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# Plan B

## "What would you do if you weren't a lawyer?"

This question is posed to all of us from time to time, by friends, interviewers in the *YLJ*, well-meaning family members – a whole range of people. Invariably we answer with either something creative (for instance, "sculptor") or something noble ("human rights worker"). The more inventive often combine the two, with something along the lines of, "Designing board games for underprivileged children in Sudan" or "Teaching ikebana in retirement villages".

My stock answer was always that I would be Anna Wintour's successor as editor of *American Vogue*. It is only now that I realise that I don't actually want that job at all. I used to subscribe – now I read it maybe twice a year and it merely succeeds in irritating me with its pronouncements such as "No woman should be without a ruffle this summer" and stories about hunting for the perfect \$900 bra for your wedding night. (I didn't make those up.)

This development is somewhat disturbing, though, as it means that I am in a state of flux. One of the things that keeps a lot of us going as young lawyers is knowing that, being young, we could always do something else. We spend a lot of time thinking about it. One of my colleagues decided, during a stressful period, that she would work with African orphans. Two weeks later, she was going to be a yoga instructor in Manhattan. Another friend was harbouring fantasies of being a private investigator, although I think it was the Bogey-style trenchcoat and hat that appealed to him, rather than the actual work. I had a pleasant daydream on the tram one morning of writing a novel in my spare time and publishing it anonymously. Obviously, it was such a raging success that I was eventually outed by my adoring public and forced to quit my lawyering job as the rigours of the talk show circuit took their toll.

## "One of the things that keeps a lot of us going as young lawyers is knowing that, being young, we could always do something else."

We always look so earnest when we discuss these options. Deep down we know, of course, that it's all rubbish. If we weren't lawyers, we would be accountants. Or in banking. Or something else that pays well and is dead boring.

It's true that some actually do quit their day jobs and go in search of the dream. But a lot of us just set arbitrary timelines that we constantly extend. I'll manage a bookshop/ design my own label/lead the proletariat revolution when I've finished articles – no, when I've finally paid off my HECS debt – or it would really be more sensible when I've put a deposit on a house. Why do we do this? It has to be fear. I can't think of any reason other than the fear that we'll fall flat on our face and look stupid or end up destitute. In the meantime, of course, we're drafting board resolutions and conducting due diligence while wondering how we got here and what the hell we're doing with our lives.

And, for the time being at least, I'll continue to draft resolutions and wonder. Why? Because, after five years at uni, that's what I'm qualified for. And I don't know what else to do.

I'm not proud of that. If I weren't such a spineless whinger, maybe I would have put my name on this article. But that could have been a career limiting move and I haven't paid off my HECS yet.

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