

Mei Zhang in Law360: Rock Climbing Makes Me A Better Lawyer

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PRACTICES Finance

Haynes Boone Counsel [Mei Zhang](#) authored an article for *Law360* that describes how her rock climbing hobby translates to the office, even if they may seem disparate.

Read an excerpt below.

I'm driving home on a Saturday afternoon with a big smile on my face, exhausted physically but fully recharged mentally, having finished my routine three-hour rock climbing session with a group of friends.

It is a typical Saturday for me, just like almost every Saturday over the past five years, except for a short period of time when the gym was closed due to COVID.

Until I discovered rock climbing, I hadn't ever worked out regularly. I can't even remember why I tried rock climbing, but once I did, I fell in love with it immediately. If you had asked me years before, I would have said I never expected to have the courage to try it, let alone enjoy it tremendously.

It was surprising for me how much I loved rock climbing, and that I would be willing to consistently dedicate three hours to it every week in my busy BigLaw life. What's even more surprising is how rock climbing shaped me into a better finance lawyer.

Focus and Concentration

From tying myself to the harness, to descending to the ground after successfully working my way to the top of a wall, every step of rock climbing demands intense focus and unwavering mental presence. Each move must be executed with careful attention to detail, from the placement of fingers on a tiny crimp to the balance of weight on a precarious foothold. Whenever I'm on a wall, I shut off the outside world. There is only me, my belaying partner and the wall. My focus is solely on how to use my body and the techniques I know to solve the puzzle in front of me, carefully identifying, assessing, and utilizing each handhold and foothold, to ascend to the top.

This level of concentration mirrors the attention required in my legal practice. As a finance lawyer, drafting precise legal documents and ensuring compliance with intricate financial regulations necessitates meticulous attention to detail. A minor oversight in a climbing route can potentially result in a fall, just as a small error in a legal document can lead to significant consequences. The ability to maintain focus under pressure is a critical skill in both arenas.

Resilience and Perseverance

Rock climbing was love at first sight for me, but just like many people, I was frightened by the height at the beginning of my climbing journey.

I still remember the first few times I was on a wall, getting scared in the middle of an ascent. I had to stop and talk to myself quietly, sometimes even out loud: "Just don't look down. You're safe and can do this. Just focus and keep going."

Strangely, this sort of self-encouragement helped me calm down and continue climbing to the top.

To read the full article from *Law360*, click [here](#).