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OREGON ATTORNEY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

IN SIGHT for Oregon Lawyers and Judges

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF YOUR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE

OWLS AND OAAP 8TH ANNUAL WOMEN'S RETREAT

Professionalism. Civility. Self-care. Happiness. Professional relationships. Personal connections. Easing our lives. Being kind to ourselves. These themes wove gently together to make a meaningful and rejuvenating respite among the trees and blooms of Welches, Oregon on April 24 and 25, 2015.

Keynote speaker, Judge Jean K. Maurer, opened our program, our spirits, and our minds with an inspiring and informative discussion about the positive impact of civility and how it raises the quality of both our professional and personal life. Her guidance for navigating the balance of focusing on what is good for your client while also taking care of yourself, sparked a thoughtful discussion of boundaries, self-care, and tips for coping with uncivil lawyers. Recognizing that each situation requires a slightly different approach, the techniques offered included setting the tone for how you want the interaction to be ("taking the high road"), building resiliency by taking care of yourself ("showing up for yourself"), respectfully discontinuing the conversation ("regrouping time"), putting yourself in the other person's shoes ("perspective taking"), and taking the other person out to coffee or lunch as a way of shifting the dynamic and really getting to know each other ("breaking bread").

With the expertise of Lydia Byhardt Bolliger, LCSW, Michelle Ryan, JD, RYT, and Virginia Terhaar, PhD, we gained an understanding of how we can improve our coping skills as well as our ability to care for ourselves. We learned about the neuroscience of our brains and how to engage the parts of our brains that bring calm to a situation.

We practiced exhaling (not sighing!) more deeply than inhaling, in order to trigger a sense of calm within ourselves. We also learned that our posture changes the emotional signals our brain sends. An easy way to shift perspective is to change our physical posture from a closed "turtle-like" posture (head tucked, shoulders in, heart protected) to an open and strong posture (head up, shoulders back, heart and mind open). We gained an understanding of the importance of being as nurturing with ourselves as we are with close friends and family, and that non-judgmental self-compassion is something that we all need but were never taught as part of our professional development. We were encouraged to let go of our perfectionism and our inner critic. We also learned that self-compassion is not selfish or self-indulgent and that being kinder to ourselves will not only decrease our anxiety, stress, and reactivity; it will also give us greater peace of mind, make us more productive, and allow us to build healthier relationships. Some of the many helpful practical tips we discussed included starting your day with at least five minutes of something that you find restorative, setting time throughout the day for short breaks, relaxing ourselves through deep breathing, and keeping a tidier house by saving only things that bring us joy. We practiced embracing this new perspective of feeding, protecting, supporting, and encouraging ourselves and found that we felt healthier and more joyful.

The retreat also gave us the opportunity to put these new perspectives into practice. Nature hikes, art, yoga, meditation, spa

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treatments, delicious meals, time for ourselves, and time with each other were readily sprinkled between these informative and moving presentations.

We concluded our relaxing and enlightening time together by sharing words that summarized our experience at the retreat: Restored. Centered. Inspired. Happy. Friendship. Grateful. Revitalized. Hopeful. Relaxed. Connected. Supported. Encouraged. Joyful.

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