



FLORIDA BAR NEWS

INTRODUCTION TO THE MINDFUL LAWYER

 By Scott Rogers  Special to the News  Columns

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Over the past 10 years, mindfulness has become increasingly popular across society and within the law. As more and more lawyers (perhaps you) have been introduced to mindfulness, questions emerge, such as: How is mindfulness different from deliberating on how best to solve a problem?

How could mindfulness have helped me be more effective in that difficult situation?

What actual benefits have you found since you started practicing mindfulness?

How do I practice mindfulness given my busy life?

This shift in interest from mindfulness *as a concept*, to the application of mindfulness to the law and specific legal contexts *as a practice*, is an important next step for the meaningful embrace of mindfulness within the legal profession and its potential to meaningfully enrich the lives of lawyers, their families, and colleagues, and to benefit society and the rule of law.

The most important and helpful answers to most of these questions comes from practicing mindfulness, for it is a method rooted in self-sufficiency. Indeed, it is the experience of many that as they become more experienced with mindfulness practice, these questions answer themselves, or answers they have heard take on real meaning. But because so many of us are not as experienced in the practice of mindfulness as we are in the practice of law, it can be helpful to learn mindfulness practice insights and tips from lawyers and judges who have been practicing mindfulness for a long time — who have journeyed from healthy skepticism, to information gathering, to trying it out, and to the realization of the fruits of practice.

Beginning with the September 1 issue of *The Florida Bar News*, readers will be able to learn from lawyers and judges who have taken seriously the study and practice of mindfulness. Questions posed by readers, like you, will be answered by lawyers and judges who can relate to the specific area of inquiry — either in terms of the substantive work they do, or from their life experience, as it connects to the heart of your inquiry.

Why might this be useful? The benefits of mindfulness are numerous. They range from the physical benefits of sleeping better, curbing impulses, reducing inflammation, and improving immune function, to cognitive benefits associated with attenuated age-related loss of gray matter (*i.e.*, brain), being less easily distracted, and improved memory, to emotional benefits of feeling less anxious, more at ease in chaotic situations, and being less prone to depression and mood fluctuations. There is much that has been learned through neuroscientific and medical research, and much more to be learned. From time to time, leading neuroscientists will respond to questions that touch on the science of mindfulness.

So that this column will help you deepen your understanding and practice of mindfulness, the tips and insights will include pragmatic responses to specific questions, tips for short practices, and links to useful guided mindfulness exercises.

If you have a question you would like to be answered — perhaps one that relates to a recent experience, or an ongoing challenge in the office or courtroom, send an email to srogers@law.miami.edu.



*Scott Rogers, M.S., J.D., is a nationally recognized leader in the area of mindfulness in law and founded and directs the University of Miami School of Law's Mindfulness in Law Program where he teaches mindful ethics, mindful leadership, mindfulness and negotiation, and mindfulness in law. He is the creator of Jurisight, one of the first CLE programs in the country to integrate mindfulness and neuroscience and conducts workshops and presentations on the role of mindfulness in legal education and across the legal profession. He is author of the recently released, "**The Mindful Law Student: A Mindfulness in Law Practice Guide**," written for all audiences.*