

# Profile

“ There's always a lot of pressure on getting it right all the time because the consequences are very serious if you don't

## Ex-lawyer presenting a case for meditation

Sue Hoban

**H**IGH-LEVEL stress was once a daily reality for corporate lawyer Sandy Wright.

Not any more. In a dramatic turnaround, which she prefers to call “switching gears”, the Mackerel Beach resident is now going back into law firms and corporate offices to teach those in similarly pressured jobs how they can use meditation to keep stress in check.

She said she had been practising yoga and meditation for 20 years after taking it up when she was studying for final-year law exams as her father was dying of cancer. She said she had come to use it increasingly during stressful periods in her career.

“Most of my friends are or have been lawyers but it's not an easy environment,” she said. “People work long hours. There's always a lot of pressure on getting it right all the time because the consequences are very serious if you don't. It also develops a way of thinking where you're looking at the worst-case scenario all the time.”

She said there was a growing meditation movement in the US legal fraternity and it was now being taught in Yale and Harvard law schools. “They are using meditation very effectively over there to address the loneliness, the drinking and the depression, things that are also common in the Australian setting,” she said.

Sandy Wright, who was inspired by a love of debating to set her sights on a law career from the age of 12, started working as a corporate lawyer in the banking industry just after deregulation as the money markets were opening up.

That experience made her an attractive target for the big law firms and she also worked in that arena for a short time.

“One of the biggest pressures as a young lawyer comes from the time costing,” she said. “When I was practising, you had to account for what you were doing every six minutes and that's really stressful because you always feel like something should be taking less time than it is.”

She also worked as a human rights lawyer for four years with then commissioner Mick Dodson at the Human Rights Commission and couldn't escape pressure there either.

“That was probably the most political office in the country at the time,” she said. “The native title legislation was coming through, the Bringing Them Home Report about the stolen generation was coming through, so it was a very interesting office to be in.”

She decided to set up her own meditation practice in 1999 and, while she doesn't rule out a return to the law, said it was unlikely in the short term. “There are some aspects I miss, like the camaraderie and the teamwork when you're working on a big deal, but I just love what I do now,” she said.

Meanwhile she is still exposed to her old profession through the courses she runs through her practice, The Inner Journey: Centre for Conscious Living.

Possibly because workplace stress is such a costly and growing problem she has discovered big companies and law firms are embracing the meditation concept.

“The hardest thing for me is to get them away from their desks and to sit. but as soon as I get them in, they want to learn to meditate,” she said.



Former corporate lawyer Sandy Wright has been practising meditation and yoga for 20 years. Picture: BRAD HUNTER CTB09704

**LaserCool**  
The coolest treatment around for...

**Hair Removal**  
Laser technology provides safe and comfortable hair reduction for men and women of all skin types.

- Permanent hair reduction.
- No burning or scarring.
- Look good and feel great.

**Photo Rejuvenation**  
A revolutionary treatment that will stimulate collagen growth and treat skin problems

**LaserCool**  
www.lasercool.com.au

**50% OFF** your first treatment  
TANNED SKIN OUR SPECIALITY

For **FREE ASSESSMENT** or appointment phone: **1300 855 800**

**Physiotherapy & Clinical Pilates Avalon**

**Snezana Poljak, Mia Sherman, Kate Bulpitt**

- Whole Body Vibration
- Clinical Pilates • Acupuncture
- Remedial & Lymphatic Massage
- Over 25yrs Experience

**Suite 6/24 Avalon Pde, Avalon**  
**Ph 9918 0230**