

Book Review: *The Anxious Lawyer, An 8-Week Guide to a Joyful and Satisfying Law Practice Through Mindfulness and Meditation*, by Jeena Cho & Karen Gifford

I am sure that many reading this could imagine *The Anxious Lawyer* being the title of a novel loosely based on their own life story. As Cho, Gifford and others have pointed out, anxiety seems to come part and parcel with the law degree. Many of us feel anxiety is necessary in order to keep our clients and ourselves from falling into legal and professional traps. But surely we can also recognize that there are times when failing to let go of our anxiety has caused the very problems we are so anxious to avoid.

Cho and Gifford, both attorneys who have spent years on the front lines of the legal profession, offer a solution to combat, or at least cope, with the pressures and stress that all of us who have chosen a career in the law face, day after day, year after year. Their new book, *The Anxious Lawyer*, is an easy-to-read introductory guide into mindfulness training, specifically geared to those in our profession. The book opens with an introduction containing a litany of the harrowing statistics on attorney substance abuse and mental health issues that we are all somewhat familiar with, even if we are in denial about ourselves. The substantive chapters that follow contain general information about mindfulness and beginning a meditation practice. The book then gets into lawyer specific mindfulness practice, such as mindfully dealing with problem clients, processing difficult professional losses and dealing with feelings of anger toward opposing counsel.

The book is set up to be read over the course of eight weeks and includes a number of exercises to be performed daily during each week. The promise of the book - one that may be familiar to some - is that following the eight weeks of mindfulness training will rewire your brain and allow you to be more mentally flexible and focused. However, the strongest parts of the book are the antidotes that Cho and Gifford share about their professional challenges. I especially enjoyed the chapter on clarity of thought because it delves into some of the thought patterns common to our profession and sheds some light on why our profession gets such a bad rap.

The great thing about this book is that it not only points out our problems but offers solutions. Admittedly, I did not exactly follow the weekly meditation schedule outlined in the book before writing this review. However, I found the book to be fascinating and helpful even without meditating as formally and regularly as it recommends. I have found myself incorporating some of the suggested exercises into my law practice and personal life. In doing so, I believe it has helped me come to terms with some undesirable outcomes which I have been holding onto, and has helped me become a better listener to the benefit of my personal and professional relationships. These benefits are enough for me to want to read it again, and this time I may even follow the program.

More information can be found at www.theanxiouslawyer.com and from the author, Jeena Cho, who will be a presenter at SC Bar Convention in January 2017.

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