



PROGRAM MATERIALS

Program #3697

May 4, 2026

Aligning Your Legal Career with Your Values

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Aligning Your Legal Career with Your Values:

Promoting Well-being, Engagement and Organizational Health

Marlo Lyons

J.D., Executive, Career, and Team Coach



Learning objectives

1. Understand how to identify and define your values to find fulfillment
2. Learn how to proactively address stress and dissatisfaction with your environment or co-workers attributed to values misalignments
3. Learn strategies for effectively communicating values, overcoming resistance, and creating a values-driven work environment
4. Understand how to sustain a values-driven work environment for individual well-being and engagement, promoting organizational health and fulfillment in legal careers

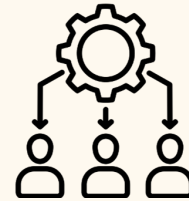
A little about me



Journalist



Entertainment
Lawyer



HR Executive

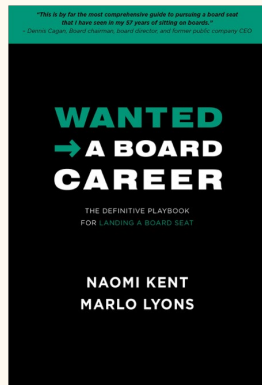


Certified Executive,
Career, and
Team Coach
Workshop Facilitator

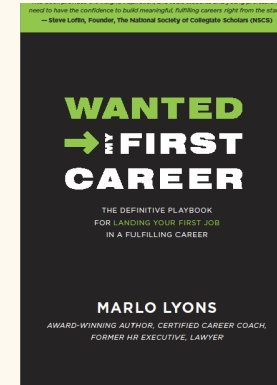
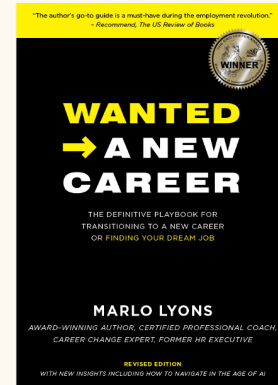
A little more about me



Podcast
Work Unscripted



Award-Winning and Best-Selling Author



HBR Contributor

What do you want?

*What do you want?
This is a deceptively simple
question. It can be much
more difficult than we
realize to give ourselves
permission to know and
listen to ourselves, to align
ourselves with our desires.*

*— Dr. Edith Egar, Holocaust Survivor
From *The Choice: Embrace the Possible**



Job satisfaction

68%

satisfied or very satisfied
with their job

15%

work more than
60 hours per week

27%

work 51-60 hours
a week

17%

Planned to take
one week or less
vacation this year

Job satisfaction

Work-life balance decreased in past year?



31%



18%

Advancement opportunities?



28%



35%

Feel stress all or most of the time?



46%



28%

Job satisfaction



Former Lawyer

<https://formerlawyer.com> › leaving biglaw

The Truth About Being Miserable As A Lawyer

Aug 23, 2021 — Wrong Responses to Feeling Miserable As a **Lawyer**. Often, when **lawyers** who are **unhappy** in their jobs talk with family and friends, they get ...



Quora

<https://www.quora.com> › Why-are-so-many-lawyers-un...

Why are so many lawyers unhappy with their jobs?



The Lawyer Life Collective

<https://thelawyerlifecollective.com> › feeling-unfulfilled

Feeling Unfulfilled



leavelawbehind.com

<https://leavelawbehind.com> › i-hate-being-a-lawyer

I Hate Being a Lawyer - Leave Law Behind

"I hate being a **lawyer**" is a thought many **unhappy attorneys** have. In this article, we reveal for you the core reason why you hate the practice of law.



Reddit · r/Lawyertalk

110+ comments · 11 months ago

Unfulfilled, but good salary, would you stay or leave?

I've been working for an insurance company for the past 5 years now and I a checked out. My low-stakes, low-value, high-volume ...

75 answers · 55 votes: Before I go any further, remember that the grass is al

How often do **lawyers** get disillusioned with their jobs? - Reddit Nov 25, 20

Unhappy and Unmotivated : r/Lawyertalk - Reddit Mar 18, 20

I've been an **attorney** for less than a year and I'm miserable. I ... Jul 9, 20

I hate everything about law and feel trapped. - Reddit May 19, 20

More results from www.reddit.com



Business Insider

<https://www.businessinsider.com> › Law › News

Why Are Lawyers Unhappy With Their Jobs



holisticwellnessstrategies.com

<https://www.holisticwellnessstrategies.com> › post › why...

Why Many Lawyers Are Unhealthy, Unhappy, And Unfulfilled

One final factor contributing to adverse health outcomes among **lawyers** is that many **lawyers** aren't happy in their careers and lives. Many **lawyers** are **unhappy** ...



Satisfaction v. fulfillment

Satisfaction

Meeting of expectations,
needs, and desires

Immediate and may be temporary

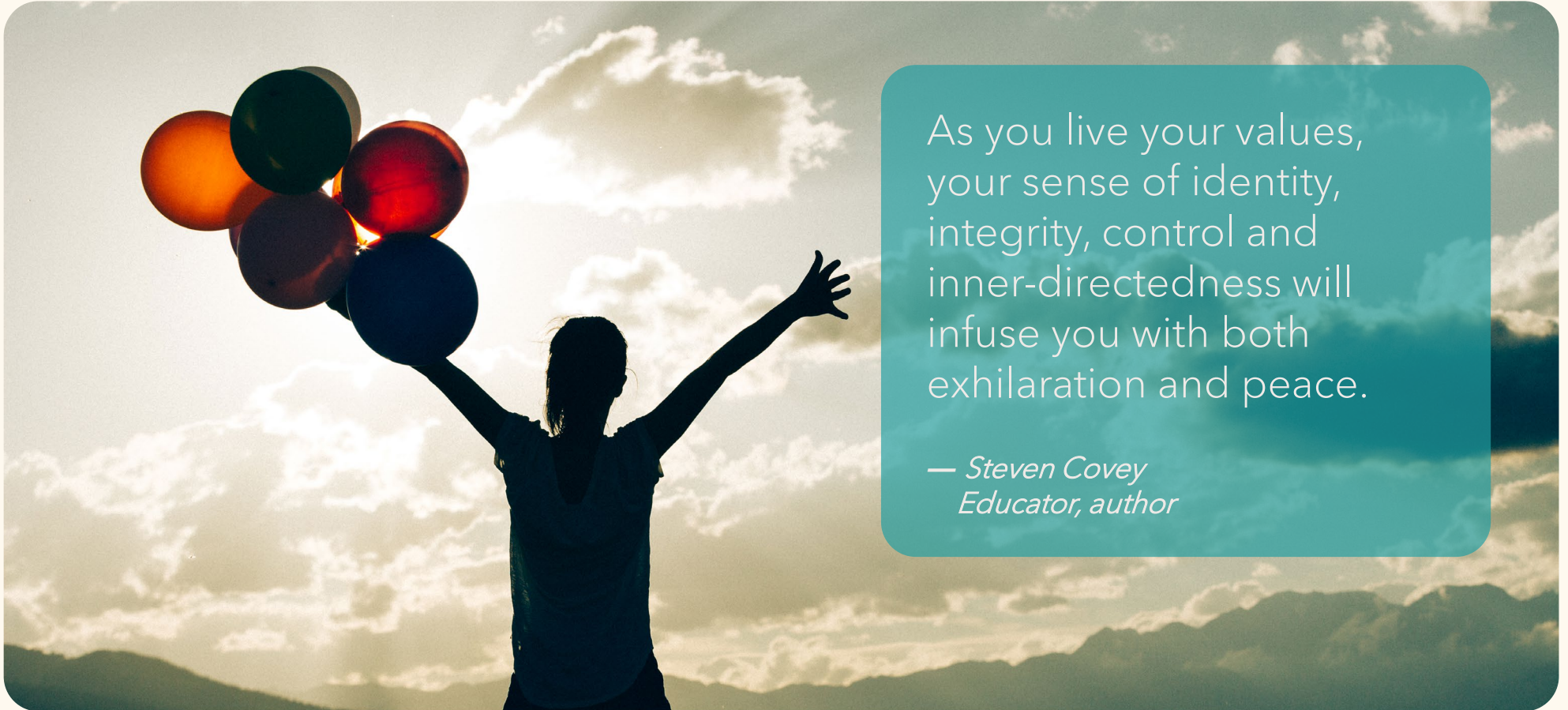
Fulfillment

Deep sense of purpose or meaning
with alignment to your values,
passions and aspirations

Long lasting

Life and work fulfillment

If your values are fulfilled, you will feel fulfilled.



As you live your values,
your sense of identity,
integrity, control and
inner-directedness will
infuse you with both
exhilaration and peace.

— *Steven Covey*
Educator, author



What are values?

Values Definition:

a person's principles or standards of behavior; one's judgment of what is important in life.

- Core of your authentic self
- Gives you a sense of purpose and meaning
- Drives your personality
- The foundation of how you lead your life
- Help you understand who you are



Identifying your values



Step 1: Identify your values

Ask yourself three questions:

What kind of work do I enjoy doing? /
What kind of activities give me energy?

What kind of work and home environment is important to me?

What kind of interactions do I want to have at work and in my life?

Step 1: Identify your values

What kind of work do I enjoy doing? / What kind of activities give me energy?

- I love researching and digging to find the case that positively impacts my clients
- I feel a rush when working on challenging cases
- I enjoy cooking, woodworking, gardening
- I need to have direction and a goal (*spinning on what I should be doing depletes my energy*)

- I enjoy hiking in nature
- I like to organize my desk, work, car, home
- I need meaningful work that makes an impact
- I enjoy having meaningful conversations with people about deep topics like world peace, sustainability, and ethics
- I love watching sunrises and sunsets

Step 1: Identify your values

What kind of work and home environment is important to me?

- Quiet / Low Stress where people aren't gossiping
- Small-under 500 people at work
- I like to know what is happening at the top of the company
- Work from home more than in an office
- Flexibility to be where I need to be, when I need to be there
(e.g., kids sports games)

- Peaceful at home, where everyone enjoys each other's company
- Everyone is mentally present when together at home (not on electronics)
- I want to have dinner with my kids



Step 1: Identify your values

What kind of interactions do I want to have at work and in my life?

- Supportive boss who recognizes my work and goal achievement
- Working solo versus in a group
- Transparent and direct communication at home and work
- In my life, I want people who help me learn about myself



Define your values

Step 2: Define your values

Stream of thought:

Flexibility:

What does this value mean to me? working remotely / being able to manage the kids' schedules / going to my son's soccer games in the afternoon / saving money not paying for aftercare at daycare / **Why is this value so important to me?** / having time to manage my life at home and work / not feeling guilty when I need to go to a doctor's appointment in the middle of the day / leaving the office early if I am done for the day because I just hate wasting time just sitting there for no reason / I want to control my time / I want to feel trusted I know how to spend my time / **When this value is being fulfilled, how do I feel?** / I feel less stressed when I have a flexible work schedule / I feel like I have more control over my days / **How do I feel when this value isn't fulfilled?** / When I don't have flexibility, I am much more stressed / I feel like there is a lack of trust without flexibility / Without flexibility it feels like someone controls me versus me being in control of myself and my schedule and that adds more stress to my day so it's about who controls my schedule and I want to be in control / **What energy do I get from this value?** / I have so much more energy when I have a flexible schedule because if I am fresh in the morning, I can start earlier than 8 am or work later than 5pm / I feel very safe having true control over my calendar and not like anyone is looking for me



Step 2: Define your values

Pick one word, sentence, concept, or phrase between the “/ ” that resonates the most for you as to what that value means to you or why it’s so important to you.

Step 2: Define your values

Stream of thought:

Flexibility:

What does this value mean to me? working remotely / being able to manage the kids' schedules / going to my son's soccer games in the afternoon / saving money not paying for aftercare at daycare / **Why is this value so important to me?** / having time to manage my life at home and work / not feeling guilty when I need to go to a doctor's appointment in the middle of the day / leaving the office early if I am done for the day because I just hate wasting time just sitting there for no reason / I want to control my time / I want to feel trusted I know how to spend my time / **When this value is being fulfilled, how do I feel?** / I feel less stressed when I have a flexible work schedule / I feel like I have more control over my days / **How do I feel when this value isn't fulfilled?** / When I don't have flexibility, I am much more stressed / I feel like there is a lack of trust without flexibility / Without flexibility it feels like someone controls me versus me being in control of myself and my schedule and that adds more stress to my day so it's about who controls my schedule and I want to be in control / **What energy do I get from this value?** / I have so much more energy when I have a flexible schedule because if I am fresh in the morning, I can start earlier than 8 am or work later than 5pm / I feel very safe having true control over my calendar and not like anyone is looking for me



Rank your values



Step 3: Rank your values

Rank values based on whether you have them in your work or life, based on the scale below:

5. The value is honored and fulfilled all day every day in my job/life.
4. The value is honored or fulfilled most of the time in my job/life.
3. The value is honored or fulfilled, but inconsistently in my job/life.
2. The value is often not honored or fulfilled in my job/life.
1. The value is never honored or fulfilled in my job/life.



Values alignment



Living your values

- Set boundaries
- Prioritize your values
- Make decisions based on your values
- Create a values-based action plan
- Reflect often
- Find an accountability partner
- Adapt/evolve
- Self-care/compassion
- Celebrate successes



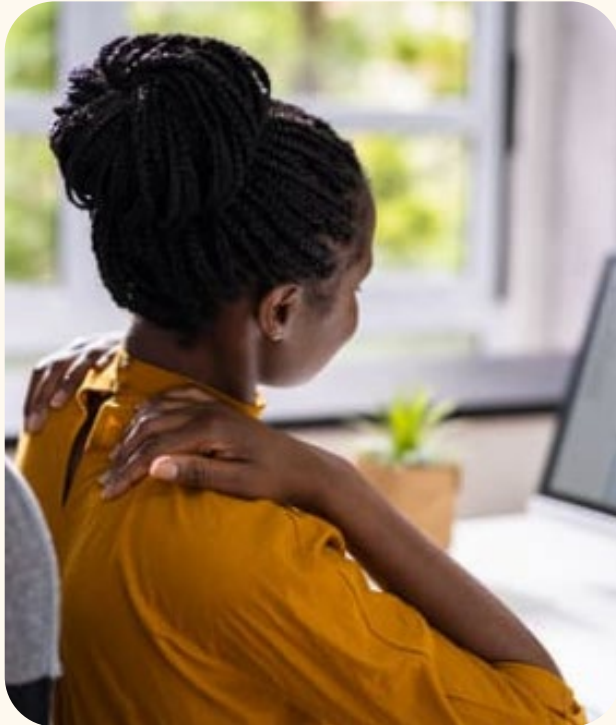
Communicating values

- Communicate values clearly and transparently
- Discuss the top three values you need fulfilled daily
- Demonstrate proper tone
- Show value to the company
- Use language such as “I” and “my”
- Overcome resistance with curiosity
- Continue transparent conversation



Case studies

Case study 1



- ❑ Lawyer oversees a practice area in a national law firm
- ❑ She has been at this firm for 6 years and is up for partnership
- ❑ She has been a lawyer for more than 20 years and has worked at a small and medium firm prior to this position
- ❑ Raising 2 pre-teens with her husband
- ❑ Spend her “spare” time hiking, biking and trying to become healthier physically



Case Study 1: Defined values

- ❑ **Making an Impact**

Having a positive and lasting impact on my clients, where they feel well taken care of

- ❑ **Connection**

Deeply understanding people and finding commonality with them in some aspect of our lives

- ❑ **Flexibility**

Spending quality time with my husband and children when my phone isn't ringing and I'm not stressed on deadline

- ❑ **Mentoring**

Knowing I helped an early-career lawyer feel a little more confident, heard, and/or helping them have a different perspective

- ❑ **Progress**

Feeling like I am making continual progress on my goals, even if I never hit perfection

- ❑ **Writing**

Writing briefs not just with legalese, but briefs that tell a story

- ❑ **Leadership**

Bringing subject matter expertise to the conversation and being heard

- ❑ **Collaboration**

Working in an environment where everyone is out to help others and not just out for themselves

Case Study 1: Ranked values

5. Making an Impact

Having a positive and lasting impact on my clients, where they feel well taken care of

5. Writing

Writing briefs not just with legalese, but briefs that tell a story

4. Connection

Deeply understanding people and finding commonality with them in some aspect of our lives

4. Leadership

Bringing subject matter expertise to the conversation and being heard

3. Collaboration

Working in an environment where everyone is out to help others and not just out for themselves

2. Flexibility

Spending quality time with my husband and children when my phone isn't ringing and I'm not stressed on deadline

2. Mentoring

Knowing I helped an early-career lawyer feel a little more confident, heard, and/or helping them have a different perspective

2. Progress

Feeling like I am making continual progress on my goals, even if I never hit perfection



Case Study 1: Aligning career to values

3. Collaboration

Working in an environment where everyone is out to help others and not just out for themselves

2. Flexibility

Spending quality time with my husband and children when my phone isn't ringing and I'm not stressed on deadline

2. Mentoring

Knowing I helped an early-career lawyer feel a little more confident, heard, and/or helping them have a different perspective

2. Progress

Feeling like I am making continual progress on my goals, even if I never hit perfection

Case study 2



- ❑ Well-respected corporate attorney;
Partner in a large firm
- ❑ Attorney for 25+ years
- ❑ Dream home; Vacation home
- ❑ Four adult and nearly grown children and wife
- ❑ Has been to therapy and is very self-aware

Case Study 2: Defined values

- ❑ **Music**
Playing music in public and feeling the rush when the crowd loves it
- ❑ **Relationships**
need to have deep relationships with people where we talk about more than small talk
- ❑ **Flexibility**
want to get to my son's baseball games and my daughter's concerts while working and not feel guilty
- ❑ **Solving problems**
solving problems for clients and feeling valued in their eyes
- ❑ **Art**
whether I'm painting or viewing original art, I like anything creative that gives me an emotional pang.

- ❑ **Negotiating**
collaborating with the other side of the table to find consensus and locking in something you are passionate about
- ❑ **Challenges**
I'm a competitive person in sports and whether running or at work I need a challenge to keep me engaged and hate being bored because it's unsettling
- ❑ **Working with hands**
it's engaging and sensory for me - whether woodworking or hanging a picture or painting— it requires focus, dexterity and attention to the task you are trying to complete, and that brings me peace and calm
- ❑ **Impact**
doing something meaningful and purposeful that impacts humans directly and not just the bottom line of a company

Case Study 2: Defined values

1. Solving problems

solving problems for clients and feeling valued in their eyes

3. Relationships

need to have deep relationships with people where we talk about more than small talk

3. Impact

doing something meaningful and purposeful that impacts humans directly and not just the bottom line of a company

3. Negotiating

collaborating with the other side of the table to find consensus and locking in something you are passionate about

2. Flexibility

want to get to my son's baseball games and my daughter's concerts while working and not feel guilty

2. Challenges

I'm a competitive person in sports and whether running or at work I need a challenge to keep me engaged and hate being bored because it's unsettling

2. Working with hands

it's engaging and sensory for me - whether woodworking or hanging a picture or painting—it requires focus, dexterity and attention to the task you are trying to complete, and that brings me peace and calm

1. Music

Playing music in public and feeling the rush when the crowd loves it

1. Art

whether I'm painting or viewing original art, I like anything creative that gives me an emotional pang.

Case Study 2: Aligning career and life to values

3. Relationships

need to have deep relationships with people where we talk about more than small talk

3. Impact

doing something meaningful and purposeful that impacts humans directly and not just the bottom line of a company

3. Negotiating

collaborating with the other side of the table to find consensus and locking in something you are passionate about

2. Flexibility

want to get to my son's baseball games and my daughter's concerts while working and not feel guilty

2. Challenges

I'm a competitive person in sports and whether running or at work I need a challenge to keep me engaged and hate being bored because it's unsettling

Prioritize conversation for connection over work

Reflection on success; determine if change is desirable; find impact in another area of life

Sit in on negotiations in different practice areas to see other techniques

Prioritize value and set boundaries

Work on a case that is not his subject matter expertise; Run first marathon

Case Study 2: Aligning career and life to values

2. Working with hands

it's engaging and sensory for me - whether woodworking or hanging a picture or painting—it requires focus, dexterity and attention to the task you are trying to complete, and that brings me peace and calm

1. Music

Playing music in public and feeling the rush when the crowd loves it

1. Art

whether I'm painting or viewing original art, I like anything creative that gives me an emotional pang.

Two weekends a month; prioritize a home project; celebrate successes

Reflect on why he has not found a new band or people to play with; maybe find a new band

Prioritize art openings; Communicate with wife; consider painting as a home project

Case study 3



- Associate at a medium-sized firm
- Attorney for 5 years
- Exhausted, burned out, stressed all the time
- Increased anxiety
- Minimal social life
- Too tired to exercise, leading to an unhealthy lifestyle
- Hates her job

Case Study 3: Defined values

❑ **Organization**

I love organizing things, whether it's my desk, closet, house, or even case files and I really feel good when everything is in its proper place

❑ **Help people**

I like to listen to others and help them solve their problems or come to the realization on how they can solve their problems

❑ **Work/Life balance**

I want to work hard when I am working but not be so tired that I can't do anything else

❑ **Meeting new people**

I love meeting new people and always want to go deeper into their lives, their likes and dislikes, because people's stories fascinate me and give me energy

❑ **Exercise**

I use the gym as a social playground to meet new people and also feel like I'm doing something healthy for myself and that makes me feel good inside and out

❑ **Consumer behavior**

I am fascinated by why people buy what they buy, what drives them to a certain brand, and how people connect to certain brands

❑ **Travel**

I love to meet new people in other cultures and learn how they live and what is important to them in their lives - it just makes me realize how big this world is and it puts my world in perspective

Case Study 3: Defined values

4. Organization

I love organizing things, whether it's my desk, closet, house, or even case files and I really feel good when everything is in its proper place

3. Meeting new people

I love meeting new people and always want to go deeper on their lives, their likes and dislikes because people's stories fascinate me and give me energy

2. Help people

I like to listen to others and help them solve their problems or come to the realization on how they can solve their problems

1. Work/Life balance

I want to work hard when I am working but not be so tired that I can't do anything else

1. Exercise

I use the gym as a social playground to meet new people and also feel like I'm doing something healthy for myself and that makes me feel good inside and out

1. Consumer behavior

I am fascinated by why people buy what they buy, what drives them to a certain brand and how people connect to certain brands and I am constantly learning about why humans behave the way they do

1. Travel

I love to meet new people in other cultures and learn how they live and what is important to them in their lives - it just makes me realize how big this world is and it puts my world in perspective

Case Study 3: Aligning career and life to values

3. Meeting new people

I love meeting new people and always want to go deeper on their lives, their likes and dislikes because people's stories fascinate me and give me energy

1. Work/Life balance

I want to work hard when I am working but not be so tired that I can't do anything else

1. Exercise

I use the gym as a social playground to meet new people and also feel like I'm doing something healthy for myself and that makes me feel good inside and out

1. Travel

I love to meet new people in other cultures and learn how they live and what is important to them in their lives - it just makes me realize how big this world is and it puts my world in perspective

Meet new people during her career exploration

Set boundaries and no longer work past 8 PM on most weeknights / 7pm on Friday nights.

Go to the gym every Saturday morning before work.

Values-based action plan: Plan some time off, even if it is a road trip.



Building and sustaining a values-driven work environment



Building and sustaining a values-driven work environment

Benefits

- Enhances employee engagement
- Promotes higher retention rates / lower attrition
- Fosters diversity and Inclusion
- Strengthens team dynamics
- Innovation and creativity
- More capacity for resilience
- Overall well-being



Building and sustaining a values-driven work environment

Company values

- Create organizational values
- Transparent communication of company values
- Embody the values consistently in actions and decisions
- Hire and separate employees in alignment with company values
- Ensure policies and procedures reflect company values
- Build community
- Measure, reflect, refine

Individual values

- Understand individual values
- Create a transparent work environment
- Assume positive intent
- Avoid judgment or emotional reasoning in behavior
- Support values different from your own
- Cultural sensitivity and respect
- Continuous conversation

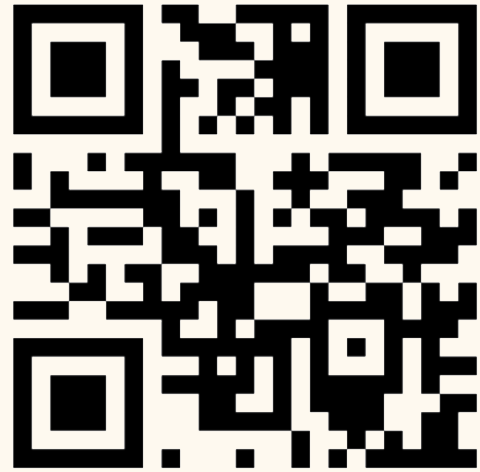
What does career and job fulfillment look like?

Returning from work feeling inspired, safe, fulfilled, and grateful is a natural human right to which we are all entitled and not a modern luxury that only a few lucky ones are able to find.

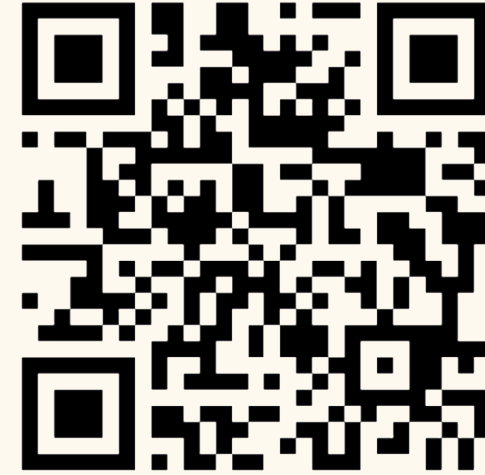
— *Simon Sinek*
Author



Aligning Your Legal Career with Your Values



MarloLyonsCoaching.com



[Work Unscripted Podcast](#)

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