



The Legal Connection

where legal technology & people connect

2012-06

June Theme = Balance

The theme this month is "balance". What tech do you use to help you find that allusive path to some semblance of work-life balance?

For me the first tech that comes to mind is my smartphone – a Palm Pixi. I've been a Palm girl as long as I have been mobile. Palm devices were keeping people mobile and organized long before the internet or even cell phone technology so it was only natural that I would stick with a device I already knew how to use and could easily manage. I was not surprised to learn that David Allen of Getting Things Done fame was also an avid Palm user when he wrote his book.

It is my mobile device which keeps me in the know. Unlike many, however, I am not a slave to my phone. I ask for email when I have time to scan/review; the same way I have Outlook set on my larger devices.

Speaking of Microsoft, for the first time, I find myself rooting for it to succeed with the upcoming release of their equipment into the tablet market. Called #Surface, this technology was originally designed to be the size of a coffee table. Never one to rush out and buy anything - perhaps it will be an option when the Palm TouchPad stops working.

That said, being mobile with a smartphone is what allows me to get up and away from my desk and email without feeling as though I am going to miss anything urgent. Note, I use the word urgent – I don't constantly scan email or otherwise let my mobility hinder my life. Perhaps that is why I feel I have attained work/life balance. I work when I wish or need; and I completely turn it off when I am not actively working.

For instance, I don't sleep with my smartphone – it stays in my office charging overnight. I also take vacations and leave the phone at home. The longest I've gone without being connected is 10 days. I am fortunate, in that I have an Operations Manager to mind the store while I am gone (and who gets hotel and other contact information in case a true emergency arises). Even if I didn't have Tracy though, I'd still disconnect.

Once the initial paralyzing fear passes, there is a calmness that comes over you when you disconnect and realize you won't be connected for some time. It is a calm well worth experiencing by everyone for a few short days a few times per year.

I hope you enjoy this month's issue of **The Legal Connection** newsletter as much as I did putting it together. Another stellar line up of original content from our regular contributors. One quick note to welcome back Steve O'Donnell and his always funny (and insightful) Steve O'Ds article to wrap up this issue.

Don't forget to check out the last page, click on the link to join **TLCxn** on LinkedIn and take a peek at the upcoming events on **The Legal Connection** calendar.

You can also click on the logos of my trusted resources listed on the last page to learn how these companies help me help my clients and colleagues.

til next month...

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be the initials 'A' followed by a flourish.

How To Turn Clutter into Order

If your primary goal is to exist in a clutter-free environment, you need to devise a system in which you operate freely. With a smart system in place, you will free up valuable time. Having more time to spend your hours doing what enjoy most is everyone's goal in life. By using systems, you will have methods of doing things that might otherwise be a strain because you don't know where to start. You will create new ways of simplifying a task or operation or you will learn other's ways and adopt them for your own.

Paper clutter is a very good example. We find papers thrown here, there and everywhere. Loose paper can be found in every area of an office. To transform a disorderly area into an orderly one, you first have to clean up the area of all loose paper and put them in a designated place or just throw away. You can use folders, binders, baskets, drawers or shelving space to store paper. You can also scan to digital and decide to only store digitally. Once you have a designated place established for each type of paper, it is easier to remain organized going forward.

Think now about how your office became so messy in the first place. What did you do with the paper when it arrived? Did you put it into a basket or folder, for example? If you glanced at it and then put it down on the haphazard pile building on the nearest horizontal surface, chances are right there is your problem! Your goal is to designate a place for every piece of paper you feel you must keep. That is the only way to be organized.

Organized ways to deal with paper that crosses your desk each day is to:

1. Put it in a folder, tray, basket, binder, envelope or drawer designated for that type of paper – mail; receipts; financial documents, etc.
2. Spend the time you need to look into what the paper commands of you and calendar the time to get it done.
3. Scan and shred.

Once you have a paper flow system you will be organized and it will prevent you from the firing search to find assorted pieces of paper everywhere throughout your office.

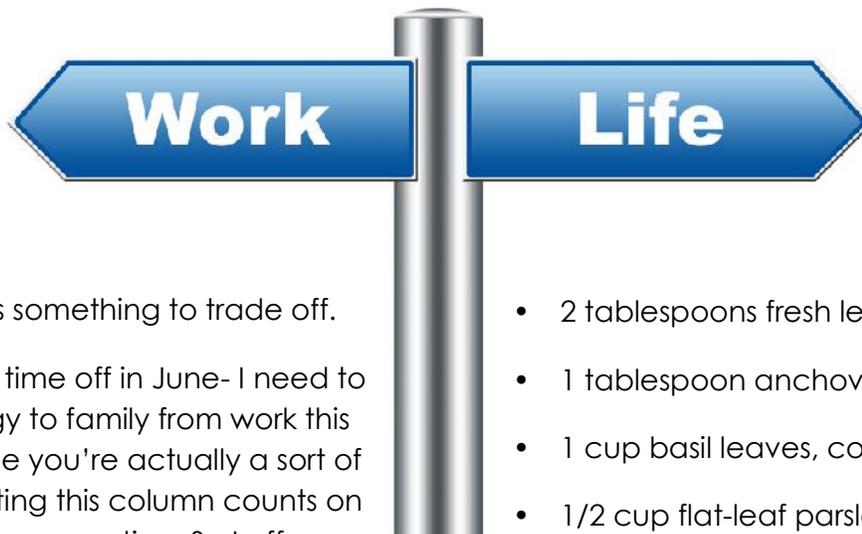
As soon as you receive the paper, you put it in its allotted place. From this, you will create a peaceful work area. You will automatically know where to go to get your paper and where to find paper that you need.

The same system can be applied to reorganizing any disordered environment. You can tackle a room, a closet, or a drawer by first organizing it and then taking a look at how it got that way in the first place. Here is where new systems come into play. You need to be able to maintain the order you have created so that the same mess does not just develop all over again.

I use a system I created for myself called D-A-F-T which stands for Defer – Act – File – Toss. The full process and how it came about are in my soon to be released ebook: [Getting Email Done!](#) which will be listed for sale at my consulting site:

www.andreacannavina.com

If you visit the site, please give me your thoughts on the design, etc. You can also download the "cheat sheet" version of D-A-F-T™ selected as a TechnoFeature by Technolawyer in 2008.



Balance. Always something to trade off.

I'm taking a little time off in June- I need to rebalance energy to family from work this month. And, while you're actually a sort of family to me, writing this column counts on the work side of my equation. So I offer you this recipe as a win/win. You can use it for a lovely summer meal, and I'll use it to buy some time off of work. Maybe you'll use it to buy some meal-planning time to reallocate to work. Or perhaps, a nap. Happy summer!

Family and guests love this salad. We make it with grilled chicken breasts or grilled pepper-crusted tuna. Do the grilling and make the dressing and croutons ahead, and you have a meal that is ready to serve whenever you're ready to eat.

Enjoy!

Basil Caesar Salad

(from <http://www.epicurious.com>)

- 1 (10-inch) piece baguette, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 garlic clove
- 1 large egg



Barbara Nelson helps lawyers and other professionals learn the simplicity of action. She's grateful for the opportunity to show up here and share her unique perspective. Barbara is a huge fan of writing to improve productivity. To learn more, visit Barbara's blog: <http://www.successfullysolo.com/blog>

- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon anchovy paste
- 1 cup basil leaves, coarsely chopped
- 1/2 cup flat-leaf parsley, coarsely chopped
- 1 package romaine hearts (1 pound), leaves separated and washed well, then halved crosswise [Note- Barbara just chops the romaine, it's faster and we like the crunch]
- 1 cup coarsely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano

Preheat oven to 375°F with rack in middle.

Toss bread with 2 tablespoons oil and 1/4 teaspoon each of salt and pepper in a large 4-sided sheet pan, then spread out in 1 layer. Toast in oven, stirring halfway through, until golden, 12 to 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, with motor running, drop garlic into a food processor and finely chop. Add egg, lemon juice, anchovy paste, and 1/2 teaspoon pepper and pulse until combined. With motor running, add remaining 6 tablespoons oil in a slow stream, blending until emulsified. Add herbs and blend until dressing turns green and herbs are finely chopped.

Toss romaine with dressing, croutons, and half of cheese in a large bowl. Sprinkle with remaining cheese.

Read More

<http://www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/Basil-Caesar-Salad-353618#ixzz1xUFqLAXC>

Get Greater Peace of Mind with a Virtual Receptionist Service

Attorneys and legal professionals are known for working long hours. It's hard work, mountains of research, meetings, drafting, more meetings, and in some practice areas, a single case can drag on for weeks, months, or even years.

Who has time for a life? But life experiences can actually help your practice. Research has shown that happy people produce better work and more of it. It's in you and your firm's best interest if you have a social life and have some time to kick your feet up once in a while.

Better said than done, right?

Thankfully, there are lots of tools out there today to help. Just as a virtual assistant (nod to LegalTypist!!) can help you with your administrative work, a virtual receptionist service can be a great time-saver. Here are four ways they can help:

Update your availability on the fly. Feel like working from home this morning? Go for it! Virtual receptionists can connect calls to you wherever you are. Need some peace and quiet to finish up a draft? Let your receptionist service know, and they'll hold your calls.

Unchain yourself from your desk. Get some coffee or take a long lunch without worrying whether you're missing a call from your next big client. Better yet, when's the last time you took a vacation?! Your receptionist service can keep callers in the loop so that they have great expectations for when to expect a return call.

Prioritize your calls. Not every call needs to be answered right away. Your drycleaner doesn't necessarily need to talk to you this minute, but you probably want to talk to the judge on your high-profile case. Virtual receptionists can transfer calls based on your preferences and help you make the most of your time.

Return calls promptly. Did you know some virtual receptionist services can also return calls on your behalf to relay or gather more information? Say you have a message from a potential new client, but, from the intake your virtual receptionist service just took for you, you know you won't be able to take their case.

Simply reply to the message, and your service can let the caller know, give them the name and number of a fellow attorney that you recommend, or refer them to their local bar association. The caller still has a great impression of your firm, and it only took you 30 seconds to communicate with your service.

Likewise, they can call and confirm appointments on your behalf, so that you can cut down on your no-shows.

Studies have shown that experiences can make a big impact on your happiness, so get out of the office once in a while (or hopefully, more often than that!), and leave your phones to the experts.



Katie Wilson is a Sales and Marketing Associate at Ruby Receptionists. Harkening back to an era when every call to an office was answered by a friendly receptionist, Ruby Receptionists provides personalized live, virtual receptionist service to small businesses and professionals throughout North America. Visit: <http://www.callruby.com> to learn more.



Rural Lawyer : Balance

Sham Harga had run a successful eatery for many years by always smiling, never extending credit, and realizing that most of his customers wanted meals properly balanced between the four food groups: sugar, starch, grease, and burnt crunchy bits
-- Terry Pratchett, *Men at Arms*

In the spirit of Sham Harga, one runs a successful law practice by always smiling, never extending credit and having your tech properly balanced between the four tech groups: security, redundancy, utility, and cost.

These are dynamic forces often in opposition with each other. If I want my systems to be perfectly secure, I must sacrifice utility (for others not to access my tech, I must also limit how I may access my tech) and invest in cost (firewalls, DMZ's, encrypted communication, and 24/7 monitoring come with large price tags). Should I wish perfect utility - unlimited access, 24/7/365 availability - I must sacrifice security and invest in redundancy and cost. But there is a point where all four forces lie in balance - costs comfortably within our budget, security contained comfortably between extreme paranoia and laxness, and systems that are sufficiently redundant so that they can attend to the tasks required of them now and for the reasonably foreseeable future with only minor, rectifiable hiccups.

While there are undoubtedly precise mechanisms that will spit out one's ROI when investing \$X in amount Y of security or amount Z of redundancy, this point of balance is more than a simple evaluation of a couple of the forces in isolation. This is more a matter of personal intuition for what we are evaluating is a fluid system and the balance we achieve today may not be the right balance tomorrow. It is a bit like yoga - today I find my balance in child's pose and even though I might find it in mountain or tree tomorrow, right now a simple solution addresses my needs and that is all that matters for the moment; let tomorrow bring a new balance with it when tomorrow comes.

Yet being in tech balance is more than simply being able to find the right balance between the four tech groups - there is finding balance while engulfed in the ever-present white noise of our interconnected tech; of finding those small moments of quiet midst the cacophony of social networks, list-serves, RSS feeds, blogs, and e-mail if for no other reason than to find some time to actually do some paying work.

I find that when the din becomes too much and the well considered advice of the efficiency experts no longer lifts me above the noise I take a retreat from my tech for a few days - deliberately disconnecting from the cacophony of interconnectedness - choosing instead to regress to more primal state of tech. One in which afternoon naps are more likely to be interrupted by the dulcet tones of a landline than the strident chirp of a cell phone and where word processing is a product of ink on paper rather than electrons on phosphor.

Admittedly, putting one's tech on hiatus is not easy (a small town's lack of reliable connectivity goes a long way in helping me ignore tech's siren song) but I find that doing so reminds me to have a more deliberate, purposeful relationship with my tech; that my tech is there to facilitate my mission, not dictate it. Seems everything needs to be rebooted ever now and then.



Bruce M. Cameron Having decided that going to law school and opening a solo law practice would be a sufficient response to the male midlife crisis, Bruce now practices Collaborative Family Law and Estate Planning in rural Minnesota. When not in the law office, he can be found on his small farm where he and his wife are at the beck and call of a herd of horses, a couple of cats, a few dogs and one extremely spoiled parrot. <http://www.rurallawyer.com>



Balance

Balance was something I missed when I was working for the Man and, after some rebound, have attained in my solo practice.

Let's face it, an employer's interest in you as anything but a money-generating piece of machinery is greatest when you are your own employer, is a little less when you work directly under the boss, and diminishes to zero as some function of the size of the business and your distance from the top.

As professionals, it's easy to work ourselves to death. Either there is such a crushing load of work that you wind up eating an old Powerbar for lunch or dinner, hunched over a computer, slowly having your soul eaten by the peaceful glow of the monitor, or there isn't.

If there isn't, then part of the time you're not working is spent chasing work. Leisure, which should fit into the space not filled by work, then gets displaced by the search for work.

It was easier to relax when I worked making life jackets for a year before I started college. I'd go in, work 8-10 hours, then...not work.

Now, when I'm not working, part of me thinks I should hang around the courthouse chatting up the real lawyers (I'm a patent attorney, I usually don't wear pants when I work...I'm wearing pants as I write this though, but no shirt or shoes) or otherwise trying to meet people that might hire me.

Sometimes I give into that urge, but I've become good at resisting.

When I first went solo, I was shocked at how much free time I had. A big part of that was because I didn't have many clients, but another part of it is that what the client was paying wasn't being split between the partners, the secretaries, keeping the lights on in an office, and paying for all the other crap, so I got to keep all of what the client paid, not a small fraction after the firm took their cut.

That led me to let leisure get out of hand. I watched a lot of movies, played a lot of videogames, and read the internet. Oddly, that actually freed up more time because I let marketing go to zero.

Now, I think I've hit a good balance. Part of the trick is doing something you like so it seems less like work. That's probably a given for any professional, as long as you can avoid the things like endless document review or accounting, the work itself isn't that bad.

A related trick is to find some marketing thing you can do that also isn't that offensive. If you're a people-person, then it's easy ... go meet people.

If you're not, maybe something like designing a new website for yourself or blogging is more your style. It's not quite the same as leisure time, but it's not a bad compromise.

Or work all the time. Some people like that. You'll still die alone and afraid.



Steve O'Donnell protects ideas. Based in Lancaster, PA, Steve's practice focuses on helping clients protect their ideas and intellectual property through the use of patents, copyrights and trademarks.

<http://www.3cpatents.com>



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CONSULTING INC

LET'S CONNECT!



THE LEGAL CONNECTION HAS A LINKEDIN GROUP

Join our group and connect with other legal professionals interested in technology, networking and sharing of practical information.

www.tinyurl.com/TLCxnGroup



July-August 2012

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Calendar

Fri Jul 6	11:00am – 12:00pm	#legalchat - twitter
Thu Jul 12	1:00pm – 2:00pm	AVVO Free Webinar - Practical Guide to Mobile Marketing for Lawyers - Webinar
Fri Jul 13	11:00am – 12:00pm	#legalchat - twitter
Thu Jul 19	1:00pm – 2:00pm	Avvo Free Webinar - "Preserve the Core": How to Set up a Core Web Presence - Webinar
Fri Jul 20	11:00am – 12:00pm	#legalchat - twitter
Thu Jul 26	1:00pm – 2:00pm	Avvo Free Webinar - Google Website Analytics for Lawyers - Webinar
Fri Jul 27	11:00am – 12:00pm	#legalchat - twitter
Thu Aug 2	1:00pm – 1:30pm 1:00pm – 2:00pm	DAFT Your Way To Organized - Webinar Avvo Free Webinar - Social Media & Attorney Advertising Rules: Ethical Issues (1hr CLE) - Webinar