

## Other Areas of Practice

# Often imitated, but never duplicated: The 'Notorious' | Jasmine Daya

By **Jasmine Daya**



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(October 15, 2020, 10:07 AM EDT) -- I recall the day I welled up in tears as I watched a documentary on the Notorious RBG. I felt overwhelmed with emotion over what this little woman with huge passion had accomplished to pave the way for women. I was once again filled with emotion upon hearing of the passing of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg.

On March 11, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic. On March 16, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau told Canadians in an unforgettable moment, "If you're abroad, it's time for you to come home."

Reports state that the pandemic has set women back years. Remote learning has required at least one parent to assist young children. Often it is the mom, whether it's because they are the lower income earner or for other reasons. Ginsburg reminds us, "Don't be distracted by emotions like anger, envy, resentment. These just zap energy and waste time."

I have three children; at the start of the pandemic, they were ages 7, 10 and 14. My husband and I initially argued about who would play teacher at home. My husband is an incredible hands-on father; he takes our children to their extra-curricular activities, amusement parks and all the "fun" things. It therefore came as a complete surprise when I saw how frustrated he would get with the remote learning situation, unintentionally snapping at the kids, particularly my youngest when she couldn't log in to Google Classroom, or my middle child when she had difficulty teaching herself math. I quickly caved.

I spent my mornings trying to work from home while ensuring my kids were engaged in online learning, helping with homework, making meals and tidying up after. By the afternoon my husband would come home and I could then leave to go to the office to continue my real job where things were not so rosy either.

Proceedings had come to an immediate halt, revenues were down, new clients were non-existent, fixed expenses needed to be paid, among other stresses. I was exhausted, deeply concerned and longed for the pre-pandemic happy times with friends, weekend getaways, going to the spa, watching the Raptors and everything else.

Despite my career as a lawyer and all my passion projects, I was one of those women who decided to step up my role as mother (and teacher) to my children. While I didn't give up my career, I certainly did more in the home and for my children during the pandemic than my husband. Arguably, he might say that perhaps I did not do enough pre-pandemic.

Surprisingly, I became appreciative of the newfound time that I had with my children. I remember moments like when my 7-year-old said, with genuine surprise, "Mummy, you are actually a really nice mummy!" I wasn't sure whether to laugh or cry. In the words of Ginsburg, "So often in life, things that you regard as impediment turn out to be great, good fortune."

As opposed to mere physical presence, I was mentally with my children. We played board games, did homework over FaceTime when I was at the office, went for neighbourhood walks, baked and cooked, watched movies, had pool and ping pong tournaments, chatted about life and many other things. The pandemic taught me how much I love being a mom and how appreciative I am of my family.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg enrolled at Harvard Law School during the fall of 1956 as one of nine women in a class of 500 men. She was reportedly asked by the dean why she was taking the place of a man at law school. She was later famously quoted as saying in court, "I ask no favour for my sex. All I ask of our brethren is that they take their feet off our necks."

Ginsburg was on the *Harvard Law Review*. After the birth of her daughter, her husband became ill with testicular cancer. She took notes for his law school classes in addition to her own. Ginsburg transferred to Columbia Law School when her husband took a job in New York City. She graduated in 1959, tied for first place in her class. Her accomplishments and her work for the advancement of women through organizations and legal precedent are unparalleled.

When you feel that things are impossible, think about the Notorious RBG and realize that they're not, because if she could endure the hardship she did and achieve such incredible strides in life and for women, why can't you? She fought for us and for our daughters and for generations of women to come.

Make her legacy count and remember that we can have a career and a family. If Ruth Bader Ginsburg could do it, so can we.

"Real change, enduring change, happens one step at a time."

— Ruth Bader Ginsburg

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