspace, when you leave the office, you already know that you're set up for the next day. You've done yourself a favor. Your future self, tomorrow morning you who shows up at the office, knows exactly what she needs to do. So highly recommend that.

I also recommend having a notepad handy. Now this is a practice that I recommend, especially for those of you who wake up in the middle of the night with ideas or things on your mind that you need to get done. This is a practice that I have on my own. I actually have a notepad next to the bed. I have a pen.

I find sometimes I will wake up at two in the morning, and all of a sudden these ideas are flowing through my mind. So I write them all down. Once I've written them all down in the middle of the night, I can then put it to rest, and I can go to sleep. Then the next day I get to look at that list and decide which of these ideas are not worth following up on and which of those ideas absolutely require follow up.

So whether your ideas come to you in the middle of the night, or maybe it's after dinner when you're washing dishes, maybe it's when you're going for a walk in the woods, have a notepad or your phone handy so that you can write yourself little notes. Find a way and a system to compile those notes

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so that you actually do go back to them. That will allow you to rest better because you know that if an idea does come to you, if something comes up, you can store it somewhere and put it away.

You do not want to leave that in your mind unwritten down because it's just going to add to any perseveration that you have, any spinning thoughts, any anxiety that you have over not getting that thing done right away. Once you write it down, and you store it somewhere, you now know you can go back to it.

So that was number five is to manage your to-do list. So discipline yourself with your timekeeping, with your scheduling, with the way you run your practice. A couple more ideas here is to ask for help. As lawyers, I know you are super independent. You're smart. You get things done. You do things better than, this is the truth, right? You get things done the way that you want, often better than those who you would assign things to.

So my advice is to ask for help, even if it means things don't get done exactly the way that you would like to have them done. Please do yourself a favor and just clear things off your to-do list.

Then finally, take some shortcuts. Again, your perfectionism tendencies might invite you to do everything perfectly. You want to have the perfect meal for your family. You want to write the perfect email. You want to have the perfect memo. You want to have the perfect conversation with your client.

Sometimes you're just going to have to settle for something that is not exactly at that standard. That's okay. You get to pick and choose where you focus that energy. But I would invite you to just ask yourself where in your practice can you be cutting some corners so that you can free up your time for that non-productive/rest time.

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Number six is to schedule your time off and stick to it. So what does that look like? I mentioned at tip number four to identify some activities that look like rest to you. So schedule that into your calendar and then stick to it. I

In addition to rest, as I'm thinking about it, I would also invite you to schedule time into your calendar to plan. Again, this is your long term planning. This is your short term planning. You absolutely must if you want to have a stable, predictable, and truly enjoyable practice, I really believe in the power of being intentional.

I truly believe in the power of just sitting down, giving yourself maybe it's an hour every week where you plan out your week. Giving yourself some time. If it's monthly, fine. If it's quarterly, okay, but give yourself chunks of time where you actually think about the big picture and where you're going.

Because that will allow you to then decipher what's important, what's less important, what you're going to clear off your calendar, what you're going to invite more of in your calendar. Then when you're choosing between your productive and non-productive time, you're really being intentional about what you're scheduling in that productive time.

So number seven, and then I'm just going to read back the list after I finish this last tip, is to practice the feeling of discomfort. Yes, this is going to be extremely uncomfortable for you. Imagine you have a to-do list. Imagine you're working on a closing or a file that has an endless to-do list. You've made dinner plans with your friend at 6:00. So at 5:45, it's time to leave the office, and you know that you have more work that you could be doing. There's that temptation to cancel on your friend and just to stay at the office until 11 so that you can continue to chip away at your to do list.

Now, if you truly are working up against an urgent deadline and terrible things will happen if you don't complete that work that evening, then absolutely cancel the dinner if you need to. But if that's not the case and

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you don't need to be there, then I would encourage you to take that dinner. Leave the office, write yourself that to do list for the following morning, get yourself set up for that next day, and then have dinner.

What you will find is that it's very uncomfortable, especially at the beginning. You'll feel like you should still be at the office. But if you can allow yourself to get over that discomfort, you will start to then relax. You'll start to have more perspective. You'll truly enjoy that you are able to reconnect with your friend, and you'll enjoy your time away. Then when you go back, you'll be even more productive.

Same goes true for little breaks you might schedule throughout the day. I'm a huge fan of taking a walk around the block middle of your workday just to clear your mind. What I find is that if I give myself a half an hour to 45 minutes, there's actually a point when I'm out, and I do this often in my neighborhood. Again, I work from home.

If I'm out for a period of I'd say about 25 minutes where I just truly let go whatever it is that's on my mind. So if you can give yourself that pause in the middle of the day, you come back to your desk feeling recharged. You feel more vital. You feel more energetic. You don't feel so resentful that you've been at your desk for the entire day. So schedule it and stick to it. It will feel very uncomfortable at first, but when you make it a practice then what you will likely find is that you are more productive. You get used to having non-productive time.

So treat it like a muscle. Apply that growth mindset. Yes, you're going to feel uncomfortable, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't be doing it. It means that you are adopting a new habit. Your brain is not used to this. Your neural pathways are kind of in shock. They're like wait a second, the habit is usually to just keep working until everything's done. Why are we all of a sudden stopping before the list has been completed? You're going to

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have to push yourself through that in order to incorporate nonproductive time as a more regular feature in your workday and in your life.

So, to recap on the seven tips, number one, gain awareness of your relationship with rest. Number two, decide on purpose what you want to think about rest. Number three is to be intentional about what balance looks like for you. Not for your friends, not for your family, not what society tells you, but what balance is right for you.

Number four choose what rest looks like for you, what activities do you enjoy, what actually does help you unwind? Number five is to proactively manage your time and your to-do list. Number six is to schedule your time off and stick to it. Then number seven is to practice feeling the discomfort.

So when you do these things, it will result in shifts over time, gradual shifts over time, and you will feel more comfortable with nonproductive time because you are addressing the problem at a deeper level than simply booking a spa appointment or a vacation or a one off relaxation time. You will understand yourself better. You'll understand what thoughts are coming up. You'll be able to be more critical of the way that you're thinking.

I mean often we think something, and we just assume it to be true. But if we were to really examine it more closely, it's not true. So this is a great opportunity for you to get to know your beliefs better. You will learn how to cultivate peace of mind whenever you need it. So that can be super helpful.

You might be in the middle of a very stressful situation at work. You will have cultivated the ability to remove yourself from that situation long enough to calm yourself, to get back into a more creative versus reactive state, and then you can re approach that stressful situation in a much more intentional manner.

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I actually have another podcast episode I'll refer you to which is How to Thrive Under Pressure. That really talks about that situation where you find yourself in the heat of the moment, things are crazy, and you just need to step back and find a way to calm yourself and to give yourself almost like instructions to move forward.

So what skills will you need? Number one, you will need to reevaluate and potentially redefine your relationship with time and with value. Because if you are completely immersed in a culture where the billable hour is at the top of the hierarchy, and you evaluate your own worth, your contributions to your organization based on the hours that you're billing.

Then you're going to have to, I think, reimagine what value means to you. Because it's not always just the billable hour. There are other elements of value that you're contributing at work and away from work that will want to kind of raise up in terms of the priority levels.

Number two, another skill you'll need is to become very self-aware, right? What are your thoughts and feelings? What is your relationship with rest? That will tell you a lot about some of the unconscious beliefs that you carry around with you when it comes to rest and productivity.

You're also going to want to raise yourself awareness about what supports you best. So how do you recharge? How do you take time off? How do you want to structure your days and your weeks? What does balance look like for you? What are your triggers? What are the situations where you're likely to find yourself trying to work really hard, trying to be very productive? Are there certain areas or triggers that incite that in you?

What can you do to proactively manage yourself? How can you get ahead of those triggers if they aren't there? Maybe it's when you get into a trial situation that you're going to be extremely busy, that you're not going to have time to go grocery shopping, that you're not going to have time for

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your friends, what can you do to set yourself up for success during those more trying periods? Again, if you're dealing with closings, they may be similar. What can you do to set yourself up for that? You want to be proactive and really onto yourself.

The other skill, of course, is learning to manage discomfort. So allowing yourself to shift from a person who doesn't believe in taking time off, who isn't used to rest, who isn't used to not being productive. If you're all of a sudden going to engage in that non-productive time, what is that going to feel like for you? How are you going to manage that initial stage especially when you just feel like ugh, like this feels so uncomfortable. I must be doing it wrong. It really can't be good idea. That's part of your work is to learn to get through that.

So if you can do that, if you can apply these skills and you can take whatever of these strategies I've suggested that work for you. If you can do these things, then you will give yourself greater longevity. You will be less prone to burning yourself out from the exhaustion of working so hard and feeling like you always need to be working. You will also find that you enjoy your work more because you are balancing it out with some non-productive time. You may also find that, ironically, as you allow yourself to have more designated non-productive time that you end up wasting less time and actually being more productive.

So this, my friends, is the episode that I share with you for all of you amazing, professional women who are struggling with taking time off, with having that non-productive time. I hope that this episode has been helpful for you. I hope that the tips that I've shared here have been helpful. They resonate with you. That you feel like okay, I'm validated. I'm not the only one who struggles with this. Now I have some ideas on how I can cope with this.

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If you want more help, you know exactly where to find me. I would love to be of service to you. If you like this episode, if you like this podcast, again, I encourage you to like it, to share it, to give me a review on whatever app it is that you download your podcasts. It helps other people find this podcast. If you do want to reach out to me, you can find me on LinkedIn. You can send me an email. I love hearing from you. So love to hear from you.

So that's what I've got for you my friends. I am going to go back to my lovely staycation with my daughter. The boys are coming back tomorrow night. So we've got another night of relative quiet in the house before we resume our usual very exciting and fun, chaotic family life. I wish for all of you that you have an amazing week, that you have some rest incorporated, some downtime, some time to just enjoy yourself. Thank you, again, for joining me. As always, it is a pleasure. So see you again next week, my friends. Take care.

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