

Alexis Robertson:

Welcome to The Path and the Practice, a podcast dedicated to sharing the professional origin stories of the attorneys at Foley and Lardner, LLP, a full service law firm with over 1,000 lawyers in 24 offices across the US and abroad. I'm your host, Alexis Robertson, Director of Diversity and Inclusion at Foley.

Alexis Robertson:

In each episode of this podcast, you'll hear me interview a different Foley attorney through our one-on-one candid conversations. You'll learn about each guest's unique background, path to law school, and path to Foley and Lardner. Essentially, you'll hear the stories you won't find on their professional bio, stories of obstacles and triumphs with some funny moments in between. And of course, you'll learn a bit about their practice. Now let's get to the episode.

Alexis Robertson:

Hello and welcome back to the podcast. In this episode of The Path and The Practice, I speak with Jack Lord. Jack is a partner in the Labor and Employment group of Foley's Miami office. This is an interesting episode because we spend more time talking about the practice than the path. As you'll hear, Jack has been practicing at Foley and Lardner for the past 25 years. Jack spent some time reflecting on what it was like to be a junior associate during the mid to late '90s when a number of new labor unemployment laws were being passed and what a busy time it was in L&E.

Alexis Robertson:

Jack also reflects on what has been like to be an out gay man in a law firm and the progress that he's seen the profession make in terms of LGBT rights. Finally, I get Jack to open up a bit about his yoga practice. Jack is a devotee of Ashtanga yoga. He shares about that and he comments on why it's so important for attorneys to make sure to focus on their wellbeing. I hope you enjoy the conversation.

Alexis Robertson:

Hi, Jack. Welcome to the podcast.

Jack Lord:

Thank you, Alexis. How are you?

Alexis Robertson:

I am great. I'm so happy to have you here. I know we were just taking a moment to chat before we started the recording, but I just said what I'd like to have you do is give everyone your quick,

professional summary, that summary you give when you are at a professional event or you're on a panel and you have that moment to introduce yourself, professional. How do you do that?

Jack Lord:

I tell folks that I'm a labor and employment attorney for companies. I have to stress that part because they hear labor and employment and they want to jump right to their own employment things. So I say, "I'm a labor and employment attorney for companies," and to emphasize that, I say, "I'm a partner at a corporate law firm, and we assist companies, we defend claims. So I do actual litigation work, but I also counsel companies in their labor relations and employee relations issues."

Alexis Robertson:

I really love how you just described that. I can tell it's from a lot of experience back to the "Can you help me with my issue at work?" So-

Jack Lord:

Yep.

Alexis Robertson:

[crosstalk 00:03:08] at a law firm. That's hysterical. Thank you so much for that. And one of the reasons I wanted you to share that is because what I want to do is walk up to how you got here, how it is you became a labor and employment lawyer for companies, and then I will say, as someone who's been a partner at Foley and Lardner for 25 years, we're also going to spend more time on the practice part. I know this podcast is called The Path and The Practice. This is one where I think we're going to talk a little bit more about the practice, but I would love to start with where are you from? Where did you grow up?

Jack Lord:

I was born in Orlando, Florida just before the mouse opened his house there. So grew up in a city that grew around me. Then I went to the University of Florida, undergrad. So Gainesville is not too, too far. A couple hours north of Orlando, and then went to Duke Law School. And in between, I lived in DC. And when I came back to Foley, I graduated law school in 1994. So I started at Foley's Orlando office. At the time the firm was saying, "We're going to get a Miami office soon," and that didn't happen too soon. But when it did happen, I came down here to Miami.

Alexis Robertson:

So you quickly went to Miami, or rather, when you got a chance to, and I'm actually going to unpack this a little bit. One, because you did refer to Disney and Orlando before Disney, and I'm actually a big fan of Disney world. So I just have to ask, do you have memories of watching this grow around you as you were growing up?

Jack Lord:

Well, okay. So technically I was born before it opened, but it opened not too long after I [crosstalk 00:04:44]. So I was an infant and able to go to Disney early on as a child. Disney itself, the property, is pretty far from where I grew up. So that's something people think about, I grew up looking at the Magic Kingdom, and it's not true. It's almost an hour to get to the actual Magic Kingdom itself from where I lived. I lived in a suburb just north of Orlando.

Alexis Robertson:

That's interesting. I'm sorry. I just had to ask. Well, all right. So you covered college. You jumped to law school. Did you know you wanted to be a lawyer? When was that seed planted?

Jack Lord:

When I was undergrad, I was an English major, which I knew right from the get-go, probably from an AP English teacher, and I just knew I loved English. I wanted to keep studying it, and I did waver a little while, did I want to continue to get my PhD and teach or law school, but I landed on law school pretty early on in undergrad.

Alexis Robertson:

And I always mentioned this, I look everybody up on LinkedIn. That's just how I work. Did you apply to law school straight, like while still an undergrad and you went straight through, or was there any time in between those two?

Jack Lord:

So I graduated undergrad early, so I did it in three and a half years, and therefore I had that gap, right? So about an eight-month gap. So in between, I did move to Washington DC, I did an internship with a congressman, and I also worked at Dulles airport.

Alexis Robertson:

That's really interesting. I have to ask, what did you do at the airport?

Jack Lord:

I worked for a contractor. I was mostly a passenger service agent. So checking people in. Ladecco was the airline. It was a Chilean airline. It's LAN, now. So I speak Spanish and help check people into their flight to Santiago.

Alexis Robertson:

Well, now I have to ask. Did you learn Spanish in school? How was it that you became Spanish speaking?

Jack Lord:

Yes. Besides an English major, I was a Spanish minor and always loved Spanish. Yeah, I did go to Spain, undergrad, studied over there and actually working at Ladecco was really ... It cemented me being able to speak Spanish, and it comes in handy everyday here in Miami.

Alexis Robertson:

I can only imagine. Right. Then you moved to Miami and it works out quite well.

Jack Lord:

Yes.

Alexis Robertson:

Okay. So you go to law school. Now, there may be some highlights to share from law school, but I am interested to jump to how Foley and Lardner, why Foley and Lardner?

Jack Lord:

I guess I knew I was going to come back to Orlando. I thought about some other cities, even Miami, a little bit, but I landed on coming back to Orlando where my family was at the time ... Well, where they still are. There's not that many national law firms. There's about four or five. I was a summer associate in my first year at Foley, and then second summer, I split between Foley and another local Orlando headquartered law firm. Gray Robinson it's called, and I liked the national practice and I felt good. I do remember in my first summer at Foley, going up to Summer Fest, I think it's called, in Milwaukee.

Alexis Robertson:

That's right.

Jack Lord:

First off, I was freezing, even though it was June, and we went to a baseball game and I had to go buy a long sleeve. Literally, it was in the 50s.

Alexis Robertson:

I believe you. I'm from Milwaukee. I grew up there. I was there, probably, that 94. So ...

Jack Lord:

Yeah, I couldn't believe they called it Summer Fest and it was in the 50s, but during that weekend with summer associates from across the country, I remember we had a training on harassment and anti-discrimination issues, and they did not mention sexual orientation, and I brought that up with the summer coordinator. I remember she was a partner in the Jacksonville office, and it quickly changed. There was no pushback on changing it, but it did surprise me that it wasn't in there. But also, I did appreciate that once I brought it to somebody's attention, it was fixed quickly.

Alexis Robertson:

Now, I know why that would be something you would focus on, but for the listeners who aren't familiar with you and that you're co-chair of Foley's LGBTQA affinity group, and really have just been, I would say, a catalyst within the firm and within the broader movement within the profession, if you'd like to share a little bit about who you are personally and why that was so important to you and should be important to others.

Jack Lord:

Yeah. I'm a gay man, and the firm has always known that from when I was initially hired as a first-year summer associate. So being out and being able to be out was always important to me. In law school itself, I became the president of the ... Now they call them outlaw groups, but back then it was a horrible acronym, COGLLI, Committee On Gay and Lesbian Legal Issues. Very terrible name, but we did the same type of work as current outlaw groups do. Not that, frankly, I was so comfortable with that I put that on my resume, which is kind of interesting. This was, after all, the early '90s, and while people were coming out much more, professionally, it still wasn't that-

Alexis Robertson:

It's a different time.

Jack Lord:

It was a very different time. People knew at Foley that I was gay, and that was very important to me. And then when I came in the summers and then, obviously, as a first year even, I felt accepted. And so, again, that's another reason I came to Foley.

Alexis Robertson:

So I want to ask more about that, but I do want to back up and ask you how is it you decided that labor employment was the practice area for you?

Jack Lord:

So '94 is the year I graduate, and I went into general litigation. I wasn't slotted. In Orlando, we just went into general litigation. So I was doing everything, commercial litigation, construction, some bankruptcy, obviously some labor and employment, and I quickly gravitated to the labor and employment. It's definitely interesting, factually, but also it's a very cool and interesting area of the law. And the civil rights act of 1991 had been passed, obviously, just prior.

Jack Lord:

So in a lot of labor and employment, there are administrative requirements. Before you go to court, you have to file with the EEOC, for example. So a lot of those charges were making their way through the administrative process and into court. And in 1994, '95, when I'm starting to do labor and employment, there is a lot of work along with the fact that ... So that law in '91 had allowed people to get jury trials for the first time in these discrimination cases and also allowed for different damages like punitive damages and pain and suffering type damages. So it was definitely a bigger deal.

Jack Lord:

Plaintiff's attorneys were much more willing to take these cases on, right? And at the same time, they didn't know how ... Frankly, neither side knew how to value them very well. So settlements were not common. And I actually tried a ton of cases throughout the '90s and early 2000s, mostly federal jury trials, got tons experience that way, which was great. And also just it's a super fun area of the law.

Alexis Robertson:

That's amazing. That's a really interesting story that I did not appreciate. As you know, I was an employment lawyer for a little while, for about a month and a half. Not a month and a half. Sorry. A year and a half after the six years as a general commercial lawyer where I did do some employment work. But when you were saying that you got to do a ton of jury trials that early on within, it sounds like, that first, what, six to eight years, but definitely the first 10 years of your practice, that's tremendous because that's not easy to do right now in the current environment.

Jack Lord:

Yeah. And I mentioned the civil rights act had changed, but the ADA had been passed in 1990, the FMLA in 1992. So it was just an era of tons of legislation, all new. And so case law was just

brand new. There obviously had been cases, but these laws hadn't been looked at so much by the plaintiff's bar because there just, frankly, weren't that many incentives. Yes, you could get attorney's fees, but the damages weren't that great beforehand and things like that. No jury trial. So it was a much bigger deal. Really fun and constantly creating new law, helping create new law. It was really fun.

Alexis Robertson:

Wow. What an amazing time to start your career as an employment attorney. And then I do want to ask, when did you transfer from Orlando to the Miami office of Foley?

Jack Lord:

I think it's going on 10 years now. I actually bought a place in Miami Beach, and so I was going back and forth. I was married, and my husband at the time and I would come back and forth. He could work from home. And so we'd work alternating weeks. It started in Orlando and Miami, and then it became mostly Miami. And then when actually I got a divorce, then I was entirely Miami.

Alexis Robertson:

Well, and that segues back to what I wanted to ask you about with working at Foley as an out attorney. So I have read an American lawyer article about you from last year titled, I'm Not Going To Hide Who I Am: Attorney John Jack Lord, Jr. Champions LGBTQ Rights. And there's a portion in there where you share an experience of ... I'm not sure if it was a client, but someone pointing to a ring and asking if you were married and you sharing that your partner gave you this. And I was wondering if you could share that story or share more about experiences you had navigating practice as an out gay lawyer.

Jack Lord:

Yeah. So that story from that article is from the '90s. It's not too long after I had started practicing law, and the client, I actually tried a ton of cases for them, and their main HR person, Kathy, I had worked with her going on a couple of years, and my partner at the time gave me a ring. It's the '90s, so at that point, there is no marriage equality, but he had given me a ring.

Jack Lord:

So I was wearing it and Kathy asked me, "Oh, did you get married?" And I said, "Well, no," because that was not legally allowed at the time, "But my partner gave it to me," and she had a quizzical look on her face, and I didn't quite know where that would lead. It wasn't like a moment where she started then asking me a whole bunch of questions or a total connection was made, but it also was not a bad moment.

Jack Lord:

Interestingly, being out to the firm didn't mean that I was comfortable being out to all clients, and I didn't know how that would affect me as a professional, right? And depending on the reaction of somebody ... Like Kathy, it ended up not being a big deal, but I was loathe to always tell clients back then. That's not the way I mostly feel today. I will say that the closet has a really bad way of trying to pull you in periodically. No matter how long you've been around and how much experience you have, the closet will kind of whisper over my shoulder sometimes, "Hey, be careful," right? "Come back here. Come be safe in here," kind of thing.

Jack Lord:

I loathe the closet. The closet is something I think is highly, highly detrimental to LGBTQ people. I understand why it exists. I understand why people are scared, but I think that the more you can put it behind you, the more definitely you're going to be a happier person, and I also think that as a whole, for society to see that we're not willing to go back there, we're not scared, we're not [inaudible 00:16:41].

Alexis Robertson:

To change who you are, to hide who you are.

Jack Lord:

Exactly. That is an extremely important message.

Alexis Robertson:

Thank you so much for sharing that. I think it is interesting because now we're in this time that ... I have to be careful how I say this, because I realize there are still people in terms of public sentiment who disagree, but there has been this cultural shift within ... I'm not sure, maybe we'll call it the last five to 10 years, and so to reflect on what that time was like, particularly from the legal profession for people that are younger, who may not consider what it was like navigating then before it was more clear that it was mostly okay.

Alexis Robertson:

But even then, you did mention that, I don't want to call it the allure of the closet. That's not quite right. I think you said the whisper of the closet, and just to make sure I'm understanding, it's just that idea of maybe it's easier not to mention this, or maybe it's easier for me to hide a part of who I am. Is that how it can present itself?

Jack Lord:

Yes. I'm always of the mindset I'm never going to lie, but you can carefully omit certain things that might naturally you say, so it's easy enough for a client to ask you on a Monday morning, "How was your weekend? What did you do?" And then you can carefully describe it without mentioning that you were with your husband or partner. There's ways that you dance around certain things that might naturally fall out of a straight person's mouth. You would say, "Oh, my husband and my kids and I went, blah, blah, blah." And you just might say, "I went ..." and kind of not the other part.

Alexis Robertson:
Right.

Jack Lord:
And that's, again, the closet. It's still, unfortunately, there for every single gay person, I think, in America. A little bit. Yeah. No matter how out you are, I think at times, and even just the pause, it might come out of your mouth. But the pause is indicative that the closet is still there.

Alexis Robertson:
Absolutely.

Jack Lord:
Unfortunately.

Alexis Robertson:
Within diversity and inclusion, we'll often talk about just the energy it takes to essentially cover, to be something other than who you are, and there's an exercise, and maybe you've seen it done at allyship sort of presentations, but where you ask participants to turn to the person next to them and describe their weekend without using the pronoun of their partner.

Jack Lord:
Okay.

Alexis Robertson:
Right? Are they able to tell you ... Back to what you said. So for me, this weekend, my husband and I, we planted a garden, and then we did this and then we did that. So imagine me trying to explain that without ... and for someone who's never gone through that exercise, it often can be really eye-opening where they think, "It actually took a lot of my mental energy to omit that or to change it," and it gives you just a tiny little peek at how that siphons energy from people when they can't be their full self in the workplace, right?

Alexis Robertson:

Because that's energy you could've put towards your client work or whatever it may be, but just a little bit. And it may seem like it doesn't happen a lot, but it happens enough where it really takes a tremendous toll. So I appreciate you for sharing that because I think it's a dynamic that for someone who hasn't had to hide any aspect of who they are, they don't necessarily realize the toll it takes on people.

Jack Lord:

Yep, exactly. It is very-

Alexis Robertson:

It's draining.

Jack Lord:

Draining and stressful.

Alexis Robertson:

Do you find that, at this point, you're able to ... I would imagine it may be to a point where you're able without second guessing to just say what you did, or do you still find that you need to be intentional to occasionally not withhold, or how do you judge that?

Jack Lord:

I would say mostly I don't even think about it, but there are moments when I will. I'm a guardian ad litem for children, abused and neglected children, and sometimes, just in the first instances anyway, I'm sometimes not so forthcoming about the fact that I have a boyfriend. Sometimes, yeah, I check myself. It just comes up every once in a while. And I dare say it's not ever going to completely go away. When I'm in an old folks home, I might have some reason not to tell the personal assistant who's caring for me, just out of maybe some hesitation of homophobia, unfortunately.

Alexis Robertson:

Yeah, that makes sense that that would always be there. And I did mention that you are one of the co-chairs of the firm's LGBTQA Affinity Group, which I think is one of the firm's most robust affinity groups, and I would be curious if you could share a little bit about the formation and organization of that group and any other highlights that are worth sharing about it.

Jack Lord:

Yeah. So I definitely helped form it. In the '90s, we did not have full benefits parity for LGBTQ Foley employees. And I remember first asking for those in the '90s. At the time, it would've been domestic partner benefits only, right? Because there was no marriage equality. So it was somewhat progressive for organizations to, at the time, in let's say '94 and '95, give domestic partner benefits. That was not the norm.

Jack Lord:

And I do remember that I asked Foley, and the first answer was no, and I didn't like the answer. And I asked and I provided information and I checked around, and the firm did, after a couple of years. I think it took two or so, provide domestic partner benefits. This was for same-sex couples only at the time. Now we have domestic partner benefits, regardless of gender pairing, and with that big request, and it was a big request, but it was very important.

Jack Lord:

The firm also had to do some learning, just like the first time I asked just to add sexual orientation, and at the time we weren't at all focused on gender identity or expression. It just wasn't part of the vernacular as it has become, and rightfully so. After that request, I frankly don't remember where or when in time the affinity group formed, but it first started as The LGBT. And I remember a discussion about what it was going to be called because I Eileen Ridley and I were the first co-chairs and still are the co-chairs, and there was, at the time, east of the Mississippi, west of the Mississippi vernacular. And West Coast was LGBT, and East Coast was GLBT. And, obviously, LGBT has won out, and that's-

Alexis Robertson:

I have not heard GLBT. Thank you for sharing that. That's history [inaudible 00:23:21].

Jack Lord:

There's some organizations still with that because they just haven't changed their names, but it used to be that. And I just remember that. So this was, again, probably in the '90s, maybe late '90s by this point, and we formed, and over the years we've added ... I remember adding the letter Q, and that was a bit uncomfortable, even for me at the time, but that was something that the community had progressed to using that term, queer.

Jack Lord:

And then we also added allies, and that was a discussion too, because no other affinity groups within the firm had ally members. We did. There was actually some thought of not adding allies, and I think it probably was the most important thing we could have done because, for reasons I can talk about later, allies have really, really, really helped us.

Alexis Robertson:

Well, feel free, if you'd like to talk about them now, you can share a bit about that.

Jack Lord:

Sure. So allies really became important for our affinity group during the timeframe in which marriage equality was still being litigated. Highly, highly litigated. Obviously, before Obergefell, when the Supreme Court found that marriage equality is a constitutional right. There were many, many battles throughout the States, throughout the federal courts. There were, unfortunately, instances in which people were voting out my rights, putting into the state constitution that I expressly could not vote.

Jack Lord:

There was a very sad moment I had when I was a poll watcher in 2008, President Obama won at the polling place I attended, which was a predominantly African American neighborhood. He won, let's say, by 90-something percent. And then on the same ballot, which I saw the printout for, I saw that my rights were also being taken away by the people who had voted at this polling place, but because they put into the Florida constitution an amendment prohibiting same-sex marriage, and that won by nearly the same amount, and I was very disheartened by that fact.

Alexis Robertson:

No, I can completely understand why that's quite the contrast and contradictory in so many ways.

Jack Lord:

Yeah. So during this timeframe, when these constitutional amendments are being put on, obviously, there's lots of litigation, and the firm took on a representation in the Washington DC area, representing some preachers from PG County, and they were anti-marriage equality, and it came to our attention, the affinity group's attention that the firm was representing this anti-marriage equality group. Not only did it come to our attention, but it also came to the attention of national groups, national LGBT groups, like Human Rights Campaign.

Jack Lord:

And the firm got incredible pushback for this, both from us internally, and then from external sources, such as the Human Rights Campaign. There was a lot of discussion. Senior management did not readily concede that taking on a representation like this was something that the firms should not do.

Jack Lord:

Eventually, and this is where the allies come in, allies were part of our affinity group by this point, and we had very vocal and very smart allies helping us to argue our case to management that if the firm is espousing that LGBTQ people are equal, that we deserve the same rights as our straight peers, that in the workplace, we should be treated fairly, but that similarly, we should be treated fairly in society, that the firm should not be taking on a representation to do away with such a fundamental right, a fundamental constitutional right as the right to marry.

Jack Lord:

Eventually, the firm did come to a policy. It was kind of a neutrality policy where neither side was allowed to take on a representation. I'll say I wasn't completely satisfied with that because, at this point, many big law firms who we consider peers were representing pro-marriage equality.

Alexis Robertson:

They were not neutral, right.

Jack Lord:

Were not neutral. And so that made me sad, but at least we were no longer representing entities or litigants who were trying to take away my personal constitutional rights.

Alexis Robertson:

Yep. I appreciate you expanding on that and sharing that. And also, I imagine that this podcast, in addition to having, people from Foley and Lardner listening, we have the opportunity to share it with recruits or those outside of the firm, and I was just wondering, because there's a couple other things I want to hit on before we wrap up today, do you have general advice to that out or closeted LGBTQ law student who's looking at navigating a law firm career and is wondering, "Will I be welcomed?" What advice do you have for them?

Jack Lord:

Yeah. First and foremost, make sure, nowadays, it is on your resume. Unlike when I was going through the recruiting process in the early '90s and I didn't put it on, nowadays, it is so common for firms to have affinity groups like ours. It is a better work environment and a better society, frankly, for LGBTQ people now. And you just want to know. If you get dinged by a firm because you have your out law group on there, that's not a place you want to work in.

Alexis Robertson:

And you don't want to be there. That's right.

Jack Lord:

So be out on your resume. I do encourage law students to be very active with their out law or whatever similar LGBT group they have at school because you're going to get good connections that way. These are people that are going to go on to different firms and potentially become clients. Certainly, you can have good friendships this way, and then starting to become involved with LGBTQ pro bono activities. You can do that through Lambda Legal or other groups. I think that's important as well.

Alexis Robertson:

That's really, really great advice. I appreciate that. And then, as I mentioned before we started the recording, totally switching gears, but something we have to talk about, I wanted to talk about your yoga practice.

Jack Lord:

Sure.

Alexis Robertson:

And let me set this up a little bit, which is that when I first heard about this, you'd mentioned that it was something you had incorporated. I can't remember if it was in the last five to 10 years, but you'd mentioned that you realized you needed it in order to continue being the lawyer, like this hard-driving lawyer that you are. And I would just love if you could talk a bit about how you learned of it, the relationship between keeping yourself healthy so you can practice, and just the role it plays in your life.

Jack Lord:

Yeah. Something I'll start by saying is anybody who is a hard-driving professional needs to incorporate some form of exercise into your life because otherwise ... It's a profession, especially law, fraught with mental health issues, and that is truly a very solid, scientifically proven way to help balance those things out.

Jack Lord:

I had done yoga periodically over the years. Go to the gym, sometimes go to yoga classes, but Foley, actually, this is only six years back now, brought for a wellness program a yoga teacher to our Miami office. And we were doing that twice a week with her. And I got into that routine and I also realized, "Hey, this is helping. It's making me feel better physically and mentally." And so I looked up just on something online near where I live in Miami beach, and I found a yoga studio with an interesting sounding type of yoga that I'd never heard of called Ashtanga. And Ashtanga turns out to be the hardest type of yoga.

Jack Lord:

I started going there, first to supplement what was happening in the office, and then to completely replace it because Ashtanga is a practice that you do five or six days per week, alternating weeks. And it's very intense, but it fits me. It's a very structured type of practice, and it really changed my life. At the time, I had some forms of mild depression, certainly anxiety, and I had been prescribed certain medications for those. And within less than six months, I was completely off medication-

Alexis Robertson:

That's amazing.

Jack Lord:

... and haven't had to look back, fortunately. And so both depression and anxiety are issues that are very common, especially at big law, but with practicing attorneys in general. And so the yoga itself is just amazing. And I could go on and on and on. I love my yoga. I love my yoga teacher. It's such a great thing in these COVID times as well because it's something I get up and I can do immediately after getting up in the morning. I have a morning practice. It starts before the sun comes up. And so well before eight o'clock, I've already done an hour and a half to an hour and 45 minutes of yoga and it starts my day really nicely.

Alexis Robertson:

That's fantastic. I really appreciate you sharing about that. As I've I've told you, I have some relatively nerdy health and wellness leanings. So I really appreciate it when I find other people who are the same, but what you said about lawyers and the profession, and really needing to find something to balance, to help with all of the things that I think attorneys are predisposed to because of, I think, how we're wired and also sometimes what the lifestyle at a firm can be is really, really important.

Alexis Robertson:

One thing I will share that I've learned over the years is oftentimes people who are really back to the hard-driving type A, a lot of times we will decompress with extremely hard workouts. And it's interesting because I would guess that with your workout, it is intense, but intense maybe in a way that's different from, say, something like a hit training where you're going to run as fast as you can for 90 minutes. It's a different type of intensity. So I just find that really interesting, and also it's amazing that in six months you felt so different. That's remarkable.

Alexis Robertson:

The one other question I have about the practice is, in addition to the physical practice, I know yoga is a part of a much broader tradition. Are there other tenants, or is Ashtanga primarily focused on the physical movement aspect?

Jack Lord:

Well, Ashtanga itself means ... It's Sanskrit for eight limbs. So there actually are seven other limbs. The Asana is the third limb. Asana is the physical practice. So you can hear that, yes, there's a lot more to Ashtanga yoga than the Asana practice. The Asana practice, briefly, is designed to cleanse your body and make it well so that you can do the other tenants of yoga, including meditation and breathing, both of which I do incorporate into my physical Asana practice, but also outside.

Jack Lord:

So I do separate meditation. The firm even provides a tool. I use the Calm app, and I have a daily meditation practice, but actually the Asana itself is called a moving meditation, and so there's breathing and meditation going on throughout my entire practice. So, yes. Great question. There are seven other limbs, not just the Asana.

Alexis Robertson:

Well, do you remember when you first told me about it, I looked it up, and as soon as you said that I was reminded that I read about that, and actually I, too, have a meditation practice that was maybe about two and a half years ago. It's a Vedic meditation. So it's similar to transcendental.

Jack Lord:

Wow.

Alexis Robertson:

I think it's great that the firm and so many other law firms are offering those sorts of resources, but I notice we're getting close to our time, so I wanted to pause and just ask, was there anything else that we didn't cover that you'd like to share before we wrap up?

Jack Lord:

I've been rewarded. I think being able to, in addition to the co-chair leadership for the affinity group, being co-chair for the National Labor and Employment Practice Group, and what I really enjoy about it, we've always been a very close-knit group, and it's a wonderful team, but being able to co-chair it with Dan Kaplan out of the Madison office, we've really been able to focus on bringing the team even closer together.

Jack Lord:

We all work for similar goals. We want to increase the amount of clients we have, billings, numbers like that are very important, but I think you can do all that and build a huge comradery. And that has been super, super rewarding. I'm really going on. And it's back to the firm. I've been here over 25 years now for a reason, and that's because we do great, cool work, it's super challenging in a good way, sometimes not a good way, but usually a good way, and yet we also get to work with people who really care about each other. And that comes out loud and clear with something like the affinity group with our allies and the LGBTQ lawyers, how we treat each other and help each other. And then also, just outside that context with my practice group, it's an amazing feeling. It makes me really proud.

Alexis Robertson:

I also appreciate you sharing that because in my over six months or so at the firm, I've started to get a little bit of a taste of that comradery, and I can attest to the fact that it is very much there, and it is fantastic.

Alexis Robertson:

Well, Jack, thanks so much for being on the podcast. If people have questions and would like to reach out to you, what is the best way to find you?

Jack Lord:

On the Foley website, foley.com, and then type my name in, and you can see my Miami number, my email address, and please reach out.

Alexis Robertson:

Thanks so much, Jack.

Alexis Robertson:

Thank you for listening to The Path and The Practice. I hope you enjoyed the conversation and join us again next time. And if you did enjoy it, please share it. Subscribe and leave us a review because your feedback on the podcast is important to us.

Alexis Robertson:

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