

Using Positive Psychology to Improve Law Student Well-being, Character Development & Performance

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Positive Legal Education: Flourishing Law Students and Thriving Law Schools 77 Md. L. Rev. (forthcoming)

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The Path to Lawyer Well-being: Practical Recommendations for Positive Change

The National Task Force on Lawyer Well-being Report (Aug 14, 2017), at

<https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/images/abanews/ThePathToLawyerWellBeingReportFINAL.pdf>

Foundations for Practice Report, Educating Tomorrow's Lawyers Initiative at IAALS

<http://iaals.du.edu/foundations>

Mindset

- Fixed Mindset: Intelligence & Personality are Fixed and Stable
 - Galvanized by focus on GPA, rank, standardized tests
 - Students
 - Over-estimate their abilities
 - Despise feedback as attack on key traits
 - Consider school, work, relationships as zero-sum activities, where the goal is proving oneself to look smart, gain acceptance, win
- Growth Mindset: Can expand aptitude, talents, and improve character with practice and experience
 - Students
 - Value learning & crave feedback
 - Seek challenges, focus on improvement, develop passion for learning
 - Are motivated, resilient, and more successful in school and business

Mindfulness

- Defined
 - Being fully aware of something and paying attention to the moment, with acceptance and without judgment or resistance. ~ Chade-Meng Tan ~
 - Paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, nonjudgmentally, as openheartedly as possible. ~ Jon Kabat-Zin ~
 - An Outcome (Mindful Awareness) and a Process (Mindful Practice)~ Shauna Shapiro ~
- Objectives of Mindfulness: Spectrum
 - Calm Monkey Mind: restless, agitated, confused, and hard to control
 - Develop Poise and Enhance Capacity to Respond rather than React
 - Cultivate Flow, Experience the Zone, and Achieve Optimal Performance
 - Joy
- Develop Mindful Perspective - Three Questions
 - When is the most important time? Now, because it is the only time that you have some control over.
 - Who is the most important person? The person you are interacting with.
 - What is the most important thing to do? Do your best to serve the person you are interacting with.

Meditation

- Mindfulness Meditation (Attention & Focus)
 - Easy Way: Bring gentle and consistent attention to your breath for 2 minutes, and when your attention wanders, bring it back
 - Easier Way: Sit without an agenda for 2 minutes, shift from doing to being
- Loving-kindness Meditation (Empathy & Compassion)
 - Think of Yourself, a Loved One, a Difficult Person, and all Persons or Beings
 - May I be happy - May you be happy
 - May I be well - May you be well
 - May I be safe - May you be safe
 - May I be peaceful & at ease - May you be peaceful & at ease
- Cultivate Optimism with Gratitude
 - Journal or Reflect on
 - Three Things I'm Proud of
 - Three Things I'm Grateful for
 - What Went Well: Things that went well today and why
- Foster Joy
 - Notice Thin Slices of Joy: Blue Sky, Bird Song, First Sip of Coffee, Warm Shower Water, Comics
- Priming for Performance: Best Day
 - Recall Best Day prior to Hearing, Presentation, Demanding Performance
- Enhance Engagement and Flow: Savoring
 - Prior to work on a project, recall or reflect on life's pleasures, wonders, and awe-inspiring moments

Book Recommendations

- The Anxious Lawyer by Jeena Cho & Karen Gifford
- The Mindful Athlete by George Mumford
- Search Inside Yourself & Joy on Demand by Chade-Meng Tan
- Into the Magic Shop: A Neurosurgeon's Quest to Discover the Mysteries of the Brain and the Secrets of the Heart by James R. Doty, MD

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.

~ Aristotle ~