



OVERCOMING THE THREE P'S: PERFECTIONISM, PEOPLE-  
PLEASING, AND PROCRASTINATION FOR WOMEN LAWYERS

**Presented by Renée Pardo Coaching LLC**

# DO YOU DO THIS?



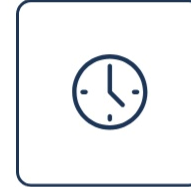
## Pursuit of Perfectionism

- Re-written an email five times before sending?
- Stayed late at office just to make sure something was "perfect" even when no one asked you to?



## Need to Please Others

- Agreed to take on extra work when your plate was already overflowing?
- Saying things on a regular basis like "ok, I'll make it work" when it is inconvenient or difficult for you to do so.



## Tendency to Procrastinate

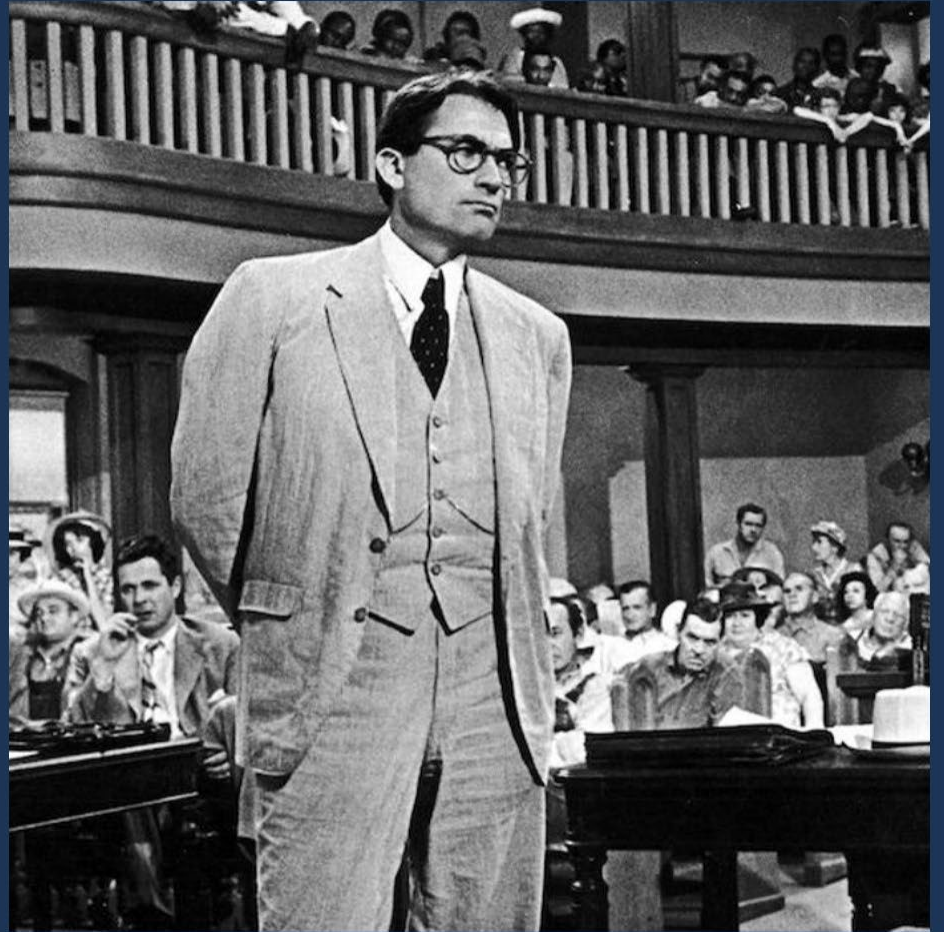
- Putting off important tasks, often due to fear of failure or a desire to achieve perfection
- Stating you need a "deadline" in order to feel compelled

THESE CHALLENGES ARE COMMON IN THE HUMAN CONDITION, BUT THEY ARE NOT SERVING YOU.!

WOMEN LAWYERS CAN BREAK FREE FROM THE CONSTRAINTS OF THE THREE P'S AND UNLOCK THEIR FULL SUCCESS AND FULFILLMENT.

# THE LEGAL SYSTEM WAS NOT DESIGNED FOR ALL

The legal profession was not designed with both men and women in mind. For generations, it was built by men, for men, with the assumption that someone else was at home handling life.



# THE BRAIN SCIENCE BEHIND THE PATTERNS

## Wired for Risk Avoidance

As lawyers, we are trained to spot problems, anticipate risks, and avoid mistakes. This serves us well in legal work, but hinders our confidence, risk-taking, and ability to step forward.

## Conditioned for Agreeability

Women are conditioned from childhood to be agreeable, not upset anyone, and avoid taking up too much space. This makes us hesitant to advocate for ourselves and our needs.

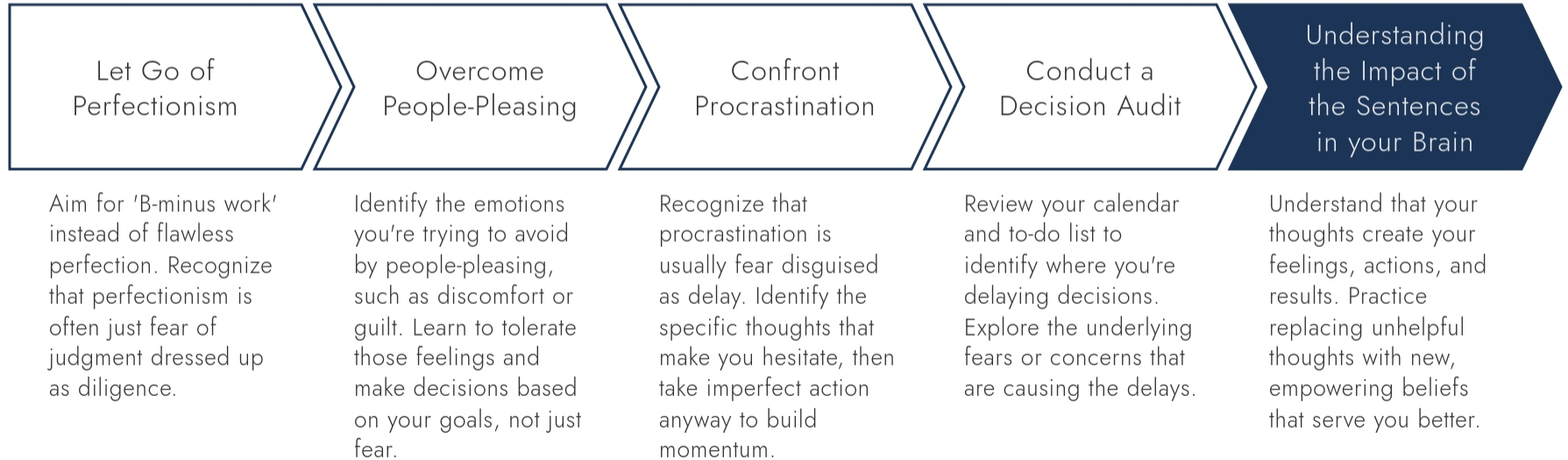
## Stress Impairs Decision-Making

Chronic stress impairs the prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain responsible for decision-making, and activates the amygdala, the brain's alarm system, leading to procrastination and avoidance.

## Retraining the Brain

Understanding the neuroscience behind these patterns helps us recognize that there's nothing wrong with us. We can retrain our brains to stop panicking, stop looping, and start moving forward.

# PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE



Let Go of Perfectionism

Aim for 'B-minus work' instead of flawless perfection. Recognize that perfectionism is often just fear of judgment dressed up as diligence.

Overcome People-Pleasing

Identify the emotions you're trying to avoid by people-pleasing, such as discomfort or guilt. Learn to tolerate those feelings and make decisions based on your goals, not just fear.

Confront Procrastination

Recognize that procrastination is usually fear disguised as delay. Identify the specific thoughts that make you hesitate, then take imperfect action anyway to build momentum.

Conduct a Decision Audit

Review your calendar and to-do list to identify where you're delaying decisions. Explore the underlying fears or concerns that are causing the delays.

Understanding the Impact of the Sentences in your Brain

Understand that your thoughts create your feelings, actions, and results. Practice replacing unhelpful thoughts with new, empowering beliefs that serve you better.

## ELIZABETH V.

Elizabeth V., a partner-level attorney, came to me struggling with people-pleasing. She was terrified of being seen as selfish or ungrateful, afraid that disappointing others would make them question if she deserved her position. We uncovered that fear and helped her learn to tolerate discomfort and make decisions from her goals, not fear.



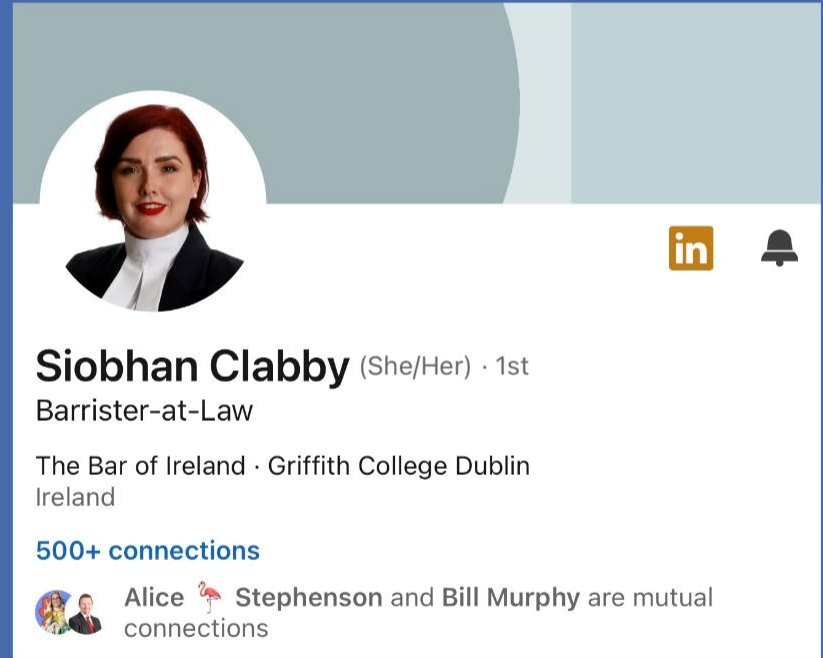
# ELIZABETH'S THOUGHT MODEL

- **Circumstances : The facts only**  
Partner Level Position at firm where others had been there longer
- **Thoughts: The sentence in your brain**  
"They are all questioning if I deserve this position"
- **Feelings: One word describing your emotional vibration**  
Insecurity
- **Actions: Behaviors you do or don't do because of feeling**  
Said yes to help everyone, took on extra assignments, stayed later than everyone else,  
Didn't turn down work even when her plate was full, didn't speak her mind on important matters
- **Results: What happens**  
She questioned whether she deserved this position

# SIOHBAN C.

Brilliant and Successful Litigator in front of the High Court of Ireland

Procrastination was an issue even though she worked tirelessly, long hours. She delayed briefs because she feared they would not be perfect. She would stay up with netflix and not go to bed be exhausted and feel shame and further behind the next day. She came to me change this cycle and find a better way.



A LinkedIn profile card for Siobhan Clabby. The card features a circular profile picture of a woman with short red hair wearing a dark suit and white collar. To the right of the profile picture are the LinkedIn logo and a notification bell icon. Below the profile picture, the name "Siobhan Clabby" is displayed in bold, followed by "(She/Her) · 1st Barrister-at-Law". Underneath, the location "The Bar of Ireland · Griffith College Dublin Ireland" is listed. A blue link for "500+ connections" is shown. At the bottom, a notification states "Alice Stephenson and Bill Murphy are mutual connections" with small profile pictures of Alice Stephenson and Bill Murphy.





# SIOBHAN'S THOUGHT MODEL

- **Circumstances : The facts only**  
Brief due before the high court on Monday
- **Thoughts: The sentence in your brain**  
"This has to be perfect and I don't know where to start"
- **Feelings: One word describing your emotional vibration**  
Overwhelm
- **Actions: Behaviors you do or don't do because of feeling**  
Didn't begin work, didn't do assignments as planned , Ruminated worst case scenario, Ended up doing last minute work
- **Results:**  
Didn't start , failed to get ready

# CONSIDERATIONS FOR DIFFERENT CAREER STAGES



## For New Lawyers

- The Three Ps hit new lawyers especially hard as they are learning the law, navigating firm culture, and trying to prove themselves.
- Advocate for yourself
- Ask for clarity/assistance
- Find Mentors in and out of the office
- Build confidence not in the work but in that you'll be okay no matter what



## For Seasoned Lawyers

- Experience doesn't automatically fix these patterns.
- Three Ps can become more automatic over time.
- Unlearning people-pleasing is critical for effective leadership. and when considering big career moves or leadership roles
- Fear of failure will show up, but seasoned lawyers can trust their experience and take bold action.

WHERE ARE THE THREE PS  
SHOWING UP IN YOUR LIFE?

COMMIT TO TAKING ONE SMALL  
STEP THIS WEEK TO BREAK THE  
CYCLE.



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