

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Reinventing Ourselves as Lawyers: We Have More Options Than We Realize

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I'm not sure who first said it (attributions vary), but these days, we are often told that we need to "reinvent" ourselves after some significant period of time in order to make our lives more fulfilling. For those of us who are not lawyers, this prompt happens with births, deaths, or other major life events, both expected and unexpected. It seems like the circumstances of life simply create paths for change and we must walk through them and make the best of new situations.

Yet, what is interesting to me is the extent to which the legal profession provides lawyers with opportunities for reinvention with everything we do. If you think about it, we are surrounded by those engaged in reinventions at every turn – whether it is a district attorney who chooses to leave public service and begin a criminal defense practice, a civil

attorney with years of defense experience who begins representing plaintiffs, the big law partner who becomes a government attorney, and on and on. We all hear and read about them, and we all pass the news on to our circles of friends.

Even though it's sometimes difficult to keep track of people we care about, this possibility is one of the most wonderful parts of the practice of law. There are many reasons that one might seek a reinvention of their legal career. What causes attorneys to want to reinvent themselves? Common reasons include personal health or commitment to family ("The grind of work at a firm is too taxing for me ..." or "I want to spend more time with my ailing parent or new baby ...")

Of course, these changes can happen in any profession or walk of life, but attorneys have several options to address such issues. There are literally hundreds of ways one can practice law that we can adjust to our needs, our preferences, and personal circumstances (i.e., government practice, rural or big city practice, solo and small firm practice, public interest practice, medium-sized and large firm practice, big law practice and in-house positions, and more.) The great part is that no type of practice is more or less a valuable

part of our legal community than any other. We are all part of an extended family.

Some time ago, the state of Nevada had a public relations tagline similar to: "Nevada: Make The Life You Want." So, too, goes the legal profession. The wonderful variations in legal practice give each practitioner the ability to work in a way that plays to their strengths, fulfills their aspirations, and fits their particular lifestyle. Current trends in "remote" practice expand these options even further. So, for me, law is a great profession because there is something for everyone.

However, a wide range of choices also carries with it the obligation of figuring out what one really wants, and this is true of legal practice, as well. For these reasons, no one is ever stuck as an attorney. If a case, or a project, or an interpersonal situation, or some other set of circumstances causes us to reconsider the type of practice we are engaged in, we may be skeptical that we have options. The wonderful news is that, as lawyers, we have more options to reinvent ourselves than we realize. We've all been there, where a change in our work is needed, begging the question of whether a reinvention is required: "Is it simply where I am working, or the entire nature of my practice that needs to change?"

In this sense, attorneys have a level of control that others should envy. My point here is that the vast range of work that attorneys perform gives us the luxury of reinventing ourselves whenever we deem the time to be right. We need not wait for the life-changing event to affect our lives from outside – we simply need to do the soul-searching that will tell us which way to go and recognize that the flexibility to affect the change we seek is within our grasp. This fact gives me hope that happiness as an attorney is ours to find, if we give ourselves permission to seek it.