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Preventing “Lawyer Meltdown” and Creating Productive, Profitable and Enjoyable Law Practices



How Dedicated Are You?

By Allison C. Shields, Esq.

On May 7, 2011, I had the privilege of attending the christening of a new naval destroyer, the USS Michael Murphy, DGG 112, named for the son of a local lawyer and friend. Michael was a U.S. Navy SEAL killed in Afghanistan in 2005 during an operation that was part of the global war on terror. He was subsequently awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, the highest award for valor, as a result of his actions on that day.

The ship was built by employees of Bath Iron Works in Bath, Maine, and what I saw of those workers at the christening, combined with Michael’s story inspired me to write a blog post, “Passion, Pride and Purpose Make a Positive Impression.” You can see some of the photos from the day in that blog post, but there are more on the Legal Ease Facebook page.

In fact, although I already wrote a blog post about the ship’s christening, I wanted this month’s newsletter to focus on Michael’s story as well, particularly since this month began with the courageous actions of Navy SEALs in Pakistan and will end with Memorial Day, a day honoring those in the United States Armed Services who died serving our country in the military.

Although the weather called for rain, as you can see in the photos, Saturday morning was beautiful, and the entire ceremony was extremely moving. (It did rain after the ceremony, though, and on our way back home to Long Island, we observed a beautiful double rainbow which you can also see in my photos.)

There were many things that impressed me about the day on Saturday: the sheer size of the ship; the courage of Michael Murphy and his fellow SEALs and the other armed forces personnel involved in the operation that day (many of whom were killed); the dignitaries who turned out to pay tribute to Michael and help christen the ship; the representatives of the FDNY who traveled from NY to honor Michael and be a part of the ceremony even though they did not know him.

After the ceremony, we had an opportunity to purchase a book, entitled, "SEAL of Honor" by Gary Williams, about the life and service of Lt. Murphy. Despite the fact that we already owned a copy of the book, I had never gotten around to reading it, so we purchased another copy, which I promptly began reading on the trip back to NY from Maine that afternoon. I think I cried through the first hour (maybe two) of reading the book, and I highly recommend it to you if you want to get a real appreciation for what our men and women in the Armed Forces (and particularly the Navy SEALs) go through in order to prepare to defend our country.

The combination of seeing all of those who turned out to honor Michael, along with my reading of the book and learning about the sacrifices those who serve our country make got me thinking not only about passion, pride and purpose, but about commitment. What Michael and his fellow Navy SEALs were willing to put themselves through for the privilege of putting themselves in harm's way to defend our country is awe-inspiring.

We all encounter obstacles and resistance. Some of the SEALs I read about had setbacks during their training, including in some cases life-threatening illnesses or injuries. But they were dedicated to achieving their goal of becoming a SEAL, and they pressed on.

How dedicated are you? What are you willing to do to reach your goals?

Sometimes the resistance and the obstacles are put in our path to test us and to help us to re-focus on our goals and re-dedicate ourselves to reaching them. When you encounter resistance, do the “gut check:” ask yourself:

1. Why is this goal important to me?
2. How committed am I, on a scale of 1-10, to reaching this goal?

If your answer to question 2 is low on the scale, it may be time to reconsider your goals. If it's high, but it never seems to get done, it may be time to re-prioritize your activities to ensure that the action steps are taking to get you closer to your goal.

About the Author

Allison C. Shields, Esq., President of Legal Ease Consulting, Inc., is a former practicing attorney and law firm manager who helps law firms create more productive, profitable and enjoyable law practices by providing practice management and business development coaching and consulting. Contact her at Allison@LegalEaseConsulting.com, visit her website at www.LawyerMeltdown.com or her blog, www.LegalEaseConsulting.com.

