

To your mental health

We spent last month [preparing your practice for 2017](#). Now that the new year has arrived, it is time to take stock in your personal well-being to ensure that you are mentally ready for all of the opportunities, challenges and clients and that 2017 will bring.

This month's series will provide tips and suggestions for the promotion of optimal mental health. From destressing the workplace to dealing with professional setbacks, we will dive into making you a happy and healthy lawyer.

Why tackle this subject? In February of 2016, the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation and the American Bar Association (ABA) conducted a study on behavioral health issues among practicing attorneys.

Researchers found that 21 percent of licensed, employed attorneys are problem drinkers, 28 percent struggle with depression and 19 percent report symptoms of anxiety. These statistics are alarming and they suggest a significant mental health problem within the profession of law.

In her [blog](#), entrepreneur and attorney Monica Zent provides tips for the happy lawyer. Some of her suggestions include:

- Get the most out of technology – With so many technological innovations, the stresses of endless meetings and emails can be avoided. Take advantage of what technology has to offer by automating daily tasks and making your day more convenient.
- Don't go it alone – Sometimes lawyers feel like a deserted island in the middle of the ocean. This is especially true in solo practices, where attorneys work alone. But there are resources available to help. Virtually every industry includes business coaches and the legal community is no different. A coach can help you through the difficult times. They assist you with practice management decisions and provide coping tools for the rough patches.

- Keep it real – As an attorney, your professional life often requires a particular image. Your clients, other attorneys and the general public expect you to constantly exude professionalism and intelligence. But sometimes, you may want to turn off the lawyer image and turn on your authentic self, which is perfectly fine. That may involve a story about your annual fishing trip or a silly tie once in awhile. As Zent explains, people are happiest when being themselves. Be true to yourself for a happier and healthier life.

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. Without it, you cannot provide an optimum level of representation to your clients. Check back throughout the month for tips and suggestions on promoting a healthy mental outlook.

About Erika Winston:

Erika Winston is a Virginia based writer with a passion for all things legal. As a former domestic relations attorney, she understands the challenge of determining the best fee structure for your practice. Erika is a regular contributor to [TimeSolv](#) and a variety of other publications.