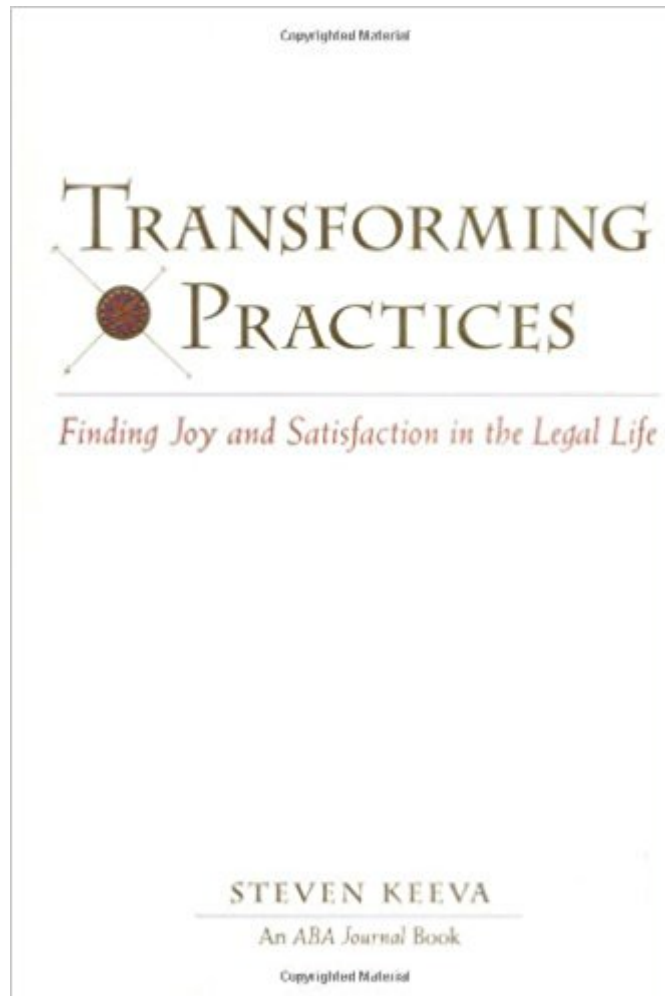




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Transforming Practices : Finding Joy And Satisfaction In The Legal Life



Synopsis

From law school to the law firm, lawyers are taught and encouraged to win, with little regard to the emotional consequences. After years of being obsessed with winning, racking up billable hours, and fishing for clients, many lawyers lose sight of why they initially joined the ranks of the legal profession. This landmark book explains how to reconnect with the spiritual side of law practice. It presents profiles of firms and lawyers who have transformed their practices from heartless and cold professional endeavors into kinder, gentler operations, with more emphasis on the clients'--and their own--emotional and spiritual needs.

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Customer Reviews

Spirituality and law practice may sound like an oxymoron, but a quiet quest to find deeper meaning in life and work as a lawyer and to cure the ailments of today's cutthroat law firm environment is well underfoot within the legal community. Transforming Practices: Finding Joy and Satisfaction in the Legal Life is the first book to explore this movement toward bringing one's soul to the practice of law and returning to lawyering from a healing perspective, rather than an adversarial one. Filled with inspiring profiles of lawyers who have successfully changed their work habits and attitudes and who have healed the split between inner and outer, "us" and "them," and individual and community, Transforming Practices makes it clear that the opportunity for transformation exists for every lawyer, in every kind of law practice. Through the use of narrative, interviews and anecdotes that draw upon the experiences of lawyers from a broad spectrum of practice areas, the book demonstrates that it is

okay for a lawyer to be human, to care, to let the values and priorities that matter at home also matter at work. Interestingly, Steven Keeva is not a lawyer himself. Rather, as a senior editor for the ABA Journal, the most widely read legal publication in the world, he has written about lawyers and the legal profession for nearly a decade. (Danielle Egan-Miller, Business Editor, NTC/Contemporary).

Steven Keeva's *Transforming Practices Is Changing Lives* "Every lawyer and law student in America [should] read this book, study it, savor it, and make it a constant companion."--Texas Lawyer "If you don't like what you've become, if your life seems empty, sterile or diminished . . . and if you've ever desired a more fulfilling life in the law, then read this book!"--The Pennsylvania Lawyer "Goes back to the fundamentals of our humanity to describe a better way to be a lawyer. It actually does more than that. It describes how to be a better human being. Everything else flows from that."--Corporate Legal Times "An amazing little book that has the potential to significantly affect the lives of lawyers and their families. . . . Rather than write another book aimed at improving what we do, Keeva has written a book that can help improve who we are and what we are."--Trial magazine". . . Provides a needed resource for lawyers seeking to wrest their lives from the often implacable maw of corporate life."--New York Law Journal "[Transforming Practices] should help all lawyers recover the integration of life and work that alone makes a day's work worth it."--Boston Bar Journal *Transforming Practices* presents a revolutionary vision to America's nearly one million lawyers, many of whom have become disillusioned with their careers. Author Steven Keeva, assistant managing editor of the influential ABA Journal, shows how by cultivating a vibrant inner life, any lawyer can find profound satisfaction, pleasure, and joy in his or her work. Through the use of narrative, interviews, and anecdotes from lawyers who have found ways to bring renewed meaning, fulfillment, and a deep sense of pleasure to their law practices, Keeva demonstrates that it is absolutely OK for a lawyer to be human, to care, to let the values and priorities that matter at home also matter on the job. *Transforming Practices* makes it clear that the opportunity for transformation exists for every lawyer, in every kind of law practice. New to this edition is a foreword by Jan Schlichtmann, the lawyer whose extraordinary story was told in Jonathan Harr's bestseller, *A Civil Action*. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Excellent overview of integrating spirituality into the daily practice of law. I would recommend this book for lawyers who are unhappy with their current job in the legal profession.

Steven Keeva (who is not a lawyer but has spent many years observing and writing about them) here provides an assortment of advice, tips, and real-life examples to help you become a better lawyer and a better person. While I found much of the book to be old news, every 10 pages or so Keeva says something eye-opening, memorable, and truly instructive. The chapters on listening and service were, for me, the real pay-off, and I know I will be going back to them frequently. By contrast, his portrayal of litigators, trials, and especially corporate practice struck me as simplistic and a bit stereotyped. In addition, those who are unreceptive to the touchy-feely approach to problem-solving should be warned that this book is nothing if not touchy-feely. That said -- and notwithstanding my other qualifications -- this book is an *important* contribution to the literature of professionalism and lawyers' "mental hygiene" (as Prof. Stone of Harvard has called it). Since this book is also a quick read, every lawyer and law student who even suspects it may be helpful should give it a try and then keep it close at hand.

The adage is that a person should not let his profession define who he is. This book shows how an attorney can let who he is define his practice. What a concept. I have recommended the book to 2 colleagues in the last 2 weeks alone.

This is an outstanding work for any lawyer that has an interest in mindfulness practices as they can be incorporated into the day-to-day practice of law. As a divorce lawyer, I find it particularly relevant and meaningful. If you have non-dual interests, if you are a student of Jon Kabat-Zinn, or if you just yearn to "wake up," this book will give you hope and energy. Thurman W. Arnold III[...].

This book is okay for some people I suppose. I had to read this for a class, and it's not something I would normally seek out. The author is the editor of the ABA Journal, but isn't a lawyer. To me, this seems like common sense written, printed, bound & sold. I naturally try to live a stress free life, anyway. Instead of buying this book, I would just have soon spent the money on some beers with friends--which I consider a much more effective way of dealing with stress, rather than reading what some guy with a collection of stories from his buddies thinks is the path to mental wellbeing. If you're someone who is not very emotionally-minded (like me), I think you will probably agree with my bottom line assessment of the book: "meh".

As a career counselor who often works with disillusioned and unhappy attorneys, I really appreciated Steve Keeva's book for its understanding of the inherent difficulties in practicing law

and its wise and compassionate solution. For unhappy lawyers who still want to practice law, but also want to enjoy it more, Keeva's book is an important reminder that, while we may not be able to transform a whole profession, each and every one of us has the power to transform ourselves. It takes just as much courage for lawyers to stand up for themselves as it does to stand up for their clients. I thank Steve Keeva for writing this book and can only hope that his readers heed his message and heal themselves.

Steve Keeva's new book is godsend to any frustrated lawyer who can't now recall why he or she ever became a lawyer! This is not simply another "feel good" book, although you will feel good when you are done reading it. This book offers concrete strategies for improving your practice of law and having more fun in your life. I highly recommend it!

Nearly every practicing lawyer owns and carries a briefcase. If each lawyer's briefcase contained a worn, dog-eared, repeatedly read copy of Steve Keeva's remarkable book, *Transforming Practices: Finding Joy and Satisfaction in the Legal Life*, the practice of law would be a much more joyful place. My copy is extensively underlined, highlighted and adorned with yellow Post-Its to mark the multiple epiphanies I found in each chapter. Out of the hundreds of books and articles I have read on lawyering over my thirty-two years of practice, none have given me as many "ah-hah's" as I received from *Transforming Practices*. The genius of Keeva's book is his recognition and description of the crises in the legal profession as a spiritual crisis requiring inner work as the solution. This spiritual crisis comes in part from a lack of congruence between lawyers' daily work and their core values and yearnings. In other words, what we do every day on the outside is dissonant from how we feel on the inside. It has long been thought that the solution is for the lawyer to simply compartmentalize his or her life, e.g., do and say things at work that would not be appropriate in other settings, such as with family, friends, or in the community. However, it is now clear that the compartmentalization approach simply does not work and produces even greater distress. In order to bring more harmony and joy into lawyers' lives and work, Keeva outlines a number of practices designed to minimize the gap between lawyer's professional selves and their humanity. His descriptions of The Balanced Practice, The Contemplative Practice, The Mindful Practice, The Time-out Practice, The Healing Practice, The Listening Practice, and The Service Practice ignites unlimited new hope and possibilities for lawyers who felt doomed to a meaningless work life. Since maximizing the fulfillment from one's law practice requires both inner and outer work, Keeva provides practical tips at the end of each chapter so lawyers can begin to implement these theories

in their work immediately. Keeva's book should be required reading for anyone even remotely interested in the legal profession. It has served me well in several ways. As a trial lawyer for over 30 years, I continue to search for ways to bring the most meaning, joy and compassion into my work. This book has proved to be a continuing source of inspiration and renewal in my quest. Since I devote part of my professional time to coaching other lawyers on transformation and quality of life issues, I have found this book to be an excellent teaching and coaching vehicle for my attorney clients. I am extremely grateful to Keeva for this invaluable book. It is my hope that it will someday be every lawyer's companion and professional bible.

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