



How to Be More Content In My Legal Career

(This is the third part of a three-part series. Previous issues concentrated on "How to Be More Successful In My Legal Career" and "How to Better Manage My Time." The author is one of five lawyers in Alabama in private practice who were recently appointed to the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism.)

In searching for answers to the questions posed above, I recently sought the counsel of ten of Alabama's best lawyers, asking them:

Describe one activity that has helped you be more successful in your legal career, one that helps you manage time better and one that helps you be more content in your legal career.

Each lawyer answered each question. The lawyers surveyed were **Karon Bowdre** (former law professor, federal district judge); **Ken Simon** (former circuit judge, civil practitioner); **Jere Beasley** (civil practitioner); **Robert Cunningham** (civil practitioner); **Gorman Houston** (former Alabama Supreme Court justice, appellate practitioner); **Ken Randall** (former civil practitioner, University of Alabama School of Law dean); **Bobby Segall** (civil practitioner, ASB president); **Sonja Bivens** (former civil practitioner, federal magistrate judge); **Patrick Tuten** (criminal lawyer); and **Susan Conlon** (family practice lawyer).

How Can I Be More Successful, Efficient And Content in My Legal Career, Part 3

Here are the answers I received:

1. Seeking to honor God and making time to enjoy other aspects of life, such as family, nature and outdoor activities.
2. Prayer and my firm belief that my first responsibility is to my family and that my legal career is simply the means by which I am able to provide for them.
3. Knowing that I am helping folks with their problems makes what I do most satisfying and emotionally rewarding.
4. Put your family first, your legal career second and your social life last.
5. Camaraderie with lawyers and judges.
6. A job well done is its own reward. I am most content when I am doing a good job for my clients, working well with my fellow lawyers and learning that I don't have to kill all the snakes—just the big ones. I also seek balance in my life. I make sure to find time to exercise, to tend to my responsibilities at home, to take vacations and to maintain friendships. When I am overwhelmed and obsessive about work, I am least content and least effective.
7. One needs a passion for his or her work to be content. It's important in my life to help others, so when I'm in a position to help because of my job, there is contentment.
8. I find contentment in developing friendships with other lawyers in non-adversarial environments.
9. Service to others and using my legal skills to help my community has made my career very fulfilling. Our profession can have a positive influence in our communities, and we each help to shape the public's image of our profession.
10. Proper exercise, rest and time with my family and, most importantly, quality time developing my spiritual life shape my attitude, give me a vision, energize me and enable me to do what I am called to do.

—Samuel N. Crosby, Stone, Granade & Crosby, Daphne