



WOMEN LAWYERS FORUM PRESENTS:  
Practicing Law During COVID-19:  
Navigating Challenges and Creating Opportunities  
Friday, May 8, 2020

Meeting Minutes

1. Daria Batkin, Chair of the BC WLF, introduces the first part of the WLF Virtual Coaching series and the 3 coaches on today's panel: Linda Parsons, Allison Wolf and Paula Price;
2. Amount of attendees on the webinar: 85;
3. Today's session is being recorded by the CBABC and the recording will be made available to registrants sometime next week;
4. Linda starts the webinar for the coaches: managing work life, managing practice and managing yourself are the 3 topics that will be dealt with today;
5. Allison deals with the first topic: managing work life:
  - It's okay to understand we're in an unprecedented situation with COVID-19, so we should really lower our expectations for ourselves. This is a time for surfing the challenges – the waves and the water are the uncertain, unexpected times we're in and the board we're on keeps us advancing on the horizon and achieving our goals (whatever those might be). So what is your board and what will keep you afloat and moving forward right now?;
  - “Productivity BS” = Boundaries and Structure. If you feel like you can't get traction on your big projects right now and are engaging in busy work, for example, focus on what kind of boundaries you can establish that will help you focus and what that structure will look like;
  - Your “second brain system” is your master project list, your ongoing to-do list and your waiting-for list (things you're waiting for before you can complete). You cannot keep this second brain list in your head! You need a system to organize it. Pen and paper, or a white board, anything that works – just write it down. This is part of your surfboard;
  - Try having a weekly meeting with yourself to determine what you want to accomplish that week and then check in with yourself;
  - Bookend your day – have a little ritual when you start and a little ritual at the end to go over what you accomplished that day. This will help you with your motivation. Decide
  - R.A.D – Run A Dash – 15 minutes per day on something that you really want to finish (for example, cleaning your office, going through a big pile of records). No matter what it is, break it down into a small task and wear it down a little each day.
6. Linda Parsons: very important to have a separate working space – her clients have found it very helpful. You need a specific space where you can focus;



7. Paula Price: when I work with clients, they ask what is the best system for time management? The answer is that it's whatever system you will actually do. One tip in particular has helped clients: this is planning. Develop a daily, weekly, monthly planning practice will help you shift from a reactive practice to a proactive one. Put a 2-meter distance between your devices and your home life – fill that time with activities that have nothing to do with work. It's important to reinforce your boundaries right now and creating distance;
8. Linda Parsons on managing your practice and dealing with challenges during COVID-19:
  - Virtual check-ins can be very helpful with your team in managing your workflow but keep them organized and brief to avoid “Zoom fatigue”;
  - Dealing with highly stressed colleagues can be difficult. Be knowledgeable about the resources people you work with can access and put a boundary around your commitment to your colleagues – just do your best;
  - Positive aspect: many collaborative interactions with colleagues at the bar and with clients;
  - “Best practices” for interacting with clients right now and strengthening relationships: 1) do a check-in with your clients to see how they're doing without a particular agenda. This is the foundation of the trusted advisor bond. 2) do a client file audit to prioritize those matters that are urgent right now and to pivot your legal strategies accordingly. This audit needs to be ongoing as things keep changing. 3) do some research if needed and engage in strategic legal thinking to determine how COVID-19 might be affecting your clients and their needs – this is an investment that you can make to build your client base in the future;
  - Challenges in dealing with clients now: some clients may be intrusive and you may need to strengthen your boundaries. Some of my clients have gotten new phones to separate work and life. Clients can also be frustrated about the COVID-19 situation – it's important to not internalize that frustration and not feel responsible for it. For billing issues, have an honest conversation with your clients about their finances and, if necessary, create a repayment installment plan. This can be painful, but needs to be dealt with. Perhaps use the RAD strategy that Allison talked about to deal with 1 or 2 bills or accounts at a time;
  - Linda identifies some COVID-19 resources available for lawyers right now.
9. Paula Price: additional comments: 1) to do your file audit, this is something you can do with a colleague or assistant, or coach. Having some support can motivate you to do this. 2) writing publically on a topic you're knowledgeable about during COVID-19 is a great investment and can signal to your clients that you can help them right now. 3) expanding your network on LinkedIn is a wonderful platform to increase your network, particularly during COVID-19. Think about people you may want to reach out to and get creative! People are very receptive right now to additional connection of any kind.
10. Allison Wolfe: at a high level, our current reality is about opportunity. It can help to shift your daily focus from how you're feeling right now to “how can I help” or “what else can



I do”? Stay positive and ask what you can do right now. Right now is a great time to do some brainstorming and do something different, new and helpful. After this is all over, think about how you want your next chapter to look like. What is your “new normal” going to look like once we get through COVID-19 and regular life resumes? We’re coming out of the “cocoon” phase of COVID-19 and it’s natural to start thinking about the next phase. Remember, the key word is OPPORTUNITY.

11. Paula Price: third topic is “managing yourself” – CREST: Choice (none of us chose COVID-19 or the consequences of what it has caused, but we are not powerless. We still get to choose what we say, how we say it and what we do and focus on. Choose what is comfortable for you and that is empowering), Routine (structure is comforting and efficient. It helps us keep going. It’s good to have “anchors” – ie. a morning routine, a wind-down routine and 3 meals a day – I work my schedule around those anchors). Expectations (the world can be changed by B-minus performers – not everything needs to be A+ work. It’s okay to cut some corners right now and just get the job done – it doesn’t have to be perfect. Give yourself some grace and manage your expectations). Self-care (what does your “Oxygen Mask” look like? What do you need to get through the day? Make sure you carve out time for it. Takeaway (we’re now 8 weeks into COVID-19. What helps me is thinking what I want to take away from this. If you have kids, what do you want them to take away from this? Apply different lenses to this. Focus on how you’ve been fortunate right now. Let your “takeaway” guide you into our next “new normal”).
12. Allison Wolf: underlining CREST is your mindset. It’s okay to just be in the “It’s Okay” or “I’m learning” or “I AM resilient” mindset and this will help you in your approach to CREST.
13. Linda Parsons: see yourself as the “hero” of your own self. You are brave and resilient and heroes go through difficult times – this is how they grow. Focus on that and give yourself a huge pat on your back during this time of nonstop anxiety.
14. Paula: announcement re: group-coaching – these will be smaller sessions led by one of the 3 coaches. Poll for the registrants – vote on the topics that you’re most interested or put additional topics you’d like to see in the chat. The coaches and WLF will finalize the list of topics once we’ve heard from the participants;
15. Allison: announcement re: today’s presentation is a teaser for the group coaching sessions – but the WLF is also doing on-one-on coaching for WLF members. This has never been done before. You will receive an email from the WLF about how to sign up and register for one-on-one coaching, but it will depend on the level of interest. There will be an application form sent out and these sessions will of course be complimentary. Stay tuned for more details from the WLF!
16. Linda: asks registrants to come up with one word about how they’re feeling at the end of this webinar – there was a lot of positive feedback.



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17. Daria: very excited for the smaller group sessions and one-on-one coaches. Asks registrants to send us any ideas about other topics you'd like the coaches to address. The WLF is working hard to pivot programs to more virtual offerings. The book club is coming up on May 14<sup>th</sup> and is virtual – the registration for that is still open. The AGM this year will also be virtual and will take place on June 4, 2020 – look out for the notice for the webinar.

- and streamline process)