

Meditation great way to ease stress

We all know that the practice of law is stressful. We have client demands coming at us through phone, cell phone, CrackBerrys, fax and (even) post. Clients want more, quicker. We may have pressures in our partnerships, money worries and attempts at having a life outside the office. We try to meet these needs that, in the process, take a toll on ourselves. We may develop health problems such as high blood pressure, anxiety disorders and panic attacks. We may see personal relationships suffer. We may feel unhappy and discontent with the practice of law. I have a suggestion of what to do to deal with the immediate symptoms of stress. Practicing a simple and short meditation may help give you some short-term relief that may help you in the long run if you decide to incorporate meditation into your daily routine. Mindful meditation is a friendly gesture toward yourself in which you take time to sit for 10 to 15 minutes or longer. You can meditate in your office, sitting in your chair. It's easy. Just make sure you will not be disturbed by your phone, electronic devices or someone knocking at your door. It might be better to do this before or after regular office hours when you are not likely to be interrupted. Sit upright - relaxed, yet alert. Drop your shoulders as you relax. Take three deep breaths and exhale to get the tension out of your body. Open your eyes and maintain a soft, relaxed, downward gaze. If it helps you to relax better, close your eyes.

- Place your hands palms down on your upper legs, resting gently
- Tuck in your chin
- Breathe normally
- Observe your thoughts gently, without judgment
- Label your thoughts as "thinking" and let them go
- Focus on your breath - in through your nose, out gently from your mouth
- Be still
- Experience being in the moment - in the now.
- Stay in the moment for as long as you wish
- When you wish to come out of your meditative state, take a deep breath and open your eyes to focus.

Feel how revitalized you are and plan your next session. When you practice meditation, you will start feeling relaxed, peaceful and happy. It rewards you with contentment and joy. You can use this method to help you when you are stressed or worried. There are spiritual benefits as well. A number of leading law schools, including Harvard University and the University of California, Berkeley, are now offering meditation courses to their students in an effort to provide budding lawyers with tools to fight the stress they will face in their careers. In the book *Transforming Practices, Finding Joy and Satisfaction in the Legal Life*, Steven Keeva writes there is a "voyage of discovery" through the balanced practice, the contemplative practice, the mindful practice, the time-out practice, the healing practice, the listening practice and the service practice. To help me with my meditation life, I have a book titled *The Reflective Counselor, Daily Meditations for Lawyers* by F. Gregory Coffey and Maureen C. Kessler. There is a daily quotation followed by a narrative. I particularly like March 4 - "We are so obsessed with doing that we have no time or no imagination left for being" Thomas Merton. The commentary addresses the fact that we have changed from "human beings" to "human doings." We are challenged to move beyond good intellects to living a human experience. In my 12-step group, we talk about gratitude and putting our lives in focus to others. I want to share with you four questions from the 10th step, daily inventory.

1. What did I do today that I like and respect myself for?
2. What did I do for someone else today?
3. What happened today that I enjoyed and appreciated that had nothing whatever to do with me?
4. Where did I have problems today?

I've opened up a whole range of questions here. Meditation is perhaps a start to more fulfillment in the practice of law. There is lots of material available about meditation on the web, in bookstores, in seminars and in courses. As the old expression goes, try it, you'll like it.

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