



Happiness in Law: Oxymoron or Enigma?

That's the question we're unpacking this month — not with quick fixes or toxic positivity, but with honesty, curiosity, and a bit of ancient wisdom.

Would it surprise you to know that my most downloaded podcast episodes--*by far!*--are my episodes exploring **how to be happier in law?!** I'm taking the hint and using this month's newsletter to unpack this topic even further.

On the **podcast**, we're diving into self-sabotage: why we do it, how it shows up in our lives (especially in high-pressure professions like law), and practical steps to stop it and start shifting toward something better. 🎙️

In **this newsletter**, we're looking closely at how we misstep in our pursuit of happiness. Feeling the weight of the world a bit more lately? You're not alone — and you're not doing it wrong. We're exploring what it means to seek happiness in a profession not exactly known for it, and how our expectations might be getting in the way. 🤔

Carve out whatever time you have — five minutes, fifteen, or more — and take what you need.

We're in this conversation together. 🤝⚖️

Announcements

Uplevel Your Team

Empower your attorneys to take ownership of their careers — and their success.

Let's partner on a high-impact, interactive session led by an experienced coach and recognized leader in the legal profession. Together, we'll design a presentation that's not just informative, but transformative — with practical, real-world strategies your attorneys can use immediately.

Popular topics include:

Building a Book of Business
Mastering Difficult Conversations
Selling Your Legal Services with Confidence
What In-House Counsel Really Wants
Crafting Your Legal Brand

If you're planning professional development or training programs for 2025, let's collaborate to create a custom experience tailored to your firm's goals and your attorneys' needs.

Let's make 2025 the year your team levels up — with clarity, confidence, and purpose. I'd love to hear about your goals and help you develop a plan.

New: 5-Session Introductory Coaching Package

Curious about coaching but not quite ready for a long-term commitment? This new **5-session package** is the perfect way to explore what coaching can do for you — with focused support, practical tools, and real results.

Whether you're facing career crossroads, craving better work-life balance, or seeking meaningful personal growth, this package is designed to help you:

Clarify your goals
Move through challenges
Create lasting, aligned change

It's a powerful first step — without the pressure of a long-term program.

Ready to see what's possible?

[Let's get started.](#)

The Happiness Pursuit

This is something my clients grapple with every day. As a coach, I work with so many amazing and talented women struggling with this very challenge. They are women who seemingly have it all and yet remain saddled with mild unhappiness, a feeling of being unfulfilled. How is it possible to come so far, to achieve all the goals, to have all the things, and not feel any differently? It flies in the face of everything we are taught about happiness.

We all go to law school for a variety of reasons—we want the challenge, the prestige, the respect, the money, and everything else that comes with it. We're each driven by a set of our own unique reasons, too. In that reasoning, we assume that happiness will also come. If we're respected, and if we have a good job with a big paycheck, we also will naturally have happiness, no?

No.

We all want to be happy. Everything we do (or don't do) in this life is because we are seeking some positive emotion that is rooted in happiness—peace, relaxation, love, respect, and so on. Those feelings are why we take certain actions and don't take others. The problem is that most of us are looking for something to create those emotions for us; we're looking for something to bring purpose to our lives, something to bring us happiness. Usually, this search is tied to something concrete and measurable—a job, a relationship, or some other milestone:

Once I lose ten pounds, I can finally figure out my life.

Once I find a good guy, I will be so much happier.

When I get my law degree and start making money, life will be so much easier.

If I move to a different firm, I will be happier.

If I work less, I will be happier.

If I have a bigger house, I will be a lot happier.

If I have more time, I will be happier.

Most people don't explicitly make a clear connection between the goal and happiness, but it is always there, silently expectant beneath the surface. We know better than to wander around telling everyone, "I'm going to achieve X-Y-Z so I can be happy." We know, on an intellectual level, that is not the way to find happiness. But that knowledge doesn't stop us from hoping happiness will follow the next achievement. The next accolade. The next thing we obtain.

The belief that happiness can be a nice side effect of the next endeavor is in there, quietly driving the search. It is hidden in the motives we are not questioning or challenging. We have to stop blindly pursuing and instead pause to ask ourselves, *Why? Why are we pursuing that thing? Why do we want things to be different?* That is the first step in getting to the nucleus of the matter and truly understanding where we are and what is driving us. Often, those questions show us that what is driving us is the belief that once these things are attained, we will feel happy, fulfilled, and worthy—and those beliefs are incredibly persuasive. It makes sense that once we have more money, we might be happier; and that if we were able to work less, life would be better—but what I have seen time and time again is that simply is not the case. I implore you, do not begin (or continue) your career believing that the job...the money...the title...is going to make you happy.

That. Is. Impossible.

In part, this problem is rooted in what society teaches us about happiness. We have been so conditioned by advertisers, society, and the media that our happiness lies outside of ourselves. If we get that power office, the beautiful home and picket fence, that partnership, lose those last ten pounds, *then* we will have it all. Then we will be happy. For some of us who are lucky, we do lose those ten pounds, we find the great guy, we have the picturesque family, or we finally get the dream career. But then it sets in: that heavy, dark feeling that comes when

you've achieved everything you wanted and yet you still feel lost. It didn't feel like you thought it would. It didn't make you happy like you'd hoped. Rather, now that the shine has worn off, everything still feels the same. So, now what?

For many of us, we interpret that feeling as a sign that we didn't get it right and then set off to find the next thing. We keep adding new projects to our lists in search of that magical combination that will complete our happiness puzzle. We reorganize our puzzle pieces, adding to and subtracting from them, hoping to finally get the combination just right. We get a divorce, leave the firm, quit being a lawyer, have a baby, buy a new house, move, and on and on it goes. I left my toxic law firm and my abusive partner—and while life was certainly different after that, it was not markedly happier. It was happy in different (healthier) ways, and it continued to be difficult in different (healthier) ways. The yin and yang of my life did not suddenly shift, even after eradicating some undeniably bad elements. My interior struggles were still there waiting for me, even after I had burnt it all down.

Coming to recognize that accumulating the right puzzle pieces in your life won't make you happy is only half the point. The other half is the exploration of how to create happiness on your own. Most people have convinced themselves that once they attain their goals, they will finally *feel* a certain way. That is where this contaminated cycle begins, because those feelings are what we must create for ourselves. How you feel about your life is a direct result of what is happening in your head. It is not something you can get from external things.

So many people blame their unhappiness on what's happening outside of themselves:

I'm unhappy because I hate my job.

I'm unhappy because my boss is a jerk.

I'm unhappy because my spouse isn't affectionate.

I'm unhappy because I don't make enough money.

I'm unhappy because I'm always broke.

From that mindset, of course, it makes sense to change those circumstances to “fix” our unhappiness: if we get a new job and get away from our horrible boss, then we won't be unhappy anymore. But that mindset is broken. Circumstances outside of us have no way of imparting feelings upon us. There are no magical feeling zappers that other people use to control how we are feeling. People cannot reach out and implant emotions into your body. Your feelings are created by your thoughts and the oftentimes nasty things swirling around in your head. Your job, your boss, your spouse, and your bank account are not making you feel anything. That unhappiness is all created in your head by what you are thinking about all those things.

[W]hen you finally make partner or land that big job, the event itself does not transplant feelings into your body. The event does not leap into you and make you feel a certain way. In those moments, you create those warm fuzzies because you are finally allowing yourself to believe something positive about your journey: *I am doing a good job. I'm successful. I'm good enough. This is it.* In those moments of success, we finally allow ourselves to believe, *I'm worthy. I am admired and respected. I can do this. Life is good.* And that is why we feel happiness. It's also why the happiness is fleeting.

Because we only allow ourselves to believe those things in certain moments, we are not practiced at believing them all the time. We withhold positive beliefs about ourselves until we have done something we deem worthy of them. So, when we achieve a goal, we buy into thoughts of worthiness for a moment; but it never sticks, because there is a part of us that believes more strongly that we are *not* inherently worthy and that, without our accomplishments, we aren't good enough. After all, we spend every waking moment preceding an accomplishment marinating our brains in self-doubt and insecurity. That part of us, those thoughts, those neuropathways kick back in and move us right back into the pattern of believing we aren't good enough and we need to do more to be worthy. We have a much stronger habit of believing in our shortcomings than believing in our innate value. We are much better at thinking, *I am not good enough until X happens; I'm not happy, so there must be something else I need to do; once I achieve this new thing, I will feel better...* So, off we go in search of the next thing.

If you are unhappy, it may be because you spend the majority of your time generating toxic thoughts. You are creating your own unhappiness. If you spend most of your mental energy thinking about how much you hate your job, or how your partner isn't good enough, or you don't have enough money, you are going to be miserable. Those thoughts feel terrible and will never create feelings of happiness. When you spend your time fixating on how your life is subpar right now, but *if and when _____ happens, then life will be better*, the mental space you are currently living in is not conducive to happiness. You cannot create success from a place of lack. You cannot reach your dreams while residing in negativity about your current accomplishments. No one who achieved great things did so from a place of victimhood or emptiness; they achieved success from a place of confidence, peace, and belief in themselves. Their mind was not filled with all the things they disliked about their present state.

People are so incredibly wed to this notion that things outside of ourselves create our feelings. When I explain this concept is wrong, people often go on the defensive. They want to tell me how terrible their boss is or how broke they really are, because once I fully understand their circumstances, I will get it. Then I will see that their bank account balance is what is making them unhappy.

If your thoughts are breeding negativity and pain, it's important first to understand that your brain is just running some old patterns, rinsing and repeating thoughts it is comfortable with. That is what brains do—they want the easy route, the neuropathways that they know and are good at running. That is precisely why happiness doesn't stick when we achieve that next big goal—because our brains are not practiced at creating happiness when we spend our whole lives believing thoughts that create *unhappiness*. We don't have the habitual neuropathways to sustain positive beliefs about our lives.

The next time you find yourself wanting to be happier, think of it as an opportunity to sit with yourself and examine the thoughts that are creating your emotions. The truth might surprise you. Only once you identify those toxins can you start to build happiness that is unflappable and 100 percent within your control. You don't need an achievement to believe in your worthiness and value. You don't need something to happen in order to believe you are successful. You can choose to believe whatever you want to about yourself and your life. Choose to have a better relationship with yourself. Choose to start believing and emotionally investing in your own value and worthiness. If you don't have that solid foundation, the challenges of legal practice are going to provide you with all sorts of false avenues to

happiness. Show up at this stage of your career connected to your true value and worthiness. From there, you can cultivate happiness no matter what you are doing or what you achieve.

A sneak peek inside "[The Lawyer Life Survival Guide](#)."

" No matter where you go, there you are."

– Confucius

Resources to Help You Create More Happiness Every Day

For Your Ears

- [Why We Self Sabotage and How to Overcome It](#)
Ever feel like you're standing in your own way? Maybe you're caught in patterns that keep you stuck, or you only see the evidence that reinforces your doubts. That's self-sabotage and confirmation bias in action—and they could be holding you back more than you realize. In this episode, we break down:
 - ✓ How self-sabotage impacts your legal career and personal growth
 - ✓ The hidden ways confirmation bias keeps you from seeing new opportunities
 - ✓ Practical strategies to rewire your mindset and break free from limiting beliefs.
- [10-Minute Guided Meditation for Gaining Clarity & Releasing Confirmation Bias](#)
In this calming 10-minute guided meditation, you'll be gently led into a state of clarity and openness by grounding in the breath and exploring the subtle patterns of the mind. This practice invites you to observe your thoughts with curiosity rather than judgment, allowing beliefs and assumptions to soften and float away like leaves on a stream.

Books

- **The Happiness Trap** by Dr. Russ Harris
Based on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), this book helps you understand how chasing happiness can actually make you miserable — and what to do instead.
 - **The Art of Happiness** by the Dalai Lama & Howard Cutler
A powerful blend of Eastern wisdom and Western psychology, exploring how compassion and perspective shape happiness.
 - **The How of Happiness** by Sonja Lyubomirsky
Evidence-based strategies from a positive psychology researcher that you can apply in everyday life.
-

Free Coaching Consultation
Test out coaching for free!

Virtual Coffee
Let's expand our networks!

Schedule my Next Session
(ongoing clients)

Schedule an Ad Hoc Session
(Pay as you go coaching option)



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