



By Lori Ann Buza

Ten Tips on Mindfulness Practice for Successful Lawyering and a Peaceful Life

EXCERPTED FROM THE FEBRUARY 2019 EDITION OF *NJ LAWYER*

Mindfulness practice helps attorneys develop the tools to harmonize work with personal life, and to find peace, joy, and success in both. It helps attorneys with self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-appreciation, as it fosters a richer understanding and insight into oneself and others. Growth takes time and patience, but once one integrates mindfulness practice into his or her life, the rewards are invaluable. Here are some simple and basic techniques that may help attorneys on their journeys to mindfulness for successful lawyering and a more peaceful life:

- 1. Breathe.** Stop and breathe. Take breaks from work to direct your attention to your breathing. Start with full breaths from the chest, and then shift to diaphragmatic (belly) breathing. Focus on slowly inhaling and exhaling, and observe what it does to your body in that moment. Close your eyes and notice how your lungs feel as they cleanse.
- 2. Eat.** Use your diet as an opportunity to fuel your body, not mask or treat emotion. Savor each bite as you recognize how the food energizes your body. Taste your food, appreciate the different flavors, and enjoy it.
- 3. Move.** Be sure to exercise or move your body every day. If you don't have time for regimented exercise, find a way to move your limbs and raise your heartbeat in a healthy way. Take time to engage your muscles and joints. While doing so, notice how your body operates, observe your perspiration, feel the ground beneath you. Take note of changes to your inhalation/exhalation as you move and exert.
- 4. Rest.** Devote enough time to consistent, nightly sleep and also take short rest breaks from work throughout the day. Even if it is for just a few minutes during work, find time to rest your mind and your body. Close your eyes and develop a peaceful awareness of quiet. After rest periods, consciously acknowledge how you feel recharged.
- 5. Stretch.** When you wake and at bedtime, take time to stretch your muscles, expand your chest, and open your body. Stretch your limbs, including your fingers and toes. In stretching, reach beyond what you believe you can do. Be aware of your body as it relates to the physical environment around it.
- 6. De-Stress.** You may do so with music, art, dance, or a hobby you enjoy that makes you temporarily forget about the stresses of work or problems in your life. Prioritize joy in your life and make time for your healthy desires. Be fully present in that moment of enjoyment. Make a point to smile during these times; notice and enjoy how your forehead, eyes, and shoulders soften when you smile.



- 7. Love.** Make a conscious effort to love not only special people in your life, but also nature and the beauty around you in the world. Moreover, love yourself; one may only love and respect others after first developing a true love of self. Each day, allow a feeling of love for yourself to surface in your being and allow it to simmer there as you experience it.
- 8. Accept.** Accept yourself, including anything that society may identify as ‘flaws.’ Recognize that you are special and unique exactly the way you are. Accept your shortcomings and problems as opportunities for growth and learning.
- 9. Appreciate.** Feel gratitude for your life, health, opportunities, and everything that makes you, uniquely you. Be grateful for each moment in your life, with a conscious awareness and appreciation of those moments as you live them. Though after-reflection is also important, true appreciation should be felt in real time. Becoming in-tune with what each of your five senses is currently experiencing brings greater life fulfillment.

- 10. Meditate.** Meditating and removing thought from the mind for a short period of time (15–20 minutes) each day may enable one to find greater peace and grow in the above nine areas. Growth will come silently, just like the time one takes to find it. It is important to empty one’s ‘cup’ so that it may be refilled each day on the path to mindfulness, wisdom, and peace.

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