



NYSBA

Women's Community

A publication of the New York State Bar Association

A Profile in Leadership

Edwina Frances Martin, Esq.

By Erica Weisgerber, Esq.

Edwina Frances Martin is Counsel, Legislative and Budget Director for New York City Councilwoman Debi Rose (49th Council District). She previously served as Director of Communications and Government Relations for Legal Services NYC. An eight-year member of the New York State Bar Association, Ms. Martin is an At-Large member of the Association Executive Committee. She is co-chairing the Association's 2014 Partnership Conference, sponsored by the Committee on Legal Aid, and co-chairs the Steven C. Krane Special Committee on Student Loan Assistance for the Public Interest. Ms. Martin graduated from Williams College and earned her law degree from New York University Law School.

Q: Can you tell me about the type of work that you do for Councilwoman Rose?

A. I vet legislation, review drafts of legislation, and manage legislative-related processes, such as roundtables, which are one of the ways that we get great ideas for new legislation. I am also heavily involved with vetting every aspect of the budget process, meeting with groups about the budget, and considering how Councilwoman Rose's budget priorities intersect with her legislative priorities.

I also work on event planning. For example, we had a great event last year called Beyond the Rhetoric with New York Law School regarding the Community Safety Act (which sought to limit the NYPD's Stop & Frisk Policy). This was one of the few forums about the CSA that had representatives from both sides of the issue – people who supported Stop & Frisk and those who did not.

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Featured Event

Women on the Move 2014 Program
Negotiating Your Own Value –
Tips From the Front Line

October 8, 2014 from 1:00 – 5:00 p.m.

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Join NYSBA's online Women's Community!

The NYSBA online Women's Community provides a private forum for dialogue, knowledge sharing and networking among women lawyers.

Visit www.nysba.org/howdoI for a series of short videos on getting started.

What Do You Think About...?

by Connie Schin

In April, the Association asked a sample of women attorneys about their use of mobile devices and applications.

The vast majority of respondents used at least one mobile device. In fact, many attorneys wrote that they used more than one device. Among the mobile users, 64% use iPhones and/or iPads; Android use makes up another 17%.

Of these, more than 88%, used apps on their devices to help them practice law and with the office-related needs of their practices.

Two of the most-mentioned law-related apps were WestlawNext and the Lexis apps. Other noted legal apps include:

- eCourts, the app for the New York State Unified Court System
- DroidLaw, for federal and state law and regulations
- Fastcase
- NYLJ, the app for the New York Law Journal
- New York CPLR, New York Civil Practice Laws & Rules
- NY SCPA 2014, Surrogate's Court Procedure Act
- NY Estates, Powers and Trusts Law 2014
- LawBill, assisting attorneys with recording and billing
- PDA Wizard, developer of law enforcement reference apps
- New York Family Court Act; and
- Rulebook, federal and state laws, as well as The Bluebook

Regarding office-related apps, respondents also reported using Clio, a cloud-based law practice management software as well as the following more general types of non-legal office apps:

- a variety of email programs including Quickoffice, Outlook.com, the app for Microsoft Outlook, Gmail and Yahoo
- mobile/remote access platforms such as MobileIron's Mobile@work app, LogMeIn, PocketCloud and Citrix Receiver

- document or cloud storage solutions such as Dropbox, Docs To Go, WD2Go, Disaster Recovery Log and SugarSync
- PDF readers such as Adobe Reader, Faster Scan or Genius Scan; banking/billing (QuickBooks, FreshBooks, Mint, Chase Mobile)
- Diigo, a knowledge management multi-tool;
- note taking apps such as Evernote and UPAD
- Communication apps such as slydial, GoToMeeting, Skype, Google Voice, QQ.

And because there is more to life than just the practice of law, respondents also use social media apps, including LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and HootSuite, a social media management app. Many everyday life apps, such as Calendar, travel apps for driving, parking, train/subway, maps, weather apps, apps for eReaders (iBooks or Kindle), and news and calculator apps.

Apps used for any other reason cover a variety of purposes such as shopping, restaurants (OpenTable, Urbanspoon, and Starbucks), fitness and wellness, entertainment (movies), BabyConnect, Real Estate (Zillow), medical, camera, music, games, and passcode keepers. ∞

What do you think? If you are a NYSBA member who wants to discuss this in our private online professional community, go to www.nysba.org/WomensCommunity and click on the relevant link. If you need help logging in, just e-mail us at webmaster@nysba.org or call us at 1-800-582-2452. ∞

Connie Schin is NYSBA's Marketing Manager.

Women's Wellness

Dealing with Difficult People Doesn't Have to Be Difficult

by Patricia Spataro

An encounter with a difficult person can leave you feeling baffled, frustrated, hurt and angry. The worst part about an encounter of this sort is the feeling of being blind-sided. The best thing that we can do to navigate these exchanges is to have a few strategies ready to implement as soon as we see the tell-tale signs of a difficult person. I can't promise that these strategies will work magically, but I can promise that trying to intervene is better than standing there feeling "caught off guard"...AGAIN!

A difficult person may exhibit characteristics such as the following:

- Treating others disrespectfully
- Managing anger and frustration inappropriately
- Judging people (often publicly, unfairly, and harshly)
- Being unwilling to compromise
- Blaming others instead of taking responsibility
- Interrupting when others are talking

A Profile in Leadership

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Q: What is a typical day at work like for you?

A. There really is no “typical” day. One of the most exciting and challenging parts of my job is that I never know what I will face in a given day. Because of this, you cannot put off what you need to do. You need to be disciplined about getting the memo done, getting the speech written; because if you put it off, the next day there could be an emergency in your district that will change the entire course of your day. For example, one recent rainy Friday morning, I woke up to learn that there was a five-alarm fire in our district at 5 a.m. As a result, all of the day’s meetings had to be canceled, and work put off so that we could be at the scene of the fire, assisting emergency workers by taking care of people who were homeless from the fire.

In addition, on certain days, the N.Y. City Council has Stated Meetings. On those days there are press conferences to prepare for, press releases to issue, and City Council caucus meetings to attend. In advance, I will prepare speaking points for Councilwoman Rose, prepare press releases regarding new bills that might be introduced at the Stated Meeting, and prepare for various caucus meetings. Each councilmember is on three different caucuses; Councilwoman Rose sits on the Progressive Caucus, the Women’s Caucus, and the Black, Latino, and Asian (“BLA”) Caucus. Councilwoman Rose also sits on the Committee on Rules, Privileges, and Elections. This Committee will also meet on Stated Meeting days— so as you can imagine, those days can be quite busy!

In addition, the budget process for the NYC Council is a very interesting and busy one. The budget process, running from January to June, starts when the Mayor presents his preliminary budget. Following its release, the Council holds oversight hearings, which go until March, on each City agency’s budget. The Council then releases its response to the preliminary budget. Subsequently, the Mayor releases his final budget in early May, triggering another round of budget hearings through early June, at which time budget negotiations begin in earnest. Councilwoman Rose was part of the City Council’s budget negotiating team this year. In addition, Councilwoman Rose is part of the City Council’s leadership as Deputy Majority Leader.

On top of this, on any given day, I have NYSBA work and obligations for the sections and committees I’m involved in, and I sit on the NYSBA Executive Committee. There are also several other organizations to which I devote my free time. For example, I am the current President of the American Association of University Women-New York State, an organization that focuses on advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.

As you can imagine, it’s a constant juggle between my many commitments and maintaining a work-life balance!

Q: What inspired you to become an attorney?

A. I was always very interested in public service, and I viewed the law as the most logical path for me to take towards helping the public good. A few personal experiences led me to determine that I wanted to become an attorney.

My mother comes from a very large and close-knit family. While growing up, we spent Sundays at grandmother’s house with all my aunts and uncles and cousins. One of my uncles, Willis Jefferson “WJ” Martin, was a lawyer, who primarily did civil rights work. My uncle experienced several challenges in his career based on his race, but he went on to have an incredible career. He was a tremendous role model for me.

In addition, after college, I worked for the Department of Energy in the Office of Hearings and Appeals, an office that, among other things, considers petitions for special redress, as well as requests for relief from certain regulatory requirements. In this position, I was surrounded by half lawyers, half MBAs. This job was a great opportunity to do real, substantive legal work and to speak with many lawyers about where they went to school, why they went to law school, and what they were doing with their law degrees. After this position, law school seemed like a natural next step.

Q: Being a mentor can change someone’s career. Have you ever mentored anyone (either formally or informally)? Can you tell us about the experience?

A. First, I must disclose that I have been very involved in the mentoring pilot project that was part of the NYSBA Section Diversity Challenge. So mentoring is incredibly important to me. As part of the Section Diversity Challenge, each section that did not already have a mentoring program was asked that leadership in those sections serve as mentors. We had 50 or so people participate, and it has been a great program so far.

On a more personal level, I have served as both a formal and informal mentor since law school. I have always found it an incredibly rewarding experience. While I was an associate at Shearman & Sterling, I served as a mentor in a program called Student Sponsor Partnership, a program that provides low-income students with a Catholic high school education. What I liked about the program was that they selected students based on potential, not necessarily on their past achievements. I have been in touch with my mentee for many years now – from the first day when we met, where she brought me flowers, through numerous program events. I proudly attended her high school graduation and was asked to stand up during her graduation as a member of her family. It has been incredibly rewarding to watch my mentee grow.

Q: What are some of the rewarding aspects of your involvement with NYSBA?

A. My experience with NYSBA has been wonderful. It has helped advance my professional career. In addition, my leadership positions in the bar association have helped develop and sharpen my political and government relations skills sets. On a personal note, I have made numerous friendships through my involvement with the bar association, and overall, my NYSBA membership has enriched my life greatly!

In this very difficult economic climate that we’re in, bar associations are of more use and value now than they have been in years. People who take the time to get engaged with at least one bar association will see a tangible benefit in their professional and personal lives.

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Women on the Move 2014 Program

Register Now!

Negotiating Your Own Value – Tips From the Front Line

As women attorneys we are asked to juggle our professional and personal lives often for less compensation than our male peers. This CLE program highlights practical skills that have helped other women attorneys successfully navigate the complicated world of negotiating their compensation in the income gender trap. Many women feel social pressures to refrain from asserting themselves in an overtly aggressive manner, yet fear that using softer language will cause them to be perceived as weak and diminish their worth. Learn the tools and tips recommended by a professional negotiator, including methods to evaluate your goals, language

selection in negotiations, and other techniques women attorneys have developed to negotiate for themselves. A panel of respected attorneys, both male and female, will explore and debate various means of negotiating, such as in person, e-mail and telephonic, negotiating with the same or different gender, whether or not your style should be tailored to your audience, as well as the ethical issues that arise in the context of negotiating your worth. Join us for an afternoon of learning on how to start the discussion and project your best self-worth when representing yourself.



Keynote speaker:

Victoria Pynchon, Esq., is the co-founder of She Negotiates Consulting and Training. Author of two books on dispute resolution, Pynchon currently focuses on closing the wage and income gap for women as a consultant, trainer and speaker. Victoria has been training lawyers and business people at UCLA Anderson School of Management, USC Pepperdine School of Law and a host of corporate venues her method of mutual benefit negotiation.



Panel discussion:

Josephine Belli, partner, Goldberg Segalla, New York City. Belli focuses her practice on regulated industries including pharmaceuticals, medical devices, cosmetics, food, wine and spirits. Belli has had a diverse legal career practicing as a law clerk to a Supreme Court judge, an associate in a law firm specializing in international business, and as in-house counsel at a global manufacturer and marketer of drugs, medical devices, cosmetics, and personal care products.



Deborah Scalise, Scalise and Hamilton, Scarsdale. Scalise focuses her practice on the representation of professionals (lawyers and judges) in professional responsibility and ethics matters and white collar criminal matters. Scalise has held the positions of Deputy Attorney General in Charge of Public Advocacy for the Westchester Region, Deputy Chief Counsel to the Departmental Disciplinary Committee for the First Judicial Department and as an Assistant District Attorney in Kings County.



Alan Harris, Alan Harris PC. Harris focuses his practice on regulatory and corporate matters for banks, thrifts, related financial institutions, and their investors. Harris spent nearly 18 years with large law firms in Houston before forming his firm in 2008.



Cara E. Greene, partner, Outten & Golden, New York City. Greene represents employees in litigation and negotiation in all areas of employment law, including executive and professional contracts and compensation. She is Co-Chair of O&G's Family Responsibilities and Disability Discrimination Practice Group. She serves on the Executive Committee of the New York State Bar Association and is an active member of the American Bar Association's Labor and Employment Law Section (Employment Rights and Ethics and Professional Responsibilities Committees).

Date: October 8, 2014 from 1:00 – 5:00 p.m. A networking reception will follow the program from 5:10 to 7 p.m.

Location: Larchmont Shore Club in Larchmont, NY.

Online registration at www.nysba.org/2014WomenontheMove

Program participants earn 4.0 MCLE Credits (2.0 areas of professional practice, 1.0 skills, 1.0 ethics).

NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION
Women on the Move
Negotiating Your Own Value – Tips From the Front Line
2014 CLE Program and Networking Reception
Wednesday, October 8, 2014
CLE Program 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Networking Reception 5:10 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Approved for MCLE credit for all attorneys, including those newly admitted.
4.0 MCLE CREDITS
INCLUDES 1.0 ethics credit
Larchmont Shore Club
One Oak Bluff Avenue
Larchmont, NY 10538
www.larchmontshoreclub.org
Register Online
www.nysba.org/WomenontheMove2014
Program Co-Chairs
Linda A. Redding, Esq.
Redding & Redding, LLP
Poughkeepsie, NY
Debra Kay Rubin-Hamilton, Esq.
Hamilton Law and Mediation, PLLC
Armonk, NY
\$75 Early Registration*
Sponsored by the Committee on Women in the Law,
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2014 Women in Intellectual Property Law

The 12th Annual Women in Intellectual Property Law Program

June 11, 2014 | Arent Fox LLP, New York City

In an ongoing effort to connect women in the Intellectual Property Law field, the NYSBA Intellectual Property Section held the 12th annual Women in IP event on June 11, 2014 in New York City, hosted by Arent Fox LLP.

Program Chair Joyce Creidy commenced the program by highlighting several women's issues in the legal profession and raising the topic of whether women should 'lean in' their careers, using the term popularized by Sheryl Sandberg in her book, "Lean In." During the panel discussion, panelists shared their experiences as women in the legal field and how their business strategies and choices brought them success. The panel included Marylee Jenkins, partner at Arent Fox LLP; Jane Chuang, partner at Lee Anav Chung White & Kim LLP; Paula T. Calhoun, senior vice president and general counsel at Music Choice; and Deborah Robinson, vice president of Viacom Media Networks' Anti-Piracy department.

For Jenkins, choosing not to reject certain assignments during her career led to unexpected opportunities. In her early days, she revealed that women associates had misgivings about whether one could wear pantsuits, over the more traditional suit and skirt attire. The legal path can be a roller coaster ride, Chuang said; for her, accepting assignments in unfamiliar areas of the law was rewarding. She also expressed appreciation of her firm's flex-



ibility during her pregnancy and as a working mother. Calhoun started out as an associate during a time when female associates were few and female partners were nonexistent. She had no initial plan to become an Intellectual Property lawyer and neither did



she map out her career goals. Her story showed how one's path can develop quite successfully through a willingness to accept opportunities as they arise. She stressed the importance of creating great business relationships and how important female mentoring in the legal profession was for her. On the other hand, Robinson planned her every career move. Her advice was to find one's passion before creating a plan and then execute that plan diligently. She imparted that whatever the career choice, it's important to be



happy with your work and to maintain a positive outlook. Even with their various career strategies and experiences, all of the panelists noted the importance of networking and memberships in associations as a valuable part of a successful legal profession.

The Women in IP Law Program included an hour-long reception before the program to allow attendees to network with each other and with the panelist speakers. Additional networking opportunities, along with dessert and coffee, followed the program. ☺

-by Olumiseun "Ola" Ogunye, Esq.

Rainmaking Tips for Your Next Event

By Earamichia Brown, Esq.

With the fall's calendar of events, gatherings, golf outings, wine tastings, etc., it's good to have a game plan for creating rainmaking opportunities. Remember, the goal of rainmaking is to form relationships and gain trust. So, keep in mind these tips for your next event.

1. Do your homework.

Is there anyone that you have wanted to meet who may be in attendance? What companies, firms and organizations are sponsoring the event? Think about your goals. Do you want to build a book or business, do you want to make a networking connection to develop a relationship, or do you simply want to expand your network? Now decide how many people you hope to connect with, and have your talking points ready.

2. Ask Relevant Questions

Rainmaking is about connecting with people and developing opportunities where they will "Know You, Like You, and Trust You." (I call it "KLT.") If you don't achieve KLT, then you won't succeed in achieving your rainmaking goals. So make sure you ask good questions about issues that are important to the individual. For instance, if it is a potential client, make sure you ask about his/her legal issues or find out his/her motivation for hiring lawyers. What's unique about the person's market or business area? If you are meeting people to expand your network, then ask questions geared to the identification of commonalities, likes, and/or dislikes. Your goal is to identify genuine mutual interests and/or commonalities to help develop a relationship based on KLT.

3. Don't monopolize anyone's time

Have your 30-second spiel ready. It should be a single sentence that illustrates something that you have recently worked on, but also demonstrates your area of expertise. Then make your introduction, and identify any commonalities that exist. If you have something in common, find out how you can be of value to the person. Most importantly, be an active listener. Make a genuine offer to help, obtain contact information, and then move on to the next person. Remember your first goal is to leave with two or three genuine connections, because quality contacts are more important than collecting a bunch of business cards. Also, remember to follow up with them.

Earamichia Brown, Esq. is an investigative counsel at the New York State Office of the Inspector General. She is a co-chair of NYSBA's Task Force on Gun Violence, a member of the Membership Committee, and a member of the New York Bar Foundation Board. ∞

Why Rainmaking Matters

Only 17 percent of equity partners at the nation's top 200 largest law firms are women, despite almost three decades of graduating law classes with at least 40% women, according to the 8th annual NAWL National Survey on the Retention and Promotion of Women in Law Firms. Women make up about half of associates (47%), but almost two-thirds, or 64%, of staff attorneys, the lowest paying attorney positions at the surveyed firms. In January, the report's author, Stephanie Scharff, previewed these research findings at the Association's Committee on Women in the Law's 2014 Annual Meeting program, "Show Me the Money: Can We Close the Gender Equity Gap?"

"This year's results reinforce that women in private practice continue to face barriers to reaching the highest positions in their firms – as equity partners and members of governance committees," said Scharf, report author, past president of The National Association of Women Lawyers Foundation and partner at Scharf Banks Marmor LLC.

Rainmaking is a critical skill for women to master in order to advance in their law firm careers and have control over their practices and lives, wrote NAWL President Deborah Froling. It is assumed that one will be a good lawyer. Today success, yielding higher compensation and more opportunities for leadership, is tied to bringing in clients and money for an attorney's firm, she wrote.

Froling learned how to be a rainmaker out of necessity. As an eighth-year associate, she left a large law firm to start a practice as counsel at another firm and had to bring in clients for the first time in her career. "It was an eye-opening experience to start from scratch and I just started working my network – it took a long time to get up and running," she wrote. "It also requires constant care and feeding, but I've had some measure of success. It doesn't happen overnight but if women are persistent and focused on rainmaking, they can become successful."

For the full NAWL report, please visit www.nawl.org.

– Robyn Ryan, Esq.

This newsletter is produced by the New York State Bar Association in conjunction with its Committee on Women in the Law and Membership Committee. Thank you to the committee members who serve on the newsletter's editorial content board: Sarah Gold, Claire Gutekunst, Lillian Moy, and Ferve Ozturk.

Practicing Law, Practically

Navigating New York State Courts 101

by Rebecca A. Slezak, Esq.

A common saying is that the only thing “unified” in the New York State Unified Court System is the name. Successfully navigating New York courts requires knowing each court’s *local* rules and procedures. Fortunately, each courthouse is staffed with non-judicial employees who are intimately familiar with these rules and procedures because they handle the voluminous paperwork that is involved with every case. These employees, who work behind the scenes, can be sources of a wealth of knowledge for attorneys.

1. Get the right information to reduce confusion and delay.

A. Supreme Court

In New York State Supreme Court, to have a judge assigned to your case you are required to file a “request for judicial intervention” (“RJI”) form. The pool of justices that may be assigned is composed of all of the justices in the entire judicial district, not just those in the county in which you filed the action. On occasion, you may have to appear in the chambers of an assigned judge, whose chambers are in a county other than the county where the matter is pending. Given that many of New York’s 13 judicial districts cover an expansive area, knowing the location of the assigned judge’s chambers is critical. Most judges may be understanding regarding a “newbie” mistake, but not for lawyers who make a habit of carelessness in learning the location of the assigned judge’s chambers.

In some districts, the assigned justice only handles the pre-trial conferences, motions and other pre-trial issues that arise. A different judge may serve as your case’s trial judge. You should call the court clerk’s office to determine how assignments are done. Once you know what to expect, you can advise your clients so that they are not confused by the system.

B. County Court, Family Court, and Surrogate’s Court

In New York’s county-level courts, the number of judges is more limited. Typically, there is one judge handling criminal matters, one for family court and sometimes a third handling surrogate matters. As a result, when you are retained to represent a client in one of these courts, in most cases, the judge will be pre-determined and not assigned from a pool. Only if a conflict arises would you be assigned to a different county-level judge. Additionally, the judge assigned to a county-level court matter generally will handle all aspects of the case, from start to finish.

2. Know your assigned judge.

Every judge handles the scheduling of motions and conferences differently. It is thus important to contact the court clerk’s office to determine whether there are particular days that motions are heard and whether oral arguments are required, or only allowed by permission. Often, the clerk’s office is able to advise whether you can select the return date on the motion, or whether date and time must be scheduled by the judge’s staff in chambers. If you must request oral arguments, you also will need to know how such requests are

made and granted. Again, the clerk’s office will be able to answer these questions. If not, you will need to call and speak to the judge’s secretary or his or her confidential law clerk. Please note that the confidential law clerks who are assigned to judges are referred to as “law clerks,” “court attorneys,” even, less frequently, “law secretaries,” depending on which court is handling your matter.

In Family Court and Surrogate’s Court (handling probate and estate matters and adoptions), specific forms generally are required. Calling the clerk’s office will help you determine which forms you need for the type of proceeding you plan to initiate. Not using the proper forms can lead to requests for amended forms, and you may not be able to charge a client for your mistake.

There are also court-specific procedures for requesting adjournments of court conferences and hearings. Some judges require you to confer with opposing counsel and advise if the request is on consent. Additionally, do not assume that all requests are granted. Remind yourself to confirm that the adjournment request has been granted otherwise, you may find yourself having to answer an uncomfortable telephone call from a court employee asking where you are and why you are not present at the scheduled appearance.

You should also determine whether clients are required to appear or if their appearances are excused for certain matters. Remember that clients lose time from work when they appear in court, and they may get upset at you and the court system if they find out that they did not need to be present. Simply calling ahead to the judge’s chambers is a great way not only to build a rapport with the staff, but also to be able to properly advise your client.

3. Check in on your arrival to court.

Call the clerk’s office prior to your appearance to determine where the matter will be heard and how and where to note your appearance when you arrive. Making sure that the right people know that you are present at court is essential. Nothing is more embarrassing than for your matter to be called and handled while you are standing in a waiting room or hallway. Some courts require you to check in with security personnel, while others have court attendants who are assigned to specific judges. If all else fails, check in with the judge’s secretary. Arrive early so that you can make sure to notify the appropriate person in a timely fashion.

In sum, navigating New York state courts effectively requires adherence to local rules and procedures and timely, respectful communication with court personnel. Following these guidelines can yield great benefits in your relationships with clients and the court. ∞

Rebecca A. Slezak, Esq. Family Court Associate Court Attorney, Montgomery County Family Court, is a former law firm associate, public defender and prosecutor. She is NYSBA’s vice-president for the Fourth District.

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Q: As someone who maintains a very busy schedule, what is your advice for all of us juggling professional and personal commitments?

A. My primary advice is to be realistic. Do not take on commitments that you do not believe you can follow through. If you are going to take on a professional commitment or something new at work – only do so if you know you can do it well. Do not merely take on obligations to pad your resume if you do not under-

stand the mission of the organization or the goal you are trying to achieve. Do not be afraid to ask for help when you need it. Finally, it is important that your family understands and is on board with your goals. The support of your family and those around you is essential to succeeding in what you aim to do. ∞

Erica Weisgerber, Esq. is an associate in the Litigation Department of Debevoise & Plimpton.

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The best strategies, in my opinion, for dealing with a difficult person include the following:

1. Don't take the difficult person's behavior personally; this behavior is much more about who they are as a person, than about you. This is hard to do, but you are most likely not the only person that he/she treats this way.
2. Stand your ground by not letting the difficult person get the best of you. Two wrongs don't make a right. If you allow someone to drive you to behave badly, you may feel unhappy about losing control. You might also erroneously be viewed as the problem.
3. Seek clarification by asking questions. This can help you to stay focused on the discussion instead of focusing on emotions that may be welling up inside you.
4. Keep your emotions in check by trying not to judge the person. Until you've walked in the person's shoes, you don't know what stress he or she is experiencing.

5. Validate the emotions of anger and frustration that are most likely at the heart of the person's bad behaviors. Validating emotions isn't saying that you are condoning bad behavior. Showing compassion can sometimes be just the thing that helps bring a conversation to a better place. If validating doesn't have a positive effect, then you may need to move to tip # 6.
6. If these attempts fail to change the tone of the conversation, calmly and politely let the person know that you need to end the conversation.

Maybe you'll have some luck with these strategies. If not, don't give up hope. Consider confiding in someone that you trust to explore other options. Keep in mind that NYSBA's Lawyer Assistance Program is available as a confidential resource for dealing with difficult people and other challenges. Call us at 1-800-255-0569 for assistance. ∞

Patricia Spataro is the director of NYSBA's Lawyer Assistance Program.

www.nysba.org/NYSBAWomensResources

NYSBA welcomes your input on identifying the needs of women attorneys that might not be addressed through existing membership benefits. To share ideas or comments, please contact Robyn Ryan, Esq., executive services counsel, at rryan@nysba.org or 518/487-5560.