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Passion makes attorneys more effective

Finding passion in one's career can be an elusive quest; the law is no exception. Indeed, many lawyers express long-term dissatisfaction with their jobs and seek their true passion elsewhere. In fact, they will often stop practicing law altogether and take the plunge to pursue other interests on a full-time basis. Why the endemic unhappiness? We have all heard countless times that the law is a "jealous mistress," all-consuming and an endless source of stress.

This myopic view is typically born of the adage that the grass is always greener on the other side and fails to recognize that every other profession has also become much more demanding and stressful, particularly since the onset of the latest recession. There is little, if any, indication that these demands will abate any time soon. Thus, it is incumbent upon each of us lawyers to channel our focus and energy on making the most of our careers here and now and to change that which is within our control, accept what we cannot change and have the wisdom to know the difference.

Being a positive force in our profession is born of passion. Passion is a critical part of any successful and fulfilling path. It is what motivates and excites you. Passion fills you with energy and a positive attitude and enables you to work tirelessly. It is at the heart of finding satisfaction in what you do, both personally and professionally. Satisfaction breeds happiness and happiness breeds personal and professional success. It is difficult to find one without the others.

Passion also makes you more powerful and effective with clients and potential clients. They are well aware that passion

translates into dedication and delivering results on their matters. It shines through in all that you do and separates you from your competitors. It enables you to focus, reason and problem-solve in a much more meaningful way. Clients both want and expect their lawyers to go through brick walls for them and passion enables you to persevere and push through to the finish line, despite the toughest of challenges. Passion converts inaction to action and results lie where the action is.

Passion also provides a more impactful framework within which to both lead and mentor other lawyers. When you are passionate about what you do, others will want to be around you and follow your lead. There is a heightened level of engagement and excitement that you bring to the table. Your group will be more receptive to your suggestions, ideas and advice and will perform at a higher level.

When team members are focused on the same goals, it enables them to be much more successful in driving the desired results, both individually and

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PARADIGM SHIFT



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collectively. In addition, when you are passionate about what you do, your mentoring is more likely to resonate with mentees. When you share your experiences with them, your passion is palpable, contagious and attractive and they will want all of the excitement and motivation that they see in you.

You will inspire them to take a closer look at themselves so as to evaluate their current circumstances and to determine where their own true passions lie. Everyone has a passion — it is just a matter of finding it.

Whether you are helping others find their passions or seeking your own, it can be a challenging endeavor. Passions rarely fall into one's lap and finding them often involves hard work. In many ways, it is not all that different from dating and is a journey of hits and misses before you find what you are

looking for. It is both an internal and external process, and while you must look outside yourself to determine what interests and motivates you, it is important to remember that passion is a state of mind and, in large part, comes from within.

As with finding a mate, if you are jaded and pessimistic, you will have a more difficult time, but if you are patient, positive and have an open mind, you are likely to be successful. There may be myriad reasons why you are unhappy today which have little, if anything, to do with lacking passion. Following your passion does not mean perpetual bliss and just because a career or circumstance is imperfect does not mean that passion is lacking.

Finding your passion is an evolutionary process that can and should unfold over many years. As people change and grow, so do their passions. By frequently considering what inspires and motivates you, you can continue to mold and shape your personal and professional life. Tweaks, rather than monumental changes, will often be enough.

Ultimately, you may be one of those individuals I mentioned earlier who finds that the law is not your true passion and you may instead decide that finding success and fulfillment means that you must follow a different path. I wish you every happiness in whatever course you choose.

In the meantime, bring passion to all that you do and every experience that you have. It will make a world of difference and will help you find the happiness and success that you seek in the here and now. As Buddha once said: "Do not dwell in the past, do not dream of the future, concentrate the mind on the present moment."