
Life Lessons Learned Along the Way: The Nonroutine Routine

By Leanne Y. Tarasiewicz

We continue our series of personal, impactful stories that have shaped how we practice law.

I have been a Paralegal with Maddin, Hauser, Roth & Heller for the past 13 years. In that time, I have worked exclusively for the Defense and Insurance Coverage group. Since 2002, my role has been to offer assistance in all aspects of case work-up to those in my group, up to and including trial. My turn has come to offer what I believe is a life lesson, a reflection on a personal experience. The following article is a glimpse of my daily routine.

Rise before dawn. Get my girls up and off to school. Head to work. Pick the kids up on the way to work out. Eat dinner. Help with homework. Go to bed. Repeat.

Time passes quickly amid the chaos of a busy schedule. Make no mistake: It isn't easy to fit everything in — day in and day out. But, as is often the case, true fulfillment is found through perseverance and hard work.

Take, for example, the fitness classes I teach through my local community education and recreation department. Fitness to me has become much more than just a routine; it's become an integral part of who I am, as I strive to meet my own goals and help others achieve theirs.

But it hasn't always been this way. In fact, the path to get where I am today was a challenge in itself.

It was about 6 years ago when I learned about the fitness programs available through the local school district. At the time, I was working full time at Maddin Hauser and had a toddler at home to keep me busy. But I decided to make fitness a priority and began to experiment with different workouts. I immediately felt a connection — especially with the high-intensity classes. Boot camp and high-impact cardio were my favorites. You name it, I tried it. P90X, Insanity, T25. Tracy

Anderson and Jillian Michaels were my best friends. Tony Horton and Shaun T were my mentors.

Within a year, I had gained the confidence (and muscle) I needed to take my newfound passion to the next level and become an instructor. Juggling this new addition in my life wouldn't be easy, but I was determined to make it work.

After mentoring under another instructor for about six months, I was ready to teach my first class. To this day, I can recall my nervousness, my anxiety. Would I bond with my students? Could I help them succeed?

Within a week or two, my nerves calmed and I felt at ease. But don't mistake that for easy.

After just one month into my new job, I discovered I was pregnant with my second child. For some women, such news might've been cause for pause — but not me. I continued to instruct step aerobics and boot camp through five months of pregnancy.

Since that time, I've developed great relationships with my students. Some have stuck with me all these years, class after class, session after session. I try to make their experience personal. I listen to their requests for certain workouts, what they enjoy and what they despise. Sprints? Yes! Burpees? No!

No matter the workout, the goal remains the same: Get the job done. Whether lunging, squatting, sprinting or jumping, I exercise alongside my students. It is as enjoyable (or painful) for me, as it is for them. Perseverance gets us through that grueling 60 minutes, and the result is always a feeling of accomplishment.

The lessons I've learned in the gym have served me well at my firm. As a paralegal, I listen to our clients, evaluate their needs and consider their wants. As a team, we figure out the best options and strategies to reach a predetermined goal. The payoff? A pleased client and another goal achieved.

So each day as I work to get the job done — whether it's at Maddin Hauser, at home or at my fitness classes — I strive to keep it personal, to consider the wants and needs of those around me, because the relationships we build with others should never become routine.

