

Working Alone Remedy

Folks,

While in court today, we were discussing people who work alone. One of the attorneys has a son who works alone and he has become less social as a result of it. So we were discussing what people who work alone do to interact with people during the day. I was wondering what some of you do.

Thanks,

Respond to you, of course.

Deb Matthews, Virginia

Same here. Listserves help immensely. Having someone to have lunch or coffee with helps too. I work for an agency, but I work from home. My dog and family help too. Without that, coffee and lunch. Reach out to people that you know and can network with.

Mitchell P. Goldstein, Virginia

I try to make it a point to get out during the day. I have a ritual with a neighbor where we walk our dogs together every morning; I often go to

Crossfit at lunchtime.

Kevin W. Grierson, Virginia

A handful of us law school friends who were staying in the area decided to have a monthly lunch, just to keep in touch. Of course, we could meet other than that, but this was one of those "calendar it for the year" things you don't want to forget

about. We talked about rough spots as newly minted attorneys, new at a firm, new solo, how-to questions, transition from student intern to employee, family dynamic and demands of work. Even after two years of student internships, we had tons

questions. We also didn't want to lose touch with each other.

That lead to some questions or situations we couldn't answer on our own, so we thought about getting advice on a regular basis from veteran lawyers. We'd buy them lunch, they'd visit through lunch, then spend 30 minutes or so talking about our

topic of the day. Then we decided to invite court clerks, then judges. All were happy to speak to us -- 4 district court judges, 1 muni court judge, 2 JP court judges, then their clerks, the Clerk of Court, legal assistants talked about "best and

highest use" of legal assistants and gave their opinions on software programs from a hands-on view point.

We formed Missoula New Lawyers Association to accommodate and organize the growing number of new lawyers who wanted to join us at lunch. [As a new lawyer "of a certain age" I objected to Young Lawyers, so we went with New.] Missoula has the 4th

Mt JD court, Muni Court, and two JP Courts, plus the UofM School of Law, so we had a steady supply of interested people and valuable presentations. And it was a fantastic networking opportunity.

Attorneys of all experience levels spoke, from the 30 year and still practicing to the 2-year new kid at the big firm. Child Support Enforcement Division sent people, SSI/D sent people. We went even when the topic didn't interest us -- going meant

seeing people you hadn't seen all month, getting a delicious buffet lunch for \$10, hearing information you might use one day, and getting CLE credit in proportion to the length of the presentation (usually 1 cr). Ed Poll swung by on his Airstream

trip, which I considered a personal feather in my cap.

Along the way, the Western Montana Bar Association was interested and offered to make us part of WMBA, and we became officially the WMBA-NLA. Then the State Bar did the same, and began offering a New Lawyers half-day CLE as part of its regular

state bar meetings.

That was a really long and round-about answer to the question of how do solos survive.

CJ Stevens, Montana

I use Gmail and frequently Gchat (or whatever they are calling it these days) with colleagues. It is almost like working in an office building and checking in with people at the water cooler.

That said, my building mates now include several social folks, so there is more chatting in the hallway these days.

Corrine Bielejeski, California

I'm a member of the Philadelphia bar association and part of several section committees. I attend committee meetings regularly which serves a couple purposes: it is a social activity and it keeps me up-to-date on

developments in law as well as allows me to meet other lawyers both more experienced and younger and is a networking opportunity. Sometimes friendships form out of these associations.

Overtime I run into people I haven't seen in ages and try to renew those friendships and make periodic lunch dates.

Infilling CLE requirements I go to different venues, summit law firms, some law firm for Aries and those are opportunities to meet new people and have a social component.

I have friendly relationships with clients, make that some clients. And several conversations and emails with the friendlier clients constitute a social interaction.

Since I live in Lawrence apartment building, they are or committee and association meetings with in the building as well as Book Club and yoga and similar classes. Sometimes I have to push myself to go to them because committee meetings especially can be a PITA, but as a member of the community it is important to participate.

Since being widowed six years ago, I've had to push myself to go out more and so I have subscribed to play series concert series and movie series (mostly Jewish and Israeli film festivals), so which I've subscribed by myself alone because it's too much of a hassle to coordinate with other people. I feel it's important to just keep getting out, regardless of what I'm doing when I'm out there. As long as I'm going to events and venues that I enjoy, it's all good. Invariably I'm enjoying myself and sometimes I'm even talking to people around me. :-)

Miriam Jacobson, Pennsylvania

I really haven't worked alone in years (and then I was in law school at night), but my husband worked from home alone for several years. He often had conference calls, so it wasn't quite as "alone" as other jobs, but he had some of the same concerns, particularly since he is a natural introvert. We frequently (2-3 times per week) had lunch out together during that time. At my urging and initial introduction to some of the members, he also joined a local service club (Exchange Club) that met weekly at lunch, which helped him to get out of the house and learn more about the community and its professionals. There are other similar clubs (Rotary, Kiwanis) that are usually very welcoming to new people. There are also other similar clubs that meet at night (I'm a member of a General Federation of Woman's Clubs club), like Lions, Orioles, etc. My husband also went to the gym in the morning and at night, but that wasn't a particularly social experience for him. What was, though, was getting involved in a local MakerSpace (kind of a collective shop with machine tools and such). So, picking up a hobby and frequenting the place where folks who do that go.

A lot of my retired clients go to Mass every day, and that provides both a spiritual and social interaction.

Cynthia V. Hall, Florida

I've been working primarily from home for a couple of years now. I set aside a coffee-shop budget so I don't feel bad about spending money on coffee when I just need a change of scenery.

For a long time I had a once-a-week membership at a local co-working place. Starting in January, I'll be working there two or three days a week. It's nice to be around people, even if it's not always very social (although it often is).

And Slack has been huge for us. All our writers are on Slack, and it's relatively easy to suck people into a discussion if you need a break for some water-cooler chat.

Sam Glover

Good points. My husband is essentially retired, but does some consulting work out of our home. He meets others for a very early breakfast a couple of mornings a week, chats with others when he walks the dog, and we speak several times a day. He also likes to eat at a restaurant several times a week and belongs to several list serves.

He seems to have adjusted pretty well to working/being alone during the day, though I've noticed that he's much more chatty at dinner now than he was when he worked in a traditional setting. We make a point of discussing current events and that also seems to help.

Vicki Eskin, Florida

Same as Miriam. I was a solo/no-staff attorney. Ron was very social, so I had an easier time than when I was single and solo. After he died, I had to push myself to maintain our social contacts. Interestingly, my church, which Ron attended and

was 'anchor tenor', turned out to be a huge disappointment. Haven't been there since. But fortunately, Ron's other friends here kept in touch while I was tottering.

On and off, I've maintained some habits he/we created, such as season tickets to the symphony. When I decided I was ready to leave the cave, but I had to push myself to "have the requisite givashits" (a Ronism).

I still go to City Band concerts in the summer (Ron played trumpet). The conductor gives me a grin when he spies me. I go to some of the Symphonic Chorale concerts (Ron was a tenor), and other Stuff we attended together. Missoula is small enough

that one keeps bumping into some of the same faces at, for instance, the Symphony, First Fridays, new exhibits at galleries. I haven't fallen off the planet, and I've gotten comfortable going out by myself. It just lacks the spice Ron brought to it.

CJ Stevens
