



FLORIDA BAR NEWS

A MINDFUL TRANSITION TO GREATER PEACE

By Scott Rogers ▶ Special to the News ▶ Columns

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A life in the law can be filled with conflict and challenges, both at work and home.

Each has its charms and, at times, may be the more stable and supportive environment. As the practice of law is explicitly adversarial and most who enter the profession expect that it will be stressful, one may feel a deep need for their life outside the law to be a refuge, an environment in which to recharge and refresh.

When it is not — for all the reasons we understand perhaps better than we'd like — it can be disappointing.

This month's question is posed by Cin, who writes:

It is challenging to find balance between my work and home life. When things at home are not going well, I tend to pour myself into my work, which sometimes only exacerbates the matter at home. I expect to deal with difficult people and emotions while practicing law. At home, I really want a place of calm. Any suggestions for how mindfulness can help me find better balance?

I shared Cin's question with Rosario Lozada, a law professor at Florida International University College of Law who helps to empower law students with well-being tools, including mindfulness practices.

She replies:

Thank you for your question, Cin. I appreciate that you are already mindful of a dynamic in your life — a dynamic that may not be serving you. You are struggling to transition from your work life — where you expect to (and probably do) encounter difficult emotions and personalities — to your home life, where you arrive with expectations of calm and peace that sometimes are not met.

One practice you may consider is to bring mindful awareness to moments of transition in your day. Many professionals "leave" work at the end of the day, yet they continue to engage in work-related behaviors.

They glance at their phones on the way to the elevator, answer an email or two while in the elevator, call a client as they head to their cars, and engage in a difficult conversation over the phone as they join the

line of cars waiting to exit the parking garage. The ride home may present additional challenges of traffic or inclement weather. And yet a red light or even a STOP sign may seem like an opportunity to respond to texts or emails. At each red light, a car may be stopping, but the minds of these professionals keep going. By the time these professionals get home, they may be in a continuous state of panic or tension, unprepared for the transition to their home life.

Consider the possibility of a mindful transition. On your journey home, try ignoring an incoming call, if you are able. Notice the impulse to pick up or hold your phone. When you stop at a red light, allow yourself to truly stop — not just by hitting the brakes of your car. Use your breath as an anchor to be present as you await the green light. Breathe in, knowing you are breathing in; breathe out, knowing you are breathing out. Give yourself permission to be with yourself — your breath, your body — in the final few minutes of your journey home. When you arrive home, get out of your car slowly and deliberately. And, as you walk from your driveway or garage to your home, notice your breath in every step.

Ralph Waldo Emerson says it well: “Nothing can bring you peace but yourself.”

Thank you, Cin, for posing a question that points to a perennial challenge so many of us face — finding balance in our lives and nurturing what matters. Emerson’s quote reinforces a key mindfulness insight to which Rosario offers practical guidance. Thank you, Rosario, for offering “step-by-step” instructions on how one might cultivate greater present moment awareness when transitioning from work to home — so that they might more fully be present and perhaps bring a little more wisdom and compassion into their lives when it may be needed most.

If you have a question about integrating mindfulness into the practice of law that you would like answered in this column, send it to srogers@law.miami.edu.



*Scott Rogers, M.S., J.D., is a nationally recognized leader in the area of mindfulness in law and founded and directs the University of Miami School of Law’s Mindfulness in Law Program where he teaches mindful ethics, mindful leadership, mindfulness and negotiation, and mindfulness in law. He is the creator of Jurisight, one of the first CLE programs in the country to integrate mindfulness and neuroscience and conducts workshops and presentations on the role of mindfulness in legal education and across the legal profession. He is author of the recently released, **“The Mindful Law Student: A Mindfulness in Law Practice Guide,”** written for all audiences.*