853

Sun, 6/20 9:19AM 59:48

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

lawyers, life, stress, day, new year's resolutions, people, problems, year, priorities, work life balance, alcohol, assistance programs, feeling, parasympathetic nervous system, legal profession, response, surveyed, anxiety, goals, email

00:00
Hello, everyone, my name is Brian Quinn. I'm an attorney. And I'm the education outreach coordinator for lawyers concern for lawyers of Pennsylvania, which is press Sylvanas lawyers Assistance Program. And the title to this presentation is be it resolved, striving for realistic work life balance in 2021. Um, as I said, I work for lawyers concerned for lawyers of pa LCL, we call ourselves and

00:32
want to take a few minutes and discuss lawyers assistance programs. Because we really do feel that it's an important part of

00:44
what we all do in the legal profession. And I'm still being told from time to time by people that see I never

00:51
knew our lawyers systems program was your what you do what you don't do? Well, so I think I want to spend a couple of minutes at least talking about that, because it's, it's, as I said, it's what I do for a living now, I probably I was a private practitioner. For over 40 years. I've been doing this for LCL, Pennsylvania, that is being their educators since 2017. And for the most part, now we provide free assistance to lawyers, judges, their family members, law students, in the form of a confidential helpline and peer assistance program. We in Pennsylvania, are not the clinicians,

many states have a clinical folks on staff, part of the PowerPoint that you'll receive will be a directory to all the lawyers assistance programs in the United States is published by the American Bar Association. However, I often get calls from lawyers from outside of Pennsylvania, because I invite you to call us if you have any questions, or you're not sure who to speak to in your particular state, we have a relationship with all lawyers assistance programs, we are all part of the American Bar Association's conference on lawyers assistance programs, kolab. So we've been in existence for 33 years. So we do have very well established relationships with the folks all over the United States. And we've been fully operational, quite in quite operational during COVID. So as we are now into the new year, I'm going to talk a little bit about not only what LCL and other lawyers resistance programs do, but how your work life balance has been impacted, and will remain impacted by COVID. And just everything that we do every day as as lawyers. Because one of the things that before I passed beyond lawyers Assistance Program, I want to remind you something else to keep. It's quite important. Now we they survey ABA surveys every year why lawyers don't reach out to lawyers assistance programs in this country. And the answer that's always given number one, most most common answer is fear of disclosure fear that it won't be held confidential. Lawyers assistance programs, although you need to check your your own state's rules of professional conduct. For the most part, I'm pretty safe saying we don't report or disclose any identifying information to anyone, you may remain entirely completely anonymous and still receive our services. free services. In some states, it's not just for the licensed lawyer, it's for their family members. We here in Pennsylvania use an expanded version, the definition rather of that of that word, family, anyone who can connect themselves to a lawyer, a licensed lawyer, by blood by marriage by former marriage qualifies for our free confidential services. We have a helpline that's operated, it's answered by a person not a machine 20 473 65 without any exceptions, we are not by any means the only program in the country that does that. Because we want people reach out, we want to include as many people including the people that are part of your life. They're part of your life. And they're not even if they're non lawyers. They're going to impact your ability to practice law, and we want to be that they're involved to help them as well. And there's a variety of ways that we do it. As I said, that's where you have to check the each state's special specific program. As I said, some of them do even provide clinical assistance. We will pay for, for example, an evaluation by a medical health person fashional but we don't perform them because we're not clinicians. I'm not a clinician, I'm a lawyer. So if you hear me talk about clinical terms, it's really to raise your awareness level. And most rules are professional conduct address another concern among lawyers. On the lawyer who's committed an ethical violation, a violation of rules of professional conduct, often won't call because I think there'll be reported. The courts know that lawyers and judges may get ill and require specialized types of treatment, they also know that there is a hesitation

05:39

to reach out for help, because there's a concern that it won't be displayed or will be disclosed will

be held confidential. So to combat that, especially if there's been an ethical violation. Most rules of Professional Conduct address that concern by providing an exception to the duty to report that generally exists among lawyers, if you know someone's committed a violation, you have to report them. Except folks except information protected or otherwise gained by a lawyer or judge while participating in an approved lawyers Assistance Program, check the rules in your state. But I'm pretty confident in telling you that for the most part, all states have some form of exception to the duty to report, it's very important that you know that. So um, you know, maybe that should be one of your resolutions for the year, including a cruise include a call to your lawyers Assistance Program, just to chat and find but but by the way, we give out free literature, free books, things like that, that will send you for at no cost. So here we are, we're finally at that time of the area, namely the beginning of the new year, resolution time. And for those who may be viewing this well into the year, it can still be a time for reflection about why you did or didn't make, or more importantly, keep your resolutions. So during the 40 plus years of my practice, I made my share of resolutions and how to optimize my practice habits and routines, winning some losing some given that I have a little more time now to reflect on these issues, I have made a resolution to share some of my resolution experiences. So let's talk about them. Okay, what exactly is a resolution? A resolution is a firm decision to do or not to do something. It's the quality of being determined or resolute. Pretty simple. As long as we have no problem being determined. We're always making decisions to do or not to do something. And we're also known to be great negotiators and resolvers of conflicts. So I guess it's that darn word firm that gets in the way for many of us. And then there's a special type of resolution, one that is often preceded by the words, this year will be different. Yes, that's the one that evasive doesn't have the slippery slope of life, the dreaded New Year's resolution. So where the heck did they even come from? ancient civilizations such as the Egyptians celebrated a new year over 5000 years ago. Although there's no documented history of New Year's resolutions this early on. Historians know that ancient Egyptians did celebrate the turn of the year with plenty of food, alcohol and sex characteristics that stand in modern New Year's resolutions. And excuse me celebrations. The ancient Babylonians are said to have been the first people to make new year's resolutions. Some 4000 years ago, they were also the first the whole recorded celebrations in honor of the new year, though for them the year didn't begin in January began in March, when the crops were planted. During a massive cold day religious festival known as a key to the Babylonians, crowned the new king or reaffirm their loyalty to the reigning king. They also made promises to the gods to pay their debts return any objects they had borrowed. These promises could be considered the forerunners of our new year's resolutions. If the Babylonians kept their word, their pagan gods would bestow favor upon them for the coming year. If they didn't, they fall out of favor with the gods in place that no one wanted to be. So a similar practice occurred in ancient Rome after the progressive thinking Emperor Julius Caesar tinkered with the calendar and established January 1, as the beginning of the new year, and that was around 46 BC. names for Janice, the two face God whose spirit inhabited doorways and arches. January had special significance for the Romans. Believing that Be honest, symbolically look backwards and into the into the future. The Romans offered sacrifices to the deity and made

promises of good conduct for the coming year so and for early Christians. The first day, the New Year became the traditional occasion for thinking about one's past mistakes and resolving to do and be better in the future.

10:23

In 1740, being was clergyman john Wesley founded, who was the founder of Methodism, created the covenant renewal service, most commonly held on New Year's Eve or New Year's Day, which is also known as the watch night services and include readings from scriptures and hymn singing, and served as a spiritual alternative to the raucous celebrations normally held to celebrate the coming of the new year, and are often spent praying and making resolutions for the coming year. So ancient New Year's resolutions involve making promises and sacrifices the gods pray for fruitful harvest, swearing repay debts, in hopes that spiritual figures would bless people with good fortune. So how did we get from there to where we are today? Well, as you can see on the next slide, according to Merriam Webster, the full phrase, new year resolution was first used in a Boston newspaper and in 1813, despite the traditions, religious roots, New Year's resolutions today are mostly secular practice. Instead of making promises to the gods, most people make resolutions only to themselves, and focus purely on self improvement. They promised to do start doing something good, exercise, eat healthy, or stop doing something bad. drink too much alcohol smoke spend too much money, which may explain why such resolutions seem so hard to follow through on despite the fact that we've had about 4000 years of practice. And well as many as 45% of Americans say they usually make new year's resolutions, only 8% are successful in achieving their goals. And that's pretty. And as you can see from the movie theme of the prior slide, you guys said, that's pretty ugly. So what makes them so difficult to keep, as we set out in 2021, to accomplish the goals we set in 2020, that we meant to do in 2019, because we made promises in 2018 that we plan for in 2017. Let's start by looking at some of the problems facing lawyers today. And by today, I don't necessarily mean just January of 2021. I mean, the legal profession has been an increased risk to develop problems with alcohol, drugs and mental health issues. For many years, regardless of the time of year, certainly long before the impact of COVID-19 was felt. So let's examine the issues that impact far more than New Year's resolutions. Far more than our work life balance. In many cases, they impact our lives, our very existence, and the lives of our families, our clients and our colleagues as well. In 2015, the American Bar Association decided it was time to look at these problems more closely. So they asked the Hazel and Betty Ford Foundation, which is a treatment center in Minnesota, to team up with them to perform the first scientific study in the legal profession of issues involving the use of alcohol, drugs and mental health issues among lawyers. The gentleman named Patrick krill, a lawyer and certified drug and alcohol counselor, spearheaded this study, he created a questionnaire that was provided to nearly 13,000 licensed attorneys throughout 19 states in the United States, who are licensed and employed in some capacity in the legal profession via private practice, government lawyers, law clerks, in house corporate lawyers, it didn't really matter licensed and employed. When crill

finished this study, he deemed his conclusions to be incompatible with a sustainable professional culture. Why he founded 21% of all attorneys suffer from problematic tricky which is defined as hazardous to possible dependency upon alcohol, not just having one or two too many once or twice too often. hazardous drinking dependency upon our role, with nearly a third of the lawyers under the age of 30 being problem drinkers when it came to the use of drugs Only 3400 of those nearly 13,000 lawyers answered the questions about their drug use nearly that means nearly 10,000 were skipped it. Why do you want to talk about it? Alcohol is legal,

15:15

socially acceptable, or socially acceptable in many circles in our profession, but not so with the use of drugs, especially illegal drugs. So Chrome's conclusion was that they simply didn't want to talk

15:25

about it, not that it didn't exist. But they didn't want to talk about their mental health

15:31

krills findings, having applied the answers to these questions, to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, DSM, that's used by medical professionals, and he is a certified drug and alcohol counselor. So he's qualified to do that. He found that 28% of all attorneys suffer from depression, not just the normal mood swings that we all experienced the clinical depression, the 23% of all attorneys suffer from some form of stress disorder, and at 19% of all 30 suffer from some form of anxiety disorder, and yes, even higher rates than those among younger lawyers. This was in 2015, published in 2016, in the Journal of Addiction Medicine, then another study was done much more recently, but still pre COVID. So none of these numbers and I'm going to give you right now are impacted by COVID-19, which I can assure you have raised the numbers considerably. But that study was done by lm intelligence and law COMM And it was performed in late 2019. The results were published approximately a year ago, as I record this in January of excuse me in February of 2020. And it was a survey of people working in a law firm setting a law firm setting, the overwhelming majority of legal professionals believe their mental well being is worse off as a result of a chosen career. As you can see from the first slide and titled mental health by the numbers 74% purely professional and has a negative impact on their mental health. That really sheds light on life inside of a law firm. A third of those surveyed said that their use of alcohol and drugs has increased to 30 44% say that their go to way of dealing with stress, drinking use of alcohol. 64% so they feel they suffer from anxiety. 64% 74% say that their work environment contributes negatively to their mental health. 31% feel depressed. Those are very, very staggering numbers. 78% of those surveyed said that they know a colleague who's experienced anxiety 62%

know colleague who's depressed 50% know a colleague with an alcohol problem. But the statistic that really should scare all of us is that 18% reported they have contemplated suicide at some point in their careers. asked what about their job negatively impacts their mental well being there are many factors but by by far, the most popular were the feeling of always being on call, unable to disconnect, billable hour pressures, lack of sleep and client demands. You know what I mentioned that 80% of lawyers and have a suicidal ideation. Putting it in perspective. In 2017, the National Institute of Health said it 4.3% of all adults in the United States have a suicidal ideation in some time in their entire point in their entire lives. 4.3% and here we have 18% of all attorneys way out of proportion folks way out of proportion. vacations. What's that? I know, this whole years, when where's the last vacation any of us were on? Okay, let's call them staycations. The point I'm trying to make is this. Only a third of the lawyers surveyed said that they use all their vacation time why they can't disconnect. Same as to their general overall answers to these client demands don't want to face all the work waiting for them when they return. Because you can't disconnect. Many lawyers feel that they need to take advantage of that small window to relax and that window is getting smaller and smaller as we work from home. And we mix work and personal time. The workday does a start and then as it always did more traditionally you leave you go to work you come back at a certain time. Now it's being spread out because interspersed with it, there are personal matters that come into play as well. So because you can't disconnect, many lawyers feel that they take the need to take advantage of that. Going from 60, zero to 60, back to zero again, what's going to take them back, they're like any quarter that a few drinks, or maybe a pill. So you add to this to work from home due to COVID, it really opens a Pandora's box of unintended consequences.

20:25

Now, I'm not a clinician, but I'm going to use some clinical term from time to time. But before I get into some of the other problems facing us, before we go to the other side of the bounce, let's let's, I want to leave you with one last slide on mental health by the numbers. Nearly two thirds of the lawyer surveyed said they couldn't take an extended leave from their employment to tend to their mental health issues, because it would either hurt their career trajectory. 78% said that, or they were fearful of what others in their firm would say about them. 77% said that, and over half felt that they had too much work to take an extended leave. So let me see if I get this right. It's the work that a lawyer does that causes them the negative mental health consequences. And yet they have too much of that

21:15

work,

21:17
to take an extended leave to tend to their mental health issues. It's the hamster on the wheel situation. So let's talk about some of these things in particular, and I'm going to only spend a few minutes on each of them. Once again, you have this PowerPoint, you can look at it at your leisure, maybe when you as you listen to my presentation. But with respect to depression, for example, what I want to draw your attention to as one of the causes of depression is right in the center of this slide, stressful life events, stressful life events, do I mentioned the fact that COVID-19 is a stressful life event. It's more than that it's being called a collective societal, even traumatic, excuse me, generational traumatic event. And trauma is also a cause of depression. You know, we're finding a lot of people that are calling us up on the phone, and our helpline, and, and exhibiting characteristics that are more closely associated with traditional grief. And that's becoming very common during the pandemic. And it's a normal response to the loss of life, rather to wash period, during or after a disaster. And it can be in response to loss of life, as well as drastic changes to the daily routines, and the ways of life that usually bring us comfort, a feeling of stability. And some of those reactions can be shocked disbelief, denial, anger, distress, anxiety,

22:49
I'm

22:51
unable to mourn someone's death in person, unable to be with them when they die. But on top of that, those missed opportunities that occur once perhaps in a lifetime graduation, weddings, special 80th or 90th birthday party. Those are the kinds of things that are that can happen, all of which can happen at the same time. And that can only complicate and prolonged grief and delay someone's ability to adapt and heal and recover. Okay, so although depression is generally been recognized as the overall number one mental health issue, there are some other issues that are that need to be addressed as well. There's the slide that I'm looking at now, of course, am I depressed? is right out of the DSM criteria for depression contains all the symptoms. And right there at the bottom of that screen that's labeled I am, am I depressed? is social or occupational distress and isolation. Social distress, social isolation, occupational distress, occupational isolation. That's been in the symptoms of depression for years and years and years and years. And yet, suddenly, this year, those words have met so many different things to us than they did traditionally. Never thought too much about that type of isolation, did we? What is stress? Stress is composed of the following sequence of elements, stimulus, a thought, and emotion and behavior. Our mental response to stress reflects how we first perceive and then subsequently think about any given situation. Our brains are constantly evaluating our present circumstances, the finding of zero rewarding, risky, threatening, maybe unknown. That initial response operates on a subconscious level and it influences our emotional and physical responses which are definitely

interrelated. So that subconscious and spontaneous analysis of every single situation we encounter is really a vital part of our instinctive survival mechanism that we inherited from our ancient ancestors. And it's similar to the animal kingdoms. Freeze fight or flight response to the brain sends the signals out to the rest of our body, sugaring specific chemical reactions, as well as other specific physical and emotional responses as well. Sometimes this subconscious process propels us to take immediate action in an emergency to get out of harm's way or trigger a fear based response, causing us to strike out in defense and then later as civilize you human beings regret our actions. We can, however, exert conscious control over our thoughts and emotions to put the brakes on impulsive, harmful or inappropriate emotions and behavior. So that awareness of how and why we respond the way we do to certain events, combined with some proper training gives us the ability to learn to hit the pause button to thoughtfully respond, rather than to instinctively react. So I asked you this, folks, do you stay calm and unruffled looking for solutions? Or do you get angry, look for somebody to blame? Some people are stressed already don't seem to be affected by the pressures and problems of daily living. I don't know too many people that have that haven't been affected by the pressures and problems of COVID-19 living. However, some people seem to thrive on the challenges but before the others are unable to, or to withstand any pressure, or any difficulty without being upset, rendered unable to act at all. Most of us stagger this fall somewhere in between. So it's the luck the optimistic and calm emotional responses that reduce harmful stress, this resentment, anxiety and anger that generates harmful stress. And those individual responses may differ from one another because of our individual differences as human beings, otherwise we would all react the same way to a given situation. So what what is it our childhood, our genetic makeup, our environments, our present circumstances, like our health, our finances, our personal relationships, previous similar experiences. And if we had them, were they positive or negative, or awareness on our understanding of what is happening, and what can be done. And here are the key words, if anything, about a given situation. lawyers don't like those words, if anything, because we all say, of course, there's something we can do, and I'm the one who can do it. But that's why we have higher stress than non lawyers. In addition, our individual response to the same situation may also vary depending on how we're feeling physically, or emotionally at that time. I'm sure some of you have experienced this. Some days you deal well with particular stressor. And some days you do poorly with the exact same stressor. So the variables that influence that response may be whether it was a first time experience where you're properly prepared for the situation. What was your proceeding physical or mental state, for example, real hungry, angry, lonely, tired, Ill injured, taking medication, depressed, anxious, fearful, surprise, caught off guard, all those factors affect how we perceive

28:36

and react to our present circumstances. So the next slide you're going to see is in title, how stressed are you? That's the question I want to pose to you. Right at the top of that slide, is the

number one answer. My work requires me to do too much in too little time. always been the case, that's always been number one on the hit parade list. The next one, you don't have enough time to spell your family. I'm hearing now. I work around my family every single day as I work from home, and they're driving me crazy. So it's been a little bit of a change to that one. But you can see from the rest of these that some of them are having to do with the work environment, which I mentioned already in connection with the latest survey that was conducted last year, pre COVID. Were both folks are still working in the normal, natural, usual, whatever you want to call that environment, in our offices, and that 74% reported that it was a negative influence in their lives. You know, some stress is healthy, positive stressors can energize and motivate us to be productive and creative problem solvers. But as we have this lawyer mentality, we become overly responsible for everything and everybody. We're problem solvers. People come to us to solve our problem. their problems, our problems don't count. And if we do have problems, we're not going to talk about them with anybody because that's a sign of weakness. We overanalyze things, we become cautious. Sometimes when things don't work out the way we want them to, we feel depressed, defeated, hopeless. That's when we start to rely on alcohol and drugs and make us feel better, quick fixes. Sometimes we start to think about quitting giving up the practice of wall. And yes, as you've heard already, occasionally, we think about suicide. So, as I said, some stress is healthy. Totally stress free life is not only unrealistic in our profession, it could actually be a harmful form of denial to many events, changes and demands in our lives, even positive ones, can leave us feeling overwhelmed, and sometimes paralyzed with worrying about how we're going to get it all done. At that point, when life seems too much for us to handle, stress, ceases to be your ally, and has now become your foe. That's when we've entered into a life of distress. And the caution I need to give you is that you can be in distress, and not even knowing gradual, incremental increases in responsibilities, duties, pressures, demands at home and at work. And now those two are jumbled up all the time. Combined with long workdays that don't start and stop like they used to. Long work weeks, that becomes risky. At some point, work begins to dominate our lives and keep us in a chronically high level of dis stress. And yet, we're often unaware that we've lost balance in our lives. Stop for a moment. Recall the last time you were acutely aware, you were under a lot of stress, it was probably some crisis. And if you're feeling you'd lost control of a situation or its outcome, the truth of the matter is, you're probably already under a lot of stress. And the crisis merely accentuated your awareness of many, if not most lawyers are in a state of denial as to the amount of stress they're under. In fact, for some, yes, there is such a thing as a workaholic, trying to relax me and create feelings of distress therapists tell us at workaholic stuff they're feeling. That is as they experienced life's eventual troubles and periods of painful or difficult times they stay busy with work and don't allow themselves to the experience of feeling of pain or sorrow. or discuss their innermost feelings with anybody else. They're hardwired, that there's always going to be something to do to keep themselves busy. So that then in times of relaxation, when they may not have any busy schedule in front of them, those feelings come back and cause some pain and discomfort. Why? Because I've never learned to deal with them. Their solution has always been to get too busy. But I went to law school, they tell them they're going to teach me how to think like a

lawyer. Wow. And then they did. And thinking like a lawyer is a legal skill, not a life skill. Remember, the distressed lawyer eventually will lose their efficiency and their effectiveness distress, that lawyer makes poor decisions, opening us up to liability,

33:25
we can and must raise our awareness levels, if we're going to achieve balance in our lives. And yes, folks, balance is the key balance is everything. And you can see that on the slide that I have included in this PowerPoint. And I put quotation marks around those remarks around them words, balance is the key. Because I borrowed them from that famous philosopher of life, in keeping with the movie theme, Mr. Miyagi from The Karate Kid. so

34:00
worried?

34:02
anxiety? What is worrying to have it? It's the heart of anxiety. It's the heart of anxiety. nearly everybody worries occasionally. It's a normal response, normal folks response to problems in the unknown. It's when those thoughts escalate in a story, our story and when we play out this hypothetical scenario in our imagination, that usually starts with two words. What if followed by the worst case scenario your brain can possibly imagine. That is what is at the heart of anxiety. We've got facts over here. Our story about the facts over here. And yeah, they intersect a little bit in the middle. But still our story about the facts. And that's how we live. We live with our story. Not the fact is what if? What if? What if, and that's at the heart of anxiety. And that's called on productive? Worry, productive worry helps us identify problems, and use effective problem solving strategies on unproductive worry, is a way of coping with problems. We can't change it as worried anxiety, already unpleasant experience. So what are we going to do? eular anyone, anyone? I love it can't help it. strategies that work, strategies that work. Let's start by setting realistic goals, realistic goals for yourself. That's what we need to start with. And I'm laughing because when you get to the slide that says set realistic goals for yourself to see one of my favorite cartoons on there. It's pretty interesting. Let's talk about some strategies that work. And one first and foremost is the setting realistic goals for yourself? Whoa, whoa, put up in 2021 different kind of woke it up. This is w o P stands for a wish an outcome an obstacle and a plan. This is a step by step writing activity begin with identifying a wish or goal you want to achieve. Next, you mentally imagine one positive outcome of achieving this goal and one obstacle that stands in the way and this reflection sets you up for the final step making a plan for how you can get around that obstacle. How's it work? A common mistake was setting a goal was to indulge in fantasy but how great life will be after accomplishing it without considering what's currently holding us back mentally

contrasting your hope for outcome the obstacle that stands in your path is is energizing. This prepares you to make a plan for when and how you'll take action. Remember that a goal without a plan is just a wish. Just a wish. But resolving to change however fervently you wish to do so is no guarantee that you actually follow through. Why not? One reason is that most OLS can't be accomplished all at once. And on the spot, you need a way to bridge your current intentions with your future actions. And contrary to popular belief, you don't need more willpower, you need a strategy. And that begins with priorities. And as Stephen Covey points out, the key is not to prioritize which on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities, schedule priority prioritize your day, visualize how you would like to spend each day and what would make you the most productive. Start making small deliberate changes that allow you to uphold your priorities and get them done effectively. step back and look at your to do list. How many are critical and must be done that day? What are you working to achieve? create a plan or work toward your objective. Then schedule your priorities and don't have 10 things on your list. Focus on three, or four. When you focus on three or four things on your list, you have a realistic chance of success and you might actually see a reduction in your stress

38:50

level as well. Time management, minimizing distractions. Okay, key key aacom clean right up front. I never fully succeeded with this resolution. I found that a major distraction was my need to see my emails now I be on the phone and often found my eyes glancing at my computer screen in order to catch the next email. I've always actually done it two or three times during this presentation with the anticipation of a kid on Christmas Eve and lastly, once I saw the email, I felt compelled to respond to an email communication like a tennis match setting the need that hit the ball back immediately. You know I felt like Federer or Serena okay needless to say that distraction did bother even though I I kept it up. I resolved to shut my email window until I was ready to review emails. The problem was I was always ready to review emails. For some reason my mind told me emails were a priority like a 911 matter. Eventually I realized that Before we even had email, or even faxes, the equivalent message came via the regular mail the Postal Service, the sender would drop it into a mailbox and two or three days later, I'd get it and then the turnaround would probably be end up being a week. Not a minute. So I resolved once again for the time to break this habit and I'm proud to say I succeeded.

40:22

Some of the time.

40:24

Some of the times, alright, I admit it out loud some of the time one of my priorities. And one of

your priorities should include what I call quick stress busters. And I just did one of them. I laughed at myself, maintain a sense of humor about yourself. I didn't intend to but I just did it. The late comedian Milton Berle would often say that laughter is like an instant vacation, which would certainly especially be welcome at a time like this when many of us can't travel, and have been confined in our homes or to our homes, I should say, not only can laughter enhance the immune system, it can increase endorphin levels, relieve pain, and alleviate stress. Take a few deep breaths. Be mindful, focus on immediate present. Create a healthy routine. I already talked about priorities, ask for help. Yeah, here's another good one. being intentional, not the kind of intentions that are on here. We all know where we're at leads the pay, and what road is paved with good intentions, not those some of being intentional with your time and your space. The Unexpected shift to remote working three COVID-19 is taking a toll on workers mental health, and many of us are unable to find relief even in the comfort of our own homes. So the pandemic has triggered stressors in careers personal finances, family life, with nearly 70% of workers saying COVID-19 is the most stressful moment in their entire careers. A culprit is the 24 seven always on culture that's emerged from hyper communication. Digital connectivity is an all time high, which is helping I guess businesses that circumvent and respond to the disruptions waged by COVID-19. But suddenly, work meaning can take place at any time of the day without warning or incident and instantaneous responses have now become the expectation and the norm. So recent data shows that remote workers are likely to clock additional time than they did before COVID-19. As many as 60 hours a month. Some surveys are showing us. So although working times appear to be on the rise for employees during COVID-19 stress is compromising their overall productivity, which is what really counts accelerated connectivity has its advantages. But this bulldozing trend of hyper communication really can wreak havoc in your personal life. And eventually, if we're not careful, we will compromise our productivity. We will no suggestions subject us to information overload, constant distraction and burnout, and burnout. So it doesn't appear that the always on culture is going to be switching off anytime in the immediate future. Here's some key strategies that can help safeguard your personal life and burnout, promote wellbeing and maintain higher productivity levels during this critical time. And that's where being intentional with your time and your space comes into play, creating a dedicated workspace. And by that I simply mean this. I know they're called laptops and you can put them on your lap and you can work with them on your lap. Does your office sit on your bed with them on your lap right next to your breakfast, your lunch or whatever. All within a few feet of where you eat, sleep and work. Here it is. Now create a dedicated workspace. Okay, that's what it means. No matter how small your quarters are, take regular breaks and remote workforce. Many lawyers are going without designated lunch breaks or midday coffee breaks. Mental Health breaks to still be scheduled and prioritize scheduled with intentionality. Additionally, you should think about other priorities that are important like family dinners, video calls with friends reading. And I don't mean reading something that's on the screen. I mean reading a book with pages, exercising etc. Things like that proactively put them onto your into your calendar to block the time and effectively schedule your priorities. Intentionally disconnect that airplane mode be your friend falling asleep with your phone in your hand so that

you can respond instantly the notification An hour is not offering you any relief. The onus is on each of us as individuals to set feasible boundaries and de stress to achieve

45:11

work life balance, work life balance, transition times, there's no way around it no matter what's happening at work, life is happening outside of it at the same time, especially during the covid 19 pandemic family members may get sick, childcare needs may have to take priority times. If you work as a solo, I know that may be difficult, if not been planned for how work matters like these are going to be addressed at various points of the day, and how you can handle off tasks to other people in your office or in your firm. Establishing routine, everything I've already touched on that and being kind to yourself. I didn't touch on that yet taking care of your body and your spirit. Now, these are extraordinarily trying times. And all the tried and true stress management techniques apply, like eating healthy, getting plenty of sleep, meditating. So be kind to yourself, go easy on yourself if you're experiencing more depression or anxiety than usual, because you're not alone in your struggles. When those stressors throw your nervous system out of balance, relaxation techniques, like deep breathing meditation, can really bring you back into a state of equilibrium. The bottom line is is sticking true to your priorities, and scheduling them with intention can help lawyers maintain an essential work life balance. And that's where setting boundaries comes into play. young lawyers and even those in mid career often fail to set healthy boundaries between work and home life. And if you don't set boundaries, you're going to receive those client calls every Sunday morning early, and routine last minute requests by colleagues to work overnight. So you got to have boundaries, so that you can have time to balance your life. Play with your kids have a zoom game night I was that I just found out about from one of my kids who lives in Chicago. We have zoom game night, there's an app on there on a phone that you can download the solid state zoom game night pretty fun to enjoying dinner with your significant other your spouse watching a movie as a family. You know, there's a perception that you must be available 24 seven as a lawyer and be seen to as the go to person integral to the firm. Ultimately, it means you're a successful lawyer. Frankly, the opposite is true. Because the lack of boundaries increases the risk of burning out this code act, you've got to know how to disconnect. Okay, while face to face communication can be a vitamin, you know, for our for our minds and our souls and our spirits. Too much screentime is a stressor pre COVID it was 13.2 hours a day, excuse me 10.2 hours a day. First stat I saw during COVID 13.3 hours a day. Now it's up to 14 hours a day average something with a screen that were filed TV, laptop, desktop cell phone. So disconnect. turn off notifications don't charge your phone beside your bed. Don't keep it with you when you're eating when you're exercising when you're socializing. Read a book or a magazine rather than looking at one on your phone or your tablet. Okay, set boundaries and set limits check your email blank times a day at designated times and let clients and colleagues no unexpected set and limit social media. Let's try 10 minutes per platform per day. Use a timer that works monitor your use a noose Do Not Disturb. Okay, I got a lot more quick stress buzzers and at the top of this next slide it says

more quick stress busters is meditation and or pray consistent stress reduction occurs with only 10 minutes of daily meditation. 10 minutes, one hour of your 24 hour day is 4% of your life folks. Is 4% of your life too much to devote to your own wellness. What are they feeling when you're on an airplane and the option to domestic sense they say you're traveling with someone who needs help. Put your own oxygen mask on first, then help the person you're traveling with. If you don't take care of yourself, how are you going to take care of your clients? How are you going to take care of your families? How are you going to take care of your colleagues that need help? Take care of yourself. Unplug from social media when it's acutely acutely distressing exercise, eat healthy, cultivate a positive attitude. Get a good night's sleep and avoid the overuse of alcohol and drugs as a short term fixed Okay, that's important. I gotten out of law school 48 years ago,

50:05

I can call myself an old blog, and I did learn a new trick. And it's called a meditation app. And I download it on my phone and I use it every single day. 10 minutes increments in the morning and an evening. As 20 minutes. Yes, I know I saw myself 40 minutes the formula of practice what I preach. So you got to take a little walk, take just sit back, lean back, relax. Try to try to pick out an hour, little 510 minute increments, okay. It'll help you. meditation and mindfulness reduces mental chatter, you know, we don't have to attach ourselves to our feelings. Okay, acknowledge them. Let them move on. Like the clouds like a windy clouds that I see blowing across the sky and I look out my window here. The trees are staying the building Stang, those clouds are moving. If I attach myself to those what I don't feel well, I let them move. Let them go. illuminate the what ifs in your life. help other people that human connection is another way of maintaining your work life balance and a resolution for you no matter what time of the year this. Okay, help somebody else it will make you feel better service to others. I helped someone 90 years old learn how to use FaceTime last week, so that he could speak to his nine year old friend that he had known since he was 10 years old, who was in an assisted living where there was no visitors allowed due to COVID-19 look on his face when he saw his friend on his cell phone. priceless. A simple thing like that. Simple. We take too much for granted. reach out for help other people. It's really essential. It's essential. Be grateful. Take a minute, I said 10 minutes before, try one minute and write down literally write with a pencil or a pen and a piece of paper. Things that you have to be grateful for, you'd be shocked at how many things you can write down in one minute. One minute is my challenge to you write down things to be grateful, I guarantee you you will be able to use black ink and not just reading, it'll build your resiliency, boost your productivity give you a positive state of mind. And really, probably sleep better at night. A great time to do it is before you put your head on your pillow, gratitude. The other stress buster, and really tip for work life balance has to do with something called the parasympathetic nervous system. You know, I was earlier I was talking about them the fight or flight response from discussing stress that was intended as a survival mechanism to allow mammals including humans, to react quickly to a situation that was life threatening. You know, unfortunately, today, the human body has the same response to non

life threatening stressors that cause high levels of anxiety. So the body's fight or flight response is controlled by the sympathetic nervous system, which is part one part I should say, of the autonomic nervous system. The other part is the parasympathetic nervous system, which works to relax and slow down the body's response. So we need to learn to activate the parasympathetic nervous system. And there's a slide up there that soon titled activating that system. I've just got some examples like running, hiking, walking, painting, gardening, golfing, dancing, swimming, yes, there's a there's a there's the Snoopy doing the happy dance. And and you know the changes in the body when the sympathetic nervous system is activated take place very quickly. So until the brain perceives that the dangers past, it continues to release hormones that keep the body on high alert and ready for intense physical activity. So once the threats over those levels decline, and the parasympathetic nervous system slows the stress response by releasing hormones that relax the mind, relax the body, and inhibit and slow down many of the high energy functions of the body. So there's some benefits that I have on the slides here. And they benefit our cardiovascular health, our circulation our hydration, keeps the valve system pumping, pain relief. Many people feel that it helps digestion and food allergies it's it's basically the fight or flight versus the

54:59

rest and digest. That's what it's actually called the rest and digest system. The parasympathetic nervous system. So when it's activated, produces a calm and relaxed feeling in the mind and the body and you can actually learn to trigger that by and immediately reduce that sense of anxiety and stress in your life. And that's one of the tips that we use for, for keeping our work life balance. in check, keep give yourself a chance for success. Last but not least, don't isolate, share your goals, declutter. And by that I mean even an uncluttered desktop or laptop as well as physical clutter, start your day off fresh. It'll help you out a lot. Don't overdo it be realistic. I always I already told you that. Sometimes we overwhelm ourselves. Because we're in a high risk profession. We really are. We're emotionally detached. We're in a win lose conflict driven adversarial profession, where one lawyers wins another lawyers loss in our quest to win takes priority over everything else in our lives. It throws us out of balance. We have high expectations and accountability, high stress levels are always on call always have to be available to solve other people's problems. And we don't end up dealing with our own problems. Why we're ashamed and embarrassed, we don't want to admit that we have there's a stigma that exists in society in general is disproportionately magnified in the legal profession. Nobody wants to be labeled an alcoholic, fanatic, depressed, etc. So we've denied, we engage in that in that psychological defense mechanism. I'm not one of them. That hasn't happened to me yet. Okay. we minimize we justify what we do. If we have no if we know someone else that needs help, we don't want to address it. We don't want to embarrass him when we get them angry. We actually enable them to continue that unhealthy behavior. So what can you do? We know it's difficult, but we need to our gang goals to motivate the impaired learners seek professional help that they so desperately need. Be in the center of the ripple effect.

Pick up the phone and call. Call for yourself call for someone else. No one gets reported. Nobody gets turned in. Okay, nobody asks your name anonymous, anonymous. We have many files that we open under that designation. Anonymous. Anonymous is just that simple. And it is part of our business. I have a slot up here called Brian's Big Five. express gratitude for what you have. Create one hour today to think relax. Do one thing you love to do every day. set clear and realistic goals. And lastly, let go of fear. But most importantly, no matter what time of the year, you see this presentation. Why? Wait? Why wait? every month, every day, every moment is the opportunity to live a new cycle. You don't have to wait until a new year to start a cycle. Being a healthy lawyer is part of being a good lawyer. Okay, no matter what's out there, no matter if there's clouds in the sky. The sun will rise tomorrow. And until it does, we have no stake in it because it is as yet unborn. Any man, any woman, any man any woman can deal with one day. And I suggest to you that you can start your goals any single moment of any single single day. You wish. Don't wait. Don't wait. That's why I call this being resolved. Striving for a realistic work life balance in 2021. No matter when you see this, I hope you get something out of it. I want to thank you for attending today's continuing legal education program. Remember, if you have any questions that you have like to contact me for any reason, call me, email me. My contact information is included in this PowerPoint. I'm once again I'm Brian Quinn. I'm the education outreach coordinator for lawyers concerned for lawyers of Pennsylvania. It's been my pleasure to present here to you today and I thank you so much