

NEXT LEVEL LAWYER

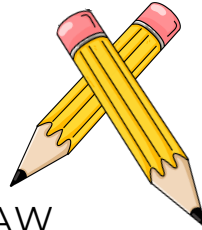
UNLOCK YOUR NEXT LEVEL SELF & PRACTICE

THE BUTTON LAW FIRM | AUGUST 2026



WHAT WE DO OUTSIDE THE OFFICE TO STAY SHARP

WHY BECOMING A BETTER ATTORNEY EXTENDS BEYOND THE PRACTICE OF LAW



By: Russell Button and Ashley Knarr

GROWTH DOESN'T STOP AT THE OFFICE

There is a tendency in our profession to believe that becoming a better attorney only happens while practicing law.

Every deposition teaches us something. Every difficult case challenges us. Every mediation, trial, and conversation with a client shapes the way we approach the next one.

There is no substitute for experience, and we believe that growth inside the office should never stop.

But over the years, we've realized that some of the greatest growth has happened outside the office.

It has happened during quiet mornings before the workday begins. While reading something that has nothing to do with one of our own cases. During conversations with family. Out on the water fishing. Or simply by creating enough space to think.

None of those moments look like professional development on the surface.

Looking back, they've become some of the most valuable professional development we've ever had.

CREATING SPACE TO THINK

One thing we've both become increasingly protective of is the first part of the day.

We've learned how quickly someone else's priorities become our own.

I'm usually up between five and six each morning.

No matter what time the day begins, the goal is always the same: to create space to think before the workday begins.

DID YOU KNOW?
NEITHER ASHLEY NOR I KEEP
OUR WORK EMAIL ON
OUR PHONES

THIS MONTH:

THE PURSUIT OF CONTINUOUS GROWTH AND UNWAVERING ADVOCACY IS WHAT STRENGTHENS EVERY CASE AND EVERY ATTORNEY.

CONTENTS:

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The daily habits that help us become better attorneys for every family we represent.

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How relentless advocacy helped protect a family after unimaginable loss.

You'll usually find me with a cup of coffee, reading current events, recently filed lawsuits, or looking at how other firms are approaching different issues.



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Ashley protects that same kind of thinking in a different way. Throughout the week, she intentionally blocks time on her calendar for what she calls “deep work”. No meetings, no notifications, no multitasking.

Just uninterrupted time to think through one case, one challenge, or one decision until she's worked through it completely.

Whether she's reflecting on the previous week's obstacles or developing a strategy for the week ahead, those uninterrupted moments have become some of the most valuable time on her calendar.

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SOME OF THE BEST STRATEGIC DECISIONS I'VE MADE DIDN'T HAPPEN DURING A MEETING. THEY HAPPENED AFTER I FINALLY GAVE MYSELF THE TIME TO THINK THROUGH A PROBLEM WITHOUT INTERRUPTIONS.

-ASHLEY K.

”

STAYING CURIOUS

We've also become intentional about staying curious.

I have always enjoyed reading beyond what the job requires. Current events, recently filed lawsuits, legal trends, and even other firms' websites have become part of my normal routine.

I do this because every perspective has the potential to challenge the way we think. Some of the best ideas I've brought back to our own cases have started with something I happened to read that morning.

Curiosity has a way of reminding us that there is always more to learn.

THE VALUE OF STEPPING AWAY

We've also become protective of the time that has nothing to do with practicing law.

I learned to bass fish from my dad years ago, and we still enjoy it together today. Ashley enjoys slowing down with a good book by the pool.

We both guard time with our families because we've learned there will always be another email to answer, another project to finish, or another case demanding our attention. The work will always be there. Time with the people who matter most doesn't always wait.



Those moments don't feel like professional development.

They're simply part of life.

But after spending an entire week making decisions, leading a team, and helping families through incredibly difficult situations, we've found there's real value in slowing down. Whether that's spending time with family, being outdoors, reading a book, or simply enjoying a quiet weekend, those ordinary moments often provide the perspective that's hardest to find during a busy week.

When Monday comes, we don't return with all the answers.

We return with a clearer mind to find the answers.

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FOR A LONG TIME, I THOUGHT BECOMING A BETTER ATTORNEY MEANT SPENDING MORE TIME PRACTICING LAW. LOOKING BACK, I'VE REALIZED THE BIGGEST IMPROVEMENTS HAVE COME FROM THE PARTS OF LIFE THAT HAPPENED OUTSIDE THE OFFICE.

-RUSSELL B.

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None of these habits felt significant on the day we started them.

Looking back, they quietly changed the way we think, solve problems, and show up for the families who trust us.

The practice of law has made us better attorneys. But the lives we've built outside of it have shaped the way we practice it every single day.

- Russell Button and Ashley Knarr



WHAT KEEPS YOU SHARP?



We love connecting with other attorneys to share our experiences and knowledge.

If you're interested in exchanging ideas or strategies, scan the QR code and reach out. We want to collaborate and grow together.





FIGHTING FOR THE FAMILY

HOW ONE WRONGFUL DEATH CASE BECAME MUCH MORE THAN PROVING LIABILITY

A CASE THAT KEPT EVOLVING

One of the realities of complex litigation is that the case you file is rarely the same case you finish.

As attorneys, we often begin with the obvious questions.

- ? Who was at fault?
- ? What damages did our client suffer?
- ? What evidence do we need to prove the case?



Those questions are essential.

But every so often, a case reminds you that advocacy isn't just about answering those questions. It's about continuing to ask new ones as the facts develop.

This was one of those cases.

A mother was driving through an intersection when an unlicensed driver operating a commercial dump truck ran a red light and violently struck her vehicle. She survived the collision and spent weeks fighting to recover.

During that time, she underwent multiple surgeries and extensive medical treatment before succumbing to the injuries she sustained in the crash. She left behind a husband and two children.



BUILDING THE CASE FOR THE FAMILY

Like every wrongful death case, our first priority was understanding the full impact this loss would have on the family.

Developing damages meant much more than reviewing medical records or calculating financial losses. We needed to understand the physical pain and suffering she experienced during the weeks she fought to survive, the emotional loss her husband and children would carry for the rest of their lives, and the financial impact that would forever change their future.

That was where the case began. It wasn't where it stayed.

As we continued investigating, the questions became more complicated.

We began working through issues involving the truck's ownership, the companies involved in the work, and who bore legal responsibility for putting that vehicle on the road.

Each answer moved the case forward, but also uncovered another issue that needed to be resolved.

WHEN THE STRATEGY CHANGED

Soon we reached a point where the litigation took an entirely different turn.

The commercial trucking company was not carrying the insurance coverage required under Texas law.

Before we could continue building the case, we had to determine whether the insurance company would be required to provide the protections Texas law mandates for commercial carriers. That issue became significant enough to require a separate declaratory judgment action before the case could move forward as it should.

Every legal issue we resolved had the same purpose. Every action, every motion, every discovery dispute, every coverage issue, and every strategic decision came back to one question:



WHAT DOES THIS FAMILY NEED FROM US NOW?

Sometimes the answer was continuing to develop liability.

Sometimes it was documenting the physical, emotional, and financial damages the family had suffered.

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Sometimes it meant shifting our attention to a completely different legal issue because leaving it unresolved could affect everything else that followed.

KEEPING THE FAMILY AT THE CENTER

That's what made this case unique.

It wasn't one difficult issue.

It was the willingness to keep pursuing the next issue as it presented itself, never losing sight of the people at the center of the case.

Russell often says that cases don't become stronger because attorneys work harder. They become stronger because attorneys continue asking

questions after the obvious ones have been answered.

That mindset shaped every stage of this litigation.

Looking back, this case wasn't defined by a commercial trucking collision or even by a declaratory judgment.

It was defined by a family.

A husband who deserved someone willing to fight every legal battle that stood between him and accountability. Two children whose future had already been changed forever by the loss of their mother.

Those were the people we represented.

Everything else was simply what advocacy required.

THE KEY TAKEAWAYS

Complex cases rarely stay confined to one legal issue. As the facts develop, be prepared for the litigation strategy to evolve with them.

Liability, damages, and legal strategy should continue moving forward together. While one issue may demand immediate attention, the rest of the case can't stand still.

Keep the family at the center of every decision. Every strategic choice we made, from investigating liability to pursuing a declaratory judgment, came back to one question: **How does this better protect the family we're representing?**