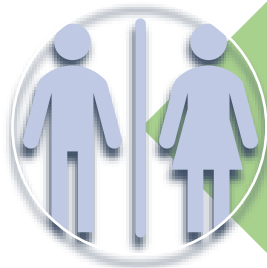# Setting Boundaries to Create Work-Life Balance and Improve Productivity

Danielle M. Hall

Program Agenda

Work/Life Balance – What is it? Is it *actually* attainable?

Professional Boundaries – What are they? Why are they important to increase our overall well-being?

How can we increase our productivity and work/life balance by setting boundaries?

Work-Life Balance

- Commonly used to described the balance that a working individual needs between:
    - time allocated for work; and
    - time allocated for other aspects of life.
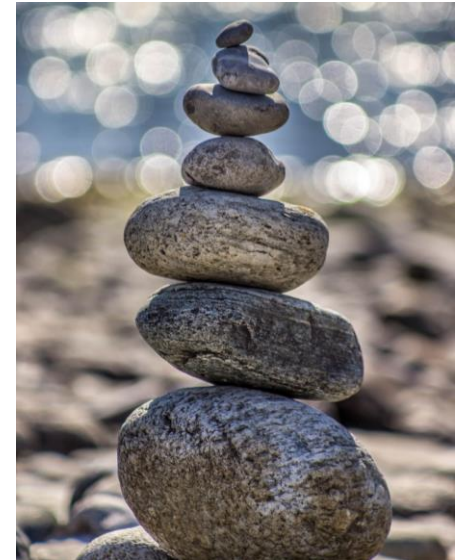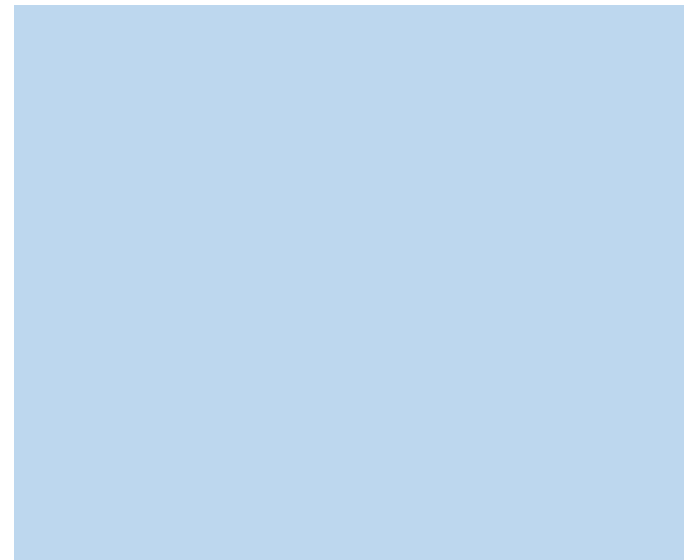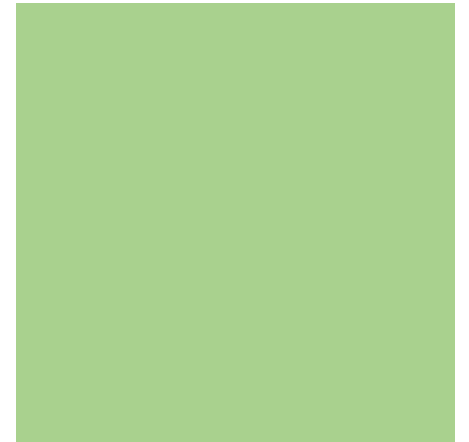
Sound Familiar?

- I am overwhelmed with tasks and responsibilities.

- There just isn't enough time in the day for me to get it all done.

- I have no control over my time.

- Others are so demanding – I am expected to be all things to all people.

- If I say no, others will think I am lazy and won't respect me.

- I have to multitask, or nothing ever gets done.

- If I don't work weekends, I will be so behind.

A Lawyer's Sense of Control

- Practices that rob lawyers of a sense of autonomy and control over their schedules and lives are especially harmful to their well-being.

- Research studies show that high job demands paired with a lack of a sense of control breeds depression and other psychological disorders.

- Research confirms environments that facilitate control and autonomy contribute to optimal functioning and well-being.
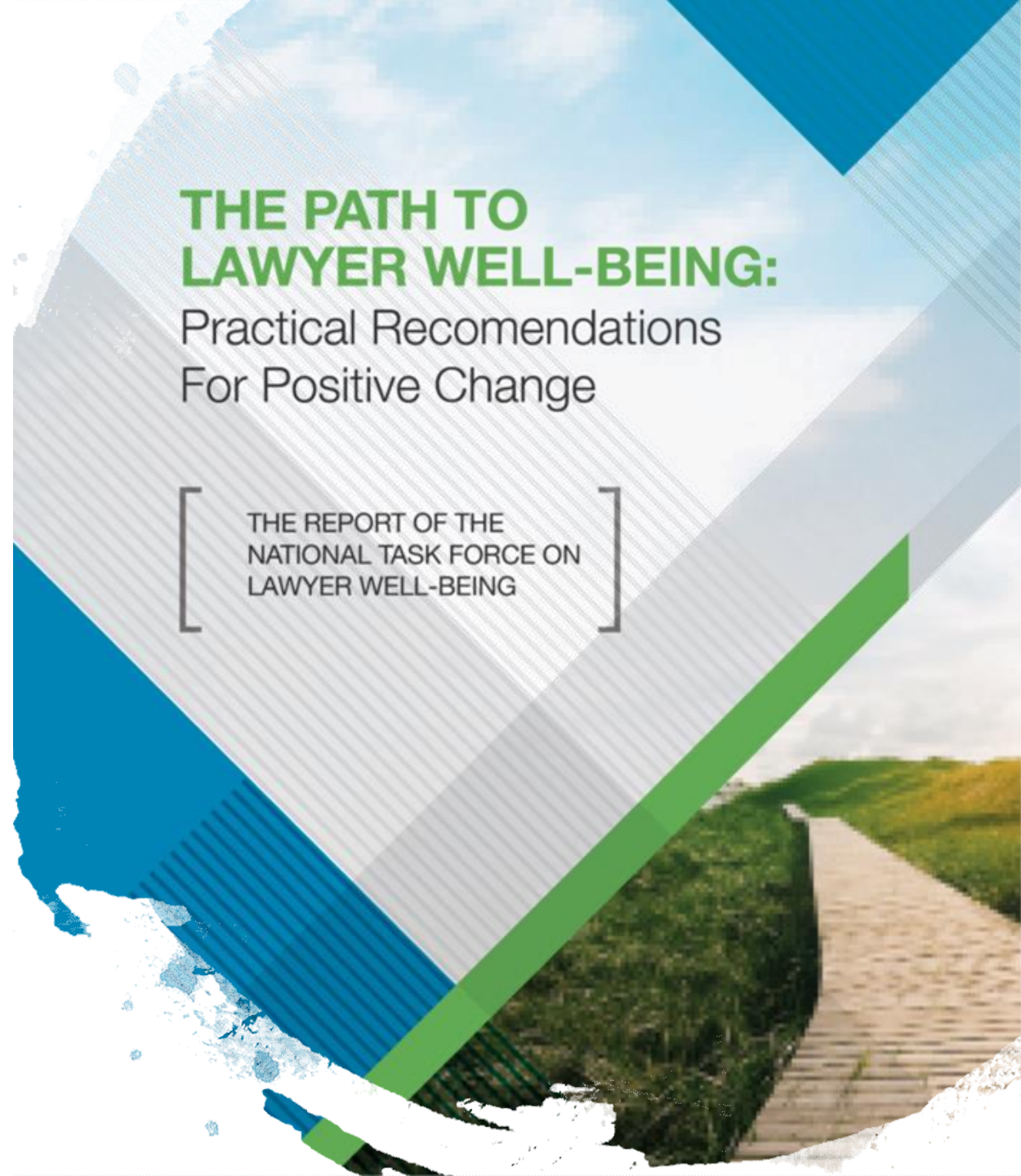
A Lawyer's Sense of Control

"We recommend that all stakeholders consider how longstanding structures of the legal system, organizational norms, and embedded expectations might be modified to enhance lawyers' sense of control and support a healthier lifestyle." – The Path to Lawyer Well-Being

If We Don't?

Consequences

- Fatigue
- Lost Time
- Increased Expectations
- Health Risks
- Ethical Violations

One has to be a healthy lawyer.
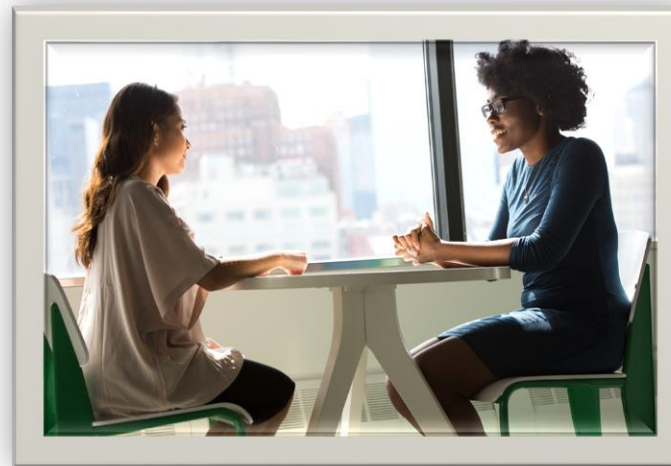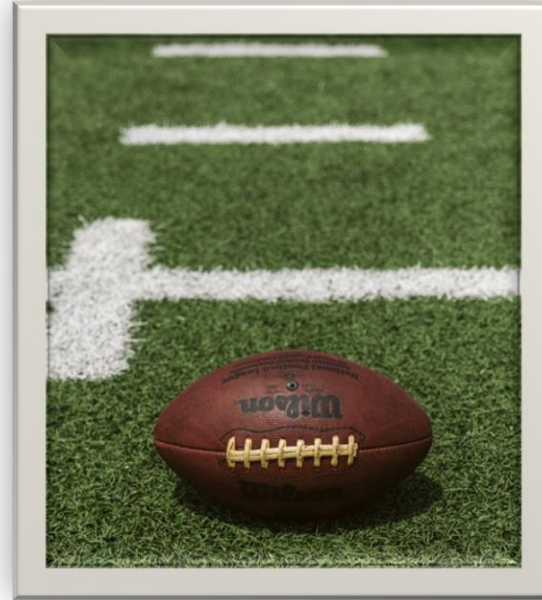
To be a good competent lawyer…

Steps to a Work-Life Balance

Setting Boundaries

What are Professional Boundaries?

- Property
- Roads
- Sports
- Personal Relationships

Professional Boundaries

- Clearly establish limits that allow for safe connections between the lawyer and the client
- Being friendly, but not being friends
- The ability to know where you end, and the clients begins
- A clear understanding of the limits and responsibilities of your role as a lawyer

Who Creates Boundaries?

- Laws
- Licensing Bodies
- Specialty Organizations
- Workplace Policies
- Individuals

Protects

The Client   The Lawyer
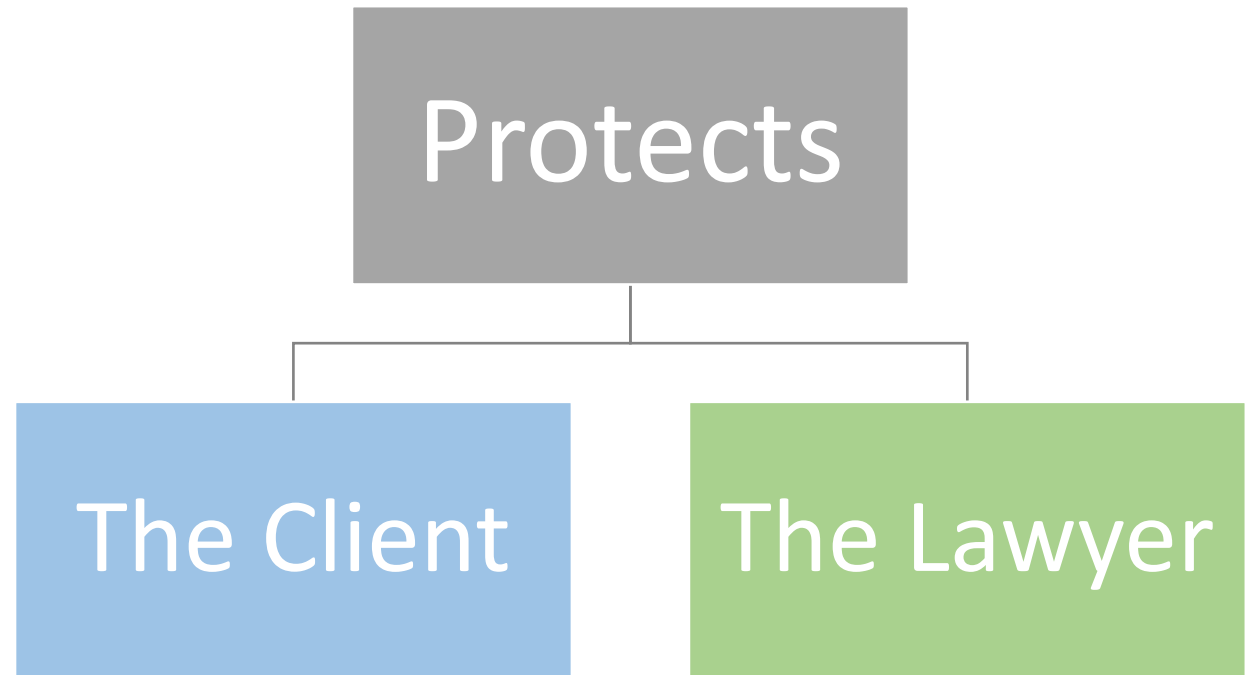
Two Categories of Boundaries

- Client Boundaries
  - Expectations regarding the representation.

- Self-Boundaries
 - Promises we make to ourselves about how we choose to use our time.

Communication

- What type of communications channels will be used?

- How often should the client expect communication?

- How long will you take to respond to the client?

- Who should they contact if they have questions?

- How long will you expect for client response?

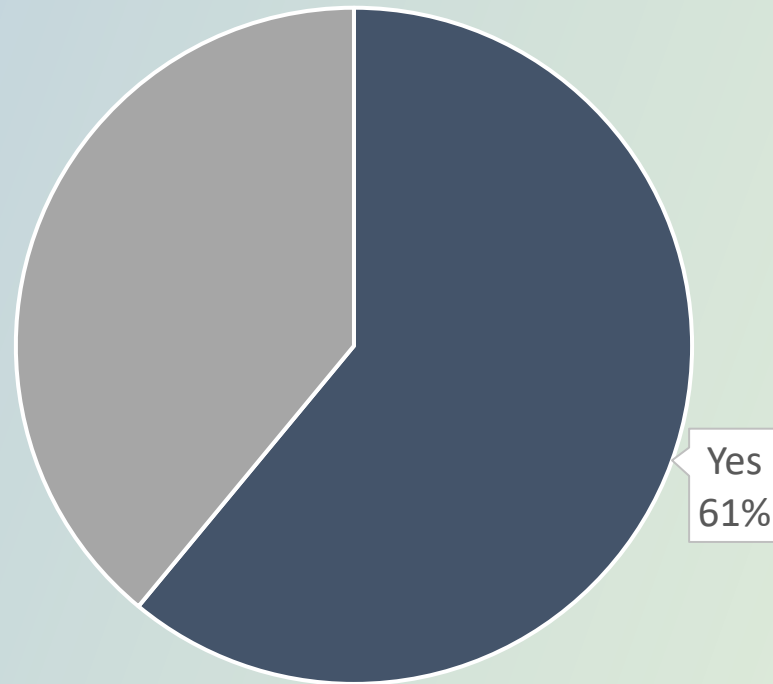- When will the client answer communication?

Methods of Communication

- Letters
- Phones Calls
- Emails
- Text Messages
- Client Portals
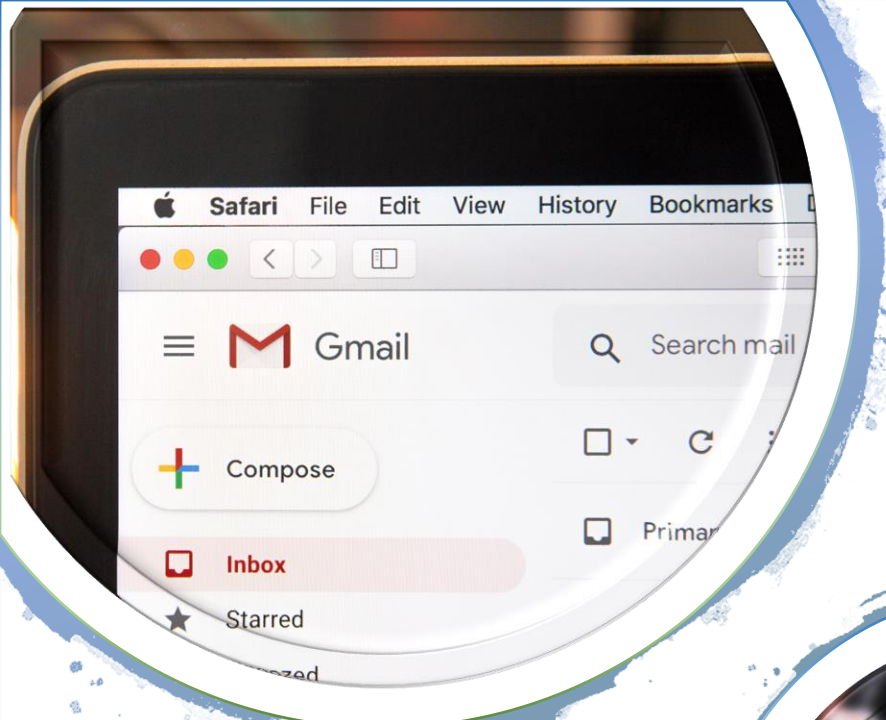
ABA TECHREPORT 2019

Technology has made my work/life balance better.

Yes
61%

Expectations

- Instant Communication
- Informal Communication

Appointments/ Meetings

- During hours
- After hours
- Scheduled
- The pop-in
- Back-to-back

What is an Emergency?

Lawyer Must Define

Client Must Understand

Tools for Setting Boundaries with Clients

- Attorney Client Contract

- Welcome Packet

- Initial Meeting

- Firm Policies and Procedures

Self-Boundaries

- How will you use your time?
  - After hours work
  - Vacation
  - Your email
  - Your calendar

Establish a Routine

Establishing a Routine

- Routines and written schedules help you better manage stress, tasks, and time.

- Set time limits for single tasks, like responding to email.

- Do the same for leisure activities.

- Routines can include taking a lunch at a set time everyday to ensure you are taking a break.

- Studies show that if something is on our calendar, we are more likely to do it.

Working From Home?

Routines are especially important.

Minimizing Distraction

Deep Work vs. Shallow Work

- Shallow Work — Tasks that do not create much new value, easy to replicate, often performed while distracted. Logistical style tasks that do not require intense focus or the application of hard to replicate skills.

- Deep Work — Tasks that create new value and hard to replicate, push cognitive capabilities to their limit, performed free from distractions.

Cognitive Switching

Devices Don't Help

Time Management Techniques to Limit Distraction

Block Scheduling

Pomodoro Technique

Increased Productivity

A Few Final Thoughts

- Be OK with saying no

- Prioritize your self-care

- Consider implementing firmwide policies

- Work /Life balance (harmony) <u>is</u> possible