

Lesson #1: Comparison Can Motivate or Demoralize

By J. Lynette Carter

When I began my career at the Pennsylvania State Capitol in 2013, I learned of a website called Pennwatch. This website enabled taxpayers to search for a state employee by name to determine their salary. A tool that was meant to keep the government accountable, I soon learned, was monitored by some in my building to keep track of salary increases and job changes. As a new staffer, I knew better than to check the website. I know myself and that a few discussions about how many pay raises Jane Doe had could soon turn into resentment, particularly for anyone convinced that they are working much harder than Jane. Numerous working environments are hot beds for competition. Knowing that others are working harder and meeting or exceeding employment goals should fuel a desire in all of us to want the same for ourselves. What's wrong with a little comparison when you want to be the best in your field?

Well, using language that most non-attorneys despise, my answer is, "it depends." It largely depends on you as a person and how you respond to competition. It's "the fine line between motivation and demoralization." Four years after I learned about Pennwatch, I was accepted into law school as an evening student. Like many of my fellow classmates, I teetered on the rope of comparison, working hard to remain motivated and doing my best to fight the urge to quit when I wasn't doing as well as a classmate. Even in the post-bar exam world, it's easy to see others excelling and immediately roll our eyes and think, "how the heck is Billy making more than I am? He doesn't handle half of the cases I do!" or "I'm here later than anyone else in my office, why does Nancy have the closest parking spot to the building?" Before we all raise our fists in anger, let's discuss parking for a moment.

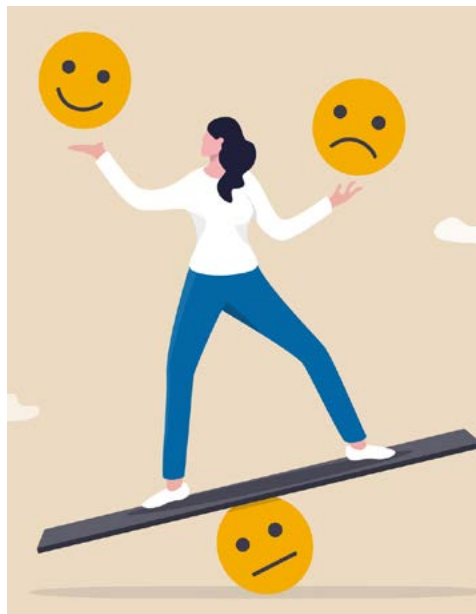
As a new staffer at the Capitol, I became accustomed to parking in a garage referred to as "Forum." As I trudged through the rain and snow, the more seasoned staffers drove by and under the Capitol building to their dry, well-lit and

conveniently located parking spaces. Oh, how I despised them. Why couldn't I have a nice spot underground? I worked hard! I stayed late! What about me? During one early morning rant, a colleague gently reminded me of the importance of patience. After 20-something years at the Capitol, she had only recently received an underground parking spot. She had waited patiently for years, working diligently, knowing that her time would come. You see,

comparison can drive you to your goals, providing the fuel you need to stay on course. Comparison can also cause you to resent every achievement that a colleague shares on LinkedIn.

Please know, dear reader, that as we walk the rope of comparison, we are all only one wobbly step away from falling into a pit of misery, demotivation and self-destruction. How quickly we forget that not all that glitters is gold. How wrong we are to assume that the grass is always greener on the other side. While a friend may be willing to share an update about their courtroom success, we do not always receive information about the sacrifices that were made or their failures. Each of us is fighting our own battles on the thin rope that leads to our

dreams. Let us try to celebrate the accomplishments of those around us. Let us do our best to remain focused on being the best version of ourselves and not someone else. Life is too short to be miserable and constantly unsatisfied with who we are and what we have achieved thus far. I am not encouraging you to settle for less or to become complacent, my friend. You should know your worth and remember that one day, a few years from now, you too will be in the underground parking garage of your career, and one day, your incredible salary and accomplishments will be discussed just as others discuss the salary increases of those on Pennwatch. Your time will come. Work hard, remain committed, and if you do compare yourself to others, do so solely with the goal of motivating yourself on the road to success.



Jacqueline Lynette Carter's bio is on page 12



Jacqueline Lynette Carter obtained her law degree from Widener University Commonwealth Law School, where she also earned a Certificate in Legislation with honors. After graduating with a bachelor's degree, cum laude, from Messiah University, Lynette began her career in public

service. She worked for over six years at the Pennsylvania Capitol Building as a research analyst for the PA House of Representatives and as a budget analyst for the PA State Senate. After drafting numerous pieces of legislation and amendments that became law, Lynette entered criminal law as a full-time certified legal intern at the Dauphin County District Attorney's office. While completing law school, Lynette managed several cases under the guidance of an experienced prosecutor and had the opportunity to observe and conduct various criminal court proceedings. As a legal intern, Lynette also drafted and submitted appellate briefs to the Superior Court of Pennsylvania, with the court finding in her favor on all briefs thus far. Lynette discovered her passion for advocacy as a prosecutor in the Dauphin County District Attorney's office. As a deputy district attorney, she tried a variety of criminal cases before PA Common Pleas judges, conducted countless preliminary hearings before magisterial district judges and successfully prosecuted a jury trial. Prior to joining Marzacco Niven & Associates, Lynette returned to the PA House of Representatives as in-house counsel, where she advised elected officials on issues related to the judiciary, education, health, human services and children & youth. At Marzacco Niven & Associates, Lynette fights for those who are injured and disabled. Lynette focuses her practice on social security disability law and personal injury law in the areas of motor vehicle and premises liability matters. Lynette is the 2022-2023 PBA Minority Bar Committee secretary. She is Zimbabwean American, bilingual, a former Division II field hockey player, the co-chair of the Friends of Midtown Beautification Committee and a member of the International Sociology Honor Society. You can contact Lynette at: <https://www.klnivenlaw.com/attorneys/jacqueline-lynette-carter/>

2022-23 Bar Leadership Institute Class

PBA President Jay N. Silberblatt named 11 Pennsylvania lawyers to the 2022-23 class of the association's Bar Leadership Institute (BLI).

"The BLI helps young lawyers develop the skills necessary to become the PBA's next generation of leaders," said Silberblatt. "During the yearlong experience, participants are paired with PBA Board of Governors mentors to help them learn about PBA operations, governance practices and member resources. I look forward to interacting with this year's class members and providing support as they carve out a successful path to future PBA leadership roles."

The new BLI class members include:

Allegheny County: Jonathan R. Bruno, Del Sole Cavanaugh Stroyd LLC, Pittsburgh

Beaver County: Max A. Schmierer, Court of Common Pleas of Beaver County, Beaver

Bucks County: Elaine T. Yandrisevits, Antheil Maslow & MacMinn, LLP, Doylestown

Cumberland County: Marjorie G. Moreno, Moore Ingram Johnson & Steele, Camp Hill

Dauphin County: Amy J. Gregory, Pennsylvania Office of Administration, Harrisburg

Fayette County: Rachel A. Clark, Southwestern Pennsylvania Legal Aid, Uniontown

Lancaster County: Kiandra D. Steffy, Saxton & Stump, Lancaster

Montgomery County: Robert M. Sebia Jr., Elliott Greenleaf, Blue Bell

Philadelphia County: Elizabeth A. Perez, Perez Morris, Philadelphia

Westmoreland County: Nicole M. Pardus, Long & Long LLC, Greensburg

York County: Sandy A. Feliz, York County Judicial Center, York

This year's BLI co-chairs are Stephanie F. Latimore, Legislative Reference Bureau of Pennsylvania, Harrisburg, and Kristen Hamilton, Law Office of Eric J. Weisbrod PC, Chambersburg.

To apply for the BLI, candidates had to demonstrate leadership ability, commit to attendance and participation in the required events, be currently licensed to practice law in Pennsylvania, be a PBA member, and be age 40 years or younger or have practiced five years or less.

The BLI was originally developed by Arthur L. Piccone of Kingston in 1995-96 during his year as PBA president to strengthen the PBA's ongoing efforts to recruit and develop leaders of the association. The first chair of the institute, Gretchen A. Mundorff of Connellsville, re-launched the BLI when she became the 2010-11 president of the PBA. Its current purpose is to inform participants on the day-to-day operations, governance, resources and staffing of the association, as well as provide introductions to its various leadership opportunities.