

NEWS & INSIGHTS

RACHEL LARY AND AMBER THOMPSON ADVOCATE FOR A MORE CONVERSATIONAL LEGAL PRACTICE IN AM LAW LITIGATION DAILY ARTICLE

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Lightfoot Franklin & White LLC partner **Rachel M. Lary** and associate **Amber N. Thompson** are calling for a shift in how other lawyers engage with clients and colleagues in [a recent article for the Am Law Litigation Daily](#) (subscription required).

In their recent article, "Nosy, Daring and Unguarded: The Case for a More Conversational Practice of Law," Lary and Thompson discussed how good lawyering isn't just about legal knowledge – it's about connection. Drawing on their litigation experience, they challenge the traditional idea that lawyers must be buttoned-up, reserved and formal. Instead, they call on lawyers to be more curious, courageous and authentic in their communications.

"Great lawyers are naturally curious, but too often, we limit that curiosity to the facts of the case," write Lary and Thompson. "We dig into contracts, analyze precedent and scrutinize evidence, but we forget to be curious about people. If you want to be a better communicator, start asking better questions – not just about the law, but about the people you're talking to."

Lary and Thompson note that nosy people might get a bad reputation — but they also get information. They contend that being nosy means showing genuine curiosity about clients, colleagues and everyone involved in a case — not just the facts. Lawyers can build trust and uncover valuable insights that improve advocacy by asking better questions and seeking context. They also urge lawyers to be daring by taking the initiative to start conversations, challenge unhelpful legal norms and bring authenticity into professional settings.

"Clients don't just want a smart lawyer. They want a lawyer they can trust. And trust isn't built through perfect legal analysis alone," they write. "It's built through human connection. If you never let your guard down – if you never allow yourself to be vulnerable, to admit when you don't know something, to share a genuine reaction – then you're missing out on one of the most powerful tools in your communication arsenal."

The perspective Lary and Thompson share in the article is a powerful reminder that effective advocacy is as much about honesty, empathy and genuine connection as it is about legal knowledge. By adopting a more conversational approach, they argue that attorneys can better serve their clients and find greater fulfillment in their practice.

Lary leads Lightfoot's product liability team for one of the largest automotive manufacturers, defending it against claims in ten Southeastern states and beyond. Her product liability work also includes defending a Fortune 500 company in high-stakes litigation across the country. She serves as chair of the firm's Associate Committee.

Thompson is a civil defense litigator who defends leading companies nationwide against product liability, environmental and toxic tort litigation. Having served as in-house counsel for a Fortune 500 freight carrier, she has substantive, real-world knowledge that informs her advocacy on behalf of clients.