

Flourish under pressure

STEPH MELNYCHUK, J.D. | Former Lawyer | Life & Career Alignment Coach | Author

Does it ever feel like your brain doesn't have an off-switch? In many demanding roles, we're trained to anticipate problems and stay one step ahead. Constant thinking can look like excellence but, over time, can keep the mind in a state of vigilance, leaving us feeling anxious, depleted, and disconnected from ourselves.



I spent nearly 20 years in this state practicing intellectual property law. From the outside, my career looked successful. Inside, I struggled with anxiety, insomnia, and recurring burnout. My mind never stopped. I mistook rumination for diligence and harsh self-criticism for high standards. I was living almost entirely in my head, which disconnected me from my emotional and physical needs and led me to override signals like fatigue and overwhelm.

I kept overriding the mounting pressure until a mountain biking accident forced me to stop. During recovery, it became clear that the way I was working wasn't working. I was trying to manage and do more and more. But the issue wasn't capability. It was a lack of boundaries. I didn't know how to mentally disengage from work or recognize and assert my own limits. As a result, I overcommitted, built resentment, and felt increasingly unhappy.

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LOOKING FOR A VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY?

The TOPICS Editorial Committee welcomes new volunteers to help us connect with association members through our informative newsletter! Our fun and collaborative group seeks BCLMA members to suggest ideas and help source thought-provoking articles that will benefit all subsections.

We meet formally at four lunch-hour planning meetings per year (lunch provided) to plan the next edition. We also host meetings virtually for volunteers who live and work in the valley, the interior, on the island or the coast! Don't miss this rewarding opportunity to build valuable relationships, and contribute to the BCLMA and to our legal community across the province.

No business writing skills required – just your enthusiasm!

Contact Committee Chair Heather Orchison at general@bclma.org if you have any questions, need additional information, or feel ready to join!

Who We Are

Founded in 1972, the BCLMA is a non-profit organization with more than 600 members from 190 law firms across BC. The BCLMA's goal is to provide educational and networking opportunities, enhance skills as legal administrators and managers, and provide professional and personal benefits to its registrants.

Member Services

The BCLMA provides opportunities to network with other law firm administrators and managers at annual spring and winter socials, and monthly subsection meetings. We host a large conference every other year.

Newsletter Services

TOPICS is a public newsletter. Contact the Editorial Committee to provide comments on articles, to offer suggestions for articles in future issues, or to augment the circulation list. We welcome your feedback! Please send comments to general@bclma.org.

Submissions

Please contact Heather Orchison at general@bclma.org if you have an article or story idea you would like to submit. Please note that our prescribed article length is 1000 words. All submissions will be subject to review by the editorial board.

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WHY BOUNDARIES MATTER

My story isn't unique. A 2022 national study of more than 7,300 Canadian legal professionals found that nearly 60 percent of us report psychological distress.¹ Perhaps this isn't surprising. What's notable is that those with two important skills reported fewer symptoms of burnout, distress, and depression.² Those skills are psychological detachment and assertiveness.

SKILL ONE: MENTAL BOUNDARIES

Psychological detachment is defined as “the ability to mentally disengage from work outside of office hours.”³ Humans can think at a rate of roughly 4,000 words per minute.⁴ The mind constantly generates a stream of commentary, whether we want it to or not. This inner voice isn't inherently bad. In fact, it's one of our greatest cognitive tools. It's what enables us to reflect, plan, rehearse, and learn. It's central to being human.

But what allows us to plan and reflect can also spiral downward. Chatter refers to the inner voice when it becomes unproductive, negative, and hostile.⁵ Chatter includes patterns such as rumination, worry, self-criticism, self-judgment, comparison, and catastrophizing. Instead of helping us solve problems, the mind loops. Instead of preparing us for action, it immobilizes us. The tool that evolved to help us navigate life can become a source of psychological distress.

If our inner voice is both a superpower and a vulnerability, how do we harness it without being hijacked by it? The challenge isn't eliminating the inner voice but learning how to manage it. When we learn to regulate it, the mind becomes a tool.



Think of the mind like a campfire; it only burns brightly when there's space between the logs. Packed too tightly, without oxygen, the flames die out. Just like a fire needs space to burn, our minds need space to rest and reset.



Meditation is a detachment tool that helps us gain awareness of incessant thinking. Only if we can catch it, can we control it. Awareness creates a small but powerful gap that allows us to loosen our identification with every thought in our head and remember that we are the observer of the mind, not its captive. It allows us to psychologically detach from work.

SKILL TWO: EMOTIONAL BOUNDARIES

Assertiveness is defined as “confidence in interpersonal relationships manifested by the ability to express emotions spontaneously and the ability to set boundaries that respect rights, thoughts, and feelings without denying those of others.”⁶ Assertiveness is often misunderstood as boldness or confidence, but it has less to do with forcefulness and more to do with communicating truth in a way that honours both your experience and another's. At its core, assertiveness is the expression of boundaries, which requires three internal capacities:

i) Awareness: The ability to identify feelings is essential for setting clear boundaries. Emotions provide useful information about crossed limits, unmet needs, and overcommitment. Without emotional awareness, we often override ourselves, suppress discomfort, or agree to things that conflict with our limits. Assertiveness begins with emotional literacy and the ability to “feel the feels.”

ii) Self-respect: “Feeling the feels” isn't enough. We must believe that our experience matters. Honouring ourselves means treating our limits, thoughts, feelings, and needs as legitimate, even when others have competing ones. If we regularly minimize our discomfort or prioritize others at our own expense, self-respect may be a related skill to strengthen.

Self-respect governs how we allow ourselves to be treated and how we respond when something doesn't feel right. When we don't feel fundamentally worthy, our needs feel negotiable. Strengthening self-respect means granting ourselves internal permission to matter and allowing that permission to guide our choices and boundaries. Assertiveness requires a quiet conviction that our limits, thoughts, feelings, and needs matter. Not because we earned the right but because we're human.

iii) Clear and kind communication: Awareness and self-respect must be expressed to be effective. Expression requires two skills: clarity and kindness. Clarity means stating your limits, thoughts, feelings, and needs directly, without hinting, overexplaining, or apologizing. Kindness means acknowledging the other person's perspective while still holding your line. When either is missing, boundaries collapse or relationships strain. When both are present, needs are protected, and respect preserved.

THE COMMON THREAD: COMPASSION

Compassion provides the internal stability that both psychological detachment and assertiveness depend on. Compassion is the practice of responding to ourselves and others with kindness rather than judgment or criticism. It helps us develop a stable sense of self-respect.

When negative mental chatter is loud, it erodes how we see ourselves. The inner critic questions our adequacy, amplifies doubt, and makes our needs feel excessive or unreasonable. Compassion interrupts that erosion and quiets the chatter. It changes how we relate to mistakes, pressure, and perceived shortcomings.

Instead of allowing self-criticism to define our value, we respond with kindness and perspective. That kindness protects self-respect. From that foundation, stepping back mentally becomes possible and speaking up becomes clearer.

CONCLUSION

If these skills just live in our heads, little changes. Psychological detachment and assertiveness must be expressed in behaviour and action. Coaching can help us build these learnable skills through repeated application. After all, the research doesn't show that understanding detachment and assertiveness predict lower burnout; it shows that the ability to detach and assert ourselves predicts lower burnout.



A former IP lawyer and in-house counsel in Vancouver, Steph now works as a Certified Professional Coach leveraging more than 10 years of experience mentoring, guiding, advising, and supporting professionals and students to pursue career goals and life dreams.

1. Geneviève Cadieux et al, *National Study on the Psychological Health Determinants of Legal Professionals in Canada (Phase I)* (Sherbrooke: Université de Sherbrooke for the Federation of Law Societies of Canada, 2022) ("National Study").

2. These findings are correlational, not causal. But in a such a large, representative sample, these skills seem to be reliably linked to better mental health outcomes.

3. Ibid.

4. Kross, *Chatter: The Voice in Our Head, Why It Matters, and How to Harness It* (New York: Crown, 2021).

5. Ibid.

6. National Study, supra note 1.

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SEREY SINN Chief Operations Officer, Crossroads Law



Q
&A

Where did your legal career begin?

My 20 years in leadership, marketing, and fundraising roles in the not-for-profit sector set me up for my legal career which began when I helped support the launch of Crossroads Law in 2017 and eventually joined full-time as COO.

Tell us about your current role.

I oversee the firm's business operations and lead the teams that keep everything running behind the scenes. With a focus on strategy, I help the firm's growth through thoughtful planning, operational leadership, and identifying opportunities to improve how we scale, innovate, and deliver a strong experience for both our clients and our team.

What do you enjoy the most about your role?

The variety! I get to work across many different parts of the business, which means I'm constantly learning, making connections between teams, and helping foster collaboration across the firm.

What is the greatest value you receive from the BCLMA?

I find tremendous value in the networking, educational webinars, and online forums. I also find the conferences highly valuable.

What advice would you give to young professionals developing their career?

Don't fear a non-traditional path. My own career didn't begin in legal management. Bringing experience from different industries can be a real strength. Many skills are transferable, and diverse perspectives often lead to better ideas, stronger teams, and innovative solutions.

What movie title best describes your legal career?

Everything Everywhere All at Once

My dream vacation:

Experiencing several countries and their cuisines!

My favourite BC day trip location:

Ucluelet and Tofino

My favourite weekday lunch spot:

HungryZus

My favourite restaurant – anywhere:

Touk – Canada's first contemporary Cambodian restaurant located on Alberni. As a Cambodian-Canadian, I can vouch for it!

The last book I read:

Berry Pickers by Amanda Peters

EVENT REPORT

OCCASION Annual Summer Networking Social
DATE June 11, 2026
VENUE Tap & Barrel, Granville Island

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WHAT MADE IT SO SPECIAL

This year's annual summer social returned to glorious Granville Island!

More than 160 attendees, including alumni and vendors, brought their enthusiasm and networking skills to the sun-soaked patio surrounded by the quiet swells of False Creek.

BCLMA board members welcomed visitors with a signature cocktail.

Many members went home with a lovely door prize, courtesy of the BCLMA and our big-hearted vendors.

Speaking of vendors, we extend hearty appreciation to all! Your company's generosity helps make every BCLMA social event an exceptional success. The photos on the following pages prove it!

The Board also thanks everyone for attending – and for your valued feedback! You told us that you enjoyed the event and venue so much, we have decided to return to the Tap & Barrel in 2027. See you there!

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO ATTENDED!







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WHAT LAW FIRM MANAGERS ARE LISTENING TO

Podcasts have become a popular way for people to learn, stay informed, discover new ideas, and feel entertained. Whether exploring business strategy, history, sports, current affairs, or something completely unexpected, the podcasts people choose often say something about what inspires them.

We invited **BCLMA member Amanda Mazloomi, Chief Operating Officer at [macushlaw in Vancouver](#)** to tell us about the podcasts she enjoys and why.

When choosing a podcast, I tend to listen for...

... a combination of professional development, personal interest, and entertainment. I enjoy podcasts that challenge how I think, strengthen my leadership skills, and offer practical insight, but I also make room for the things I love, like hockey! This helps me decompress so I can show up as my best to my role. My podcast picks leave me either better informed or a little lighter than when I started.

I listen to podcasts when...

... I commute or drive. I consider this time truly sacred in my daily routine. Podcasts give me an efficient way to stay curious without adding another item to my calendar.

Currently, I'm listening to...

The Curiosity Shop by Brené Brown and Adam Grant

Locked On Canucks by Trevor Beggs and Kyle Bhawan

Here's why...

The Curiosity Shop brings together two perspectives that really compliment each other. Adam Grant is a quantitative researcher who brings an evidence-focused lens through experiments and statistical analysis. Brené Brown is a qualitative researcher whose approach feels very genuine.

I personally connect with the qualitative approach, so it's incredibly beneficial for me to get deep insight into a more qualitative mind. I have immense respect for Brown's work, particularly the way she connects inner emotional work with effective, human-centred leadership. She makes complex ideas about courage, vulnerability, trust, and leadership feel deeply human.

Together, Brown and Grant slow down, ask better questions, and explore complexity rather than reach for easy answers.

Locked On Canucks serves a completely different, but equally important, purpose. I am a die-hard Canucks fan (even when that feels unfortunate; almost like I'm cursed!). The show delivers relevant news, local analysis, expert opinions, and broader NHL context in a concise format. As a leader new to an executive role, any opportunity to gain useful information efficiently (especially when it's regarding something I'm passionate about) is music to my ears. The hosts' banter also provides welcome comedic relief after a brutal season. This podcast has helped me decompress so many times, and I am grateful for that.

Stand-out episode...

The 'Shop's' episode titled "The Highest Performance Strategy is Caring About People," featuring Simon Sinek, stood out to me because its premise captures a leadership

principle I care deeply about.

High performance and care are not competing priorities. The strongest teams are built when accountability, trust, and genuine concern for people reinforce one another. Also, I love the team-sport analogies when it comes to leadership, and they help me understand complex issues with a different lens.

What I have learned from a podcast that has influenced my work...

Brown's work has reinforced my belief that leadership does not require perfection or having every answer. It requires self-awareness, courage, empathy, as well as a willingness to have honest conversations.

As a newer executive, I try to create clarity while remaining open to questions, feedback, and complexity. *The Curiosity Shop* reminds me that curiosity is not indecision; rather, it is a discipline that supports better judgment and

more thoughtful leadership.

Locked On Canucks has helped me understand team dynamics, conflict, and business decisions in a different way. This perspective has helped me see organizations as unique structures that rely heavily on all the pieces and the foundation working cohesively to succeed.

My recommendation

I recommend *The Curiosity Shop* to law firm leaders and managers. Since our work regularly requires us to make decisions involving people, risk, competing priorities, and sometimes with incomplete information, Brown and Grant encourage listeners to replace certainty with curiosity, engage with complexity, and lead with both courage and humanity – valuable practices in any workplace – especially in law firms navigating rapid change.



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Duty to mitigate: Not a one-size-fits-all

PRESTON PARSONS, Partner, Overholt Law LLP

The obligation to **provide notice or payment in lieu of notice when dismissing an employee** can be a significant financial liability for employers, especially if the obligation requires reasonable notice at common law.

For long-serving or senior employees, those obligations can reach into the millions.

While employers often focus on enforceable termination clauses to reduce their risk, a recent BC Court of Appeal decision is a reminder that mitigation can play a critical role in reducing liability, and that mitigation is not necessarily limited to re-employment.

THE DUTY TO MITIGATE – DEFINED

Picture this: an employment relationship comes to an end. The long-term, senior employee has no written employment contract limiting severance, and thus has a large claim to reasonable notice at common law. While such an employee may wish to sit back, do nothing, and collect severance from the employer, the law is clear that the employee has a legal responsibility called the **duty to mitigate**. This means **taking reasonable steps to reduce the financial impact of losing their job – typically by making genuine efforts to find comparable employment**.

If a dismissal dispute ends up in court, the employer typically always advances the argument that the employee failed to take reasonable steps to mitigate, leaving a judge to determine whether or not the employee's mitigation efforts were reasonable. If the employee did not take reasonable steps to mitigate and the employer can demonstrate that there were comparable jobs available that the employee may well have obtained, had they applied, the court can reduce the damages or compensation the employee would otherwise receive.

It should be apparent from the preceding paragraph that the key word is reasonable. Courts look at the facts of each case rather than apply a one-size-fits-all rule. This means that employees may fulfil their duty to mitigate in a variety of different ways.

CASE IN POINT

A recent case, *Cressey Construction Corporation v. Parolin*, 2026 BCCA 199, aff'g 2025 BCSC 741 [*Parolin*], considered whether exploring one's entrepreneurial side satisfies the employee's duty to mitigate in a wrongful dismissal claim.

After Ms. Parolin was constructively dismissed from her position as the Director of Marketing at a real estate development and construction company, she did not look for another job. Instead, she started three businesses. The employer protested, arguing that a failure to search for comparable jobs was a failure to mitigate. The trial judge rejected that argument, and the Court of Appeal upheld the trial decision.

As most employees meet the duty to mitigate by looking for comparable employment, there are fewer cases that address those who choose to start their own business ventures instead. This makes the Court of Appeal's specific factual observations about Ms. Parolin's situation noteworthy. Here are four points arising from the Court of Appeal's decision for parties to consider when determining whether starting a business satisfies an employee's duty to mitigate:

1. The degree to which the new business(es) and the employee's professional background are aligned

The Court of Appeal noted that Ms. Parolin's businesses were largely connected to or drew significantly from her existing "extensive" experience in real estate development. Although one venture extended beyond her expertise, she

collaborated with an experienced partner and generated some success by the time of trial.

By contrast, in *Hart v. EM Plastic & Electric Products Ltd.*, 2008 BCSC 228, the employee was found to have failed to fulfil the duty to mitigate after refusing two jobs offers in his industry to pursue an unrelated career in real estate. The fact that Ms. Parolin's new businesses aligned with her professional background was a factor in persuading the justices that her actions were reasonable.

2. Degree of effort put into the new business enterprise

The Court of Appeal confirmed that Ms. Parolin poured significant time and resources into starting her businesses. She worked 40 to 60 hours per week and she partnered with experts. While turning a profit in the short-term was not guaranteed by starting a business, this did not detract from her reasonable efforts. Her substantial commitment to her businesses was evidence that she took reasonable steps to mitigate her lost income.

3. The employee's circumstances prior to dismissal

Prior to the termination of her employment, Ms. Parolin worked from home. This was an essential term of her prior



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employment that allowed her the flexibility to balance her work and specific childcare responsibilities. The Court of Appeal specifically endorsed the trial judge’s consideration of that flexible working relationship in finding that her decision to pursue business startups from home was reasonable in the circumstances.

4. Formal business training and education is not required

The justices confirmed – in refuting another argument made by the employer – that formal business training or a business degree is not required to find the employee’s decision to start a new business as reasonable. Of course, while its absence is not fatal, the presence of formal business training or education will surely be a factor weighing in favour of the reasonableness of the employee’s decision to embark on an entrepreneurial path.

MITIGATION IS NOT A CHECKBOX; IT IS A REASONABLENESS ANALYSIS

The *Parolin* decision confirms that a dismissed employee may be able to reasonably mitigate by starting their own company,

even without first searching for a comparable employment opportunity. Whether an employee has satisfied their duty to mitigate will depend on the reasonableness of the steps they took in light of their circumstances.

The many pathways available to employees for mitigation arguably make it even more difficult for employers to prove that an employee failed to mitigate the loss of their employment. However, employers are likely to be able to establish a failure to mitigate if they have evidence that comparable employment was available and was rejected to either pursue a business venture without any guarantee of success or start a business unrelated to their professional experience. Employers must carefully assess the facts before taking the position that a former employee has not made reasonable efforts to reduce their losses.



Preston Parsons is a partner at Overholt Law, practicing in the areas of employment and labour relations, human rights, and privacy law. Overholt Law is a boutique employment and labour relations firm located in downtown Vancouver, British Columbia. For more information regarding Overholt Law, please visit

overholtlawyers.com

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About us

Founded in 2021, Maturn offers evidence-based coaching programs for women at the intersection of career and key life stages, including fertility, maternity leave, motherhood and peri/menopause. We provide workshops and training for people leaders to help them better support women through these transitions, creating workplaces where women can thrive at every stage of their careers.

How our services benefit legal firms

Legal firms are a strong fit for Maturn:

- **High attrition at predictable points.** Law firms lose talented women disproportionately around parental leave and the return-to-practice period, often right when they're up for partnership track decisions. Coaching support helps firms retain the associates and partners they've invested years in developing.
- **Billable hour culture makes transitions harder.** The return from leave, fertility journeys, or menopause symptoms can collide with performance metrics that don't flex easily. Programs that help women navigate these stages (and help people leaders manage them well) reduce the quiet drop-off in hours, visibility, and advancement.
- **Partnership pipeline protection.** Firms invest significant resources in getting women to senior-level roles. Losing them at motherhood or menopause transitions is a costly leak in that pipeline. Support at these stages protects that investment.
- **People leader training matters more in firms.** Partners and practice group leaders often manage people without formal management training. Equipping them to support team members through fertility, leave, and menopause transitions reduces the risk of well-meaning but harmful missteps (and the legal/ HR exposure that can follow).
- **Reputation and recruiting.** Law firms compete hard for top talent, and visible support for women through career transitions is increasingly a differentiator in recruiting and in client-facing DEI commitments.

What our clients say: Read testimonials [here!](#)

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Save The Date

BCLMA Educational

Date: Thursday, October 15, 2026

Time: 11:45 am - 1:30 pm

Location: Terminal City Club

BCLMA Annual Winter Social

Date: Thursday, November 19, 2026

Time: 5:15 pm - 9:00 pm

Location: Fairmont Waterfront Hotel

Survey Reminders

Please note the deadline for submitting your [survey](#) responses:

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Leadership is the small things, again and again

ALEX PHIZICKY, Founder, The Phiz Coaching & Consulting

We tend to think of leadership in grand gestures: when a crisis happens and the leader stands before the team to deliver hard news, or when big decisions need to be made, for better or for worse. Sure – these are leadership moments – but they are not where leadership actually lives. The real work of leadership is less glaring and ‘glamorous’.

WHAT EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP ACTUALLY LOOKS LIKE

True leadership comprises small repeatable behaviours that bolster or inform the way to lead and be with others. It is the consistency you bring to your relationships, work, and way of being that builds trust. It’s about how you respond when someone brings you bad news, how you celebrate wins with your team, and how to develop the people around you.

When that consistency is missing, trust erodes, performance slips, and people stop bringing forward problems they could have raised early because they have quietly learned that it is not worth it.

Although the grand gestures matter, they sit on top of hundreds of small, repeated moments that came before them. If the foundation is shaky, grand gestures will come across as hollow and vapid.

HOW DO YOU BUILD A STRONG FOUNDATION?

We are told to be consistent, be reliable, be present. But how?

The how is in your systems.

In *Atomic Habits*, James Clear makes a deceptively simple argument. “You do not rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your systems.”

For leaders, this means the level of consistency you demonstrate is not a personality trait you are born with; rather, it is the output of the systems you have built around yourself.

THE HABIT LOOP BEHIND EVERY BEHAVIOUR

Clear breaks every habit down into a four-step feedback loop: cue, craving, response, reward.

- i. The **cue** triggers your brain to initiate a behaviour. It is information that predicts a reward. It could be a location, time of day, emotional state... anything that makes you go, "it's time!"
- ii. The **craving** is the motivational force behind the habit. What you crave is not the behaviour itself, but the change in state it delivers. (You do not crave brushing your teeth but you do crave the feeling of clean teeth.)
- iii. The **response** is the actual habit you perform, whether it is a thought you have or an action you take.
- iv. The **reward** is the end goal. It satisfies the craving and teaches your brain that this loop is worth remembering for next time.

Clear describes the first two steps, cue and craving, as the 'problem phase'. Something signals that a reward is available, and you start to want it. The last two steps, response and reward, mark the 'solution phase'. You take the action, and you get some kind of payoff.

You can see this in your own life every day.

- i. Your phone buzzes (cue)
- ii. You feel the pull to check it (craving)
- iii. You pick it up (response)
- iv. You get a hit of new information (reward)

The loop closes, and your brain clocks it. That is why you do it 80 times a day! Not because you lack discipline, but because the loop is well-designed and well-rewarded.

The same is true for leadership behaviour. The leader who consistently acknowledges good work has a loop in place that cues them, pulls them toward it, and rewards them when they do it. These behaviours do not feel arduous in the moment because the loop is doing the work.

When a leadership behaviour is not happening consistently, the loop has a broken link. The cue is missing, or the craving is not there, or the response is too hard, or the reward never comes. When you find the broken link, you can fix it.

FOUR PLACES TO LOOK

Clear's four laws of behaviour change map directly onto the loop. They are the four levers you can pull when you're struggling to find consistency in your desired habits.

1. **Make it obvious.** If a behaviour has no cue, it will not happen reliably. If you want to acknowledge good work, build the cue in. The cue is the difference between meaning to do something and actually doing it.



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2. **Make it attractive.** If a behaviour feels like a chore, you will avoid it so reframe what it actually does. Giving feedback is not a tax on your time; rather, it is the single highest-return thing you do for retention and performance.
3. **Make it easy.** If the right behaviour takes more steps than the wrong one - not from malice, but from a place of efficiency. The same is true of your team. Your job as a leader is to move the right actions along the path of least resistance.
4. **Make it satisfying.** While behaviour that gets rewarded gets repeated, behaviour that goes unnoticed fades out. This applies to you and to your team. Celebrate and acknowledge when you do the thing you are working on. Journal about it, announce it – it doesn't matter – just don't let it just happen without noting it. This is important to do for team members as well.

START SMALL

The thing about changing behaviours that stick in the long term: it only works if you do it slowly. Start with one behaviour you want consistency in and design a loop that makes that behaviour happen.

Because here is the part most leaders miss: your team is watching you. Not just the grand gestures, but your patterns of behaviour. They are learning what they can count on you for and what they cannot. And it's those patterns that make up the leader that you are, whether you designed them intentionally or not. So, you may as well design them well, right?



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Alexandra Phizicky is the Founder of The Phiz Coaching & Consulting, an ICF-accredited (PCC) executive coach, leadership facilitator, and keynote speaker based in Vancouver. She works with individuals, teams, and senior leadership groups on leadership development, communication, coaching skills, and team alignment.

MEMBER SNAPSHOT

CADENCE KONOPAKI Director of People & Operations, YLaw (Yousefi Law Corp)



Q
&A

Describe your current role.

From HR to office expansion to tech implementation to client relations, and everything in between.

What do you enjoy the most about your role?

Every day is different and the time flies!

What is the greatest value you receive from the BCLMA?

Attending the educational seminars and workshops. I appreciate the diversity of experience and depth of knowledge along with the chance to interact with peers from other firms.

What advice would you give to young professionals developing their career?

Build your network! Even if someone works in a different department or sector, you never know when or where you might need their advice or support.

A song title to describe my legal career:

Step by Step by New Kids on the Block

My guest list to my exclusive dinner party includes:

All the friends I made in Europe when I lived there.

My favourite restaurant – anywhere:

Bunsen in Dublin. I lived there for five years. No burger since has come close!

One thing about me that might surprise you:

I used to run Edmonton's equivalent to *Bard on the Beach*.

The last book I read:

Golden Son by Pierce Brown. (Loving the series!)

In my spare time, I like to:

Read, work on my balcony garden, or volunteer in the community.

THE SOUNDING BOARD

YOUR BCLMA.
YOUR NEWS.

Fall is just around the corner and we are excited for what's ahead!

The annual fall education session will take place on October 15th at the Terminal City Club in Vancouver. This year's topic is *Proactive Resilience: Building Your Firm's Business Recovery Plan*.

We look forward to welcoming all of you at our annual winter social on November 19th at Fairmont Waterfront Hotel in Vancouver. Registration will open shortly.

Remember to visit the [Events webpage](#) to find a subsection session this fall that interests you.

Thank you to all BCLMA members and volunteers.

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RECIPE

Authentic German Rouladen

One of Germany's most famous and delicious dishes, Rouladen are beef roulades filled with bacon, onions, mustard, and pickles, then browned and simmered in an incredibly rich and flavourful gravy. An excellent go-to meal for fall!

PREP TIME: 30 minutes | **COOK TIME:** 2 hours
TOTAL TIME: 2.5 hours | Four servings

ROULADEN INGREDIENTS:

- 8 slices top round beef (about 4 × 6 in, 1/4 in thick), pounded slightly thinner
- 1/3 cup German yellow mustard
- 8 slices bacon
- 8 medium German pickles, sliced lengthwise
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

GRAVY INGREDIENTS:

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon cooking oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 small leek, chopped
- 1 large carrot, chopped
- 1 large celery stalk, chopped
- 1 cup dry red wine
- 2 cups strong beef broth
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 4 tablespoons chilled butter
- Corn starch or flour slurry (to thicken)
- Optional: heavy cream (for a creamy gravy)



Recipe from [Daring Gourmet](#)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Spread mustard on beef; season. Add bacon, pickles, and onions; roll up and secure. Brown the Rouladen on all sides; set aside.
2. Sauté the onions, garlic, leek, carrots, and celery. Deglaze with red wine; add broth, tomato paste, bay leaf, sugar, salt, and pepper.
3. Return Rouladen to pot and simmer (or bake covered at 325°F / 163°C) for ~90 minutes, until fork tender.
4. Remove Rouladen and strain cooking liquid.
5. Thicken gravy; whisk in butter; adjust seasoning. Add corn starch (as needed) and/or heavy cream (if using).
6. Return Rouladen to gravy and heat through.

Serve with traditional sides, such as Rotkohl (red cabbage) and either homemade Spätzle (German noodles), homemade Semmelknödel (bread dumplings), or boiled potatoes.

Recipe Links:

[Rotkohl](#) | [Spätzle](#) | [SemmelKnodel](#)

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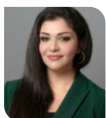


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