

JOINING A FIRM

SUCCESS TIPS FOR LAWYERS
JOINING FIRMS (PART II)

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Chapter 16
SUCCESS TIPS FOR LAWYERS
JOINING FIRMS (PART II)
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ABA JOURNAL ARTICLE LINK

https://www.abajournal.com/magazine/article/most_lawyers_are_introverted_and_thats_not_necessarily_a_bad_thing

Success Tips for Lawyers Joining Firms

A. Finding Your Niche

1. OAAP Attorney Counselors assist many lawyers and law students with career-related concerns. Lawyers who request assistance from the OAAP typically represent a broad spectrum of the legal profession:
 - New admittees searching for their first law job.
 - Experienced lawyers evaluating whether to switch practice areas or firms, or leave private practice to work a law-related, or non-legal job.
 - Lawyers seeking to effectively balance their work, family and personal life.
 - Lawyers who find themselves out of job.
 - Lawyers who are reentering the legal profession after working in other fields, or taking a leave from practice to focus on health issues or their families.
 - Lawyers seeking to find work more suited to their values, skills, interests and personal preferences.
 - Lawyers starting to consider retirement.

2. The OAAP is available to you at any stage of your legal career. We are here to help you find your niche and to offer our support as you navigate the stress of searching for a job, adjusting to a new job, taking on the challenging aspects of your job, balancing your career with your personal life, or making a job change:
 - We offer confidential career counseling. Attorney Counselors are available to meet individually to discuss circumstances, administer self-assessments, brainstorm alternatives and strategies, and provide referral resources when appropriate.
 - We conduct a six-session networking and support group for lawyers in the process of making a career change, “Finding Meaningful Work.” The group is designed to help lawyers create and execute a job search plan, develop a mission statement and elevator speech, learn and practice networking, as well as refine their job search skills.
 - We periodically hold a “Job Satisfaction through Self-Assessment” workshop.
 - We offer “Lawyers in Transition” presentations that occur during the lunch hour. Presentations feature guest speakers who share their personal experiences and successes with career change.
 - We sponsor career-related seminars yearly, some of which are available on CD and DVD.

If you are interested in accessing any of our career-related resources, please visit our website at www.oaap.org or contact the OAAP at (503) 226-1057.

B. Resilience and Well-being in the Practice of Law

1. Resilience allows lawyers to successfully cope with the stressful demands of legal practice. Resilience is both an ongoing process and an outcome. When viewed as an outcome, it means being able to bounce back from stressors (recovery); endure and remain engaged in a positive way despite the stressors (sustainability); and learn as well as build new capacities from the stressful experiences (growth) (Arewasikporn, Davis, & Zautra, 2013). In its absence, we are more likely to see the shadow side of stress such as burnout, compassion fatigue, or unhealthy use of substance. Two of the best resilience resources within your reach are yourself and your social connections.
2. **Building Blocks of Resilience:** Cultivating resilience can be characterized by the acronym ABC. To strengthen your resilience while practicing law and, in turn, your well-being, consider:

A: **Acknowledge.** Acknowledge and adhere to those matters that contribute to your positive emotional experiences. Research shows us that possessing a positive affect can have the powerful effect of deterring the influence of negative events such as stress and pain. These include:

- **Identifying and reframing negative thoughts.** The way you view adversity or challenges can impact your productivity, creativity, and self-worth. Viewing stressful events as a challenge or an opportunity instead of a hardship can shift our beliefs and the resulting consequences. Kelly McGonigal (2013), a health psychologist, referred to it as “transforming” stress, and she explained that being in a state of flow (i.e. at work) is a stress response much like when we are threatened or overwhelmed. Seeing stress as a source of energy, resource, or meaning for ourselves can increase the activities in the same areas of our brain that are associated with the type of focused attention we encounter when rising up to a challenge (McGonigal, 2013). Similarly, finding ways to dispute a limiting thought such as by asking ourselves for the evidence that support that negative thought can stop a downward spiral (Levine, 2018) and allow for constructive possibilities.

How are you confronting your negative thoughts?

- **Practicing Self-Compassion.** Kristin Neff, a professor and self-compassion researcher, defines self-compassion as "being kind and understanding toward oneself in instances of pain or failure, rather than being harshly self-critical; perceiving one's experiences as part of the larger human experience, rather than seeing them as isolating; and holding painful thoughts and feelings in mindful awareness, rather than over-identifying with them." (Seppala,

2011, p. 60). When we practice self-compassion, we take on an attitude of kindness and understanding toward ourselves much like a trusted and loving friend who listens to us with empathy, and is encouraging and validating. Self-compassion has been associated with lowered anxiety while allowing us to see shortcomings with greater calm and as a learning opportunity (Seppala, 2011).

How might you be kinder and more understanding toward yourself today?

- **Exercising Gratitude.** Gratitude elicits positive feelings and leads to emotional well-being. A study of a three-month trial of gratitude journaling showed a significant favorable impact on well-being, affect, and depression (O’Connell, O’Shea, & Gallagher, 2017). Setting up a diary of positive experiences provide the opportunity to experience these emotions again and again when re-reading the diary entries (Seligman et al. 2005). Keeping a journal, a file, or record of events with favorable outcomes can help you cultivate gratitude.

How else might you see yourself practice gratitude?

- **Identifying your strengths, assets, and resources.** Individuals who use their strengths experience greater subjective well-being, which is related to mental and physical health-related quality of life (Proctor, Maltby, and Linley, 2010). Make a list of your strengths such as your skills, attitudes, aptitudes, talents, or qualities, and keep it nearby so you can easily be reminded of it. If you are seeking to find your strengths, recall past instances when you overcame a stressful or traumatic situation. *What did you do that was helpful during the event?*

What else may your strengths be?

- **Engaging in Self-Care:** Discovering or rediscovering relaxing, refreshing, and enjoyable activities can help replenish your energy and prepare you for the next challenge.

How do you (or might you) practice self-care?

B: **Balance.** Balance the needs of the different dimensions of your life to increase your resolve, sense of self, and well-being. Regularly checking in with yourself and the ways you are supporting these areas can help you find the balance that works best for you. The report of the National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being lists six dimensions of well-being:

- 1) Occupational: Finding satisfaction, meaning and financial stability through work.
- 2) Emotional: Being able to regulate our emotions.
- 3) Physical: Engaging in physical activity, healthy diet, and sufficient sleep.
- 4) Intellectual: Pursuing creative or intellectual outlets for continued personal or professional growth and development.
- 5) Spiritual: Being attuned to those qualities that allows us to find meaning in daily experiences, or to transcend physical and emotional discomfort.
- 6) Social: Supporting our need for belonging.

(Lawyer Well-Being Tool Kit, 2018).

How are you doing in each of the dimensions mentioned above? Which areas might you spend more time on?

C: **Connect.** Connect with and maintain a socially resilient environment. Research informs us that having a sense of shared community and accountability where individuals are encouraged to be there for each other and help one another creates a socially resilient environment (Arewaskiporn, Davis & Zautra, 2013). More specifically, among the social environmental factors that promote resilience (as seen in children and adults) are 1) being in contact with caring people who value the person's individuality; 2) being engaged in activities that allow a person to be part of a cooperative endeavor and which encourage helping others; and 3) involvement in groups within the community (e.g. church) that regard connection, provide meaning, and foster growth (Arewaskiporn, Davis & Zautra, 2013). To foster a socially resilient environment, find like-minded people with whom to connect, or create your own community. Reach out to friends, family, colleagues, peer, or mentors and expand your support system. Remain open to asking for help. Contact professionals such as clinicians or counselors, including the OAAP, for added support.

How else might you stay connected and maintain a socially resilient environment?

C. Brief Resilience Scale (BRS)

The Lawyer Well-Being Took Kit

(https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/lawyer_assistance/ls_coll_p_well-being_toolkit_for_lawyers_legal_employers.authcheckdam.pdf) has a list of individual assessments (pp. 25-28) for lawyers seeking to engage in self-assessment.

Among the listed assessment is the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS), which can be found at <https://ogg.osu.edu/media/documents/MB%20Stream/Brief%20Resilience%20Scale.pdf> (a hard copy has been provided below). The BRS is one way of evaluating your current level of resilience.

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BRS scores can be interpreted as follows (Smith et al., 2013, p. 17):

| <b>BRS Score:</b> | <b>Interpretation:</b> |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1.00-2.99         | Low resilience         |
| 3.00-4.30         | Normal resilience      |
| 4.31-5.00         | High resilience        |

Smith, B.W., Epstein, E.E., Ortiz, J.A., Christopher, P.K., & Tooley, E.M. (2013). The Foundations of Resilience: What are the critical resources for bouncing back from stress? In S. Prince-Embury & D.H. Saklofske (Eds.), *Resilience in children, adolescents, and adults. Translating research into practice (The Springer Series on human exceptionality)* (pp. 167-187). New York, NY: Springer.

Brief Resilience Scale (BRS)

| Please respond to each item by marking <u>one box per row</u> |                                                              | Strongly Disagree             | Disagree                      | Neutral                       | Agree                         | Strongly Agree                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| BRS 1                                                         | I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times.              | <input type="checkbox"/><br>1 | <input type="checkbox"/><br>2 | <input type="checkbox"/><br>3 | <input type="checkbox"/><br>4 | <input type="checkbox"/><br>5 |
| BRS 2                                                         | I have a hard time making it through stressful events.       | <input type="checkbox"/><br>5 | <input type="checkbox"/><br>4 | <input type="checkbox"/><br>3 | <input type="checkbox"/><br>2 | <input type="checkbox"/><br>1 |
| BRS 3                                                         | It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event.  | <input type="checkbox"/><br>1 | <input type="checkbox"/><br>2 | <input type="checkbox"/><br>3 | <input type="checkbox"/><br>4 | <input type="checkbox"/><br>5 |
| BRS 4                                                         | It is hard for me to snap back when something bad happens.   | <input type="checkbox"/><br>5 | <input type="checkbox"/><br>4 | <input type="checkbox"/><br>3 | <input type="checkbox"/><br>2 | <input type="checkbox"/><br>1 |
| BRS 5                                                         | I usually come through difficult times with little trouble.  | <input type="checkbox"/><br>1 | <input type="checkbox"/><br>2 | <input type="checkbox"/><br>3 | <input type="checkbox"/><br>4 | <input type="checkbox"/><br>5 |
| BRS 6                                                         | I tend to take a long time to get over set-backs in my life. | <input type="checkbox"/><br>5 | <input type="checkbox"/><br>4 | <input type="checkbox"/><br>3 | <input type="checkbox"/><br>2 | <input type="checkbox"/><br>1 |

**Scoring:** Add the responses varying from 1-5 for all six items giving a range from 6-30. Divide the total sum by the total number of questions answered.

**My score:** \_\_\_\_\_ item average / 6

Smith, B. W., Dalen, J., Wiggins, K., Tooley, E., Christopher, P., & Bernard, J. (2008). The brief resilience scale: assessing the ability to bounce back. *International journal of behavioral medicine*, 15(3), 194-200.



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# *IN SIGHT* for Oregon Lawyers and Judges

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF YOUR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE

## NETWORKING FOR INTROVERTS

Networking is to business what exercise is to health: while everyone agrees it's essential, it is something that people frequently avoid, are uncomfortable with, or feel that they can't do well – if at all!

Many people say, "Networking comes naturally to outgoing, chatty types, but not me. I'm quiet, and I feel anxious in large gatherings or meeting new people. I'll never be able to walk up to strangers and start talking about myself." If you find yourself agreeing with all or part of that statement, don't feel like you'll never be able to enjoy the benefits of networking. Follow a few of these suggestions, and with a small effort you may be surprised at the results.

### Realize That You're Not Alone!

While some people embody Will Rogers' philosophy that "A stranger is just a friend I haven't met yet," the rest of us experience varying degrees of unease when meeting new people. One step to conquering anxiety is to realize that other people might also be uncomfortable and to take ourselves less seriously. Don't feel that you have to apologize for taking up someone's time. Ideally, you'll be listening more than you are talking, and most people like to talk about their work or their interests.

If your networking goal is career-related, remember that most successful people got help along the way. You are giving people an opportunity to feel good by helping you – even if it's only for a 20-minute informational interview. Everyone begins his or her journey at the starting line.

### Start Small

Don't wear yourself out when you begin your networking. Set a modest, achievable goal, like going to a local group that meets monthly. (Often these meetings include helpful self-introductions.) The next month, you might decide to chat with one or two people.

If that seems too daunting, practice on familiar territory: talk to your friends and family members. You may be surprised at the contacts they have or what you learn when you strike up a conversation about their backgrounds and interests.

If you still feel intimidated about starting a conversation with someone you don't know, recruit a friend to attend an event with you. If he or she is more outgoing, have your friend introduce you to a few people, and then try meeting some others on your own. If your friend is more reserved, circulate independently for 20 minutes, and then regroup. Either way, the buddy system can initially be more comfortable than striking out on your own, and having someone around for support makes it more likely that you'll stick to your goal.

### Work From Your Strengths

At times you won't be in your comfort zone, but always be aware of your particular strengths. Many people who are uncomfortable in large gatherings do well when talking with one person. Shy people frequently learn that one way to avoid talking about themselves is to ask other people questions. Approach people who are standing alone – they might be feeling awkward, too!

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Break the ice by asking a simple question, like “Where did you get your coffee? I didn’t see any when I came in,” or comment on the surroundings: “This is a great room – I’ve never been in this building before.” Simple comments can lead to a longer conversation.

Practice networking skills at events you enjoy. You’ll be more motivated to attend, and it will be easier to talk with people about the topic.

### Tried-and-True Techniques

You may have received some of the best advice about meeting new people on your first day of grade school: get there early, stand up straight, look people in the eye, and have a purpose.

Dale Carnegie, who authored the classic *How to Make Friends and Influence People*, provided these timeless tips: Don’t forget to smile – it helps you relax and puts other people at ease. Keep your business cards handy, and ask others for their cards. Make a note of how you met the person and his or her area of interest, so you can follow up effectively. Use the person’s name in conversation. It makes the conversation more personal, and it helps you remember them.

### Be Prepared!

Experienced athletes warm up and prepare before their events, and the same drill applies to networking. Have a few conversational icebreakers in your repertoire before attending a meeting or event. These should be simple questions that require more than a “yes” or “no” answer. “What kind of work do you do?” “How did you get into that field?” “What do you like most about your job (or your area of practice)?” “What do you find most challenging?” “What would make your job easier?” “What would you change if you could?” are all good conversation starters.

These types of open-ended questions are also the basis of a great informational interview, with a few additions. At the end of an informational interview, always thank the person for spending time to talk with you and ask if he or she can suggest anyone else who might be helpful for you to meet. If so, ask permission to use the interviewee’s name when you introduce yourself to his or her contact.

Before entering into the networking arena, hone your “elevator speech” – a catchy, one-minute introduction. Here’s a suggested formula for a memorable

elevator speech: I/We + Help + (Target Market) + (Benefit). For example, “I help companies protect and defend their intellectual property assets.” If you’re not among other lawyers, make your introduction easy for a non-lawyer to follow: “I’m a criminal defense attorney who represents people accused of a DUI.” Use natural language, and practice it until it becomes second nature. In time, you can add one more element: what makes you unique.

Be prepared with responses for questions that might not have a simple answer, particularly if you are in a career transition. If you’re currently out of work, consider whether you want to share that information with new contacts up front. It can be helpful to have your network of existing contacts know that you are actively looking for work, but you might not want to lead with that when meeting someone for the first time. If you are currently employed but looking at other opportunities, have a response ready for the person who says, “Hey, what are you doing here? You’re not looking to leave your firm, are you?”

### If All Else Fails . . .

If you try some of these suggestions and feel like you’ll never be comfortable with networking, don’t give up! Try a structured networking group that helps its members to build business through word-of-mouth referrals. (Be mindful of ethics rules prohibiting lawyers from giving or receiving reciprocal referrals. Also be aware of the ethics rules governing personal follow-up on referrals.) Don’t forget your college and law school alumni associations, which provide access to preexisting connections as well as networking groups based on ethnicity, gender, or special interests.

E-mail can be a good supplement to in-person “meet and greet,” allowing you to get in touch with lawyers who were mentioned in the news or who authored articles on a specific topic. Meeting someone for coffee can frequently be more productive than mingling at a cocktail party or large dinner event. Don’t neglect the world of social networking sites, either. Try LinkedIn ([www.Linkedin.com](http://www.Linkedin.com)) for direct business networking, and consider starting a blog or using Twitter ([www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)) as a marketing tool.

### Finally

Analyze your results: Which techniques worked for you? Which ones were unproductive? Remember

to pace yourself. Getting out of your comfort zone can be challenging, but long-term success is attained by gradual changes over time. Doing too much too soon can lead to burnout.

Remember to follow up with the people you meet. The key to successful networking isn't merely making a lot of contacts; it is developing those contacts into mutually beneficial relationships that will provide rewards over a career lifetime.

MELONEY C. CRAWFORD  
OAAP ATTORNEY COUNSELOR

### Four Great Books on Networking

- Marti Olsen Laney, PsyD, *The Introvert Advantage: How to Thrive in an Extrovert World* (Workman Publishing Co.: 2002)
- Harvey Mackay, *Dig Your Well Before You're Thirsty: The Only Networking Book You'll Ever Need* (Currency Books: 1999)
- Jay Conrad Levinson and Monroe Mann, *Guerrilla Networking: A Proven Battle Plan to Attract the Very People You Want to Meet* (AuthorHouse: 2009)
- Diane Darling, *The Networking Survival Guide: Get the Success You Want by Tapping Into the People You Know* (McGraw-Hill: 2003)

# IN SIGHT *for Oregon Lawyers and Judges*

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF YOUR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE

## INTROVERT'S SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR NETWORKING EVENTS

I'll admit it – networking is one of my least favorite parts of my job. I wish everyone just knew who I was, thought I was fabulous, and that my phone was ringing off the hook with more business than I can handle. Unfortunately, that's not the case. So every week I attend two to four networking events – even though casual chit-chat with strangers over mini appetizers is not necessarily my favorite way to spend an evening.

### As an Introvert, You're in Good Company

Despite the fact that I'm a professional public speaker, I'm a big introvert. I dislike attending most events that involve large crowds because they make me feel claustrophobic. I am uncomfortable at events that are so crowded that you have to yell to be heard by the person next to you. When business groups try to entice me by telling me over 1,500 people will attend their event, I cringe. I take comfort from reminding myself that I'm not the only person who feels this way.

As a business owner, it's important to make connections within my community. Here are some of the lessons I've learned that help me navigate networking events as an introvert.

**1. If the event room is loud and crowded, head for the hallway.** You will find your fellow introverts there, enjoying their space and speaking at a normal volume for conversation.

**2. If the event has an educational component, go to it.** It will give you a smaller group to start with and a basis for starting conversations.

**3. Go to events for business professionals, not just for lawyers.** Lawyer groups can lead to referrals, but business groups will put you directly in front of potential clients.

**4. Attend groups and events that interest you. When you're comfortable, you'll be more effective at networking.** When you go to events that interest you, you'll be more likely to meet people who are like-minded and more likely to hire you.

**5. Don't be afraid to branch out beyond the traditional networking events.** Some networking groups do more unusual things like go-carts instead of happy hours. You can also network at sci-fi conventions, hiking groups, and book clubs.

**6. Go to lunch and breakfast events.** You might be more comfortable talking to people over a meal with your hands occupied with silverware. These events tend to be smaller, too.

**7. Give yourself permission to leave early.** It's okay to set a goal for the number of contacts you want to make and leave once you achieve it.

If you're ever uncomfortable at an event and you want to leave, it's okay. You can always say you have another event to attend. No one has to know that the appointment is with your family, a book, or your pillow.

RUTH CARTER

THE CARTER LAW FIRM

*The author's weekly blogs can be read*

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