

Lawyers as Endurance Athletes: 5 Tips to Developing Stronger, More Resilient “Mental Muscle” in Your Life

Presented by: Heidi Brown, Professor, Brooklyn Law School and Justin Martin, Associate General Counsel, Electric Power Research Institute and Chair, Law Department Management Network

It's OK to not be OK, but then what? There are many dimensions to well-being, including emotional, intellectual, occupational, physical, spiritual and social. Endurance athletes use specific techniques to build emotional and mental muscle around their physical muscle, and enhance their performance. Below are tips we can use to apply the same concepts to enhance our well-being and effectiveness as in-house counsel.

Tips to Develop Mental Muscle and Be Healthier, Happier and More Effective

1 – Train, then trust

- Make time to improve yourself
- What dimension do you most need to focus on?
- 30 minutes a day for 30 days is a good start
- Set up your system to deal with stressful situations, then trust that system to work for you in a performance moment
- Develop good habits

2 – Find your “flow” state

- What activities get you so involved that time seems to disappear?
- When you are in a flow state, you feel powerful and challenged, but you know you have the skills to do the work
- Set up your environment to eliminate distractions and make it easier to get into a flow state
- Taking a break just before you lose your momentum helps you recharge following a flow state

3 – Eat your whole foods (of ethics)

- As lawyers, we are all aware of the professional responsibility rules relating to diligence, competence and communication
- In order to provide the best possible service to your client, you have to take care of yourself
- Even something like improving your communication skills can alleviate anxiety, add value to your work as in-house counsel and give you more time to do other things

4 – Craft yourself - create a plan for well-being

- Commit to well-being – as an individual and as a profession
- Educate yourself and the in-house community on attorney well-being
- Self-Assessment - where are you and where can you improve your well-being?
- Encourage awareness of, empathy for, and non-judgment of others, and help reduce the stigma of talking about these issues
- Schedule well-being activities and ways to recharge
- Hold yourself accountable

5 – Get out of your own way

- Take action – what one thing do you need to work on most?
- Write down what is on your mind
- Who inspires you based on the way they exhibit the dimensions of well-being?