

Being a PRO in Life

By Courtney Schulnick



A career in law can be difficult. Likewise, being a parent can be tough at times. While both can be hugely satisfying, given the demanding nature of each, trying to juggle the two can sometimes leave you feeling as though you've been swept up by a cyclone. Add a pandemic to the mix and one can easily understand why we as par-

ents sometimes feel like we're going to snap at any given moment.

The irony of it all is that despite how trying life itself has been during the pandemic, we often create additional suffering for ourselves by the things that we tell ourselves.

As a litigator and mother of three little boys I, like many other parents, have had to wear a lot of different hats over the course of the last several months: lawyer, teacher, cook, cleaner, and playmate, just to name a few. We do so much to assure that our families are safe and well on a daily basis, all the while excelling at work; and yet, at the end of the day, we still manage to feel as though we are not good enough or that we should do better.

Mindfulness practices can help us recognize our judgmental tendencies. By paying attention moment-to-moment with a gentle, curious attitude, we can increasingly notice when we "get in our own way" so that we can foster greater kindness and compassion toward ourselves, as well as others, and avoid reactivity. This awareness enables us to more fully attend to our needs so that we can better support ourselves, as well as others, through the challenging moments in our lives.

One way to cultivate greater awareness is with a practice called "PRO." The "P" stands for "pause." Given the busyness of our lives, oftentimes we're totally unaware that we've gotten lost in habitual reactivity. By giving ourselves permission to take moments throughout the day to just pause, even if only for a few seconds, we can create space

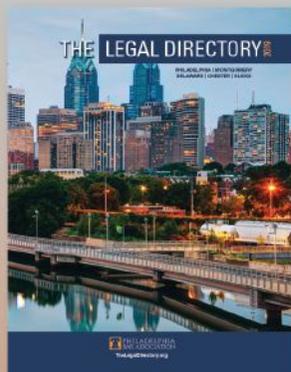
between what we may be telling ourselves—such as I'm not a good enough lawyer, parent, friend, cook, and so on—and reality.

The next step is "R," which stands for "relax." We invite the body and mind to relax. Mindfulness is not about forcing ourselves to be any certain way. Instead, we just notice how we are and extend a kind invitation to ourselves to let go, without the need to judge our experience.

The final step is "O" for "open." We open to what is here for ourselves, as well as others. By turning toward what is, without the need to change it, we are better able to accept even the most stressful of moments and invite some ease into our lives.

The next time you notice yourself getting worked up, perhaps give "PRO" a shot to escape reactivity and choose how to best respond in the moment. If you are interested in additional mindfulness practices and resources, please visit my mindfulness website at <https://www.courtneyschulnickmindfulness.com>.

To learn more about my mindfulness programs that are being offered via Zoom, please visit www.courtneyschulnickmindfulness.com or call me at (856) 261-8875.



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