

## Best Practices for Contentment GOALS ADD A SENSE OF MEANING

From the book *Engineering Happiness*, “[T]he psychologist Jonathan Freedman claimed that people with the ability to set objectives for themselves –both short-term and long-term –are happier.”

There is additional research to back this up –goals do seem to add a sense of meaning, direction, and focus to life. Research from psychologist Richard Davidson suggests that making progress on these goals also activates feelings of positivity and can even stave off negative emotions (including fear and depression).

In another study, researchers found that ambitious goals tend to make people happier. However, don’t go too overboard with your goals, as outrageous, unattainable goals will ultimately leave you feeling unhappy when you realize they cannot be met.

SOURCE: M. Baucells & R. Sarin, *Engineering Happiness*, University of California Press (2012).  
E.L. Deci & R.M. Ryan, *The “What” and “Why” of Goal Pursuits: Human Needs and the Self-Determination of Behavior*, 11(4) *Psychology Inquiry* 227-268 (Nov 19, 2009).

## NPR Podcast [Thriving in Life](#)

One secret to midlife happiness is being a rookie at something. Trying new things and failing keeps you robust. Also, to revive a midlife marriage, mix things up: Hike, go dancing or set out in an RV.

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## Wellness & Self-Care

**DEPRESSION IN LAWYERS** Depression is disproportionately high in the legal profession. Several states have added a mental health component to mandatory legal continuing education due to the striking statistics for depression in lawyers.

- Depression is 3.6 times more likely in lawyers than any other profession.
- Forty-six percent of lawyers reported experiencing depression at some point in their legal careers.
- One in four lawyers suffer from elevated feelings of psychological distress.
- Suicide ranks among the leading causes of premature death among lawyers; lawyers are ranked in top ten professions with highest suicide rates.

SOURCE: Debra C. Weiss, *Perfectionism, “Psychic Battering” Among Reasons for Lawyer Depression*, (Feb 18, 2009).

## Surveys & Perspectives

**SEEK BALANCE, DON’T FEAR CHANGE** “[R]emember that there are four generations of lawyers practicing today –the Silent Generation, the Baby Boomers, the Gen X-ers and the Millennials. Each of these generations has its positives and its negatives. We can learn from both aspects.

Change –change is not a bad thing. Just because we ‘always did it this way’ does not mean that we should not try a new way to do things. At the very least, those of us that have been doing it the same way for many years should listen and entertain a new option or procedure.

Mentoring –we must mentor each other. To the Silent Generation and the Boomers, be patient with the young-uns. They really do want to learn. They will catch on and will probably improve upon the technique. Gen-Xers and Millennials, be patient with us. We are not trying to make you crazy. We are just resistant to change.”

SOURCE: Melanie Shannon Rothey, *Parting thoughts: Seek balance, don’t fear change*, 19(12) *ACBA Lawyers Journal* 3 (Jun 9, 2017).

Arriving at one goal is the starting point to another.

-- John Dewey