

5 Ways to Overcome Work Life Balance Obstacles

Some professions are more demanding than others. Law is one of those demanding professions. It can be particularly challenging for young attorneys who want to prove themselves, but also want a life outside the practice of law.

In a new Florida Bar survey of young women lawyers, one female attorney complained her partners had no understanding of work life balance or her need to pick up a sick child from school. "Too many male partners have stay at home wives who don't understand that I have to do the same things their wives do while also working."

Another female attorney suggested firms entirely reinvent their culture to respect singles who want a personal life. Both are valid reasons why work life balance concerns need addressing.



(Leslie Pollack)

Today, my guest bloggers are [Leslie R. Pollack](#) and [Christina M. Himmel](#), associates at [Kluger Kaplan](#) in Miami. The two women have some great suggestions for lawyers or anyone struggling to overcome work life balance challenges.

This is 2016. It is a year where we could witness Hillary Clinton become the first female President of the United States. It is a time where women have ostensibly shattered whatever glass ceiling may have existed in the past. Yet, despite the perceived progress for women, there are still obstacles to overcome, including work-life balance.

For young women lawyers, navigating through the ever-changing legal world can be challenging for a multitude of reasons. Inequality in pay, respect, and advancement are among the issues confronting young women lawyers. According to a recent [survey](#) conducted by the Young Lawyers Division of the [Florida Bar](#), 43% of young women attorneys have experienced gender bias.

One of the survey participants said that she left a job because she "was told by the managing partner that [she] did not have to worry about making money and moving ahead because [she] would get married one day and will not have to worry about living expenses."



(Christina Himmel)

More than a quarter of the female lawyers surveyed reported that they resigned from a position due to lack of advancement, employer insensitivity, and lack of work-life balance.

Perhaps one of the biggest obstacles for a young woman lawyer—and young lawyers generally—is the expectation of being accessible and "on call" 24/7. When the

partners were our age and they left for the day, they left. Because of the ease of technology, we're never really away from office as long as we have our phones.

While 24/7 access may seem overwhelming, here are a few tips to keep everything in perspective and help maintain that sought after work-life balance:

1. **Establish boundaries.** For example, when you get home from work you may decide not to check your emails for the first hour so you can spend uninterrupted quality time with your family. On the weekends, you might look at your phone and address an issue with a quick email saying you will handle the matter first thing Monday. That way, you are appeasing your employer but still maintaining a level of balance
2. **Stick to your plan.** Don't get discouraged if you have a week where work completely infringes on your personal life. Work-life balance is a process and work demands often are cyclical. Ride the cycle and keep your eye on the big picture rather than becoming frustrated by the work life balance challenge going on in the moment.
3. **Take time for yourself.** Whether you like exercising or traveling, be sure you make time to pursue your interests outside the practice of law. It's always easy when work for a partner who is understanding and takes family life seriously. Make an effort to convey that personal time is important to you and that if one suffers, the other will too.
4. **Create your own definition of success.** Success looks different to everyone so it is important to establish your own personal career goals and pursue them. For one person, success might be billing 2,500 hours and taking the quickest track to partner. For another person, success might mean doing well at their job and being someone who the client comes to for advice, but not necessarily being the first one in and last one out.
5. **Have a work life conversation.** Don't be afraid to discuss flexible work options with a law partner or manager. One of the great advantages of technology is the ability to leave the office at a reasonable time, go meet friends or family for dinner, and then finish a pending assignment later in the evening from the comfort of your own home.

While modern technology has certainly changed the way we work, it has also opened the door to benefits like flexible schedules and the ability to work from any location. For young lawyers, navigating through the ever-changing legal world can be challenging, but also quite doable.