

Meet Jasmine Daya: a personal injury lawyer with a passion for the kitchen

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Jasmine Daya is a lawyer and the Managing Principal of Jasmine Daya & Co. She is also Author of Law Girl's Bump in the Road and JD in the Kitchen, blogger, podcaster and speaker. Jasmine has always viewed herself as an advocate and naturally chose a legal specialization in the area of personal injury, with a particular focus on claims involving minors, club assaults, particularly those involving bouncers or nightclub security, bullying and cyberbullying which is a developing area in the civil law context, elder abuse, personal injury claims arising from landlord negligence, fatality claims and catastrophic claims involving motor vehicle accidents. We caught up with her recently to find out how she is combining and celebrating the different parts of her identity.

My first job ever was...flipping hamburgers and tossing fries at my parents' Harvey's restaurants.

I became a lawyer because...I watched My Cousin Vinny. I loved it and immediately saw myself passionately advocating for real people with my own style which is exactly what I do.

I decided to write a cookbook because... since I was a young girl, my mom and I had discussed writing a cookbook. My mom is an incredibly talented home cook, her creativity blows my mind however she does not have the patience to measure, note measurements, test and retest. The cookbooks have not only made my mom and I realize our dream of recording all of our family recipes but it has given us time together that we would otherwise never have had. Chatting (and gossiping) in the kitchen while waiting for the stove to heat as well as bickering about proper techniques has been more fun than I could have ever imagined.

My proudest accomplishment is...becoming a lawyer. It's an honour and privilege to practice law in Ontario. Regardless of what entrepreneurial pursuits I am working on, my clients come first. They believe in me, rely on me, and no matter what, I always have their back.

My boldest move to date was... starting a personal injury law firm in a highly competitive market, in a highly competitive city when many personal injury law firms are folding.

I surprise people when I tell them...I have three children.

My best advice to people who want to pursue their passions outside of work is...just do it and stop thinking and talking about doing it. What are you waiting for?

My best advice from a mentor was...the worst they can do is say "No". That advice is always in the back of my mind when I'm about to pitch one of my big ideas knowing that everyone will think I'm crazy which is usually the case. Generally, people are taken aback by me and my ideas and watching facial expressions and body language has actually become quite entertaining.

"It's okay that people underestimate me, it actually gives me an edge because they don't see me coming and don't know what hit them."

I would tell my 20-year old self...stop stressing about what your parents are saying, go to law school. They will come around and you will have no regrets.

My biggest setback was...three major banks shutting the door in my face when I wanted to buy my first commercial property and with only a week to waive the financing condition.

I overcame it by...buying the commercial property! The purchase required me to find the right people to structure the deal, time and energy but I did it. Now, every time I see those same bankers, I smile large as they continue to stare at me in shock just like they did the first time they met me.

The once piece of advice I give that I have trouble following myself is...I am a true believer that "When life gives you lemons, you make lemonade." I pass those words of wisdom on all the time. In my case, I usually self loathe for an evening on the sofa with junk food, wearing my sweats and snuggle with my cozy blanket before I start working on the lemonade the next day. We all need time to process, but I need to learn how to stop being so hard on myself as it doesn't just impact me but also, everyone

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around me.

If I had an extra hour in the day, I would...be able to see the surface of my desk more frequently. The piles seem to stack up faster than I can clear them and my law firm is supposedly paperless!

If you googled me, you still wouldn't know...I love potato chips.

The one thing I wish I knew when starting my career is...it's okay that people underestimate me, it actually gives me an edge because they don't see me coming and don't know what hit them.

I stay inspired by...people. I love networking and meeting new people as you never know where those connections will take you or how their thoughts and opinions will help develop new and creative ideas for you to embark upon.

The future excites me because...the sky is the limit and I've only just gotten started. I am beyond excited about what the future holds.

My next step is...to continue building my empire.

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