

*By Brandon E. Tate, Heather George Myers,
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IN THIS TOGETHER





FOUR LAWYERS
SHARE THEIR
TIPS FOR
BEING BETTER
PRACTITIONERS
AND PEOPLE

The legal field is a demanding and complex industry. Though we sometimes sit on opposite sides of the table, we all share a common focus: justice. In this article, four attorneys share tips that have helped them succeed as legal practitioners and wholesome human beings.

KNOW YOURSELF, YOUR PRACTICE AREA, AND YOUR VALUE INSIDE AND OUT

Be able to adapt to different situations. Stay true to how you want to be known in the community. (Brandon)

TAKE TIME OUT

Taking time out helps you avoid burn out and allows you to maintain balance. (Shelice)

BE CAREFUL OF THE COMPANY YOU KEEP

Proverbs 1:10 states: “My son, if sinful men entice you, do not give in to them.” Who you align yourself within the practice of law makes all the difference. As the old saying goes, “iron sharpens iron.” Associate with colleagues, family, and friends who truly understand your goals and will not tarnish your name. (Michael)

WHEN PLUGGING IN A USB, LOOK FOR THE SYMBOL

- Horizontally - It will point up
- Vertically - It will face you
- On your desk - It will face to the right

Do you always plug in a USB device the wrong way the first time? This easy tip will help you plug it in correctly the first time. (Heather)

“Associate with colleagues, family, and friends who truly understand your goals and will not tarnish your name.”



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EDUCATE YOURSELF

You're not in school anymore. The law is ever changing, and you need to stay on top of what you are advising. Great options are publications, CLE, and legal listservs in your practice area. (Brandon)

MOVE AROUND

Start an exercise routine such as walking or yoga. Get out and get some fresh air. (Shelice)

BE A SPONGE

Proverbs 3:13 states: "Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding." Throughout a lawyer's career, he/she will be presented with many opportunities to make money. However, sometimes the only thing good about the opportunity is the financial reward. Knowledge is priceless and never runs dry. Money is temporary and cyclical. Always choose wisdom over money; the opportunity to gain knowledge over financial gain. (Michael)

STOP PROCRASTINATING

- Book recommendation: *Eat That Frog!*
- Buy a notebook
- Use the tips

This book helps procrastinators make simple changes to their daily routine so they actually check items off their to-do lists. (Heather)

EVERYTHING IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO MARKET YOUR FIRM

Marketing is not just your online presence (i.e., website, social media). Marketing includes things like how often you return phone calls, how you respond to emails, how you communicate with people, how responsive you are to client needs, your fee structure, and many other things you wouldn't think of as marketing. Try new things. (Brandon)

CHECK IN WITH NETWORKS, FRIENDS, AND COLLEAGUES

This will keep you socially active in this new normal and allow you to make sure those you care about are OK as well as letting them know you are OK. (Shelice)

INVEST AND SAVE YOUR MONEY

Proverbs 6:6-8 states: "Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest." Simply stated, invest your money no matter how little you make. A good rule of thumb is to save or invest at least 10% of your earnings. You will be surprised at how quickly your money accumulates and compounds with the right investment. (Michael)

REOPEN A CLOSED BROWSER TAB

- PC: Ctrl+Shift+T
- Mac: Command+Shift+T

If you accidentally closed a web browser that you need, just use these commands to open it again. (Heather)

"You cannot rob life or the practice of law. If you do not prepare, 9 times out of 10, the result will reflect your input."

Continued on page 33...

Probate Litigation



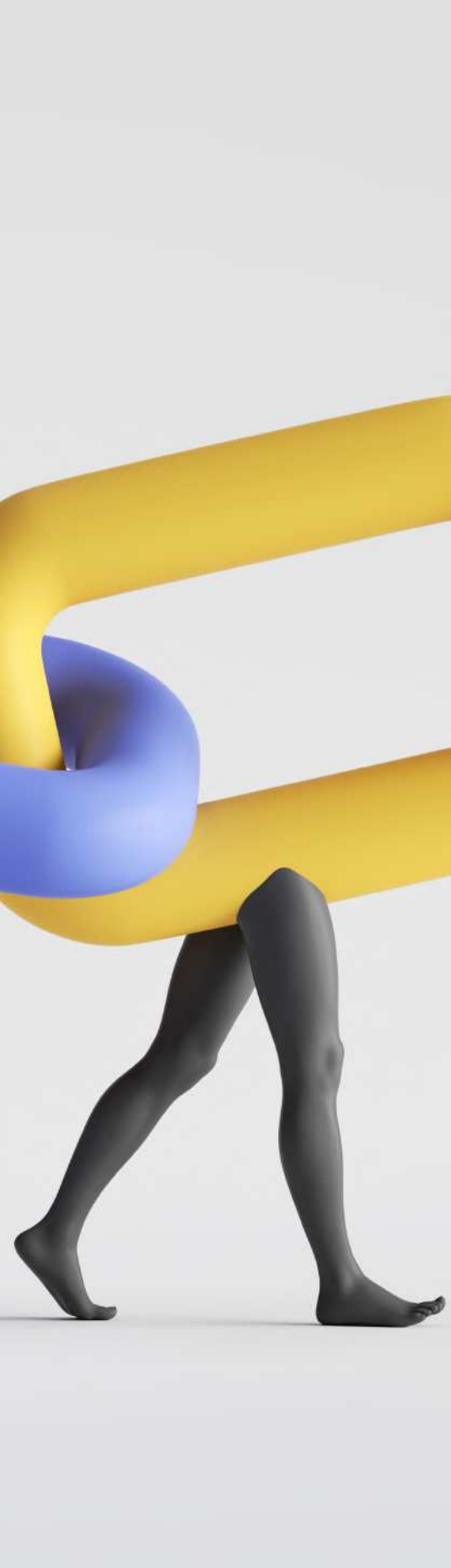
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Continued from page 13

ENACT SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES FOR YOUR FIRM

A must if you want to scale your firm and heavily recommended even if you do not. It is tremendously helpful and will create efficiency for you and your staff to have systems and processes in place for things like administrative tasks, client intake, client management, etc. Systems and processes also make it easier to seamlessly hire an assistant, paralegal, or associate. (Brandon)

STAY CONNECTED TO THE BAR ASSOCIATION

Your local, state, and specialty bar associations can provide a wealth of resources and support. (Shelice)

WORK AT YOUR CRAFT

Proverbs 10:4 states: *“Lazy hands make for poverty, but diligent hands bring wealth.”* You cannot rob life or the practice of law. If you do not prepare, 9 times out of 10, the result will reflect your input. So will your financial bottom line. Put in the work and you will be rewarded. (Michael)

ELECTRONICALLY SIGN WITH AN IPHONE

- Take a picture of the page you need to sign
- Open picture in photo app
- Click on +
- Select “Signature”
- Sign and then move signature box
- Click “Done”

In the virtual world you need an easy way for clients to sign documents electronically. Apple makes it easy on an iPhone. (Heather)

MANAGE YOUR TIME EFFICIENTLY

You must balance your time doing

legal work and developing your business and networking, while also balancing a home and personal life. This is one of the most important and difficult items to achieve. (Brandon)

GET ORGANIZED

The more organized you are, the more efficient you will be, which makes for less stress and more achievement. You can minimize chaos by creating to-do lists and prioritizing tasks. (Shelice)

BE CAREFUL WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

Proverbs 11:13 states: *“A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy person keeps a secret.”* Resist the urge to put everything about your practice on social media. Stay away from posting about specific cases or clients when making comments on social media. (Michael)

NEW PROCESS SERVICE PROVIDER

Doxpop now provides process service via sheriff’s civil process, certified mail, or first-class mail. Doxpop has made process service easy! If you use Doxpop as your e-filing provider you can select which documents you want served, how you want them served, and pay the service fees when you file the documents. (Heather)

DO NOT BE TOO AVAILABLE, AND DON’T BE TOO UNAVAILABLE

Find the balance. To manage your time effectively, this has to be taken seriously. You can manage client expectations for immediate responses by clearly outlining in an engagement letter something to the effect that “all calls will be responded to within X hours (or X days) if not answered.” (Brandon)

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF VIRTUAL CLE

The CLE requirement for in-person attendance has been relaxed due to the pandemic, resulting in a plethora of virtual CLEs at discounted rates! Sign up for them to make sure you meet your three-year requirement. (Shelice)

BE TEACHABLE

Proverbs 12:1 states: *“Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but whoever hates correction is stupid.”* Good lawyers are teachable and are always willing to learn no matter how old they get. View correction as a blessing and an opportunity to add to your practice. Correction from a colleague, judge, or mentor is free CLE. Be teachable. Take direction and instruction. (Michael)

BOOK RECOMMENDATION: PROFIT FIRST

Profit is not an event. Profit is a habit. *Profit First* helps you change your mindset from Revenue – Expenses = Profits to Revenue – Profit = Expenses. Start the habit of making a profit now. (Heather)

DO NOT BE AFRAID TO DECLINE A CASE

Your best cases are going to be the bad ones you decide to decline. Bad cases are expensive as they take up a significant amount of time with little return. Be exclusive. (Brandon)

BE A SPEAKER FOR A CLE

When you are a speaker, you get at least four hours speaking credit for the CLE and you usually do not have to pay for the CLE. Being a speaker can also help you with staying current in your practice or other areas of the law. (Shelice)

NEVER TAKE THINGS PERSONALLY

Proverbs 12:16 states: *“Fools show their annoyance at once, but the prudent overlook an insult.”* Try not to take things personally. The practice of law is difficult. Sometimes in the process of handling an issue or during the representation of a client, people say things they do not mean. When that happens, try not to overreact. Remember, we are all human and nothing should get personal. (Michael)

BOOK RECOMMENDATION: THE GO-GIVER SERIES

The secret to success is giving. Learn how the Five Laws of Stratospheric Success help you network naturally, give exceptional value, and produce extraordinary results. (Heather)

QUICKBOOKS AND AN ACCOUNTANT

Have bookkeeping software through something like Quickbooks and have an accountant. Shift the responsibility and liability to an accounting professional for things like quarterly/annual taxes and, to a lesser extent, bookkeeping. Taking this off your plate will also help you balance your time better. (Brandon)

DEVELOP HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS WITH CLIENTS

During this pandemic, it is even more important to make sure your clients' needs are being met. Call them to see how they are doing and whether they need anything. This type of communication allows your relationship to become organic and not so transactional. (Shelice)

DON'T BE FAKE

Proverbs 12:9 states: *“Better to be a nobody and yet have a servant than pretend to be somebody and have no food.”* Be your authentic self. (Michael)

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PROBATE LITIGATION


Will Contests
Trust Disputes & Claims
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**BOOK RECOMMENDATION:
THE WORST-CASE SCENARIO
SURVIVAL HANDBOOK**

If you're having a bad day, flip through this book and see how it could be worse! You might learn something practical that you hopefully won't need to use one day. (Heather)

**DO NOT BE AFRAID TO CALL ON
ANOTHER ATTORNEY**

Whether calling someone to potentially co-counsel on a case, refer a case to, or just to ask questions about a case, do not be afraid to call on someone else. Indianapolis and Indiana are some of the most open and generous legal communities among attorneys, with most being more than willing to answer questions and help. (Brandon)

BE A VOLUNTEER

Sometimes you have to take yourself outside of the legal world and help others in your community. You will be surprised at how a little bit of your time is greatly appreciated and valued by others. (Shelice)

KEEP YOUR WORD

Proverbs 12:19 states: *"Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue lasts only a moment."* If you say you will do something, keep your word. The relationship you develop with other lawyers and clients by keeping your word on little things is worth more than gold. (Michael)

EXERCISE EVERY DAY

My favorite is OrangeTheory Fitness. I love my 6 a.m. workouts, which I call Orange Therapy. Working out first thing in the morning means I burn calories all day and I'm less likely to get busy and skip my workout. (Heather)

NETWORK, NETWORK, NETWORK

It is not who you know, it is how well they know you. Even if someone knows who you are, they are not going to refer a case to you unless they know you well. A referral also reflects on that referring attorney with the clients. (Brandon)

**DO NOT BE AFRAID TO ASK
FOR HELP**

If you do not know something or are unsure, ask. It will save you time and a lot of stress. (Shelice)

"Although there will be times when the unexpected occurs, do your best to stick to your schedule so that you complete the tasks you set out to achieve."

CATCH MORE FLIES WITH HONEY

Proverbs 15:1 states: *"A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."* Give what is not given to you. Sometimes, it is not wise to meet anger with anger. Stop negative energy by being the bigger person during confrontations. (Michael)

LOOK GOOD ON ZOOM

Get a Ring Light. Remote hearings are here to stay (at least for a while), so spruce up your look with a Ring Light that gives you that beautiful in person glow! (Heather)

**INVEST IN YOUR TIME AND
EFFICIENCY**

In the realm of systems and processes: 1) have forms; and 2) have checklists. Look at your practice and determine what can be streamlined. (Brandon)

**GET YOUR ANNUAL MEDICAL
EXAMS INCLUDING PHYSICAL,
VISION, AND DENTAL EXAMS**

If you are not in good health, then you are not going to be able to serve clients to the best of your ability. Your health is the thing that matters. (Shelice)

FIND A MENTOR

Proverbs 15:22 states: *"Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed."* Find a great mentor. It can make all the difference in your career. (Michael)

READ OR LISTEN FOR FUN

I love to listen to audiobooks when I'm in my car. Here are a few of my recent favorites: *The Flight Girls* by Noelle Salazar; *The Glass Ocean* by Beatriz Williams, Lauren Willig and Karen White; *The Reckoning* by John Grisham; and *The Masterpiece* by Fiona Davis. (Heather)

FIND A CASE MANAGEMENT/TIME

Keeping option that works for you Do not go without one. Some features to look at would be auto-checklists upon case opening based on practice area of the matter, auto populated documents, time keeping, billing, invoicing/payment, etc. (Brandon)

EAT HEALTHY

When you eat a healthy diet, you have more energy and are more productive. Poor eating habits can lead to you feeling sluggish and may lead to other health issues. Eating healthy along with some exercise keeps you at your best for you and your clients. (Shelice)

BE A 'PICKY' PRACTITIONER

Proverbs 18:17 states: *"In a lawsuit the first to speak seems right, until someone comes forward and cross-examines."* All that glitters is not

gold. Never solely rely on a client's version of events. Screen your cases and fact check. (Michael)

PLUG INTO A PODCAST

There are a ton of practice management tips and legal news available via podcasts. Try some of these: 5 Minute Marketing, The Christy Wright Show, Fight Hustle End Hurry, The Law Entrepreneur, and Off the Record with James Bell. (Heather)

PHONE/FAX: GO VIRTUAL

Phone: use VOIP. Fax: use internet fax. This primarily pertains to faxes, as internet fax is the way of the now and future. You will be able to fax and receive faxes from anywhere and will save money on toner and paper. In the realm of the new COVID-19 world, this is a must. (Brandon)

STICK TO YOUR SCHEDULE

Although there will be times when the unexpected occurs, do your best to stick to your schedule so that you complete the tasks you set out to achieve. (Shelice)

BE A CHEERFUL GIVER

Proverbs 19:17 states: "*Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them for what they have done.*" Lawyers should be givers and lead the way in philanthropic endeavors in their communities. (Michael)

BREAK YOUR CELL PHONE ADDICTION

- Set one cell phone free day per week
- Challenge yourself to only call or text on your phone
- Set daily usage limits: There are apps for that!

- Don't charge your phone near your bed
- Put your phone away when you walk in the door at home
- Change your phone settings: Notifications/Do Not Disturb
- Place a hairband around your phone

One study found that the average cell phone user touches their phone 2,617 times per day and spends 3 hours and 15 minutes on their phone per day. Use these tips to help you break your cell phone addiction. (Heather)

BEWARE OF ONLINE ADVERTISING TRAPS

A LOT of empty promises, with very little return on investment. You will get a lot of proposals from purported advertising/marketing companies from around the country/world promising a lot of different things in the advertising/marketing realm that simply are not achievable. Ask other attorneys to see what they do to try and pick out viable advertising/marketing options. (Brandon)

GET ADEQUATE SLEEP

If you are not well rested, you will not perform well in anything. Your body and mind need to have down time to reset so you are at the top of your game at the start of the next day. (Shelice)

YOUR NAME MEANS SOMETHING

Proverbs 22:1 states: "*A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.*" Your name and brand are invaluable. Protect them. (Michael)

REGISTER FOR THE ISBA SOLO AND SMALL FIRM CONFERENCE

If you haven't been to the Solo and Small Firm Conference you are missing out! Put it on your calendar

and register today. It's June 3-4, 2021, in French Lick, Indiana. (Heather)

INVEST IN YOUR FIRM/INVEST IN YOURSELF

The only way to grow your firm, practice, client base, etc. is to invest both in your firm and invest in yourself: networking, learning the law, client development, marketing, investing money back in the firm, and investing time in yourself create a balanced life. (Brandon)

HAVE A HOBBY AND LIVE A COLORFUL LIFE

Although you may thoroughly enjoy the practice of law, get out and do something totally unrelated to law that you enjoy. Doing so will definitely create some lasting memories in your life. (Shelice)

BE A MENTOR

Proverbs 11:25 states: "*A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.*" Lawyers should give their time and talents to making the profession better. Be a mentor. (Michael)

CALENDAR YOUR PERSONAL TIME

- Get up 30 minutes early
- Leave the office 30 minutes early
- Don't eat your lunch at your desk

If a task is on your calendar you are more likely to do it. When I train for a mini marathon, I am more likely to do my long run if it is scheduled for a specific time on my calendar.

(Heather) 