

Goals, Accountability, and Opportunity

By JOSHUA J. DEVINE

Young lawyers are often highly motivated, extremely driven, and goal-oriented individuals. We need to be, as during this time in our lives we are also challenged by the mounting responsibilities and pressures we face in our personal and professional lives. As we kick-off 2022, I hope you took some time at year-end to be with your loved ones and reflect on the past year.

I am a chronic goal setter. In fact, I tend to set stretch goals that challenge me beyond what even I think I can accomplish. As a setter of stretch goals, I know I won't always meet them. But I also know I will achieve more than I would by setting a goal I know I can achieve. Rather than waiting for the new year to start, I always set aside time at year-end to reflect and create an annual development plan for how I can grow based on the past year's successes and missed opportunities. Then, throughout the year, I regularly hold myself accountable for the expectations and goals I set and re-calibrate as needed. As the new year begins, if you are not already doing this for yourself, please consider starting this habit now and hold yourself accountable for the goals you set out to achieve in 2022, and maybe include a couple stretch goals.

When it comes to setting goals, it's important to ensure that they be tracked and measured in some meaningful manner. As such, I'd like to take this opportunity to update you on progress we've made on one of our most important goals of the bar year and then check in

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on your own progress towards the challenge I presented last year to explore beyond your own comfort zone to further enable professional growth and development.

In my first article of the bar year, you may recall I set a goal for the Young Lawyers Executive Committee (EC) to provide 1,000 hours of pro bono and/or volunteer services this bar year. I am pleased to inform you that we are well on our way to achieving that goal with our EC members having completed over 200 hours of service to pro bono or volunteer opportunities (as of December 1, 2021). While there is still work to be done, I want to commend the EC members on their efforts to date. Not only are EC members working to meet and maybe exceed the goal I set for them, but they are also quite busy in their day jobs as well as volunteering for us to organize CLEs, networking, and volunteer events for young lawyers and other programs throughout the state—all while simultaneously juggling their ever increasing-

ly busy personal lives and for many, growing families.

You may also recall that I previously challenged all of you to push outside of your comfort zone and experience something new. It's check-in time! As we start off the new year, take a few moments to reflect on your experience and ask yourself the following questions: Did you challenge yourself and step outside your comfort zone in 2021? Did you overcome some fear or anxiety by trying something new? Did you grow from the experience? If you didn't challenge yourself in 2021, maybe now is the time to ponder how you might do this in 2022. Fulsome professional growth and development doesn't come to those who only master one set of skills.

If you have already created your development plan for the year, I'm not going to ask you to reassess your plan, but do ask yourself: are you really challenging yourself or are you just setting goals based on metrics you know you will achieve?

As young lawyers, we all should hold ourselves and each other accountable for our ongoing development. We are accountable to our employers, our clients, our families, and the individuals and organizations we volunteer to serve. In 2022, I challenge you again to challenge yourself and push outside the ever expanding but maybe too well-defined boundaries of your current zone of comfort.

Lastly, the EC has been hard at work planning events for young lawyers throughout the state. Whether your goal is to learn or develop a specific skill set to help in meeting your goals, look for a YLS-sponsored CLE. If you want to expand your network and learn more about leadership opportunities with the bar, please attend one of our monthly EC meetings or networking events. The year is young, so if you have not spent time setting some goals, the opportunity is still knocking. I very much hope to see you at an upcoming event. ■

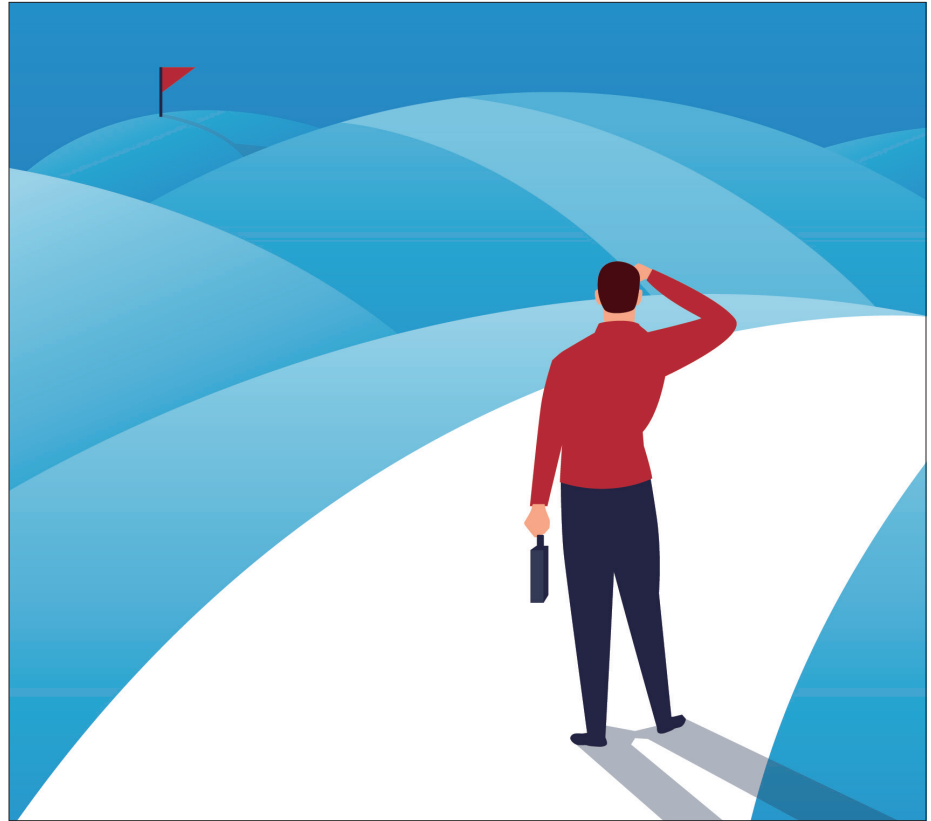


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