

## **The Law and Your Life—Aligning Personal Values with the Practice of Law/ Fundamentals of Professional Development**

This course invites the L3 students of UCLA Law School to become part of a growing conversation, one that is taking place across law school campuses throughout the U.S. This growth is evidenced by a recent conference held on the U.C. Berkeley School of Law campus, attended by lawyers, judges, law professors and students, to address issues of personal values, morality and their place in the practice of law. [“The Mindful Lawyer: Practices & Prospects for Law School, Bench and Bar”, October 2010]. Fifteen law schools across the country, including Berkeley and Yale, are now teaching similar courses.

This course proposes to give students an arena in which to explore, rather than set aside, their personal approach to life in the context of the law. It proposes to offer a thoughtful forum in which to examine the seemingly inherent conflict between the courts, as arbiters of fact and law, and humans, as arbiters of morality.

There is a growing body of research documenting increased rates of professional dissatisfaction and accompanying psychopathology among lawyers. Substance abuse, depression, and physical illness resulting from prolonged stress are increasingly common. This trend is making its way into law schools. One study found that “as early as their first semester of law school, law students begin to shift from focusing on their internal value systems toward placing an increased emphasis on external values such as grades and competition leading to decreased satisfaction and overall well-being.”<sup>1</sup> Another stated: “Within six months...the law students experienced significant decreases in well-being and life satisfaction, and substantial increases in depression, negative affect and physical symptoms.”<sup>2</sup>

I propose teaching a course that helps students align their personal values with their law practices, and equips them with lifelong tools for meeting the challenges of practicing law, managing stress and maintaining balance in their lives.

The course would be highly interactive and include four core aspects:

- exploratory writing exercises and discussion that engage and help each student identify his/her core values, then understand how to integrate those values into their lives and practice;
- techniques for coping with stress, long hours, and difficult work situations, that the student can engage at any moment for dealing with a wide range of challenging circumstances;
- practices that help students maintain good mental and physical health, as well as recognize, interrupt and combat detrimental behaviors/responses to undue stress;
- fundamentals of professional development—an understanding of the business side of the practice of law, and why it’s never too soon to start.

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<sup>1</sup> Sheldon and Krieger (2004). *Does Legal Education Have Undermining Effects on Law Students? Evaluating Changes in Values, Motivation and Well-Being, Behavioral Sciences and Law.*

<sup>2</sup> Serota, Michael. “No Way in the World Could We Be Satisfied,” *The National Law Journal*, July 9, 2010.

Development of these abilities will be supported by assigned readings, class discussions, specific assignments and actual practice of the skills taught, and their application to practice situations. Course materials and sources draw on research studies, relevant texts, popular media and possible guest presenters.

**Reading:**

*Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers: An Updated Guide to Stress, Stress Related Diseases, and Coping*, Robert M. Sapolsky

*Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*, Daniel Pink

*Man's Search for Meaning* Viktor Frankl

Leonard Riskin, *The Contemplative Lawyer*, 7 Harvard Negotiation Law Review 1 (2002)

Train Your Mind, Change Your Brain Sharon Begley

*The Art of Possibility*, Rosamund Stone Zander, Benjamin Zander

Anger, Thich Nhat Hahn

Mindsight: The New Science of Personal Transformation, Daniel Siegel, MD

*Mindfulness for Law Students: Using the Power of Mindfulness to Achieve Balance and Success in Law School*, Scott L. Rogers

Understanding the Negative Effects of Legal Education on Law Students: A Longitudinal Test and Extension of Self-Determination Theory, Kennon M. Sheldon, Lawrence S. Krieger,

*FSU College of Law, Public Law Research Paper No. 206*, 2006

*The Power of Purpose* Peter S. Temes

*The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*, Deepak Chopra, MD

"Personal Aspirations, the 'Good Life,' and the Law," Tim Kasser, *Deakin Law Review* special edition on happiness and the law, 2005.

*The High Price of Materialism*, Tim Kasser, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002

*Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation In Everyday Life*, John Kabat-zinn

*Buddha's Brain: The Practical Neuroscience of Happiness, Love, and Wisdom*, Rick Hanson

*Spiritual Direction and Meditation*, Thomas Merton

*Jewish Meditation Practices for Everyday Life: Awakening Your Heart, Connecting with God*, Jeff Roth

*Jewish Meditation: A Practical Guide* Aryeh Kaplan

*Inner Space: Introduction to Kabbalah, Meditation and Prophecy*. Aryeh Kaplan

*How To Meditate: A Step-by-Step Guide to the Art and Science of Meditation*, by John Novak

*The Fine Arts of Relaxation, Concentration, and Meditation: Ancient Skills for Modern Minds*, Joel and Michelle Levey

*8 Minute Meditation: Quiet Your Mind. Change Your Life*, Victor Davich

## Draft Curriculum Overview

### The Law and Your Life—Aligning Personal Values with the Practice of Law/ Fundamentals of Professional Development

#### I. Back to the Future

*“To laugh often and love much; to win the respect of intelligent persons and the affection of children; to earn the approbation of honest citizens and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to give of one’s self; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to have played and laughed with enthusiasm and sung with exultation; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived...this is to have succeeded.”*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

What is your definition of success?

What is your practice vision?

What vision do you hold of your life and your practice?

Why did you attend law school?

What values drive you?

What are your passions?

What activities give your life meaning?

What type of life do you want to lead and how does that align with vision of your practice of law?

Does your definition of success include excellent health? Fulfilling relationships? Creative outlets? Emotional well-being? Psychological stability? Energy and enthusiasm? Contentment? Serenity?

If these latter qualities of life are “presumed,” do you feel them now?

If not, how do you expect to achieve and maintain them moving forward? How have your attitudes changed since year one?

Discussion of *choice* versus reactivity – exploration of that power and how it impacts our decision-making, both in practice and in life.

Daniel Pink on motivation: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6XAPnuFjJc>

*Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*, Daniel Pink

Attitudes about money:

Inherent conflicts in business development.

Exploration of current attitudes, beliefs about money; developing/maintaining healthy money attitudes.

Individuals who have combined professional success, financial success and personal success (fulfillment).

(Possible guest)

Writing assignment.

Introduction to Meditation for sessions II, III, IV

## **II/III. Techniques for Coping with Stress in the Firm, in Practice and in Life**

Both the practice of law and daily life regularly serve up unforeseen challenges. Even the most skilled among us are not prepared for them all. The ability to calmly meet life's challenges is vital to leading a well-balanced, healthy life.

How do you currently cope with stress?

- Overeating?
- Under-eating? (Loss of appetite?)
- Alcohol?
- Pot?
- Controlled substances?
- Explosive outbursts/ rage?
- Isolation?
- Brooding?
- Humor?
- Exercise?
- Internalization?
- Physical manifestations, e.g. skin conditions? hair loss? GI disorders
- Meditation?

### **The neuroscience of meditation**

- Physiological benefits
- Neurological benefits
- Emotional/psychological benefits
- Physical and curative benefits

Teach breath and meditation techniques for relieving anxiety, increasing energy, coping with stressful encounters, resolving hostility, enhancing communication, increasing attention, enhancing understanding, resolving adverse practice situations.

### **Application to real life and practice situations; capacity to**

- cope with stressful work events
- focus without distraction
- be conscientious and high performing without being emotionally wrought
- create emotional distance without compromising quality of work
- balance innate, often compelling search for meaning in life in the face of the daily grind
- inject creativity into problem-solving
- be more self aware; engage in honest self-critique
- listen with open-mindedness and patience
- facilitate productive communication in adversarial situations
- respect and empathize with others
- cultivate understanding for opposing points of view

Students will practice application of these skills to their own actual legal experiences in school and/or clerkships/internships and report on them in subsequent sessions.

#### **IV.**

##### **Professional development**

- What it is. What it's not. Fundamentals of professional development
- Making it natural.
- Understanding what "they" want; knowing what you want
- Creating a professional development plan
- Practical skills, time management
- The importance of relationships; establishing trust, likeability, bonds
- The keys of communication
- The importance of mentoring

##### **Insightful Lawyering**

- Is there a place for insightful lawyering in the legal realm? Or are insight practices more akin to philosophical doctrines, to be kept apart from the law?
- What has been your personal experience with meditation?
- Are you able to separate your "self" as an insightful person from your "self" as a lawyer? Should you?
- Are these skills one and the same?

## **V. Nutrition: Eating to be a better lawyer**

*Let food be thy medicine, and medicine be thy food*

Hippocrates

Practicing law is physically, mentally and emotionally challenging, requiring no less than the stamina of an athlete. Constant demands for our attention via a multitude of communication devices, combined with constant pressure to perform, makes preserving good mental, physical and emotional health both essential and extraordinarily challenging.

Overview:

- What is stress?
- The physiology of stress
- The impact of stress on health
- How is stress being manifested among the students in the class?

Countering the impact of stress on the body with appropriate nutrition

Distinguishing between foods that induce

- sluggishness
- energy swings
- weight fluctuation
- mood fluctuation

And foods that

- increase energy
  - increase clarity
  - promote excellent health
  - create positive moods
- to support an active law practice

**The Composition of Food:** some basic biochemistry

Presentation of final projects