Keeping Balanced in the Law

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What do you see as the biggest obstacles facing women in the legal profession today? Balance. Brownstein has some of the most talented women I have ever met, but still many struggle with balancing the effort and commitment it takes to succeed with the desire to maintain their lives outside of work.

You have to be honest with yourself about what you want to accomplish in your life and career. Try not to give up everything outside of work that is important to you in order to achieve professional success. I believe my relationship and time spent with my daughter has given me the strength and insight to be a better lawyer and leader.

Some have suggested that the whole billable hours/books of business/rainmaker model needs to be blown up in order for women to get more seats at the management table at bigger law firms. Do you agree? Why or why not? There are changes that need to be made to the current model but I don’t believe that they have to be completely blown up for women to succeed. Women are capable of getting seats at the management table. It requires an understanding that working hard is not enough to advance in your career and you must seek out more responsibility.

You should ask yourself questions like: What’s my relationship like “with my department chairs or practice group leaders? Does leadership know who I am? Find ways to promote yourself and your accomplishments (and your team) with confidence.

What does your firm do to help get women into leadership roles? We recognize that there is a need for a collective and collaborative effort to empower women to be both successful attorneys and firm leaders. In the past we have held women’s retreats and, while a valuable experience, that effort alone has not propelled more women into leadership roles so we recently launched a more comprehensive Women’s Leadership Initiative. Spearheaded by one of our associates, this initiative provides training, mentoring and networking opportunities and an annual leadership forum for women, and seeks, among other goals, to develop female attorneys and policy professionals into leaders in the firm and the community.

WOMEN IN LAW BY THE NUMBERS

23%
of all federal judgeships were held by women in 2011

18.8%
of Fortune 500 general counsels were women in 2010

Source: 2013 report by Catalyst on Women in Leadership-Law

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