

HOW TO BALANCE A BUSY LEGAL CAREER WITH PERSONAL PURSUITS

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Jasmine Daya, Law'05, unlocks her secret to successfully juggling a busy law practice and business with writing legal articles, a cookbook, a chick lit novel and a lifestyle blog – all while raising three children. Plus, she also has advice for law students! (Photo by Matt Barnes Photography)

A lawyer and managing principal of her own firm, a published author of personal injury law articles and a cookbook, a lifestyle blogger, a chick lit novelist and a mother of three: these are just some of the roles held by Jasmine Daya, Law'05. Reflecting on her life, career and accomplishments, she shares what has guided her practice and how she finds work-life balance.

What excites and challenges you about your practice, Jasmine Daya & Co.?

I practice in the area of civil litigation, primarily in the area of personal injury. It is not an area I chose, but one that chose me. I wanted a career in litigation and personal injury was where I landed my articling job. I thought for sure that I would be done with personal injury after I completed my articles given unfounded preconceived notions about “ambulance chasers” but about two months in, I realized how much I genuinely enjoyed the area as it enabled me to connect with real people that require my assistance in a way that only a lawyer could help. These individuals come to us in their greatest time of need and appreciate that we are there for them.

In recent years, there have been several changes in the area of motor vehicle law which I anticipate will continue to evolve over the next few years. I truly believe the system is in dire need of change given the erosion of rights of accident victims. I believe that the monetary cap will be raised for the *Simplified Rules* and that there will be no juries for civil trials in these cases. I believe that we will see evolution from a civil perspective in the areas of sexual abuse in light of the #metoo movement, cyberbullying/cybercrime that continues to evolve at lightning speed and with respect to cannabis given recent legalization of the substance.

How do you find harmony among managing your own firm, raising children and pursuing your other passions?

I am of the view that one should never say “no” if an opportunity presents itself because once lost, it will not present itself a second time but instead will be replaced with a feeling of regret. My desire to enjoy life while striving for success is what enables me to practise law while accomplishing my other pursuits – there’s also my colour-coded calendar, which essentially schedules every minute of every day.

Tell us about your early experiences in running a business.

Prior to commencing law school, I had a solid business background by way of education and experience. My father is an accountant and entrepreneur. He taught me about financial statements, payroll and taxes in my early teenage years. During the weekends and summers, I spent my days at my parents’ restaurants. I used to colour, play video games and watch movies in the back office and then when I was old enough, I started to work at the restaurants. With degrees in economics and finance combined with my practical business experience, I have an edge that most lawyers don’t have and it enables me to own and operate my law firm while still practising law. [Editor’s note: Queen’s Law now offers a [Graduate Diploma in Legal Services Management](#), Canada's only online diploma in business skills for legal professionals.]

Tell us about your time at Queen’s Law and any experiences that you have carried with you over the years.

Queen’s Law provided me with an incredible experience and definitely played a significant role in enabling me to achieve the success that I have today. One of Queen’s Law’s greatest strengths is its close-knit and collegial environment. While I still have many friends from my days at Queen’s, I would not hesitate to contact any of my peers to ask for advice or to catch up, even if I haven’t talked to them in years because my class had a real sense of community that transcends time.

What’s it like coming back to Queen’s Law to guest lecture in Insurance Law and Torts classes?

Returning to Queen’s Law to guest lecture is such an honour and fills me with immense pride. I can’t help but smile every time I hit the Queen’s campus because my mind flashes back to all the good times and trust me, there were many especially given that I was the Social Convenor for the Law Students’ Society!

What advice would you give current Queen's Law students?

Pursue your passion, aim high, work hard, set goals and achieve them. If you choose an area of law that is financially motivated but perhaps not what you enjoy then you will eventually be unsuccessful, unhappy or both. Choosing an area that you enjoy can lead to financial success if that is what you are seeking but regardless you will derive pleasure from your career path, which will also enable you to enjoy life outside the law. Do not be short-sighted, a legal career is a marathon, not a sprint.

By Quinn Brown