

## Mindfulness and Law Practice

By: [Benjamin Goodman](#)

None of us likes the idea that our doctor is practicing on us, but she is. None of us likes the idea that our lawyer is practicing on us, but he is. We may dislike even more the idea that we are practicing law on our clients...but we are!

If you practice in the legal field, you have been practicing to practice since before you were even licensed, before law school even. And, once you are licensed, you continue to practice, and to learn, and to become better at practicing. Hopefully, the better you get at it, the more value you are providing to your clients, and the more they are valuing you.

Mindfulness practice is also a practice. It is not buying a meditation CD and trying to force yourself to relax for 20 minutes with your office door closed during lunch time. It is not watching a YouTube video of Jon Kabat Zin giving a Google Chat, or watching Matthieu Ricard giving a Ted Talk, or attending a conference featuring Ven Robina Courtin. It is not going to Yoga once a week. It is not any of these things...but it is all of them and more.

As with the practice of law, mindfulness practice takes time, learning, and patience. More importantly it takes a willingness to make time, to submit to teaching, and to be patient. Most importantly, it requires a daily commitment to do these things for as long as it takes.

Most of us could not have passed the bar exam straight out of undergrad, no matter how good we were. Most of us could not have passed the bar exam right after graduating from law school without having cramming intensely for at least two of the most horrible months of our lives. Most of us will not make partner at a prestigious law firm immediately upon being admitted to practice.

Mindfulness, as you learn to practice, may help you with many things. In time, it will likely reduce stress. It will likely improve your communication skills. It will likely make you a better mediator, or trial attorney, or judge. However, a law professor friend of mine reflected recently that mindfulness is supposed to help everyone these days...from pregnant mothers to drone pilots to asshole attorneys. But what good is mindfulness if it just makes you better at ripping everyone around you to shreds?

My answer would be that through mindfulness practice, you may become aware, perhaps for the first time, of what you are doing and why you are doing it. Maybe, just maybe, the shreds of human flesh will start to leave a bad taste in your mouth, and you will choose to stop. You are not a shark. You are an advocate for truth and justice for all.