

FEAR FACTOR



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WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU WERE SCARED?

If you ask my mom, I was the kid who didn't stray too far from her side. I've fortunately outgrown my childhood terrors of the dark, large dogs, and strangers. But, I've found that now my anxieties are largely centered on health, family, or a combination of the two. Unlike the fears of my youth, which would surface only when I was directly confronted with them, my concerns today are always there, in the back of mind, lingering. Maybe it's because I worry, or perhaps it's because I am a mom.

As a parent to three little ones, I know I am needed. (And currently *wanted*, which is always nice, especially since I've been told that might change when the teenage years hit!) I cannot afford to be taken out of commission.

Not too long ago, my husband and I went to Santa Fe and decided we would spend a few days on the ski slopes. Neither one of us had been skiing since high school, but we had fond memories of traversing down the mountains in Colorado and West Virginia and were excited to do the same in New Mexico. Then we arrived.

An immediate rush of fear washed over me. I panicked as my internal dialogue started screaming. *Would my ski legs return? If I fell, how bad would it hurt? If I miraculously didn't fall, were my thighs prepared for such an adventure? And, Boy—doesn't that green run look steep?*

My pride won. Not wanting to look scared, I didn't voice my concerns, and I joined my husband on the ski lift up what seemed like the tallest mountain.

Long story short, my apprehension was quickly replaced with joy as I cautiously but successfully made my way down the mountain. I found it beneficial to avoid moguls, trees, and people; I couldn't come home with any broken bones! Later, as my husband and I were rehashing the day, I was surprised to learn that his internal dialogue sounded a lot like mine.

All too often we let our trepidations decide which path we take. And we don't voice our concerns because we don't want to appear weak. I know many young lawyers who have done just that. I'm one of them. It is amazing how crippling fear can be. I've seen many succumb to it with regard to work-life balance issues. I'm one of them, too. I remember how nervous I was to tell my firm that I wanted to change practice areas ... or that I was pregnant. Looking back at the conversations makes me laugh. I was *so* scared that they would not welcome my news and that the result might hurt. I was pleasantly surprised at how understanding and accommodating they were. It was just a matter of me facing my fears and asking.

I've found that even though fear can be crippling, it also can be a great motivator. TYLA recently created the blog *Lawyers Who Lunch*, available at tyla.org, to address work-life balance questions, concerns, and apprehensions that many attorneys face. The hope is to start a discussion with attorneys across Texas and beyond so we can learn from and motivate each other as we cautiously make our way through our legal careers. Even when the view seems pretty steep, TYLA doesn't want your fear to take you out of commission. You are too important. You are needed and wanted.

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