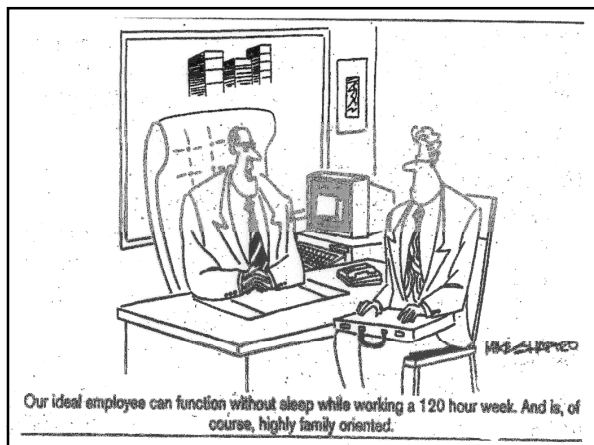



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**“Getting Lost”
in our Own Lives**

Robynn Moraites
Executive Director
NC Lawyer Assistance Program

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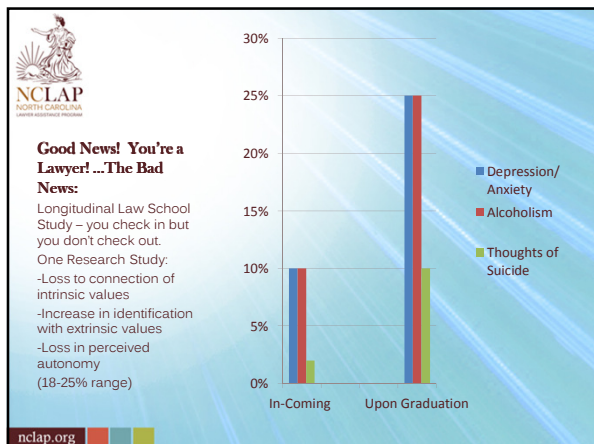
Let's call a spade a spade. We must understand the true reality and nature of the system within which we operate.

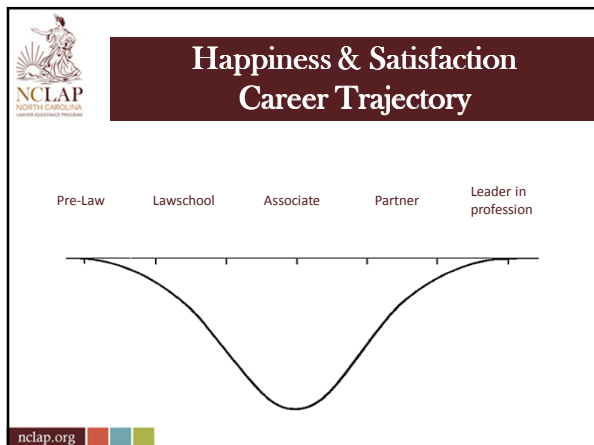
Do we as a profession really practice what we preach?

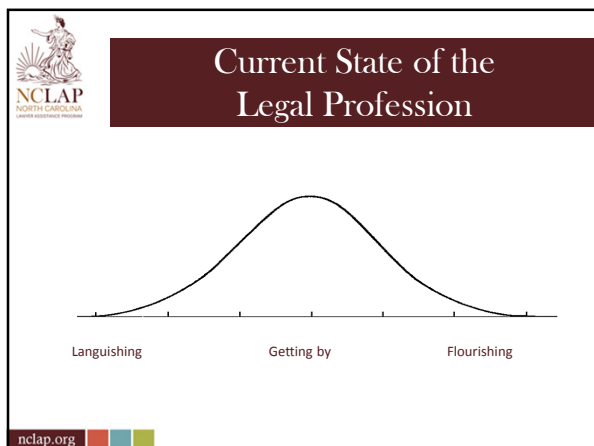



Legal Profession and Self Care.
See the reality for what it is, in order to better navigate it.

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Why?

- Being studied.
- Ideas include :
 - False Self Syndrome
 - Limbic brain resilience
 - Top two major contributors for Lawyers


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False Self Syndrome

- We all (meaning all people on the planet) have it to some degree.
 - The disconnection with true self if for no other reason than to fit in our society and culture
 - Need to meet expectations, to succeed
- In its basic form – being “out of touch” with ourselves and overly identifying with the roles we play.
 - Disconnection from feelings and authentic internal experience

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The Roles we Play - An Unspoken Agreement

Mores are one explanation. Society defines roles, too. The young can have fun in certain ways, but adults are discouraged from engaging in similar activities. Or visa versa.


- We all play roles, and they constantly change. The role of employee or entrepreneur differs from boss and manager or from parent, spouse or child.
- Peoples' personas change, even if subtly, as they play their everyday roles; they change depending upon the interaction or scenario.

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 **The Roles We Play**


Super Mom	Rescuer	Chairperson	Manager	Devoted Dad
Taxi Driver				Referee
Counselor				Hero
Cruise Director				Problem Solver
Loving Spouse				Go-to Guy/Gal
Volunteer				The Advocate
Stellar Employee	Committee member	The Comedian		
	Financial Provider	Dependable One	The Intellectual	


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 **Adding to that...False Self Syndrome**

- Legal profession adds new layers and dimensions
 - Zealous advocacy;
 - Always the helper;
 - Confidentiality;
 - Isolated-workload;
 - Tomorrow never comes;
 - Success.

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 **Typical Attorney Workload**



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Competitive Nature of Stress

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False Self

- The profession of law greatly reinforces the false self syndrome and encourages disconnection from authentic experience.
- Lawyers are a self-select group already prone to this tendency.
- Recipe for disaster.

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Our Poor, Ignored Limbic Brain

FRONT Anterior Cingulate (motivation)
FRONTAL LOBE (planning)
Dorsolateral Prefrontal (executive & logical)
Olfactory Bulb
Lateral Orbitofrontal (appropriate social/ emotional response)

MOTOR MOTOR SENSORY

BACK PARIETAL LOBE (movement)
OCCIPITAL LOBE (vision)
TEMPORAL LOBE (language)


CORTEX

Corpus Callosum

LYMBIC SYSTEM
Hypothalamus
Amygdala (basic emotions)
Entorhinal Cortex (memory)
Hippocampus (memory)

CEREBELLUM (coordinate movement)
BRAIN STEM (body basics)


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Limbic Brain

- This is where emotional resilience resides.
- We must attend to it or ignore it at our peril.

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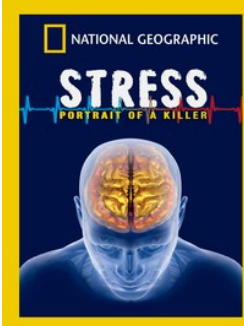


Stress: Portrait of a Killer


This movie sheds wonderful insight into the propagation of illness in today's society via the inner workings of the human stress response.

Only 50 minutes long.

Available on Netflix.




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So, what is a lawyer to do?

- Critical to maintain, renew or begin extracurricular activities that nurture the limbic brain
 - Focus is on heartfelt joy and connection to self, others, and community
 - This does NOT mean volunteering for a bar committee to add something to your résumé. That is OK, it just does not count for this purpose.
 - Not superficial connections. These are OK, they just do not count for this purpose.
 - The guiding features: it brings you no outer recognition or benefit other than joy to your heart.
 - Example of tomorrow never comes

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So, what is a lawyer to do?

- Practice good boundaries from the onset
 - Believe it or not, it is easier to start now than to try to turn it off later
 - We teach people how to treat us
 - Many lawyers think they do not have a choice – we always have a choice
 - Do something at the end of the day to affirmatively transition out of work into home life
 - Turn off the crackberries
 - TAKE vacations; USE those vacation hours
 - Make good choices now that do not limit future options
 - i.e. buy a less expensive/smaller house
 - Take 3-day weekends when things are quiet
 - Realize many practice areas are feast or famine and work within that framework.


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So, what is a lawyer to do?

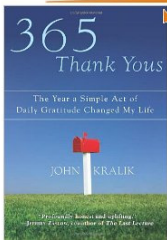
- Activities that help us gain and maintain a broader perspective (beyond our jobs, beyond our false selves):
 - Some kind of mindfulness practice
 - Yoga, meditation, martial arts, etc.
 - Spiritual readings within your faith tradition
 - If you don't have a faith tradition, maybe explore it
 - A daily gratitude list
 - Regular exercise as part of a daily routine.
 - Finding ways to laugh and have real fun.

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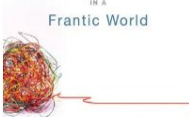


Some books on these topics...

Click to **LOOK INSIDE!**




365 Thank You
The Year a Simple Act of Daily Gratitude Changed My Life
JOHN KRALIK



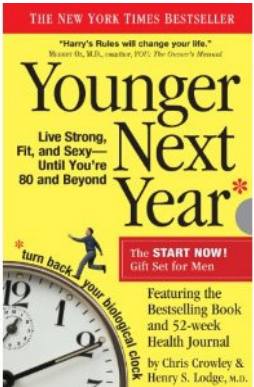
Mindfulness
AN EIGHT-WEEK PLAN FOR Finding Peace IN A Frantic World
Mark Williams and Danny Penman
FOREWORD BY JON KABAT-ZINN

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Regular Exercise Routine

- This book is written by a lawyer and his doctor and explains the evolutionary biology of aging. Most of what we call aging in this country is decay...
- This book explains in rather simple terms why exercise is so critical to our optimal functioning.




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Alas...you will forget...we all do.




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Future Practice Advisory...


- Doesn't imply weakness, just "human-ness"
- Is more about "dis-ease" than disease.



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So slow, is it even moving?



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Rather slow and insidious....
then increases... then overwhelming....



Burning



Uncomfortable



Overwhelming

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So what happens?



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We crash.


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LAP: Safe, Confidential & Free

- Services are FREE, paid for by your State Bar dues
- Completely confidential – Pursuant to Rule 1.6
 - Assist
 - Assess
 - Educate
 - Refer
 - Support

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Remember... mighty forces are at work




Not the least of which is ourselves and our drive for recognition, success, achievement and perfection...in many ways we each are the single biggest force we must each overcome.

We always have a choice. (movie clip)

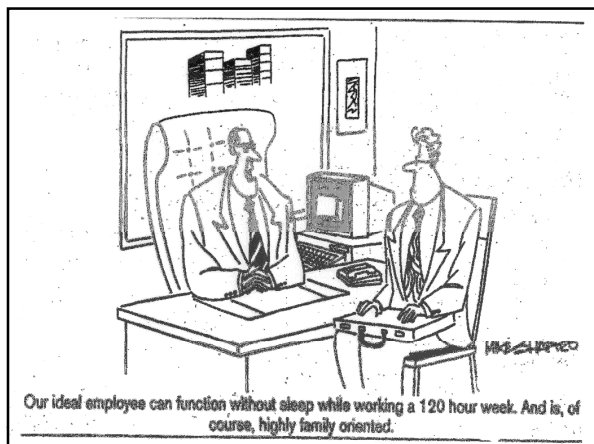
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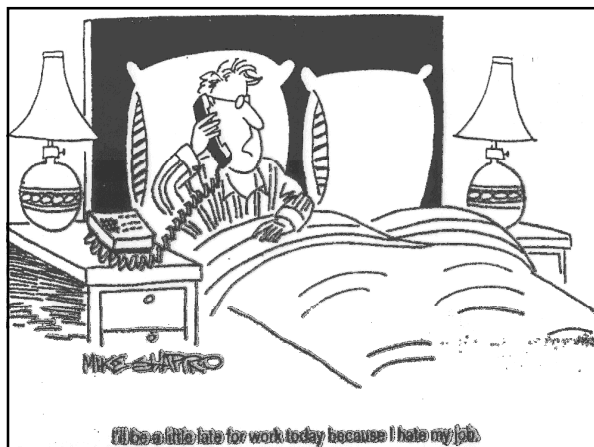


But we always have a choice.



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The Take Away

- Conscious choice vs. unconscious reaction

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In the event you wind up there...

Robynn Moraites Executive Director 704-892-5699 robynnmoraites@gmail.com	Tony Porrett Raleigh and Areas East 919-719-9267 tporrett@ncbar.gov
Cathy Killian Charlotte and Areas West 704-910-2310 cathy.d.killian@gmail.com	Towanda Garner Piedmont Triad Area 919-719-9290 tgarner@ncbar.gov

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Thank you!
