



Why Every Attorney Should Consult the Lawyer Whisperer

Career Development



There are times in their careers when lawyers have deep, dark, burning questions. The kind of questions that very few of us are willing to ask, know whom to ask, or how ask appropriately. And these deep, dark, burning questions in legal minds vary. They land on different points of a spectrum and touch on issues including how to ask for a raise and get it, the best way to negotiate an offer, how to say no without compromising a career, or how to deal with executives who don't respect the legal function.

And it's difficult to find reliable or trustworthy resources on which a lawyer can depend to provide honest and straight answers to questions like these. Seeking solutions within your company leads nowhere. Asking external peers who have experienced your problem leads to the demoralizing contest of who has the worse situation, which can leave you feeling helplessly doomed to career dissatisfaction. Soliciting help from others who have not experienced your problem is just not useful. And of course, there is the dilemma and risk of oversharing: How much do you want your colleagues to know where, when, and how you struggle in a profession where the projection of competence and strength is paramount? Vulnerability, the term that Brené Brown popularized, is definitely not a virtue in the legal profession.

So what's a lawyer to do?!

I've often asked myself this question during my career journey. As I continued my quest for the advice of a knowledgeable, honest and objective expert, I found **Julie Q. Brush** — and I love following her. Brush is also known in our profession as [The Lawyer Whisperer](#). Her popular career column is the Dear Abby for lawyers and is one of three select publications I religiously read on my daily commute. Not only does Brush manage to answer the deep, dark questions I harbor — with sensibility, direction and entertainment — she manages to surface the deep, dark questions I didn't even know I had. As a

leading career strategist and advisor in the legal profession, Brush provides the complete set of information all lawyers need to know and hear.

Like a horse whisperer, who observes free-roaming horses in order to develop a rapport with and train them, Brush leverages the knowledge she develops through her vibrant search practice and close professional relationships to help lawyers of all backgrounds realize their full potential. And her advice resonates. Throughout the year, I have gained wisdom from Brush and her column that has served as a valuable asset in my career. Below is a list of ten lessons that have made a professional difference for me:

1. You can ask for anything you want. It's *how* you ask that will determine whether or not you get it.
2. The likelihood that you'll stay in your current job the rest of your career is close to nil. So think strategically about how your current position will position you for your next one and make decisions accordingly.
3. If you want control of your career, you must have leverage. So work towards building leverage wherever you are to place yourself in the position to make the career choices you want instead of having them made for you.
4. You can successfully mitigate fear by creating a detailed plan through it and playing out the worst-case scenario.
5. A "Me" mentality will not earn respect, a good reputation or career success. Prioritizing the help you can provide to others pays big personal and professional dividends.
6. There are things in life you can control and things you cannot. For the things you can control, you must do so as "perfectly" as possible. For those you cannot, let them go and focus your energy elsewhere.
7. Continuously stay in tune with yourself and the changing profession (whether you're happy in your job or not). By being aware of who we are, what we want and what we need, we lay the foundation for making the best career choices.
8. When making an important decision, gather all the facts, process the information and then go with your gut. It's never wrong.
9. Everything you need to know about a candidate or an employer is revealed during the interview process. So pay attention to the "tells" and you'll avoid costly mistakes.
10. Our profession continues to evolve and change considerably. In order to remain relevant, secure and marketable, you must adapt!

With a resource like *The Lawyer Whisperer*, no lawyer needs to be doomed to career uncertainty or dissatisfaction. So this column is a career must. By following Brush's advice, I was able to solve tough dilemmas and consider new possibilities without feeling helpless or seeming weak. So no matter how burning your thoughts, concerns or legal career questions are, give *The Lawyer Whisperer* a try for the answers you seek. The column is free and provides past questions and Brush's advice for those who are curious. And anyone can submit questions through the website's anonymous form. Even if you are satisfied with your career, I recommend perusing through her archives for a reliably great read. Not only will you enjoy the clever prose, you'll learn how our profession is evolving and might discover the answers to questions you didn't even know you had!



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Olga V. Mack is a fellow at CodeX, The Stanford Center for Legal Informatics, and a Generative AI Editor at law.MIT. Mack shares her views in her columns on ACC Docket, Newsweek, Bloomberg, VentureBeat, Above the Law, and many other publications.

Mack is also an award-winning (such as the prestigious ACC 2018 Top 10 30-Somethings and ABA

2022 Women of Legal Tech) general counsel, operations professional, startup advisor, public speaker, adjunct professor, and entrepreneur. She co-founded SunLaw, an organization dedicated to preparing women in-house attorneys to become general counsels and legal leaders, and WISE to help female law firm partners become rainmakers.

She has authored numerous books, including *Get on Board: Earning Your Ticket to a Corporate Board Seat*, *Fundamentals of Smart Contract Security and Blockchain Value: Transforming Business Models, Society, and Communities*. She is working on her next books: *Visual IQ for Lawyers* (ABA 2024), *The Rise of Product Lawyers: An Analytical Framework to Systematically Advise Your Clients Throughout the Product Lifecycle* (Globe Law and Business 2024), and *Legal Operations in the Age of AI and Data* (Globe Law and Business 2024).