



WINNING IN YOUR OWN COURT

10 Laws for a Successful Career Without Burning Out or Selling Out

by [Dena Lefkowitz](#)

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Lawyers tired of the rat race should take responsibility for crafting a more fulfilling career, according to this spirited self-help book.

Lefkowitz, an attorney and career coach, aims her advice mainly at other lawyers who feel as if they're stuck in a rut, endlessly overworked, underpaid, and trapped by law school debt or family obligations. All is not lost, she contends, if readers are willing to shape their careers by "design" rather than by "default." She lays out 10 principles of successful career change that can help readers assess their circumstances and prospects, collect data to use in making choices, let go of past decisions that aren't working instead of doubling down on them, get along with colleagues, bring in more revenue that will boost their clout within their firms, shift their mindsets from pessimism and caution to hopefulness and confidence, and gird themselves for the risk and discomfort that come with making major career changes. Lefkowitz illustrates these principles with anecdotes from her coaching practice, wherein she gently coaxes clients past their neurotic road-blocking and toward career breakthroughs in which they demand free time to have a life, refuse thankless administrative work so they can increase billable hours, claim credit due, reach for a partnership, take a pay cut and leave their soulless corporate firm to work at a nonprofit that defends people against the powerful, or jump off the legal hamster wheel altogether to pursue the dream of teaching. Lefkowitz knows this terrain well—"I've experienced the pounding heart and sweaty palms at the utterance of two words by a judge, 'Ms. Lefkowitz?'"—and writes about it in vivid, earthy prose. (" 'So,' I asked Marjorie, 'what exactly makes you feel so loyal to these douchebags?' ") Her advice is as straight to the point as a well-written legal brief—"dread, sadness, or crying at the thought of going to work" is a sure sign that a change is needed—and sometimes pithily aphoristic. ("Here's the thing about people pleasing. It's never enough....If you can't say no, you will find yourself buried in a pile of yesses.") Lawyers in particular will appreciate the author's lessons, but others will glean important insights as well.

A useful, reassuring guide to midcareer course correcting for attorneys.