

Hello and thank you so much for downloading this PDF. It always warms my heart to know that there are more lawyers out there who want to work with those going through a separation in as constructive way as possible.



Hi, I'm Louisa.

When I was working as a solicitor, I actually didn't feel like learning anything new because I was so fed up and stressed out that I had no capacity to take on anything else. I felt like my heart wasn't in my work and I was always playing catch up with my home life. I also felt like I wasn't being the best parent I could and that was the big thing that was really crippling me.

In 2013 I decided that it had to be better to try things and fail than to never know. I resigned from my position as a solicitor and shortly after that set up LKW Family Mediation. I am still here, so something must have gone right! 😊 Shortly after this I went to Resolution's DR conference, and in the bar one evening there was an open and honest conversation (where else do lawyers have honest conversations!) I was really shocked by how many lawyers candidly admitted that they were burnt out, fed up and tired of not doing more DR work because that was what really lit them up.

Since then I have come to realise that I am in a fortunate position of having taken the leap to earn my income purely from dispute resolution and I really want to share the joy that comes from that with others. Don't get me wrong, there have been many challenges in running my own business, but every day I appreciate how much I love my work and that I am master of my own working life. That is something I love to share with others.

If you are one of those lawyers (solicitor, Legal executive, Paralegal – it doesn't matter) that would dearly love to feel more joyous about your work and to feel like you are working more constructively, then I imagine you have thought about either doing more of the dispute resolution work you're qualified to do; or wondered how in the heck you can persuade the partners of your firm that there's a business case for you to qualify as a mediator, collaborative lawyer, arbitrator – or maybe you even have another dream?

These are the top 5 tips I have to help you achieve that aim:

TIP 1

DECIDE THAT THIS IS WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO DO.

That might sound a bit basic or a bit abstract, but honestly, too many people think of this as something they would like to do in the future or put it on the "things that would be awesome if they happened to me list". This is unlikely to drop into your life. You have to make it happen and to do that you need to make a plan. The first step of planning is to decide that you're going to do this. Oh, and write it down because that makes it much more likely to happen. If you're like me this would be a great opportunity to buy a really nice new notebook with a pretty cover to make plans in. But you might favour a google doc or a techie note. It doesn't matter. Just WRITE IT DOWN.

TIP 2

START MAKING A PLAN.

If you are already qualified in one form of dispute resolution and you want to do more of that work, then more people need to know that you do this work. So, start telling everyone. Tell colleagues and tell clients. Always tell clients. Don't assume someone doesn't want that process. They may just feel there is only one way. Or even if they are off to court their friend or cousin might be having a much more amicable separation. If you're not already qualified, then you'll need a plan to make this happen. Do you have an appraisal coming up? Mention it. Can you put together a business case for doing this training? Can you pay for it yourself? Can you agree that it will be paid for by two years' training budget and that you will do other training that is free (workshops put on by firms for marketing purposes, reading, mutual training between colleagues). If you want to do this make a plan for it to happen – even if it will take you 2, 3 or 5 years.

TIP 3

GET YOURSELF NOTICED. BE VISIBLE.

Make sure people know you. Raising your profile will help get you known. Make your values clear in everything you do. Be evangelical about dispute resolution. Be visible in your local area by attending events. Talk to as many people as possible. Use social media. There are so many family practitioners on Twitter discussing the issues of the day. Get in on conversations. Listen and absorb and share your views. This can be great if you have constraints on how many events you can attend. I like to think of twitter as networking in your pyjamas on your sofa. You could even join a local group like a POD or one of Resolution's committees. Make contacts and use them. If you haven't updated your LinkedIn profile for a while, then now would be a great time to dust that off.

TIP 4

DEAL WITH YOUR FEARS.

With stepping up into being more visible, or working differently, lots of fears can come up. There can be imposter syndrome where you feel like a fraud. There can be lots of worry about others thinking "who do they think they are". Sometimes we don't realise what old stories we are carrying until we do something that's out of our comfort zone and our subconscious gives us a hefty kick to get in the safe zone again. Coaching or counselling can be very helpful if you feel you are struggling with fears. Fears can be a major barrier in taking that first step, and deciding that this is a change you are GOING to make.

TIP 5

ASK FOR HELP. REACH OUT.

This can again trigger lots of unpleasant emotions because not all of us utilise our 'asking for help' muscle very much. In fact, for some people it's so out of character that you may not even feel it is a muscle anymore. Trust me I have very definitely been a part of that school. But I can also honestly tell you, that when I set up my mediation practice I was blown away and humbled by how many people were prepared to offer their time, support and encouragement to me. That's partly why I want to help and support other lawyers to make this jump because I'd like to give back what was given me, and also, because I really enjoy mentoring others. I'm a PPC to other mediators. It's what we do). So, ask people. If they say no don't ask again but you might be surprised how many people say yes.

I am so excited for you.

I know how game changing it is to move from being fed up and depressed into working in a way that actually makes you want to get up on a Monday morning. Getting a buzz from a good day's work, knowing you have made a difference in people's lives is simply magic.

How can I help you?

I am always willing to answer an email or point you in the direction of assistance so please always get in touch. I also run training events and workshops for lawyers that are all designed to help you develop skills and plans to work in a way that lights you up a bit more.

You can have a look at the [training program](#) to find out about forthcoming events, and please follow LKW Family Mediation via your favourite social media channel (or all of them!):



If you have found this useful then please encourage others to check out the social media pages or to sign up to our mailing list. I honestly want to share the 'know how' of a more rewarding way of working with anyone who is interested.

Thanks, and good luck,

Louisa



LKW Family Mediation The Atrium, Curtis Road, Dorking, Surrey RH4 1XA

t 01306 646690 **e** louisa@lkwfamilymediation.co.uk **w** lkwfamilymediation.co.uk