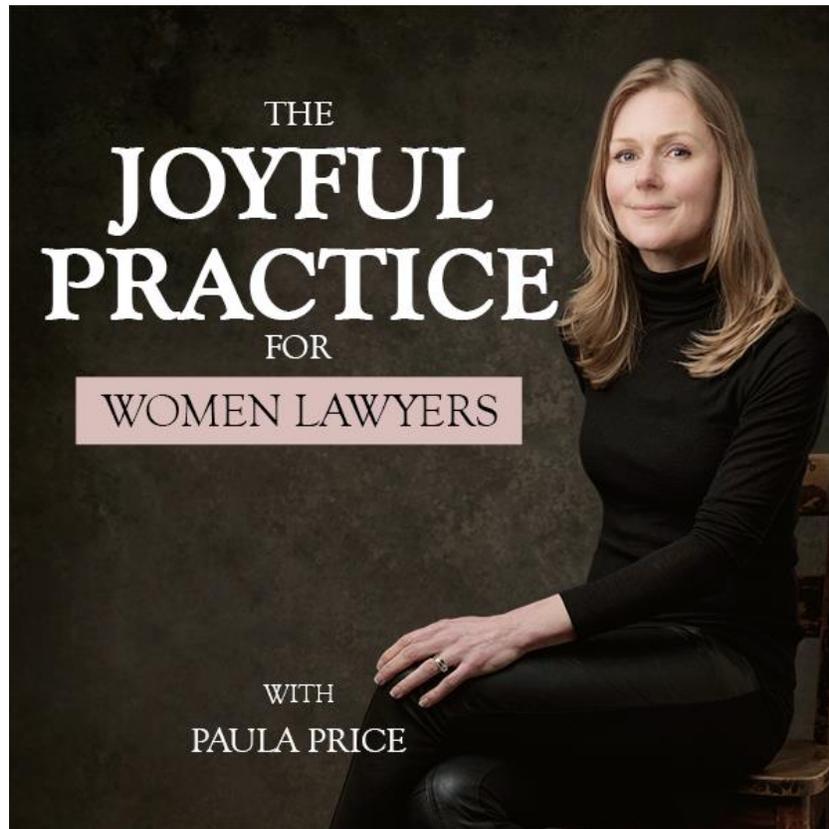


Ep #64: How to Break Up With "Busy" Once and For All



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Paula Price

Ep #64: How to Break Up With "Busy" Once and For All

You're listening to *The Joyful Practice for Women Lawyers* Podcast episode number 64.

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 friend. Welcome back to the podcast. Paula here. I hope you are having a fabulous week wherever you are, whenever this happens to reach you. For me, it is summertime in Vancouver. I am in a very quiet house right now. My husband has been operating somewhat of an ad hoc summer camp for our kids and for their cousins who are visiting from out of town. I've been taking advantage of our house being empty to catch up on work and get ahead of a few things and plan out some projects. Part of that is what inspired today's podcast episode, which is all about the real reason why you are so busy.

I'm really excited to talk to you about this today. I will give you a full fair warning that today's topic is, I mean some people use that term truth bomb. I don't know if it's so much of a truth bomb because it may not be something that you fully experienced yourself. I don't like the idea of it being an all-out bomb. It might be more of like, I don't know, a small little firework maybe. I don't know.

But it's a topic that I think will resonate with a lot of you, even if it's not squarely something that you experience. I think we want to take a closer

Ep #64: How to Break Up With "Busy" Once and For All

look at being busy and maybe some of the reasons behind that for you. I'm going to share some stories as we go through today's episode because it's something that I can absolutely relate to. So I'm going to share a little bit of what's happening for me.

I would invite you to think about how this shows up in your law practice. For sure it showed up in my law practice. It continues to show up in my practice. I want to really put this topic on the table so that we can examine it and do something about it. So we're going to be talking today about busyness. We're going to talk about what it means or why we are all so busy, and how, in some cases, we are truly hooked on the idea of being busy.

So busy. It's one of those things that I think we all throw around. I think it is a problem. I think the reason that we get so busy and talk about being so busy is that it's kind of a comfortable trap. It's actually uncomfortable. Yet, at the same time, it is comfortable. When we talk about being busy, whether it's our professional work or something that's going on in our personal life, I think it's almost like a badge of honor, right? Oh, I'm so busy. Right?

What does that mean? It means you're in demand. It means you've got stuff going on. It makes you feel important and good. I think we all truly enjoy being productive. If you're listening to this podcast, chances are you're a high achiever. You're a lawyer. You're used to going out and doing hard things. There's a sense of accomplishment that comes along with that. So busy might just be part of who you are, who you identify as. You're a woman who is on the go, who has lots of balls in the air. That's part of how you see yourself.

Within a legal culture, among certain environments in particular, you may be in a culture that really supports being busy. Whether it's because of the

Ep #64: How to Break Up With "Busy" Once and For All

billable hour that is attached to your time, or if it's because the culture of the office is that you're a bunch of go-getters and you like to be out there and active. Your culture might really reinforce and support the idea of busy as being a good thing.

One of the kind of slippery things that I have found when it comes to being busy, is that also gives you this built in excuse. In a sense, this is kind of what I'm getting at with that real reason. Almost that dark side of being busy. When you are busy, it gives you an explanation for not doing certain things. It allows you in a very socially acceptable way to avoid things that are really uncomfortable.

So maybe it's work that you really don't want to do. I know I used to have files that sometimes would be referred to as the dog files. The ones that you kind of inherit from somebody who's left the office, and it goes into the back of a cupboard somewhere. Every once in a while you might think about it, but nobody's really pressuring you to do anything about it. Maybe it doesn't have any deadlines attached to it ever.

So instead of just tackling that project and getting it over with it sits there. It lingers. You think about it. You do the work 500 times in your head before you actually do it in real life. So when you're busy, there's a built in excuse to avoid the dog files.

It may be that you're so busy that it gives you an excuse when your work turns up less than perfect. This is a shout out to all the perfectionist out there. I'm one of you. Sometimes it may feel like your work needs to be perfect, better than perfect. When you're really, really busy, and you have no choice but to just do something, it almost gives you that excuse to not do everything perfectly.

Ep #64: How to Break Up With "Busy" Once and For All

So if somebody were to come back and say well this brief that you drafted wasn't really your best work, you could turn around and say I know. But I've had these five other things. I had an application I had to get to. You can kind of list out your laundry list of all the things you've been working on. It kind of gives you an excuse for why your work isn't exactly up to the standard that you wish it were.

When you are busy, it allows you an excuse to put off big decisions. So I see this a lot with lawyers who come to me who have been putting off big decisions for some time. Sometimes they are in the process of putting off a big decision. They might come to me and say, "You know Paula, I've been doing this particular job for years now. I know it's not for me. I know I need to find a way out, but I'm just so busy."

Or what I love are lawyers who come to me and they're so busy that they can't fit in time with me. I get it. I totally, totally get it. But I also would offer that if you're in a situation where you cannot free up an hour every so often to work on you, to work on what is important to you, then there's something going on there that is much bigger than just being busy. That it's time to really create and carve out that time for yourself.

When you're busy, you get to cancel things that you don't really want to do. So if you committed to a lunch date or a dinner or visiting somebody or a project that maybe it's not something that you really wanted to do, but you said yes because you didn't want to say no. Well, now you've got a built-in excuse as to why you don't need to be there or why you cannot be there. You don't have to take responsibility. You don't have to own that you don't want to do it. You get to say, "You know what? I'd love to but I am just so busy. I can't do it."

It also gives you an excuse not to kind of deal with some of those problems that may be keeping you up at night. I know for myself the one thing that is

Ep #64: How to Break Up With "Busy" Once and For All

on my to do list, or one of a few things my to do list right now, is booking some medical appointments. Nothing urgent, nothing urgent. But at the same time, I've noticed that these appointments have been on my to do list for a while now. Right? There's nothing really stopping me from doing it except that I'm busy.

So you might ask yourself, what is it on your to-do list? What are those items that you write down week after week after week, and you never really get around to them? They're not urgent until they become urgent.

So what I'm offering today is that behind this sort of persona of busy or this life where you're busy is that there are these little excuses, there are these tiny little benefits that keep you trapped in this sense of busy. Because even though it is uncomfortable to be busy in the way that you're busy, it is more comfortable than having to deal with some of these things. Now, the advantage, of course, in a law practice, for example, is that you may also be able to say I'm busy, and it's for the greater good, which further reinforces that idea of being busy and being productive.

Now, I know that you're all very intelligent and capable women, and you may or may not be actively trying to solve the problem of being busy. But what I have experienced, what I've seen with clients is that you don't really try all that hard to stop being busy.

What I usually see happening, and this is not shaming or finger wagging because I fall into this trap myself, is that you might complain a little bit about being really busy. You might set a boundary or two and start being a little bit more proactive about not being busy. But that sometimes slips and then you find yourself saying yes. You keep being busy. Then you get into that trap, or you keep getting rewarded for being busy.

Ep #64: How to Break Up With "Busy" Once and For All

So maybe there's that immediate gratification, that dopamine hit when you execute on all your tasks. You're super busy. You have a really productive day. It's just bam, bam, bam, bam. Point after point on your to do list gets crossed off. You get to feel good about that. Maybe you get accolades from the people that you work with. They're really excited because you're so productive. If you want to get something done, you hand it to the busiest person you know. So you are a magnet for all the things that everybody wants to get done. You're known for that.

Maybe you're getting compensated directly for the amount of busyness that you're doing. Maybe your billable hours are exceedingly high, and you're recognized as a valuable contributing member of your organization. You get to feel productive, right? It feels really good when you can go home at the end of a long day and say I was so busy, and I got all these things done.

But while this works really, really well in the short run. You get to be productive, and you get to be busy. What can happen is if you let this go on for too long, then you might find that things start to unravel. So what you might find, going back to one of the earlier examples, is that when you are really busy, you might find that your quality of work starts to suffer. People might comment about the quality and how maybe it's not up to your usual standard.

You might find if you're getting really busy that you start to lose control of your files, and you may start missing deadlines. You may miss deadlines that you're aware of, which is uncomfortable and kind of embarrassing. You may start missing deadlines that you weren't even aware of. I think that's where it can get to be quite scary that you miss something that you didn't even have registered on your calendar or somewhere.

Ep #64: How to Break Up With "Busy" Once and For All

In your personal life, you might find that you're starting to let things go just because you don't have time. So you might start missing bill payments. You might know that you're missing them and not care. Be willing to pay the interest or the penalty because you're just so busy. You may find that your health starts to suffer.

So I talked about some of these longer term non-urgent health matters that you might want to be taking care of, but you might find that your immediate health is suffering too. Maybe you're getting sick more commonly than usual, or you're really tired. You're feeling rundown. You might start noticing signs that you're slipping into burnout.

Another thing that you might feel is happening to you is that you might start to feel really disconnected. This is what I notice, especially if you've been busy at a very busy level, whatever that would be called. Busy, busy or extra busy, busy squared, busy to an exponential degree. Is that what happens over time as you start getting really disconnected.

Because if you're staying busy in order to avoid certain things then chances are you're also not really staying connected to things that are important. So you may start disconnecting from the bigger picture at work. You might be really involved in the small micro tasks. But if you were to step back, you might say okay, I've been really busy. I've been engaged, but none of these projects are really aligned with what I want to do long term. So you might be disconnected from your work.

You might find that you're disconnected from your colleagues. Maybe your relationships with them have started to suffer and atrophy. Maybe you're resentful because you're busier than they are. Maybe you just have lost touch because you don't see them anymore. You have to keep canceling your lunch dates or coffee dates. Or when you walk by them in the hallway if you're in a physical building, you're just like hi and goodbye. You don't

Ep #64: How to Break Up With "Busy" Once and For All

have that chance to develop rapport. So you might be disconnected from them.

You might become increasingly disconnected from your friends and family. I mean they are probably the first on the list. I know, for me, that's typically where I have to cut first, right. If I have a social engagement and in contrast to that I've got work that is required. Maybe it's a deadline that needs to be met. I will feel, and maybe you feel like this, too, that the social engagement is not essential. It's something that can be sacrificed.

So if you increasingly do that over time, what you may find is that you're increasingly disconnected from your friends and family. Maybe you still get to see them sometimes, but when you see them, the only thing you can really think about is how busy you are. The only thing you can talk about is how busy you are. You may find that those interactions are not all that rewarding for you, and it may also be that those interactions become less engaging for the people that you're with.

Worst of all, I think, is that as you become increasingly disconnected from your surroundings, you may also find that you're becoming increasingly disconnected with yourself. That can come from a number of sources. It may be that you're just simply not spending any time where you're not engaged in something. So you're not really connecting with what you really want. You're not thinking about your long term goals. You're not thinking about your self-care. You're not thinking about your relationships, etc.

It may also be that you're making promises to yourself, and then you're breaking those promises. So much like you're breaking lunch plans with your friend. You might also be telling yourself okay today is the day that I'm going to turn things around. I'm gonna go to bed early. I'm going to get up early the next day. I'm going to go for a run. I'm going to get my hair cut. Whatever it is that you put on your agenda, and then the work comes up,

Ep #64: How to Break Up With "Busy" Once and For All

the busyness steps in, and you decide that the commitment you made to yourself is no longer as important as getting that thing done. So you start to really eat away at that integrity that you have with yourself.

So what ultimately happens in this situation then is that you find yourself almost as though you're running on a treadmill, and you miss out on opportunities. You probably feel like your practice is being run in a very reactive manner as opposed to a proactive manner.

One lawyer I spoke with described having their practice run them instead of the other way around. You may feel like that too. You may find that you're missing out on life events. So people around you are celebrating birthdays or anniversaries, or they're throwing parties or they're having dinners or whatever it is that they are doing. You are simply not participating.

You may find that you are so busy in the short run that you are not being proactive about your long term growth professionally and personally. You're starting to feel like you're falling behind. So you've got that really uncomfortable situation where you're busy, busy, busy. Yet, you're feeling like you're not caught up on anything, particularly the big things that matter.

You may feel like you're running around with your practice with your hair on fire. I know a lawyer that I used to work with used to describe practicing like that. That is a terrible way to be. I mean fine if it happens from time to time. But if that's your day to day, that is a very stressful place to be. What you may find is that you become increasingly resentful, and you feel like you're missing out. Maybe you feel super stressed all of the time.

Now, if you can relate to what I'm talking about, I do have some ideas to offer you. Before I offer the ideas that I have, I want to warn you that you probably will not like them. You probably won't like hearing them. If you actually go and follow through and try to implement them, you'll probably

Ep #64: How to Break Up With "Busy" Once and For All

like them even less because this is an exercise in total discomfort, especially if you are hooked on busy. Trust me.

I'm going to offer you four suggestions. As I go through them, I would invite you to think about how you can apply these suggestions in your life. I also invite you to think about how uncomfortable this can be for you, and what you're going to do when faced with that discomfort.

So number one is to stop being busy. This is going to be so hard. If you're used to operating at 100 miles an hour and all of a sudden you stop, it is going to feel so wrong. You're going to feel empty. You're going to feel untethered. You're going to feel like there's something that has gone extremely wrong.

I used to get this feeling when I used to write exams at university. I can remember I would get really worked up in anticipation of the exam. This was an undergrad. This was a law school. All the work and energy went into focusing on this one exam, whether it was an hour or three hours. I just remember that feeling when exams were done at the end of an academic year, walking outside, especially for some reason it was worse in the summer. Even though I would be walking out into like a beautiful spring day, I would have this sense of dread in the pit of my stomach every year.

This happened too, and it may happen for you when your professional work slows down. So you're busy, busy, busy. Maybe you're in trial. You've got a closing. You've got a deal. You've got clients that for whatever reason are just demanding everything from you. Not necessarily in a bad way, but they just need you. So you've been catering, catering, catering, catering, and all of a sudden, it stops. There's this weird feeling.

It's almost like when a boat is kind of going along the water. It's going really, really fast, and then it stops suddenly. The wake of the water starts

Ep #64: How to Break Up With "Busy" Once and For All

to catch up with it. It's almost like this weird drifty not quite going anywhere, waves are lapping. That is you. If you decide to stop being busy, it is going to be totally disorienting.

Now, how can you stop being busy? Some ideas might be to take a holiday. Maybe you actually plan to go somewhere and then follow through. You may take a day off. It doesn't have to be an extended amount of time. I'm inviting you to stop being busy for any period of time that you think you can schedule in your calendar.

The idea here is to simply have some period of time where you have nothing on your plate. It is even better if you can put your phone aside and create a window where there are no external influences, where you don't have any little dopamine hits that are waiting for you, emails to respond to, two text messages to respond to. If you can just remove yourself from all of those things and be still, it is going to be so uncomfortable. That is exactly where I want you to be for this.

Now has happened to me yesterday, actually, which is probably why I'm so keen to be recording this podcast in advance. Full disclosure, I'm recording this podcast in advance in part because I am, shh, it's a secret. I'm avoiding something, which I can tell you exactly what I'm avoiding.

Yesterday, again, as I mentioned, my husband has been out with the kids quite a bit, and I've been catching up on work. Yesterday, I had time to actually go into some of the admin things that I typically don't have time for during my work week. I work a busy week. I have the kids on either end, like bookends I guess, Monday to Friday. I try not to work too much on the weekends. So there are certain tasks that I never really get to because I'm busy.

Ep #64: How to Break Up With "Busy" Once and For All

That is my badge of honor. I get to avoid these things on purpose because I actually don't have time for them. So yesterday, I made the time for them. I sat still and I looked into some of the back end things that are going on at a sort of an admin level. Just I won't bore you with the details except to tell you that as I looked at these things, I started to get increasingly uncomfortable.

I went from being in this jolly happy, productive feeling mood to just complete almost shame and a sense of disorganization. I just looked at it, and I thought, Paula, how on earth do you let things get to this point? Now, I wrote everything down. This is actually what I'm going to suggest to you too. I wrote down all the things that I was thinking, all the terrible things I was telling myself. Then I decided I just couldn't take anymore, and I left. I went and I joined the makeshift summer camp and spent the day far away from my home office. That, I think, was probably the best thing for me in that situation.

But what I really appreciated and why I'm sharing this with you is that in the stillness, when all the urgency was gone, this was a Sunday. So nobody was really emailing me. There wasn't much going on in my professional work that I could latch on to and busy myself with. Is that I realized that there are some things here that I really need to take care of, to take care of myself, to take care of my business.

So when you do this, you are going to feel potentially really uncomfortable, right? If you're taking that time off, and all of a sudden, you're going to have this open space. You're going to start to have to come face to face with some things that maybe you were avoiding. So that is step number one is to stop being busy.

Now, I realize as I'm recording this podcast, that there's a bit of overlap. There's things in your work life that are going to come up, and those things

Ep #64: How to Break Up With "Busy" Once and For All

are going to start nagging at you. There are things in your personal life that are also going to come up and start nagging at you. So I invite you as you think about what will happen for you, when you decide to put a pause button on being busy and allow all this discomfort, you might think about what's going to come up in your mind, what the sort of nagging things that you've been avoiding, where they're going to show up.

So step one is to take the time. Step two is to allow the discomfort. I know it's really uncomfortable. All the things that you've been avoiding are going to rise to the surface. It's gonna be terrible. It really isn't going to be very comfortable. So what might that be for you? Well, in the workspace, it might be nagging deadlines. You might have deadlines that you've kind of been avoiding, kind of putting off. Those will jump up right?

For me, I had on these come up not that long ago, actually. I was falling asleep, and I realized, wait a second. For my coaching license, I have a certain number of the equivalent of CPD requirements that I need. I need to get some additional mentor training coaching to keep my license updated.

I thought of this in the middle of the night. I thought oh okay. I need to look into this, and I have time a lot. I've got lots and lots of time to do it, but that's one of the things that came up for me. Maybe something like that would come up for you. Maybe there are CPD credits that you need for your license. Maybe there are deadlines on files that you've been kind of aware of, but kind of also avoiding.

Another nagging thing that might come up for you are conversations you do not want to have. Maybe it's a conversation with a colleague. Maybe it's a conversation with somebody that you work for. Maybe it's a client. Maybe it's something within your organization. Maybe you want to try to set a boundary with somebody. Maybe you have been asked to work on a

Ep #64: How to Break Up With "Busy" Once and For All

project, and you've decided that you're going to say no. You don't feel comfortable doing that.

So there may be conversations out there in your professional world that you are simply avoiding. When you're not able to throw yourself into your work, and you've got time to deal with these things, that's when it's going to come to the surface, and it's going to feel really uncomfortable.

Now it may also be that you've got conversations like that that exist in your personal life. There may be conversations that you've been avoiding, people that you've been avoiding because you've been able to. You can justify it. I would invite you to think about what those conversations might look like. Is this a time to start thinking about when to have those conversations?

Other things that may feel uncomfortable. I talked earlier about dog files. Those were always my Achilles tendon when I was practicing law. I don't have dog files anymore. I love all my clients I'm happy to say. There's no file that is really a dog file for me. So I'm blessed that way. So I don't want to rub it in or anything, but I hope that's okay. But I really do love working with you. So you may have dog files. I do have dog files in the sense that there's the admin and there's things that I don't want to do. Those clearly were front and center yesterday.

But what is that for you? What are the tasks that are important, and they're not urgent. Nobody's really looking over your shoulder to make sure that you get them done. Because this is a good time to think about them, to feel uncomfortable.

It may be loneliness. This can happen. You might be so, so busy, and all of a sudden you stop being busy. You realize oh like where is everybody? Where are my colleagues? Where's my family? Where are my friends? I

Ep #64: How to Break Up With "Busy" Once and For All

can fully confess that yesterday loneliness started to set in. I'd been doing a lot of work here at home while everybody was out doing things because that's what I chose to do. I needed the time. But at a certain point, I just thought this is not fun anymore. I miss my family. I miss my friends.

So this might be something that comes up for you too. When you actually take the time, you might realize that you lost out some of your friendships, some of your relationships. This might be a wakeup call that it's time to get those relationships back on track.

It may also be that what comes up for you is that you're not fully throwing yourself into or even giving sufficient airtime to your really big goals. I understand this completely. I have amazing lawyers who reach out to me because they want help with big goals. Sometimes we do not end up working together. Maybe it's that they have found somebody else that they are working with.

Sometimes it is just that they are not able to make those goals a priority. I have so much empathy and understanding. I offer so much grace to all of you who are in that position where you have a big, big goal, but the timing just doesn't feel right. I absolutely honor that. I think we all need to respect our own internal gauges of when timing feels right and when the timing doesn't feel right.

I would also offer that in my experience, sometimes we have to short circuit that feeling of rightness because if we wait for it, it's not going to come to us the way that we wish that it would. So if you are in a cloud of busy and you are able to just continue to go through your days and everything feels rushed, and you don't have time for those big goals.

I would invite you, when you go through this exercise of stepping back and allowing yourself the space to think about them again to ask yourself

Ep #64: How to Break Up With "Busy" Once and For All

whether this is something that you want to change. Whether you want to take that big goal and find a way to bring it back into the forefront. Because if you wait for the time to be right, that time may not ever present itself in the way that you want it to. So just wanted to say that.

I can also tell you that I practice this. I practice this as I preach this. I recently enrolled in a program that is a big commitment for me. It was terrifying. It involved me making a very big decision. I felt very much in the shoes of how my clients feel when they are making big decisions. There's that fear. There's the unknown. I made the decision to go ahead with it. I took the scary route.

Sometimes I think that is the right thing to do. Maybe it's the right thing to do for you. I don't know. It really depends. You're in charge. You know what's going on. But my invitation here is to think about whether and how you want to move that up the priority ladder so that it doesn't get lost in the shuffle when you go back to being busy.

So that was step two, is to allow the discomfort and to kind of feel that. I give you a list of examples of a number of different ways that discomfort might show up for you. All the things you've been avoiding that have risen to the surface.

Now, once you have identified what it is that is bringing up the discomfort for you, I would invite you to write these things down. What is it? What are all the things? This is exactly what I did yesterday when the wave of discomfort washed over me. When I was really, quite honestly a little bit upset, I wrote it all down. I would invite you to do the same. What are the things that come up for you?

Then I would like you to identify all the uncomfortable thoughts that underlie the feeling of discomfort. So what are some of the thoughts that might

Ep #64: How to Break Up With "Busy" Once and For All

come up for you? You may feel like you're not on track. Maybe you've got that big goal that comes up for you. You're thinking you know what? This is important to me. I've done very little to move it forward. So I'm not on track. I'm not where I want to be.

Maybe you look at your desk. Maybe you think about, maybe you're not physically at work, but you can think about work, and you think my desk is not orderly. It's not tidy. There's so much there that I just need to remove. I need to declutter. Maybe that you're at a point in your practice where you're starting to narrow your focus. So when you first start out, maybe you're taking everything from everybody. You've got a practice that looks very mixed.

Maybe now you're more interested in developing more of a niche practice area. So you may be wanting to refine what it is you're doing. So you might want to start to declutter your desk by giving away files or wrapping up and not taking on new files on a certain subject matter.

It may be that you're evolving your practice. So you may be kind of mid-level or more senior, and maybe you're developing a mediation practice in addition to your litigation practice. You want to focus more on that. So what does that look like for you? The idea here is to think about what the uncomfortable thoughts? The thought are might be I'm behind. Everything's a mess. You might feel like you're not organized. You may be perfectly organized. You may be a very organized person.

But when you stop and think about the things that you do not have a chance to attend to, this was me yesterday. In many areas, I'm so organized. Yet, in these areas I was looking at yesterday, I thought this is kind of messy. In fact, this is a mess. So you may have that to where everything is in order except there's this one thing. So what is it that you're telling yourself about that lack of organization?

Ep #64: How to Break Up With "Busy" Once and For All

Another thing you might be telling yourself. I mean maybe you felt like this before. You feel like you don't have any meaningful relationships left. That you've been so busy. You've had your head down, working hard, but you're missing out on really important relationships in your life. So these might be some of the thoughts that come up for you. I would invite you to take a full inventory and just write them down, as painful as they might seem.

The reason that I'm inviting you to do that is because when you go back to that list, after you've kind of digested it, after you've gotten it all out into the open, you can then go back to it, and you'll be able to deal with it in a much more deliberate and focused way. So that's step three is to identify all the uncomfortable thoughts and to write them down.

So far, what I've offered is, number one, stop being busy. Number two, allow the discomfort that you're going to feel when you stop being busy. Three, write down all the thoughts that you're having, all the things that are creating the discomfort for you. Then number four.

Now, you don't have to do number four all at once. You don't even have to do it in that moment. Once those thoughts are recorded, I think you can move away, especially if you're just feeling like this is enough. It's time for me to take a little break.

But when you go back, what I would invite you to do is still have a look at what it is that you've written down, what are the areas of discomfort that you've identified, and to make a plan to deal with them not all at once. Just one by one. Pick one thing on that list and make a teeny tiny bit of progress.

So that might mean if it's a bill that you haven't paid, just go ahead, pay that bill. If it's a client that you need to email that you've kind of been putting off because you dread it, send that email. Just that one email. If you have a

Ep #64: How to Break Up With "Busy" Once and For All

dental appointment that you haven't scheduled, you haven't been there in a couple of years, just book the appointment.

If it is that you want more help, call someone to help you, right. You can call me. I'm a coach. I can help you get these things in order. If you don't want to talk to me. That's fine. There are other coaches. But do something. Do one small thing that helps you get forward momentum, movement in relation to this particular list of things that are uncomfortable, the things that you have been avoiding.

Now, if you can do one thing in the moment, I would also invite you to start thinking about how you're going to deal with the balance of the list going forward. Again, I do not want you to feel overwhelmed to the point that you're not taking any action at all. Maybe you schedule yourself an appointment later on in the week where you can literally sit down for an hour with your list and your calendar, and you can start scheduling in some of these items. The idea here is to know that you've got this list and to slowly start chipping away at it and to have a plan.

Now, why this will work. When you actually go through this process, when you allow yourself to feel the discomfort, identify what it is that you are potentially keeping yourself busy from on purpose, then you will start to reconnect with yourself. You're onto yourself. You're now seeing okay. There was something there that I've been avoiding, and now I'm not avoiding it anymore. You will slowly but surely start to regain a handle on things. What you'll find is that your practice, your life will shift from that reactive busy state to a more proactive state.

As you gain awareness of how you may be using your busyness to avoid things, you may become more discerning and able to spot when you're avoiding something on purpose. What else will happen is you will no longer need to rely so much on your busyness to back you up when you want to

Ep #64: How to Break Up With "Busy" Once and For All

say no to something. You may also find that you're tying your busyness less and less to your sense of value.

You will increase your skills when it comes to tackling discomfort and dealing with that really uncomfortable feeling instead of avoiding the thing that you don't want to do, procrastinating on the thing that you don't want to do, and that will make you feel more empowered. Again, as I said, you'll be in much more of a creative zone as opposed to a reactive zone.

This is not easy work. It will take a number of skills. Number one, it will take some basic time management skills. You will need to book some time, whether it's a day, half a day, a few hours, whatever you can manage in your busy schedule. I would invite you to just find a way to allow this space where you're not busy.

The next skill this will require, and this is the toughest one is to tolerate discomfort because this is going to be a very uncomfortable exercise. The busier you are the more uncomfortable this is going to feel. You're going to be like why am I not doing anything when I have so many things to do. That is exactly the point.

It is also going to require a willingness on your part to examine what's on your mind. So when that feeling comes up, why am I doing this? This is stupid. I have so much to do. Yet here I am doing nothing. When you start to take note of what's coming up, literally taking note on paper, putting it so that is now something that you can see with your own eyes that you can process at a later point when you are moving out of your—Because you might panic, you might feel uncomfortable.

You might look at this later on when you've got the full benefit of your executive functioning to then come up with creative plans and solutions. You're going to need to be willing to take what's on your mind and put it out

Ep #64: How to Break Up With "Busy" Once and For All

on paper. You're gonna have to be willing to look at it, which if you've been avoiding it is going to feel uncomfortable.

So what will happen for you is, again, this will lead to a gradual shift over time. It will hopefully decouple your relationship with being busy. You'll feel less attached to it. You will move from someone who may identify herself as busy to someone who is feeling calm and confident and in control of your practice, of your personal life.

You will feel less reactive and almost that jumpy feeling to a feeling of, again, that confidence. You'll be less fearful. You won't be so scared of the things that you're avoiding because you will have dealt with them. You'll know that you can tolerate the discomfort. That you can move through that. You will confront the underlying fears that you have that are causing you to avoid things, and you will be able to then deal with them.

So that, my friends, is today's podcast episode. I hope you have enjoyed this discussion. I think it's really uncomfortable. I think it's really difficult. But when you can open yourself up to this concept, this idea of sitting with the discomfort, of not being busy, there is so much for you to gain there.

Again, just to review the four suggestions that I have. Number one, stop being busy. Number two, allow the discomfort. Number three, identify all the thoughts you're having, all the items that come up for you. Write them down on a piece of paper so you can deal with them. Then make a plan to deal with them not all at once and start taking some positive action.

So it has been a pleasure. Thank you so much for joining me this week. I'm very excited to reconnect with you again soon. For all of you who are listening, I just wanted to say a big thank you. I very much appreciate your support. If you would like to leave me a review and a rating, that would be excellent because it helps other people just like you find this podcast. I

Ep #64: How to Break Up With "Busy" Once and For All

would just really love that. So thank you again. Have a great week, and we'll reconnect soon. Bye for now.

If you enjoyed today's show and don't want to miss an episode, subscribe, and follow the show wherever you listen to your podcasts. If you haven't already, please leave a rating and review. Your feedback will help me create a podcast that's tailored to your needs and goes straight to the heart of what matters to you. For instructions on how to subscribe, rate, and review the podcast, visit www.thejoyfulpractice.com/podcastlaunch. See you next time.

Thank you for listening to this episode of *The Joyful Practice for Women Lawyers* podcast. If you want more information, visit www.thejoyfulpractice.com. See you next week.