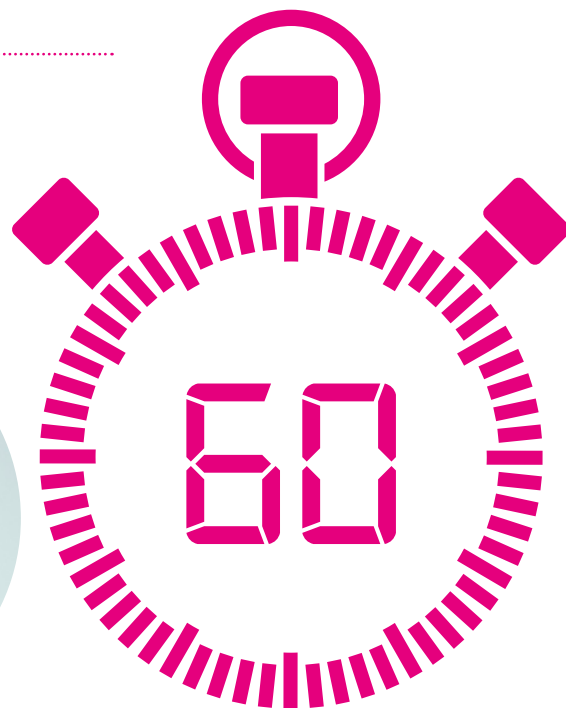


## 60-SECONDS WITH:

**KATHERINE  
KELSEY  
BARRISTER  
1KBW**


**Q** What do you like most about your job?

**A** Every day is different. I maintain a mixed practice, doing financial remedy and private law children cases. There are times when I do a run of finance cases and it's nice to then have a break and to do a children case (and vice versa) and to focus my attention in a completely different direction. I'm also doing an increasing number of Schedule 1 cases, which is the best of both worlds. I decided to specialise in family law because I find people and their lives fascinating, and you really do see the best and the worst of people.

**Q** What would you be doing if you weren't in this profession?

**A** Good question! I've wanted to be a barrister since I was at primary school. But, with hindsight I think that I would have been well suited to working in hospitality (managing a hotel and constantly straightening cushions) or retail (as a buyer for a large department store). If my (lack of) talent was not a consideration, then being a cabaret singer, or stand-up comedian would also have its attractions. Anything that involves interacting with people...and an element of performance.

**Q** What's the strangest, most exciting thing you have done in your career?

**A** When I first started at the Bar, I did some criminal work. It was an invaluable grounding in advocacy and cross-examination. I remember my first (and only) Crown Court trial. There are few things more exciting (or nerve-racking) than addressing a jury. Having to pitch your advocacy to be as persuasive as possible to twelve complete strangers. Looking each of them in the eyes and hoping / wondering if you will be able to persuade them in one direction or the other. Utterly exhilarating!

**Q** What has been the best piece of advice you have been given in your career?

**A** Breathe. I've been a barrister for nearly 20 years. It is a very rewarding career – but at times it is very difficult and stressful. Each phase of my career has brought with it a different set of challenges as well as opportunities. I still get nervous before a big case. I still feel the weight of expectation on my shoulders daily, knowing what is at stake for my client. I still think of cases that I did years ago – wondering what happened to the clients I met and tried to help. And when I stand up in court to address a Judge I always pause to focus and to breathe.

**Q** What is the most significant trend in your practice today?

**A** The move to ADR. I find the opportunities this presents exciting. I act as a private FDR Judge, and I appear in front of Arbitrators and private FDR Judges. I also mediate. It can be so much better for clients if they can resolve their family disputes without having to go to court. Also, the skills I have developed in my ADR practice are transferable to my court-based work. It has led to deeper insight and greater versatility.

**Q** What personality trait do you most attribute to your success?

**A** A good sense of humour. Given the gravity of the situations I find myself in on a near daily basis, it is important to keep some sense of perspective. Also, when a client is particularly stressed or nervous it can be very helpful to be able to engage with them on a human level and to try to make them see the lighter side of life. I think that one of my skills is that I can build a rapport with a client relatively quickly and (hopefully) put them at ease. Likewise, when interacting with a

professional client or an opponent, the ability to break the ice and diffuse an otherwise fraught situation, can be invaluable.

**Q** Who has been your biggest role model in the industry?

**A** Without wanting to sound too nauseating, my husband (who is also a barrister). He never ceases to impress and inspire me.

**Q** What is something you think everyone should do at least once in their lives?

**A** Karaoke. It is a great release. And you tend to sound better as the evening progresses.

**Q** What is the one thing you could not live without?

**A** My family.

**Q** What is a book you think everyone should read and why?

**A** Plato: The Republic. Not just as an A level text! It really makes you think hard about society and the human condition.

**Q** What would be your superpower and why?

**A** To travel through time. Probably forwards rather than backwards. I love science fiction and any Netflix box set with a dystopian theme (although the last couple of years of real life has felt dystopian enough at times!) so the ability to see what society and technology will be like hundreds of years from now would be exciting.

**L**