



Managing the Unique Stressors of Working In- House

ACC - Northeast
February 15th, 2024

**We're FREE,
Confidential,
and *FOR YOU.***

WE HELP LAWYERS, LAW STUDENTS, AND OTHER LEGAL PROFESSIONALS.



Free and Confidential Consultations and Resources



OUR MISSION

is to promote well-being and resilience in the legal community, improve lives, nurture competence, and elevate the standing of the legal profession.

A Few Common Myths

- Working In-House is the ideal position
- High pay
- Low stress
- Good work/life balance
- Work is more predictable
- In-House counsel have little to complain about



The Reality

- Working In-House is challenging for many reasons:
 - More work than hours in the day to complete it
 - Lack of resources
 - Expected to know all aspects of the law at the drop of a hat
 - Often having to manage internal conflicts
 - Stress of managing a legal department or various sizes
 - Perhaps the only lawyer or one of very few lawyers on staff
 - The implicit or explicit expectation of perfection
 - Being seen as an impediment to the success of the company
 - Unable to choose/fire your client
 - Feeling lack of control in your work

Stress and Burnout

One might be good/bad/neutral and the other is just bad

Stress



- Disequilibrium / Imbalance
- Internal activation to respond to a threat
- Excitement and anxiety is the same internal biological response



What is in
your
control?

Hint: It's not the wave.

Exercising Control

The difference between...

Your life happening to you

vs.

Engaging with your life around you



Contributing Factors to Unhealthy Stress

Lack of
Control/Autonomy

Overcommitting /
Saying "Yes" too much

Lack of community

Values alignment

Excessive Workload

Too little recognition

Lack of
validation/appreciation

Perfectionism

Common Reactions to Stress

Trouble “shutting
work off”

Disruptions to
sleep

More difficult to
complete tasks

Trouble focusing
/ more
distracted

Less satisfaction
with work

Lack of
excitement or
interest

Feeling
physically unwell
or exhausted



Prevention

Sleep

Eat more of the good stuff

Breathe / Meditate / Relax

Exercise for fun

Pursue fun and passion



Helpful habits



Use calendar to make fewer decisions



Set and maintain boundaries early on



Say “no” to reasonable requests / Insert a pause



Avoid multitasking



Respect your downtime



Maintain community



Identify your values

Have a Customized Approach

- Understand the source of your stress and utilize a specific strategy



Source → Response

Out of my control

- Expected to know all areas of law
- Being asked to take on too many tasks
- Conflicts between people/departments
- Can't "shut off work" at the end of the day

Within my control

- Reframe my lack of instant knowledge
- Practice setting more boundaries
- Feel more prepared to address conflicts with helpful skills
- Do something else that demands my attention

Practical Strategies: Organizational Techniques

Habits – Procedures



Week of August 20

Happy Birthday Dad

- [unclear]
- [unclear]
- [unclear]
- [unclear]

2013 SEPTEMBER 2013						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

2013 NOVEMBER 2013						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

2013 DECEMBER 2013						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

SAFE

403250



64°
New York, NY



Organization + Productivity



Reduce
Distractions,
Block Time &
Tame Tasks



A photograph of a man with a beard, shirtless, holding a frog by its back legs over his open mouth. The frog is light-colored with dark spots. The background is a bright blue sky with light clouds. The man's head is tilted back, and his mouth is wide open, showing his teeth and tongue. The frog is positioned as if it is about to be eaten. The image is partially obscured by a white circular graphic on the left side of the slide.

Most Important Tasks

Effective Strategies to Deal with Difficult Situations

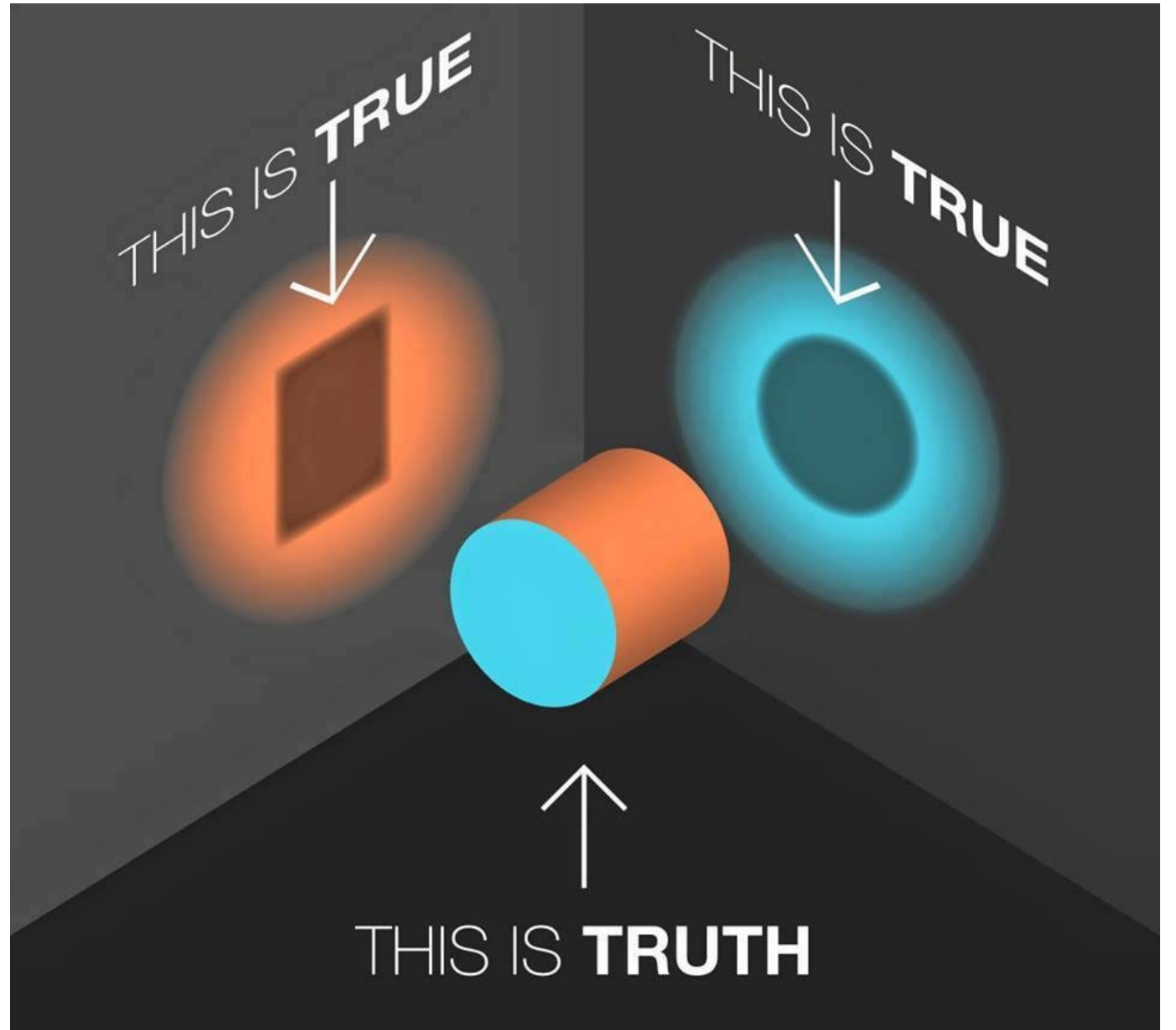


De-escalating Conflicts

What do you have control over?

- Awareness of your body, emotions, and thoughts
- Distinguish between in and out of your control
- Focusing on staying calm
- Model the behavior you want to see from others
- Respond as if it is not personal

Validate,
Don't
Persuade



+

•

○

Active Listening

Give undivided attention

Paraphrase back what you heard

Reflect back their feelings

Ask for confirmation

Adjust if needed

Repeat...



Shawn Healy, PhD
shawn@lclma.org

Thank you!

www.lclma.org

617-482-9600