

## Episode Summary

**Episode number:** 97  
**Episode name:** Resilience, Your Way: Building and Maintaining Healthy Habits in the Practice of Law  
**Guest(s):** Fiona Kirkman

**What area(s) of law does this episode consider?** Resilience in legal practice.

**Why is this topic relevant?** Resilience is an important quality for anyone; but for lawyers on the frontline it's fundamental to personal and professional wellbeing.

In *The Road Not Taken: Navigating the Early Stages of Legal Practice* with Aden Bates, Aden spoke about the importance of trying new things and encouraged young practitioners to think about and to experiment with where in the legal industry they wanted to be - but building the confidence and resilience to do that can be a challenge for many.

To help with this challenge, lawyers need to exercise resilience when transitioning to new careers within the legal field. Making career changes within the legal sector often entails adapting to unfamiliar roles, responsibilities, and environments. This demands a high level of emotional strength and adaptability to cope with potential setbacks, uncertainties, and the learning curve associated with the new role. Resilience empowers individuals to navigate these obstacles, maintain their confidence, and persist in the face of difficulties.

**What are the main points?**

- Vicarious trauma refers to the emotional impact experienced by professionals who work with traumatised individuals and handle related materials.
- Despite not directly experiencing the trauma, lawyers can develop secondary trauma from hearing or reading about it, leading to emotional distress.
- Richard Susskind, an expert in artificial intelligence and the future of law, emphasises the need for a well-rounded skill set in the legal profession.
- While intellectual intelligence (IQ) is important, both emotional intelligence (EQ) and business skills (BX) are also crucial.
- Additionally, proficiency in technology (AI) is increasingly vital. This holistic approach, combining IQ, EQ, AI, and BX, is essential for the next generation of lawyers and mediators to succeed in serving clients and advancing their firms.

**What are the practical takeaways?**

- It is important for lawyers to develop tools and skills to work with clients in difficult and traumatic situations.
- It is crucial for lawyers to take care of themselves first so they can effectively help their clients.
- This includes maintaining good sleep, eating, and exercise habits, having a mentor, and building a support network of individuals who have experienced similar stress.

- Sharing personal experiences can also be beneficial in assisting others in the field.
- It is important to recognise when personal and work circumstances require extra support and utilise available resources for optimal well-being.
- Having a strong support network is crucial. Online communities are helpful, but having a few older, experienced individuals to confide in and seek guidance from is invaluable. Mentorship plays a vital role in building our resilience and should be considered an essential tool.
- Working in the law can be isolating, especially as a sole practitioner. It can be helpful to maintain relationships with former colleagues and mentors from law firms you worked at prior to becoming a sole practitioner.
- Connect with inspiring professionals through LinkedIn and reach out for advice and mentorship.
- Meet people that work in similar areas to you. It can be helpful having someone to talk to following difficult experiences.
- There are early warning signs that you are overstressed. An example is losing sleep or waking up in the middle of the night to complete a task.
- Recognising the difference between good and bad stress is crucial.
- To determine if you are stressed, assess your normal level of productivity and efficiency. When this changes, it is necessary to revert to basic self-care practices like adequate sleep, healthy eating, exercise, socialising, and finding balance.
- Lawyers should be continuous learners and explore different career paths beyond the traditional trajectory in the legal field.
- Exploring alternative career paths can lead to personal growth and fulfillment. Time is limited, so it is important to pursue what brings you joy and satisfaction.
- Consider your goals and personality when choosing a career path. While income may be affected by certain choices, finding fulfillment and aligning with your strengths can ultimately lead to financial success.
- Seek guidance from mentors and professionals in the field to gain insight into their career path and the realities of the field. Every job has its challenges and success is not guaranteed, but by pursuing something that brings happiness and fits your skill set, you enhance our chances of a fulfilling career.
- Finding your purpose and motivation is crucial, especially in the legal industry.
- Lawyers should experiment to find the right fit, as there is always a job that will align with their goals. Experimentation and change does not need to be drastic.

## Show notes

[Aden Bates, \*The Road Not Taken: Navigating the Early Stages of Legal Practice\* \(2023\)](#)

[Richard Susskind, \*Tomorrow's Lawyers: An Introduction to Your Future\* \(2013\)](#)

[Smokeball Practice Management System](#)

[FamilyProperty](#)