The background of the slide is a photograph of a modern office or meeting room. In the foreground, there is a long, thick wooden table with a natural grain, supported by dark metal legs. Several wooden chairs with brown leather seats are arranged around the table. To the left, a tall potted plant with green leaves stands in a woven basket. The wall behind the table is made of light-colored, textured bricks. A large window is visible in the background, and a dark metal cabinet or locker is on the right side. The overall lighting is bright and natural.

# Piercing the Veil to Attorney Wellness: Tips & Techniques

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# About Me

Business & Environmental Lawyer

Advanced Certified Yoga Teacher

Wellness Retreat Leader

Jen the Yoga Lawyer LLC

Presentation title

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# "Harnessing the Power of Yoga to Advance Attorney Well-Being"

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Jen the Yoga Lawyer LLC

# My Why

Pandemic - Share Practices – Heal – Empower – Release - Center

Be a better lawyer & leader by being a better human

Better = Integrated = Whole

I want you to be healthy & well

# I Approach Work-Life Balance Through Yoga



Balanced Action through the teachings of yoga



Contemplative tradition meets modern neuroscience



Science behind ancient practices & philosophy



Simple act of bringing body & breath together quiet the mind, relax the body, melt away stress, anxiety, stiffness, discomfort.



Life becomes more easeful, joyful, and full of meaning - off the mat, into the world

“

It takes time to become who you already are.

”

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The more we consciously engage in mindfulness the easier it becomes.

Mindfulness is a practice. Law is a practice. Work-Life Balance is a practice.

It takes intention to be mindful and to create balance in your life and feel whole. This is yoga.

Life, on purpose.

When we harness the power of yoga to  
advance our own wellness, we step onto the  
— path of conscious leadership —  
– of being the noble or enlightened leader.



# What is Yoga?

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- To come together as one
- Wholeness
- To "yolk" - Humanity is bound
- A path to Integration: body, mind, spirit
- Mindfulness
- Not just "asana" or exercise

# Benefits of Yoga: The Body



*Strong body – strong mind.*



Lengthens and strengthens muscles and other soft tissues to help relieve tightness, stiffness, and weakness that can lead to discomfort and limitations in mobility



Physical practice helps to relieve stress stored in the body



Teaches you to listen to your body

# Benefits of Yoga: The Mind

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*Strong mind – soft heart*



Moving body with breath is proven to cultivate sense of well-being



Lower stress hormones (cortisol) and promote release of positive hormones (endorphins)



Helps to ready and quiet the mind for meditation

*As Above – so Below*

Promotes a sense of being connected to something greater than yourself to help alleviate loneliness and feelings of separation

Cultivates dedication to higher principles that affect your relationship with yourself and how you interact with others

Helps build honesty, authenticity, connection, awareness

## Benefits of Yoga: The Soul

# The Body is the Vehicle to Integration

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- Body, mind, spirit
- Integration leads to possibility, freedom, consciousness, wholeness, integrity
- Spirit is not separate from the body
- The body is nature
- Spirituality matters

Asana teaches  
to balance the  
body



Stay centered  
amidst the  
chaos



Increase  
awareness



Connect to the  
breath

Balanced  
Action

# Integration: 8 Limbs/Petals of Yoga

- External – How we relate to others.
- Internal – How we regard/respect our inner world.
- "Sheaths" of consciousness: mind, breathe, body, etc. that are influenced by external/internal factors.
- Create a centered, balanced life.

# Integration

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- Latin – integer – integration – integrity
- Sanskrit – prakriti – earth – nature – body
- Integration – Inclusion - professionalism – competence - integrity
- Ancient Egyptian – Neteru – spirit – nature
- Wholeness requires us to unite body with spirit, with mind

The path toward abundance lies entirely in the domain of nature.

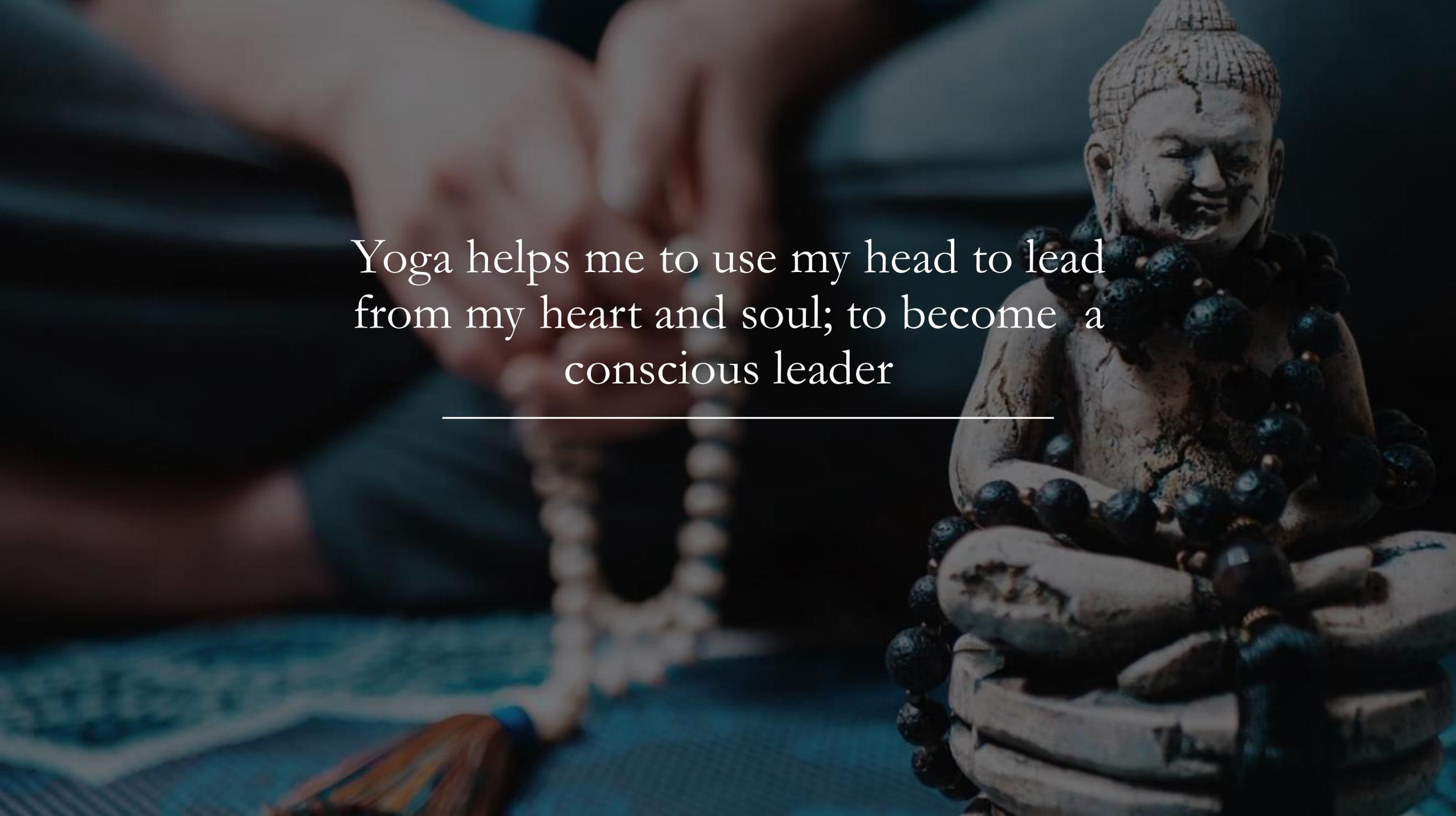
- B.K.S. Iyengar



# Spirituality & the Practice of Law

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- Integrity
- Adherence to higher principles of law
- "Natural laws" - Civil Rights
- Altruistic reasons for becoming a lawyer
- Professionalism
- Civility
- Fairness, justice, equity
- Lawyer loneliness
- Connection to something greater



Yoga helps me to use my head to lead  
from my heart and soul; to become a  
conscious leader

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# Why Practice Yoga (Integration) as a Lawyer?

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- We don't get a pass from demands of modern-day life.
- Adversarial nature of practice diminishes feelings of compassion (towards ourselves and others)
- Burn-out
- Stress
- Greater joy, meaning & purpose
- We are human; humans need integration – it is our nature
- Service oriented profession that forgets to serve itself
- Resiliency
- Judgmental
- Relief from perfection standard
- To feel connection

# Lawyers Are In Crisis

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- 2018 landmark study by the American Bar Association
- Shocking statistics
- A lawyer's duty of competence is related to their well-being
- Lawyer Well-Being: A continuous process in which lawyers strive for thriving in each dimension of their lives:





# A Story

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Law practice depletes us of patience and compassion

# ABA: Attorney Well-Being

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Emotional



Occupational



Social



Intellectual



Spiritual



Physical

"To be a Good Lawyer You  
Have to Be a Healthy Lawyer"

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American Bar Association

# NJSBA 2022 Study

- 51% feel enthusiastic about being a lawyer
- 68% reported feeling anxious in the last 2 weeks
- 56% reported high prevalence of alcohol misuse
- 49% reported feelings of isolation
- 49% reported moderate to high levels of burnout
  - 2x as high as other working populations (about 25-28%)
- 23% reported a high prevalence of depressive symptoms
- 28% considered leaving the profession as a result of mental health, burnout, or stress
- 10% reported thoughts of suicidal ideation.

# Factors Contributing to Burn Out

- Not taking time off.
- Lawyers not comfortable taking time off to address well-being were 10 times as likely to report burnout than those who felt they were.
- Those who took 5 days or less of vacation time were 4x as likely to report burnout than those with more than 20 days.
- Almost 74% of respondents reported working weekends
- 50% reported employers expected them to be available outside of normal business hours “frequently or always.”
- 16% more likely to report burnout than those who felt work never interfered with their personal life.
- Associates were 3x as likely to report depression than partners
- Non-equity partners were 2x as likely to report depression than equity partners

# Trances – Unconscious Actions

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FOMO - afraid to say no, busyness as a distraction, workaholic



Achievement – grasping success, fame, money is your worth



Unworthiness – not being good enough, insecurity

# Mindfulness Moment

Are you living in a trance state of mind?

Pause for a moment and think about what you truly value in life,  
and how you spend the majority of your time?

Are those things in balance?

Reflect on your emotional state when in your trance. How does it  
make you feel? Give it a name (use humor).

Why do you do it?

“

Everyone talks about changing humanity, but no one  
talks about changing himself

”

The Change We Seek Starts Within

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Leo Tolstoy

# How Can Lawyers Achieve Work-Life Balance?

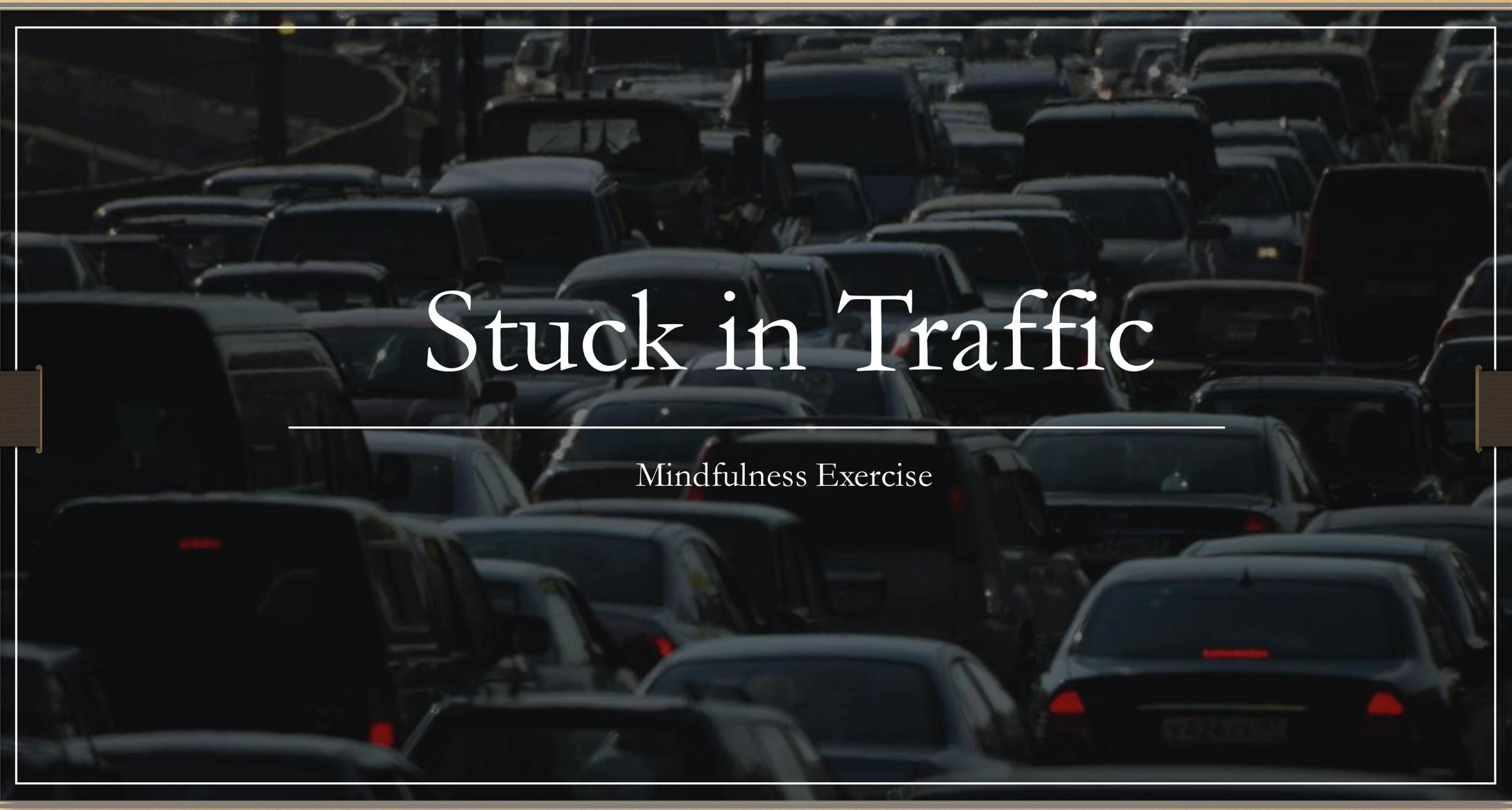
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## Honor Yourself

- The duty that you owe to yourself to be healthy and well is as important as the duty that you owe your clients, firms & families
- Take care of yourself so you can take care of others
- Self-Care/Self-Compassion
- Best friend standard

## Co-Create Your Reality

- Intentionality
- Mindfulness/yoga teaches that we co-create our reality
- Take responsibility
- We co-create the state of the profession and its demise of civility, lack of balance
- You are in control more so than you think



# Stuck in Traffic

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Mindfulness Exercise

# Thoughts, Words, Actions Create Reality

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- Thoughts create images in the mind
- Thoughts are the source of our words
- Words create actions
- Actions create habits
- Habits create characteristics
- Influence your community/surroundings to create your reality





# Co-Creation Reflection

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Harnessing the benefit of being away from home on retreat, close your eyes and watch yourself go through a typical day as a silent witness.

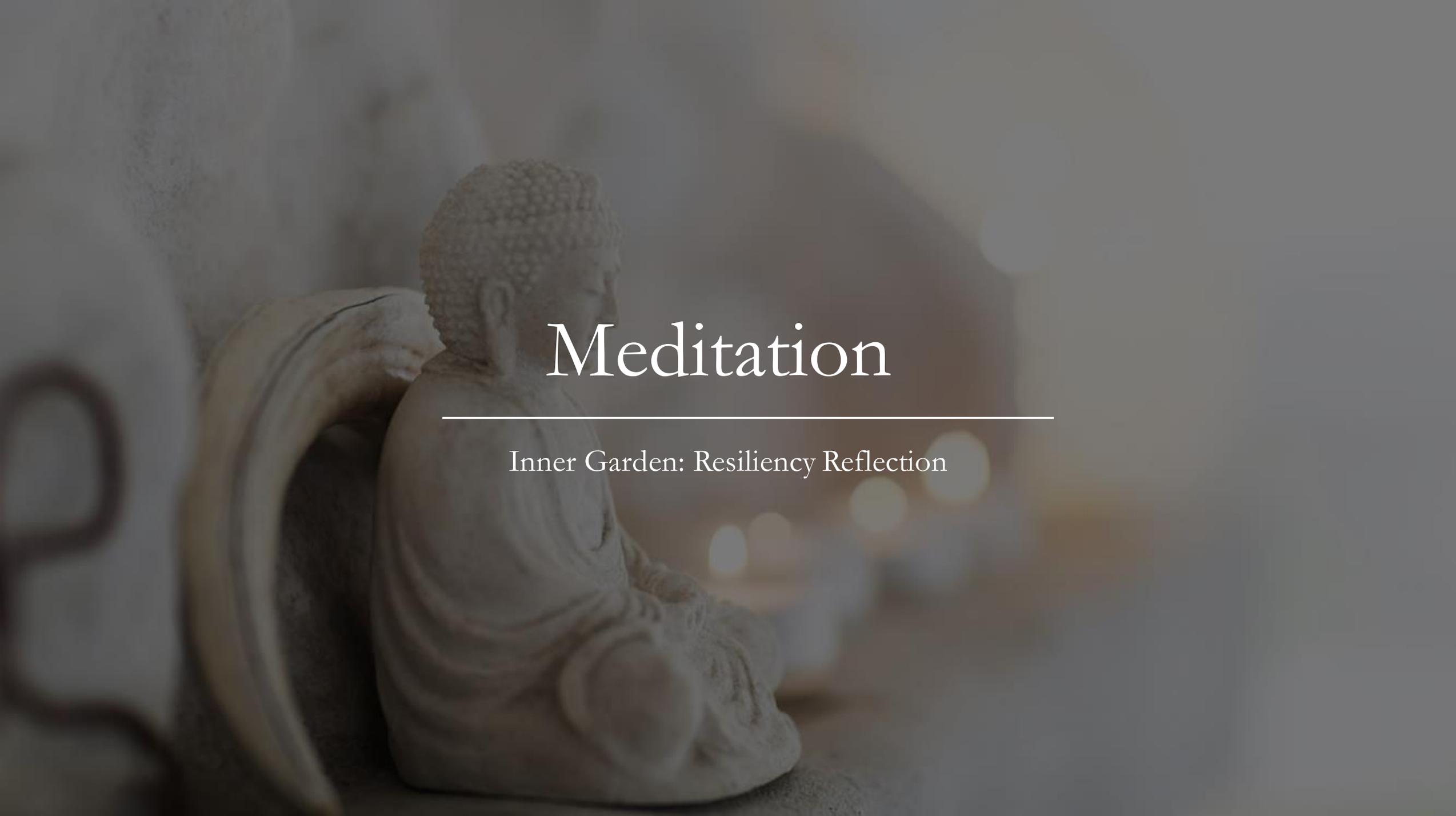
What type of reality are you co-creating for yourself?

# There are 2 Types of Suffering in the World

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From Jack Kornfield and Buddhist Master Ajahn Chah

- The suffering that you turn away from, which will haunt you wherever you go
- The suffering that you turn toward and face, which becomes transformed into wisdom through the simple act of courage by turning to face the truth.

A white stone Buddha statue is shown in a meditative pose, seated and facing right. The statue is positioned on the left side of the frame. The background is a soft, out-of-focus scene with warm, golden light spots, suggesting an indoor setting with decorative lighting. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

# Meditation

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Inner Garden: Resiliency Reflection

# Practical Tips: Emotional

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- Don't believe every stupid thought about yourself that comes into your mind.
- The ego is a dangerous thing; always creating separation instead of connection.
- Live from the heart, it will never steer you wrong. Love big!
- Field of psychiatry is increasingly making connections between food and mental health.
- Ask yourself: Would I reinforce the thoughts I am having about myself in a friend?
- Engage in self-compassion/ self-care / self-honoring

# Practical Tips: Social

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- Find your community/ your "tribe".
- Be curious, not judgmental.
- Studies show that an important part of longevity is connection and living in relationship/community.
- Take time for fun and don't feel guilty about it.
- Be authentic.
- Surround yourself with allies.

# Practical Tips: Occupational

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- Alleviate boredom/complacency through pro bono work.
- Keep a beginner's mind: we cut ourselves off to possibility when we think we know it all.
- Speak your truth – the Snowball Effect of the Little White Lie & how it co-creates your reality.
- If you're feeling stuck and want a job change: bring in allies to help you.
- Bring awareness to your implicit bias.
- Consider what works for you: remote/hybrid/in-office and ask for it.
- Practice gratitude in good times and bad.

# Practical Tips: Intellectual

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- Your brain is an organ of happiness; feed it with what makes it happy.
- What you consume from food to drink to news and environmental toxics all have a direct effect on your brain and its ability to balance chemicals, promote health, and operate optimally – all things that effect your well-being
- Fast food is sad food!
- Take up a hobby that will challenge your mind.
- Meditate!

# Practical Tips: Spiritual

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- Consider what spirituality means to you and cultivate that in your life.
- Spend time in nature.
- Meditate and practice yoga to quiet the mind to access deeper states of consciousness, which many people experience as spirituality.
- Consider if/ how your law practice advances the altruistic reasons you went to law school and if not, how you can better connect the two.

# Practical Tips: Physical

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- Small steps = big change over time.
- Commit to one hour of exercise a week, every week as a practice.
- Weekend warriors!
- Choose whatever exercise you enjoy and try new things.
- Pairing up with a buddy or a class to build community helps set the habit.
- Create a healthy relationship with sleep.

# Practical Tips: Employers

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- Encourage employees to take time off - one of the main reasons for burnout.
- Be nice to your associates – they are the most stressed/depressed!
- Create an atmosphere of inclusion and well-being through CLE offerings, subscriptions/benefits, top-down values, hiring practices.
- Supply healthy snack options.
- Avoid/lessen emphasis on alcohol at outings.
- Offer hybrid/remote work as an option.



# You: Happier

## The Lies of Happiness

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1. Having more of something to the excess (love, sex, fame, drugs) will make you happy.
2. Advertisers and fast-food chains know what will make you happy.
3. A life without any stress will make you happy.
4. Somewhere else will make you happy.
5. Your smartphone, tablet, new gadget, etc. will make you happy.
6. Constantly "being in the know" will make you happy.
7. Alcohol makes you happy.
8. Drugs make you happy.
9. Sweet treats, desserts – sugar – make you happy.
10. Money makes you happy.

- Dr. Daniel Amen

# Gratitude Practice

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For the next 7 days:

- Start each day with: "This is going to be a great day!"
- End each day with: "What went well today?" and count all the things that you are grateful for – big and small.

# Remember to Dream

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- The manifestation of our dreams begins in our mind. If you can dream it, then you are on your way to manifesting it.
- Allow yourself to let go of the stereotypes of what it means to be/look like a lawyer– the "shoulds" - be yourself.
- Shamans say that we dream our reality into being.
- Vision boards work. Try it! (Canva)
- Athletes are trained to envision their success for a reason – it works!

Answer  
the  
following  
questions:



If I didn't care what people thought I would...



If I could be certain it was the right choice I would ...



I was always meant to be a ...



There is still time for me to ...



In 5 years I will ...



My vision for peace on earth is ...

# Write down 3 goals for yourself

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SOCIAL



EMOTIONAL



PHYSICAL



OCCUPATIONAL



INTELLECTUAL



SPIRITUAL

# Pick One Goal and Ask Yourself:

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- 1. Desire:** How badly do I want it? Give it a number of 1-10. You've really got to want it to make a change!
- 2. Knowledge:** What do you need to accomplish your goal? What do you need to learn to make it possible?
- 3. Action:** What do you need to do to achieve? Write down your baby-steps to get there. (Leap of faith!)
- 4. Encouragement:** Now write down a few words of encouragement to yourself – words you would say to a friend who came to you for advice.

## Perfect Day Guided Meditation

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This is meant to be a fun exercise where you imagine your perfect life. Let your imagination go and don't hold back!

It doesn't matter how far-fetched it may seem today, just stay with whatever comes to mind and go with it.

Oftentimes, it's the most surprising things that appear that have a way of coming true.



# Thank You!

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The "OWL" - Optimal Wellness for Lawyers App – is coming soon!