



# High Performance Without Burnout: Practical Well-being Strategies for Lawyers

 ERIN CLIFFORD  
WELLNESS COACHING®



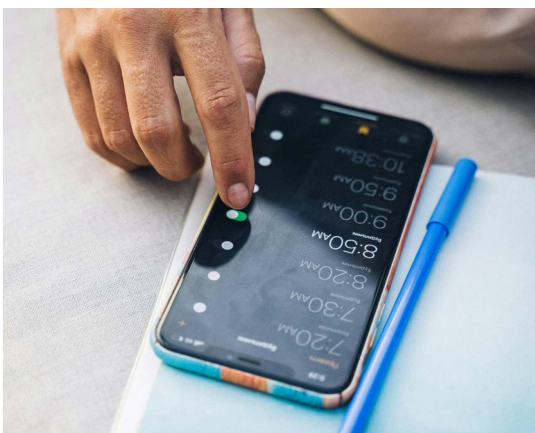
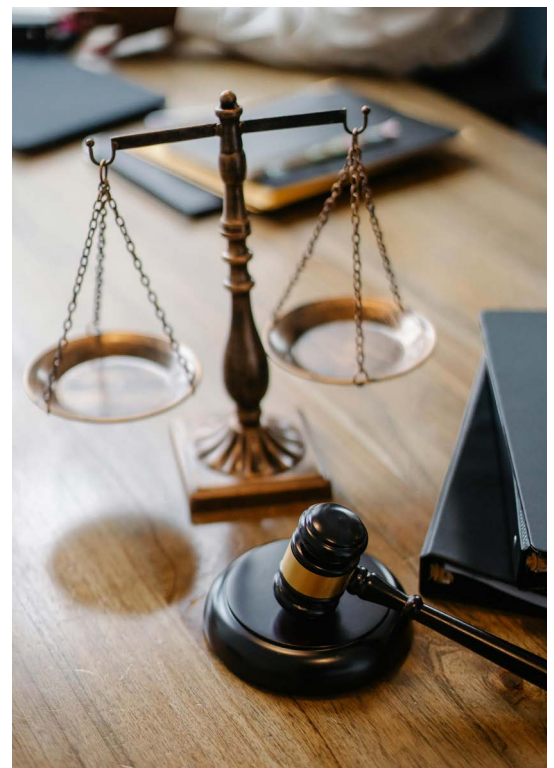
## The Reality of Legal Work

- Not a 9–5 profession
- High pressure, high stakes
- Constant demand
- Limited recovery

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- Higher rates of burnout, depression, and anxiety compared to other professions due to stress, overcommitment, and a culture that normalizes unhealthy coping mechanisms.

- *International Bar Association, Mental Wellbeing in the Legal Profession: A Global Study*



According to ALM Intelligence’s 2021 Mental Health and Substance Abuse Survey, part of Law.com’s Minds Over Matters project, **72% of respondents reported “always being on call and not being able to disconnect” as their top workplace stressor.**

# Lawyer Well-being Data



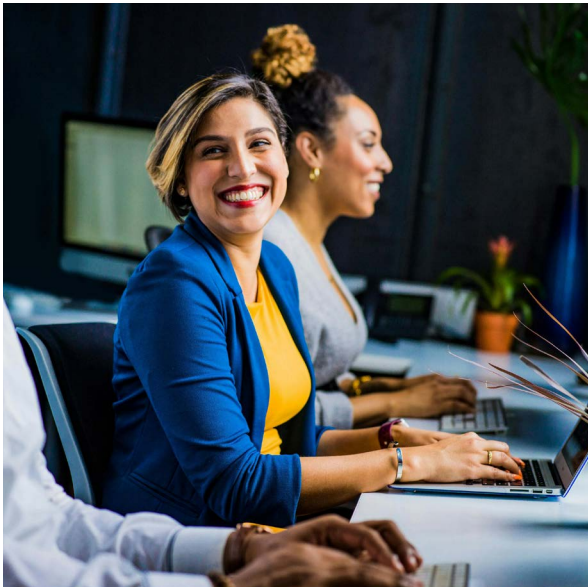
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The World Health Organization (WHO) defines burnout or chronic stress in the workplace as:

- Exhaustion
  - Cynicism
  - Reduced effectiveness
- *Can a global push alleviate lawyer burnout?*, Angela Tufvesson, LJJ Online.



You cannot perform when you are pouring from an **empty cup**.



### Why This Matters for Lawyers

Burnout impacts:

- Judgment
- Client service
- Retention
- Firm performance
- Mental and physical well-being



## What It Looks Like in the Legal Profession

- Irritability
- Disengagement
- Poor communication
- Overworking
- Overwhelmed



## The Hidden Signals of Burnout in Lawyers

- Sleep disruption
- Fatigue
- Mood swings
- Loss of interest
- Physical and mental health concerns

## Real World Lawyer Case Studies

- Substance use
- Health breakdown
- Career impact
- Suicide risk



## The Reframe

Well-being is not just about self-care. It is a performance strategy.

## Performance Impacts a Lawyer's

- Focus
- Decision-making
- Client outcomes
- Longevity



## The New Layer of Stress: The Workplace Has Changed

- AI
- Constant connectivity
- Notifications
- Faster expectations
- Information overload

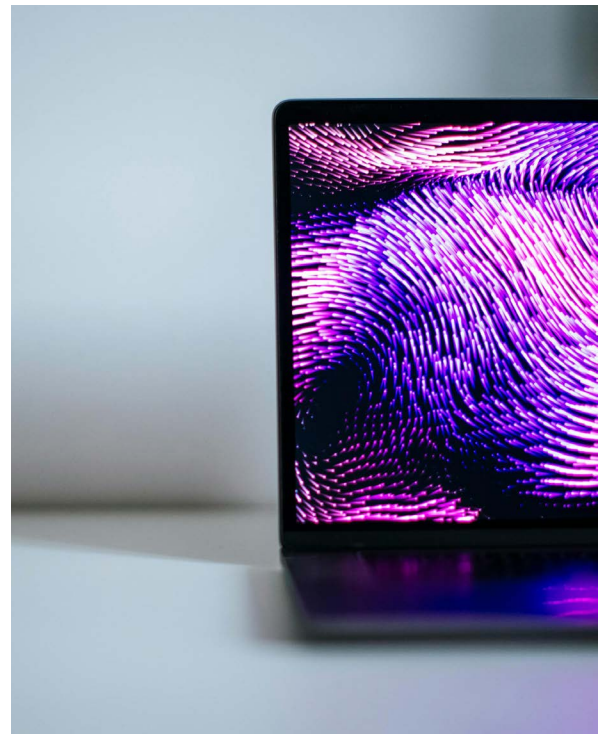
## AI Is a Tool, Not a Replacement

- AI can help with efficiency
- AI can help with research
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### **BUT**

- It still requires judgment
- It still requires ethics
- It still requires human oversight

Especially in something as highly specialized as the legal profession...



## Emotional Intelligence

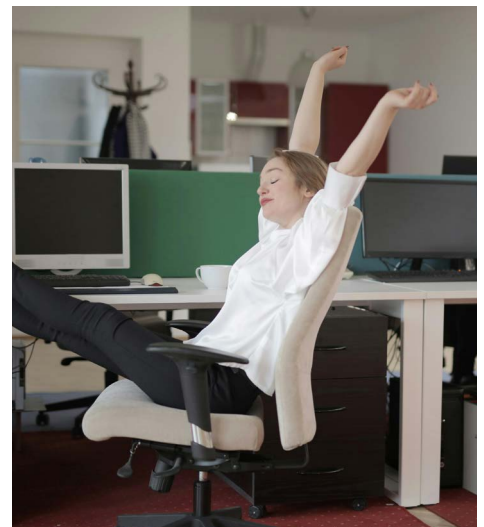
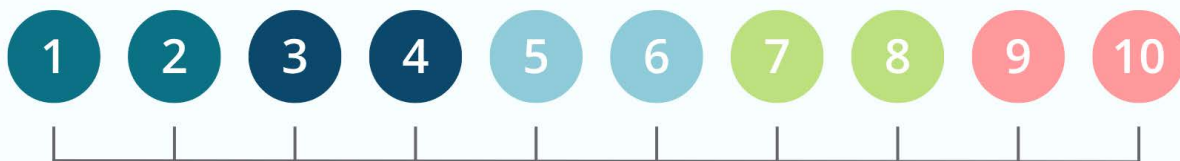
Pay attention to your inner world and how you show up.

# Daily Check-In Tool

1-10 scale

Why not lower?

What moves you up one point?





## How can lawyers ground or reset?

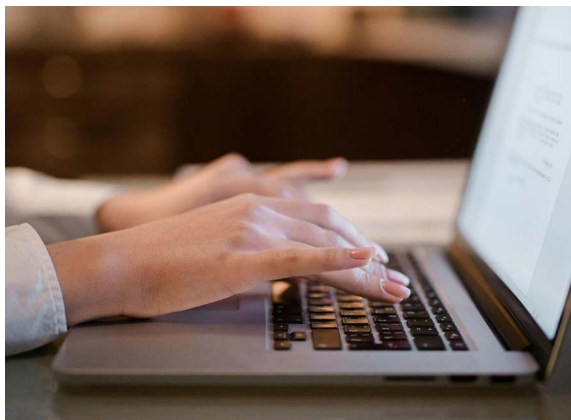
- Breathe
- Music
- Name your state or category
- Sensory techniques
- Set intention

## Boundaries (Reframed)

Boundaries are not saying no.

They are:

- Managing expectations
- Protecting focus
- Making room



## Legal Profession Boundary Examples

- Email response norms
- Client expectations
- Internal timelines
- Moving on



### Micro-breaks for Lawyers (<10 min):

- +40% focus
- Lower stress
- Better cognition

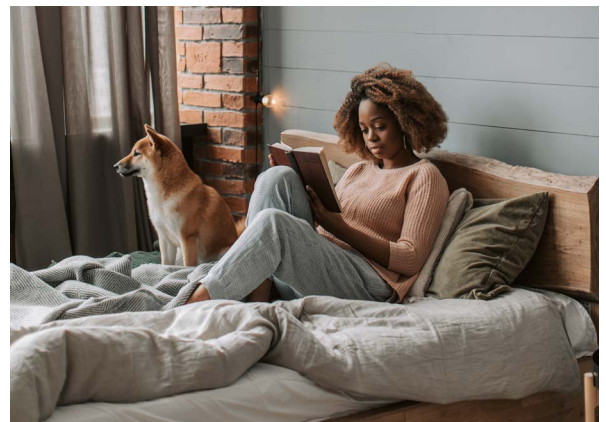


### What Counts as a Break

- **Movement** – walk, stretch, desk exercises
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### Sleep Impacts a Lawyer's:

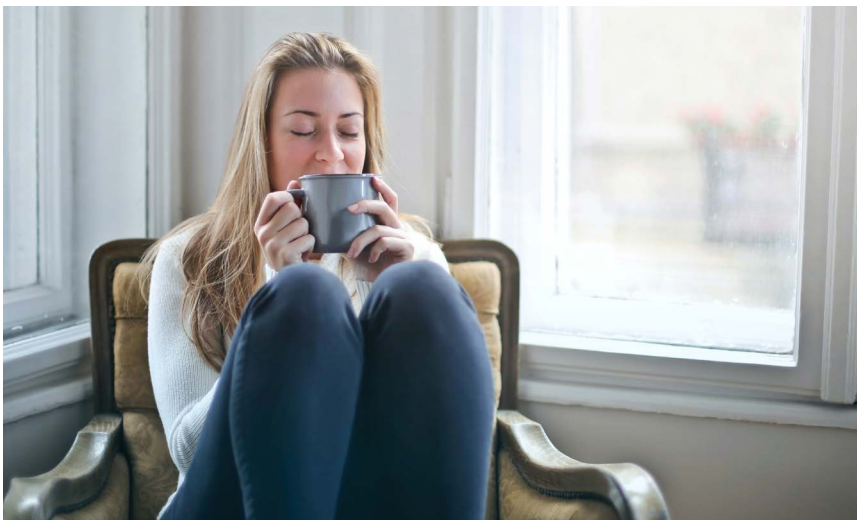
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*(Best practice = create a nighttime and morning routine)*

# NUTRITION REALITY

Common pattern for lawyers:  
☕ Coffee → nothing → bad choices

*Brain uses 20% of your energy*



## Importance of Community and Social Connections for Lawyers



- Stay connected to family, friends, and build new relationships
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## Build a Culture of Well-being

### What Drains a Lawyer's Performance

- Poor communication
- No boundaries
- Always-on culture
- Not seen as a whole person





## Culture Shift

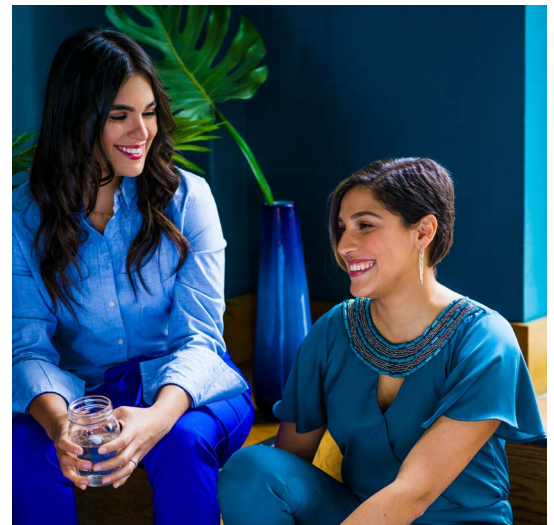
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- Model behavior
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## Why It Pays Off for Legal Professionals and Organizations

Well-being drives:

- Productivity
- Financial growth
- Retention
- Lower costs
- Resilience



What is ONE thing you will implement tomorrow?



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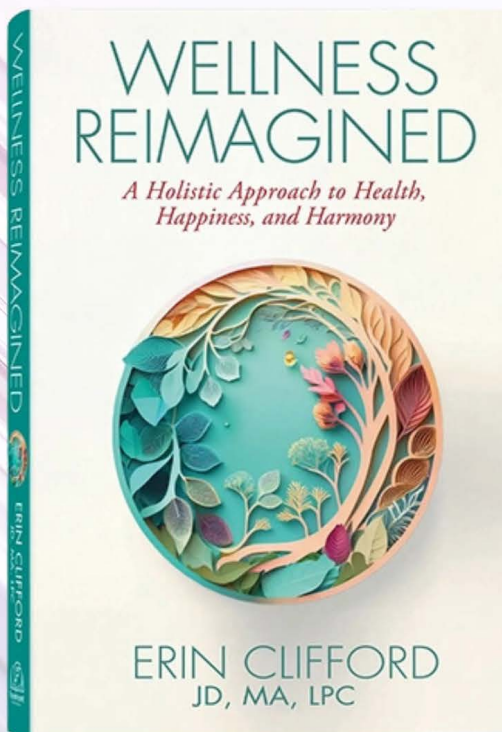
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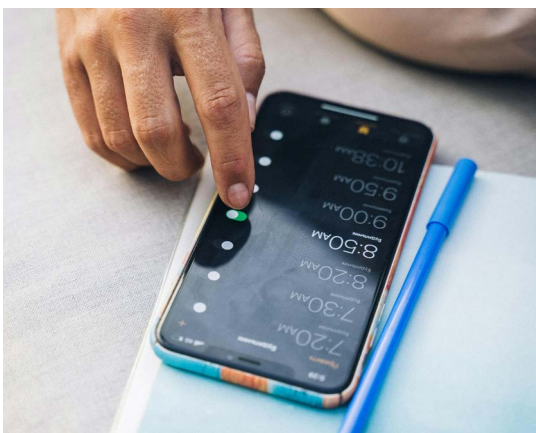
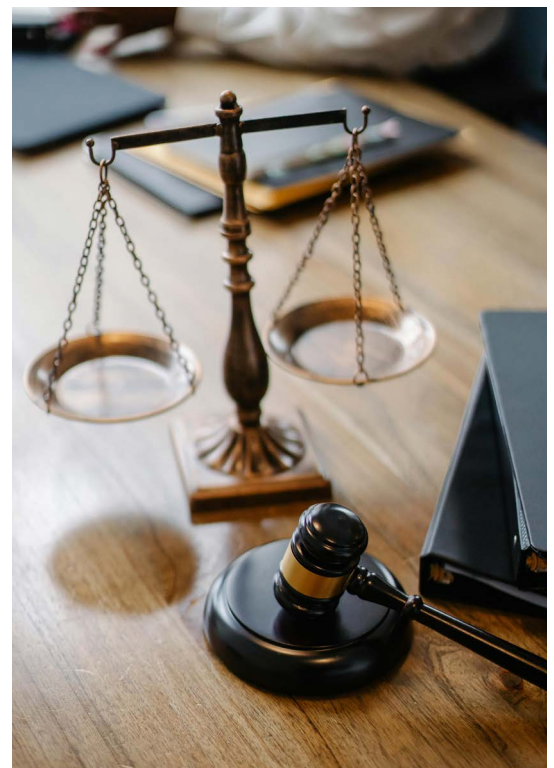
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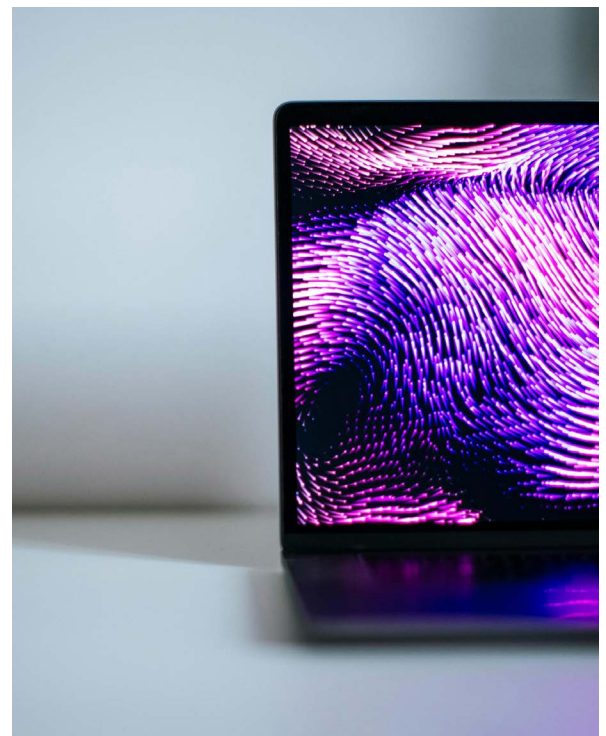
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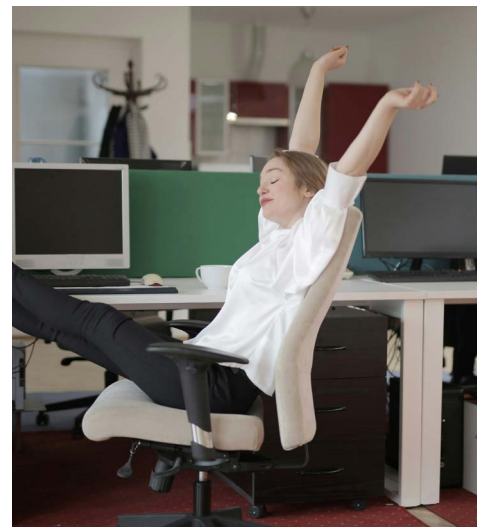
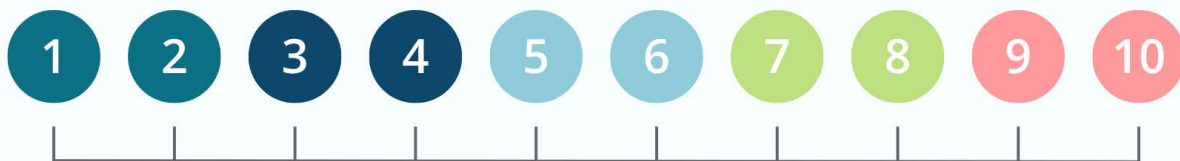
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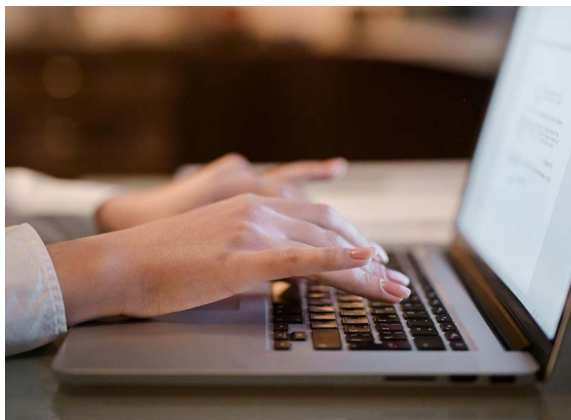
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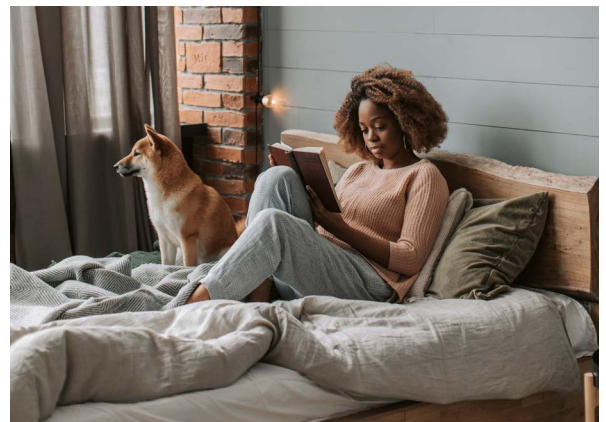


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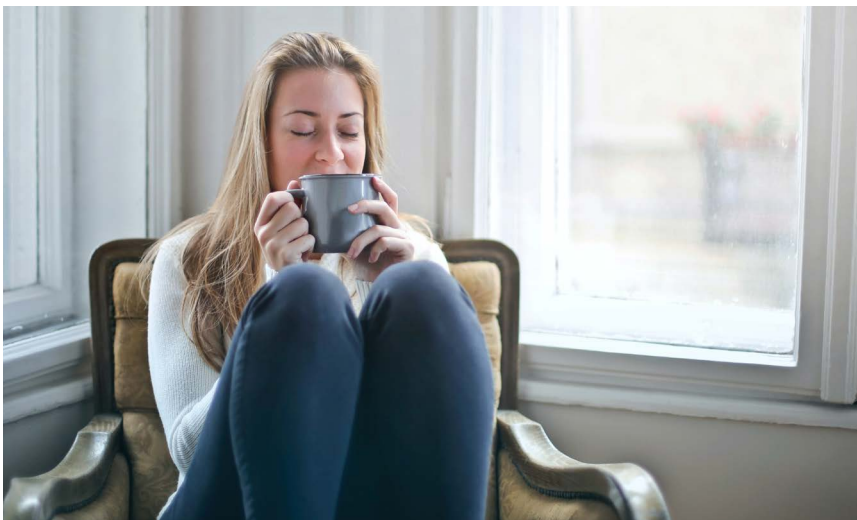
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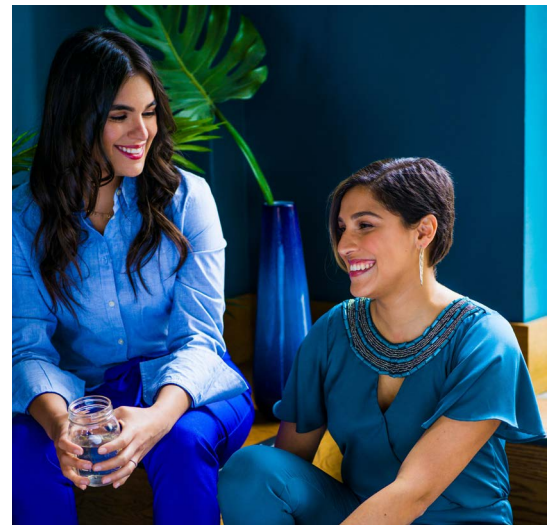
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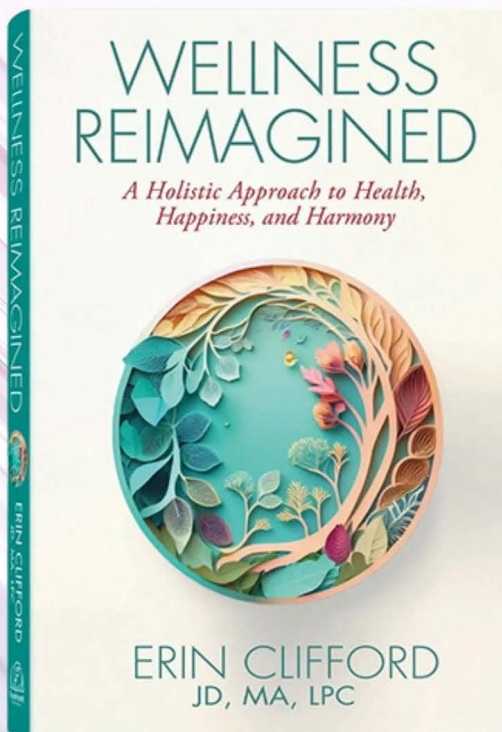
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