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Law & Reorder: Legal Industry Solutions for Restructure, Retention, Promotion and Work/Life Balance

By Deborah Epstein Henry (Chicago, IL: ABA, 2010). 357 pgs. \$29.95. Order, www.ababooks.org.

Reviewed by Kari Niesen-LaScala

Whether you are seeking a better work-life balance or looking to come back to the legal field after an extended leave, this book, written by a Yale law school graduate and mother of three, may help you in your journey.

In part I, entitled "Structural Solutions for Legal Employers," the author begins her discussion of her main theme: creating an atmosphere in which there is work-life balance will benefit both firms (employers) and their attorneys. Some reasons include the following: the high attrition associated with burnout is costly for firms when they have to hire replacement attorneys; high billable rates and hours make fees unpredictable for clients, which may cause them to look elsewhere for representation, especially considering evolving technology and current economic conditions; if lawyers have more time to be engaged in their communities, they may help generate more business for their firms; and a good working environment helps firms attract talented lawyers.

The author argues that employers should take steps to ensure that employees who are seeking work-life balance are not stigmatized by assumptions that they are less ambitious or talented and to allow qualified employees to continue on a partnership track (even if that track is longer for them than for other employees). The author repeatedly notes that work-life balance issues should be considered relevant to all employees, not just to mothers, to help alleviate any negativity associated with them.

The book lays out many ways in which employers can create work-life balance while still keeping an eye on the employer's bottom line: allowing attorneys to work reduced hours, work from home, or job share or hiring temporary attorneys.

Part II, entitled "Advice for Lawyers and Law Students," gives tips on such things as when to announce a pregnancy, how to prepare for maternity leave, and how to prepare when coming back to work, including setting up effective childcare arrangements. The book provides detailed tips to lawyers who have decided to work reduced hours as to what they should do to make sure they remain key players at work, as well as offering time-management ideas and advice for lawyers who have been laid off or who are trying to reenter the workforce after an extended leave.

The author is clearly passionate and knowledgeable on this subject and tries to dispel the notion that some of her suggestions are too idealistic. A notes section provides additional relevant reading, and the "Cheat Sheet" will help women lawyers evaluate potential employers. Overall, the book is an interesting read for lawyers craving more balance in their work and home lives.

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