

Prospectus:

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Two years into the pandemic, we have collectively experienced a tectonic shift in the nature of work. Employees who were once bound to jobs within commuting distance of their homes can now work from wherever they want for employers around the globe. In a corresponding trend, a growing number of law schools and graduate programs are offering asynchronous online education, allowing students of any age to master new skills on their own schedule and without being geographically bound to the institution.

In light of these changes, the article begins with the premise that the happiest and most fulfilled attorneys are those who live a life of meaning and purpose. While many in the profession have achieved that goal, many others are unsatisfied with their career trajectories but feel, for a variety of reasons, that they aren't empowered to make a change. Unfortunately, study after study talks about attorneys who are stressed and unhappy with their professional lives, and would even leave the law entirely if they could.

The article argues that these attorneys have a far more dynamic set of options than simply leaving the profession or staying unhappy. The article also serves as a lesson to law students that it's not just possible--but indeed should be the goal--to merge personal and professional interests to find a career filled with meaning and passion.

This is where lifelong learning comes in. As every practitioner knows, law school taught us an analytical framework--how to "think like a lawyer"--which is reinforced in even the dullest of legal careers. Relying on those analytical skills, and bearing in mind that asynchronous online education has opened up new worlds, it's entirely possible to evolve professionally, learn new skills and practice areas, write on new topics, and continually pivot one's legal career to align with personal goals. It's also important to understand that meaning and passion change over time, so even the most fulfilled attorneys need to continually evolve to hit this mark.

The article concludes by arguing that, outside of our ethical duties, there are "no rules" in the professional world and we are infinitely free to pursue meaning and purpose in the law--now unencumbered by geographic constraints--with lifelong learning as the path.