

# Strategy for Your Career and Your Life



Cordell M. Parvin



© 2009 by Cordell M. Parvin

Copyright holder is licensing this under the Creative Commons License, Attribution 3.0.

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/us/>

Please feel free to email this eBook to whomever you believe would enjoy and benefit from reading it. You may also post this eBook on your blog site or distribute it across your social networks.

To follow me on my social networks click on the icons.



## Table of Contents

I.	My Career and Life at the Crossroads	1	Evaluation Questions	18
II.	What I Learned from Harry Chapman	2	Approach	19
III.	Life in the “Zone”	3	Your Purpose	20
IV.	Developing Your Own Roadmap for Success	6	Four Areas	22
V.	Your Life and Career Purpose, Vision and Core Values	7	Importance of Purpose	22
VI.	Don’t Seek Balance - Determine Your Priorities and Live Your Life Accordingly	8	Your Core Values	23
VII.	Burning Out	8	Your Roles	23
VIII.	Client Development / Marketing	14	Your Goals	24
IX.	What Makes Rainmakers - Rainmakers?	17	How You Spend Your Time Weekly	25
X.	There is No Magic Formula to Map the Rest of Your Career	17		

## I. My Career and Life at the Crossroads

October 9, 1978 was the coldest October 9<sup>th</sup> in recorded history in Roanoke Virginia. After practicing law for seven years, I was considered a mid-level lawyer. Nancy, my wife, and I had been married for eight years. Although I had a good life and career, the events of that day brought me to a crossroads that motivated me to map out my future success and a plan for how to achieve it.



On that cold morning in October I took Nancy for her weekly visit to Dr. Julian Meyer's office. Nancy was 7 1/2 months pregnant. Early in her pregnancy, she was diagnosed with toxemia/preeclampsia, a pregnancy induced hypertension. Women with toxemia not only have elevated blood pressure, but also face health risks for liver and kidney damage or failure, and eyesight problems. Dr. Meyer had warned us that Nancy's blood pressure would continue to rise over the months of her pregnancy, and to our dismay it did. Nancy's blood pressure was 200/155. Dr. Meyer said to us: "Ready or not, today is the day we have to take this baby, otherwise you are risking permanent damage." He told us he was not certain if our baby would be born alive or whether it would be born with birth defects.

At 7:40 that night, our daughter Jill was born. She was 3 pounds and 7 ounces. She was so small I could hold her in my hand like a doll. Nancy's blood pressure went down, but her white cell count also went down. One specialist after another was called in to diagnose the problem. On the 10th day after Jill was born, the doctors were getting ready to take Nancy's bone marrow to determine if she had leukemia. All of a sudden, miraculously, Nancy's white cell count started to rise and soon thereafter she was able to leave the hospital. After about four weeks, we were able to bring Jill home from the hospital.

During Nancy's pregnancy, Jill's birth, and Nancy's extended stay in the hospital, I felt totally out of control. I was just a "bit player" in the most important drama of my life. In this experience I learned a great deal that created the strategy for my career and life, which I have shared with young lawyers over many years. At that point, I had really not taken responsibility for my career. I wasn't really sure why I was practicing law or what I wanted in my life. I didn't have a vision of what I wanted to become as a lawyer. Other than making partner, I did not have any specific goals. For eight years Nancy and I had both worked very hard (as defined in those times) and had focused almost exclusively on our careers. However, without warning, our priorities had changed.



## II. What I Learned from Harry Chapin

There was a second thing that influenced me at the time. I was a big Harry Chapin fan. I am sure many young lawyers have never heard of Harry Chapin, but I am fond of saying: “All I ever needed to learn about a strategy for career and life, I could have learned from Harry Chapin and his songs.”

Harry Chapin’s most popular song was “Cat’s in the Cradle.” The words were written by his wife Sandy. The song is about a father who is too busy with work to be present for his son’s birth and too busy with work to play catch with his son when his son turns ten. Later the son has his own family and is too busy to bring the family to visit his mom and dad.

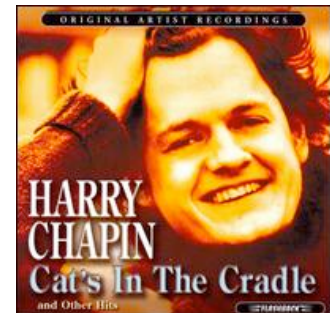
The father laments: “...as I hung up the phone, it occurred to me, he’d grown up just like me. My boy was just like me.” Through that song, I determined I would always make time to be with Jill and we would have special father-daughter time on a regular basis.

During my career, I traveled frequently during the week. Saturday afternoons were always father-daughter time and what great times we had. I also always went to work early so I could be home for dinner with Jill and Nancy. I normally worked from 6:00 am to 9:00 am on Saturdays and Sundays because for most of that time Jill and Nancy were sleeping and did not miss me.

“Dreams Go By” is another Harry Chapin song that resonated with me. It is about a couple who has dreams while in school, but they must wait to pursue them. They get married and decide to have their children first. Later when they are getting ready to pick up their grandchildren, they lament: “But I guess our dreams have come and gone. You gotta dream when you are young.” I learned from this song to have big dreams and not to put off trying to accomplish them.

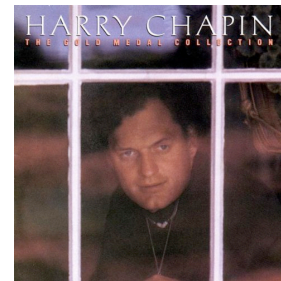
After Jill was born on that cold October day, I decided to take control of my future. Much to the chagrin of my partners who wanted nothing more of me than to litigate their client’s cases, I decided I would focus on construction law and issues faced by highway and bridge contractors. My career dream was to become the best transportation construction lawyer in the United States and I developed a plan to pursue my dream.

I also learned a great deal from Harry Chapin’s life. Harry Chapin was a successful entertainer before he found fulfillment in life when, in the early 70s, he became interested in world hunger. A priest had explained to Harry what good performers could do to raise consciousness and funds to change the world. Some singers would sing at one benefit, but not Harry.



It is reported that he contributed the proceeds from 130 of his more than 200 concerts each year and, to help the cause, that he would sign autographs for everyone who had purchased souvenirs. He was about to perform a free benefits concert in 1982 when he was killed in an automobile accident. In 1986, Harry Chapin's family was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor in recognition of Harry's efforts to address world hunger. His epitaph is taken from his song "I Wonder What Would Happen to this World." It is:

*Oh if a man tried  
To take his time on Earth  
And prove before he died  
What one man's life could be worth  
I wonder what would happen  
to this world*

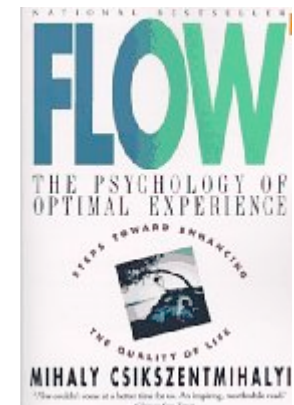


Specifically, I learned from Harry Chapin's life to find my passion and purpose in life, and pursue it. In 1978, I decided that my career purpose was to help my construction clients build great projects and achieve their business objectives. While I was not totally clear about it at the time, my life purpose was to be a loving father, husband, and son. I also found a desire to inspire teenagers to serve in meaningful ways.

My current life and career purpose and passion is to teach, coach and mentor young lawyers on life and career planning. I find meaning in my own life when the lawyers I am coaching find success and meaning in their life and career.

### III. Life in the "Zone"

Having grown up playing baseball, football and basketball and watching great athletes, I always had a sense for what it was like to be "in the zone." Professor Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi has written extensively on this concept. In ***Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience***, the professor describes the elements of flow.



Those elements include:

1. **Clear goals with immediate feedback.**

My daughter, Jill, became a rock climber when she was a teenager. That activity has clear goals and immediate feedback - reaching the top without falling.

2. **Balance between challenges and skills.**

If it is too easy, it is boring. If it is too difficult, it is frustrating.

3. **Action and awareness merge.**

When there is balance between the challenges of the activity and our skills, we must focus on the activity and then there is little distinction between ourselves and the activity. A rock climber reported to Csikszentmihalyi: "You don't feel like you are doing something as a conscious being; you are adapting to the rock and becoming a part of it."



4. **Concentration on task without being distracted.**

This is closely aligned with the merging of action and awareness. When we are doing a flow activity we are aware only of what we are doing. We are not distracted by outside forces or our mind wandering.

5. **Sense of control.**

Joe Montana in Super Bowl XXIII reminded me of someone who was in total control of the situation. Down by 16-13 with 3:20 left in the game, the San Francisco 49ers started their last drive on their own eight yard line. Montana completed five consecutive passes and then completed two more, one for the winning touchdown.

6. **Loss of self consciousness.**

Focus is on the activity, not on anyone's evaluation of our performance.

7. **Altered sense of time.**

In large part, because the activity is so enjoyable you lose track of time.

8. **Autotelic experience-auto (self), telic (goal).**

Motivation is from self rather than from external sources administered as rewards and punishment.



Dr. Csikszentmihalyi later subdivided these elements into characteristics of flow and conditions of flow. Characteristics of flow refer to what people feel at the time and conditions of flow refer to what the environment must be like to be conducive to flow. Looking at the list above, the characteristics of flow would include merging of action and awareness, concentration on the task, sense of control, loss of self consciousness, and altered sense of



## IV. Developing Your Own Roadmap for Success

So, how can mid-level lawyers take what I learned and develop their own strategy for their career and life? Build a strategy by considering your life and career purpose, envisioning what you want to become, discovering your core values, and developing goals and a plan based on your life and professional roles and your priorities.

Success is generally measured in both extrinsic and intrinsic terms. Many young lawyers focus only on the extrinsic measures and are unhappy. Extrinsic motivations cause me to do something to be better or have more than someone else. Intrinsic motivations cause me to do something because I enjoy it, it gives me a feeling of contributing, or it is the right thing to do.

### There are four aspects to our lives and only one is truly extrinsic.

**Physical/Economic.** We must be physically fit and creating enough income to support our family. This generally is an extrinsic determination.

**Mental.** To be “in the zone,” we must always be learning new things and developing our skills.

**Emotional, including our relationships.** We need strong relationships with our family, our clients and our friends.

**Spiritual.** We must discover and live our values. Anthony Robbins once said: “Success without fulfillment is failure.”

To be both successful and fulfilled we must be operating on all cylinders in all four aspects of our life.



## V. Your Life and Career Purpose, Vision and Core Values

To discover your life and career purpose, ask yourself why you wanted to be a lawyer and why you want to be one now. I was inspired by Clarence Darrow and Atticus Finch when I read Darrow's autobiography *My Life in Court* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*. While my practice has not given me the same opportunities to serve as Darrow and Atticus Finch, I feel the same passion for my clients and try to embody what I believe made this real lawyer and fictional character special. If you can find a purpose centered on serving and giving rather than receiving, you will be more inspired about being a lawyer.



What is the vision for your future? What do you want to become? I find many lawyers who complain about what they are doing, but have not given thought to what they want to become. Lawyers who are “in the zone” have found an area of law or a client base that creates a passion in them. They see their work as fulfilling a need and they work hard to be the best they can be. In 1978, I found this in working with the highway and bridge construction industry. I am passionate about the people in that industry. They are risk takers. They contribute to the economic well being of our country and state. They “dream big dreams.” So, think about the area of law or the type of clients that will arouse your passion.

What are your core values? We all have them, but few of us discover what they are. Take time to discover how you want to live and what you value.



## VI. Don't Seek Balance - Determine Your Priorities and Live Your Life Accordingly

I maintain there is no such thing as work-life balance and even if there was it would be incredibly boring to try to live a balanced life. Instead of seeking to live a balanced life, I suggest lawyers spend their time based on their priorities and realize that priorities change over time.

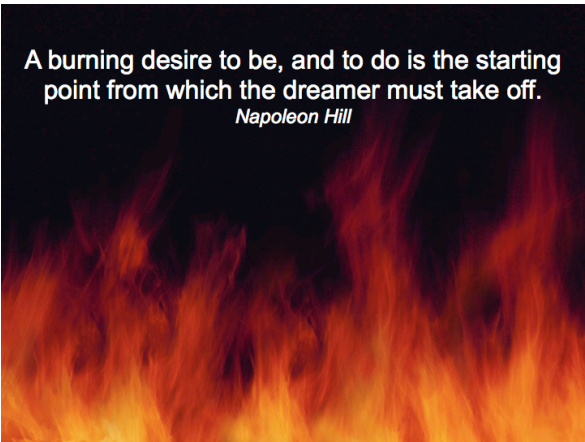
To focus on your priorities, focus on your life and career roles. I learned this concept from Stephen Covey's books. When I was with a large law firm, my roles were Father, Husband, Brother, Practicing Lawyer, Business Developer, Practice Group Leader, and Head of Professional Development. I set goals and planned my year and each week around those roles.

I find many lawyers subconsciously plan their billable time. They are at the office from a certain time in the morning to a certain time in the evening. But, they have no plan for their non-billable or personal time. I put my personal roles at the top of my list because those are the easiest to neglect. Each week I identify the most important thing I can in each role and I plan it.

## VII. Burning Out

Do you ever feel like you are burning out? Many young lawyers have told me they feel burned out. A few months ago, I received a call from Samantha, an associate I know in Dallas. I could tell something was troubling her. Samantha told me that she felt like she was "burning out" and felt like she spent all of her time at the office getting her billable work done. She complained that she had no time for her own development, client development or, more importantly, her personal life.

Samantha mentioned to me that she and Michelle had been speaking about this problem and they both felt they had no life other than getting their billable hours and they both felt exhausted by it. Samantha and Michelle are not the first associates to feel this way and they likely will not be the last. No matter what we do, there will always be 168 hours in a week. Since we can't expand time, what can we do?



A burning desire to be, and to do is the starting point from which the dreamer must take off.

*Napoleon Hill*

After listening to Samantha, I asked her to describe to me in detail what she had done the day before. She said she got up at about 7:00 am, showered and got ready for work. I asked what time she arrived at the office and she told me she arrived just before 9:00 am. and worked on billable matters until noon. I asked how long she had taken for lunch and where she had eaten. At first she could not remember. Then it came to her. She had gone downstairs, purchased something to eat and ate lunch at her desk. I asked Samantha what she had done during the afternoon. She said she worked on the same client matter all afternoon and had finally left the office at 7:30 pm. Samantha recorded 9 3/4 billable hours for that day which would have been about right for the time she was in the office.

I then asked Samantha what she had done after work. Samantha, who is single, told me she had stopped at the grocery store on the way home and picked up what she needed to fix dinner. When she got home, she changed clothes, fixed dinner and ate. By that time it was after nine. After dinner, Samantha spent an hour paying her bills and went to bed at about 11:15 pm, both exhausted and unfulfilled.

I would be exhausted and unfulfilled if that was my typical day. I asked Samantha what she wanted her day to be like and she told me she wanted to be able to work on her own development as a lawyer, work on client development and have a personal life. I asked her to tell me what she had in mind for those areas. About a year ago, Samantha had developed an interest in doing legal work for construction businesses.

Samantha's mother actually owned a successful construction company and Samantha had worked for her mother during summers while she was in high school and college. If her mother could have her way, Samantha would give up her law firm practice and work full time for the company. Samantha's mother had asked Samantha to go to Florida and lead the company's efforts in the hurricane repair and reconstruction work the company was doing. Her mother would love to have Samantha ultimately take over the reigns of the company, but that was not what Samantha had in mind. In her eyes, the company would always be her mother's. After all her mother had started it with nothing after she and Samantha's father had divorced. Samantha did not want to be handed the business or, for that matter, be dependent all her career on senior lawyer's clients. She wanted to develop her own business.





Over the last year Samantha had become active in several Dallas based construction associations. She had actually developed three clients over that time. Two were women who knew her mother and the third was a male owned company located in Fort Worth. Samantha told me she would like to be spending more time in her client development efforts and becoming an expert in construction law topics.

I asked what her important roles in her personal life were. I knew she was very close to both her mother and father and to her sister who was only a year younger than Samantha. So two obvious roles are a daughter and a sister. I knew Samantha owned a horse and enjoyed riding and I knew she was active in her church. So, when Samantha hesitated, I reminded her of the roles I knew were important to her. My gentle reminder gave Samantha other ideas.



Health and fitness were important to her. She told me she had run for exercise and had actually run in marathons. She had no time for that now. Samantha also said she was active in the Dallas community. She belonged to the Rotary Club and was very active in its community service projects. She also was a member of Success North Dallas, a group of up and coming business men and women and professionals.

I asked Samantha what it would take to feel better about the time she wanted to spend on her construction client development efforts and her family and other personal interests. Samantha said she simply felt she had no time. She was spending so much time at the office doing billable work that she had no time for the other things.

Finally I asked Samantha if she was interested in my observations. She said that was the reason she had called me. She wanted my advice. With her permission, I started to share my views. I told her billable hours were really not her problem. I told her she was neither planning nor using her non-billable time or personal time wisely. I told her she probably had a plan each week for her billable work.

It appeared to me she planned to do billable work from 9:00 am to about 7:30 pm on Monday through Friday. I reminded her that she could do billable work at other times. I knew she had a plan each week for her time in church and that was from 9:30 am to noon on Sunday. I asked if she planned any other part of her life for the week. After a short pause, Samantha told me she did not plan any other part of her life, with the possible exception of attending the Rotary Club meetings and the Success North Dallas meetings. The reason she had stated those were possible exceptions was that she frequently found a work related excuse not to attend.



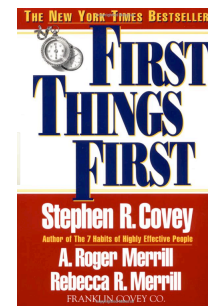
I asked Samantha what her schedule was when she was running and working out. She said she would get up at 5:00 am and workout until about 6:15 am, then shower, eat breakfast and get ready for work. Under this schedule she generally arrived at work no later than 8:00 am.

I then shared with Samantha my schedule of getting up at 4:30 am so that I could arrive at the Cooper Fitness Center when it opens at 5:00. Over my lifetime, whenever I tried to workout either at lunch or after work, I had missed many workout sessions because something else got in the way. I might get a call from a client at the end of the day and when I finished I would no longer “feel like” taking time to workout. For me, planning to workout from 5:00 am to 6:00 am or 6:30 am made it more likely I would do it.

I also told Samantha that after my daughter Jill was born, I frequently worked in my office (which was close to home) from 6:00 am to 9:00 am on Saturday and Sunday. I chose to do that because Jill was never up early and frequently my wife Nancy was not up early on Saturday or Sunday either. Working during those hours allowed me to be home early and eat dinner most evenings with Nancy and Jill. I was not suggesting that she, or anyone, follow my pattern. I was merely suggesting she look for other potential times to workout that would allow her to accomplish her other priorities. I mentioned that a female partner in my old firm and her husband who is also a lawyer both got up early every day. They alternated days to go to the gym and work out. Since their two children were asleep, on the days when she did not work out, the female partner generally worked at her computer using Citrix to access her office files. For her that was a good use of her time when she had to be home and her children were asleep.

I asked Samantha if she had planned to pay bills after dinner the night before. She said no. She had just realized she needed to do it. I suggested that she even plan when she would do something as mundane and unexciting as paying bills.

I suggested that Samantha read the book *First Things First* by Stephen Covey, Roger Merrill and Rebecca Merrill. The book is filled with many suggestions I knew would help Samantha, but the main point I wanted her to get from it is to plan her life around her roles. I also told her Dr. Covey's story about the "big rocks."



Dr. Covey describes that when he was teaching he pulled out a wide-mouth gallon jar and placed it next to a pile of fist-sized rocks. After filling the jar to the top with rocks, he asked, "*Is the jar full?*" The group replied, "Yes." He then got some gravel from under the table and added it to the jar. He jiggled the jar until the gravel filled the spaces between the rocks. Again, he asked, "*Is the jar full?*" This time, the group replied, "*Probably not.*" Dr. Covey then added some sand and asked, "*Is the jar full?*" "*No!*" shouted the students.

Finally, Dr. Covey filled the jar to the brim with water and asked his students the point of this illustration. Someone replied that you could always fit more things into your life if "*you really work at it.*" "*No,*" countered Dr. Covey. The point is, if you put the big rocks in first, " . . . *would you ever have gotten any of them in?*"

The only “big rocks” Samantha was putting in the jar first were her billable hours and church attendance. If she wanted to develop her construction law expertise and business and wanted to spend time with her mother, father, sister, riding her horse and being active in the community, she would need to plan ahead and not just let it happen. She needed to plan the most important thing she could do weekly in each of her roles.



I could tell Samantha was game to try anything. She asked if I had any more advice. I told her that I would feel exhausted if my day ended by me coming home from work at 7:30 pm, eating dinner, doing something I did not enjoy and then going to bed. I suggested she consider going back to her old schedule of getting up earlier and working out. I also told her she would be exhausted if she sat at her desk all day. I told her to get up at least every two hours and, if nothing else, just walk around her floor and breathe deeply. I also suggested that unless it was absolutely necessary she needed to get out of her office at lunch. Even if she was going downstairs and picking something up she needed to go outside and walk briskly around the block where her office is located.

Finally I told her that this change could not be like a diet that a person starts and then abandons. She needs to make this a life-style change. To do that she needed to do it each day until it became a habit. I told her she should keep a journal for the next month of what she did each day and if she wanted to, she could share it with me.

I wonder how many young lawyers only schedule the time they plan to be in the office doing their billable work. My guess is the majority schedule little else. For me, it is as important, if not more important, to schedule my non-billable activities and to schedule my family, fitness and recreational activities. If I don't schedule those activities, they generally get cast aside leaving me feeling burned out and unfulfilled.



## VIII. Client Development/Marketing

I think there are four main ways lawyers get business. First, by being the very best in their field. If you were thought to be the best civil trial lawyer, or corporate M&A lawyer or labor and employment lawyer in Texas, or maybe even your city, it is unlikely you would need to do very much marketing or client development. Whenever a big case or a big deal came in you would be on the “go-to” list. Second, by being fortunate enough to represent a company that gets sued a lot, if you are a litigator, or does a lot of deals, if you are a corporate lawyer. That works well until your client is acquired by another company or your contact retires. The third way is by finding a niche and becoming an expert. That is the approach I took. The fourth way is by being very active in the community.



What would be most important considerations if you hired:



Brain surgeon?



Your family physician?

Client development involves building your reputation and building relationships. I believe clients still generally hire lawyers rather than hiring law firms. I also believe that in most instances your reputation gets you considered, while your ability to connect with the client representative and build their trust and confidence gets you hired. If I knew I would need double by-pass surgery, I would want to go to Mayo clinic, or some place known to have the very best heart surgeons. On the other hand, when I looked for my family physician, I asked friends about their doctors and then I met with several to determine which I felt most comfortable treating me.

The first thing any lawyer needs to do to expand their client base is to have a plan with goals, an understanding of why the goals are important to the lawyer, and activities that are necessary to achieve the goals. Any marketing or client development activities must be driven by appropriate clients and potential clients, understanding their business drivers and being able to offer a solution to their issues.

I am frequently asked what to do if you have very limited time. There is no one answer that applies to everyone. If I wanted to build my reputation, I would write articles for industry publications. If I had a stable of clients, I would spend time with the clients I already have.

Other than doing quality work and providing extraordinary client service, both of which are a given, in my opinion, the most successful way to develop clients is to find a niche in which you can be the best. You should base your niche on your talent, your passion, and the client needs.



Many mid-level lawyers believe few, if any, company executives care about getting a card from an associate at a networking event. To be candid, giving a card to the executive means nothing, but learning about the executive and his or her company and finding a way to “give” value to him or her will make an impression. This follows what is known as the law of reciprocity. When you give something of value to someone, he or she feels an urge to give you something in return - sometimes the opportunity to handle one of his or her legal matters.



Even doing something that shows you recognize what makes him or her unique can be valuable. Recently, a female associate in my old firm called me after attending a big social event where she met a gentleman in his sixties who was a leader in the industry. He is German but has lived in the United States for 30 years. The female associate spent a year in high school and a year in college in Germany. She asked for my suggestion on what she could do to advance the ball. It turned out that a photographer had taken a photo of the two of them and a few other people. I suggested that she get a copy of the photo and send it along with a handwritten note, in German, on monarch stationery that she was glad to meet him and some other pleasantries about her experiences in Germany. I told her she could conclude by simply saying something about the work she is doing in the industry and how much she has enjoyed working with companies in the industry. She did it and she actually received a call from him thanking her for the card.

I have never gotten business from networking and civic activities in my church or community, but one of my former partners, Neil, built his career on his involvement in the community. He is a little older than me and first became active 30 years ago in a Los Angeles childcare center for kids unable to cope with their family environment. He actually made friends and picked up some business from others helping at the center. Only years later did he realize that working with kids who needed a role model gave him a life purpose and took him away from the stresses of his work life.

He then became active in the University of Pennsylvania Alumni Society of Southern California and ultimately became president of the group. He developed more friendships and clients from this experience.

In 1984, Neil announced to his partners that he would be working at the office Monday through Thursday and would do his charitable work and community activities on Friday. His partners were surprised by this announcement, but from January 1984 through the present day, Neil works on charities and community activities on Fridays. Most of his clients admired him for doing this and having the courage to take a more active role in the community at the risk of having his compensation cut. As his civic activities increased, he found clients recommending him to other clients saying proudly that Neil is not only a good lawyer, but also a good person. His civic activities actually created a “niche” for Neil.

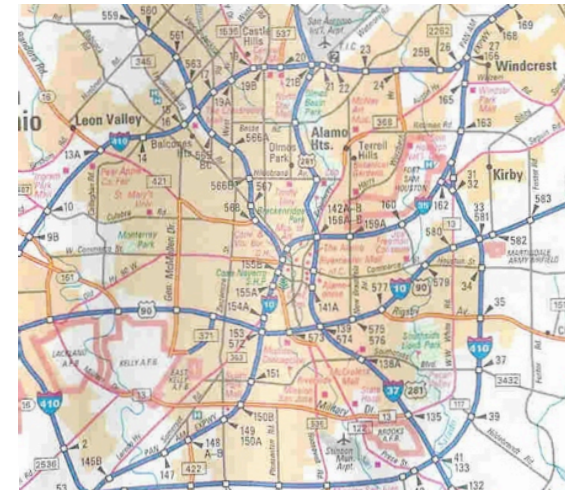


Part of Neil’s civic activities involved coaching youth sports for more than 15 years. For two of those years there was a game on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 3:30. Neil never missed a game. When asked how he could do this with clients having emergencies, Neil would respond by asking what we would do as lawyers if a client called us and said he needed to meet with us at 3:30 on Tuesday on an emergency matter and then an hour later a second client called saying he needed to meet at the same time on an emergency matter. Neil always treated the games he coached as the first emergency and frequently met clients after the game while dressed in his coaches’ uniform.

In 1999, Neil's youngest child was struck by cancer and slowly died. In part, Neil was able to cope with this because his dying son was proud of him for being a good person who helped others. After his son's death, Neil found more meaning in his life by becoming a spokesperson to increase funding for pediatric cancer research. Once again, as he expanded his charitable activities he developed more business. You might say that Neil got more clients by doing good things in the community than most lawyers get by marketing themselves as lawyers. Neil is proof that being active in the community for the right reasons can develop clients.

## IX. What Makes Rainmakers - Rainmakers?

What makes rainmakers different? Interestingly, there have been studies of what makes rainmakers different than the general population of lawyers. Generally they have a high degree of emotional intelligence. (There are good books on emotional intelligence. While you may be born with some of the characteristics, most can be developed). Rainmakers have a high ego drive, meaning they get great satisfaction from convincing the client to hire him or her. Rainmakers are very empathetic, meaning they are able to see the world from the clients' point of view. The general population of lawyers are logical thinkers and less able to see from the clients' point of view. Rainmakers are eternal optimists. The general population of lawyers are pessimists. Rainmakers handle defeat or criticism well. The general population of lawyers does not. Rainmakers exude a passion for their work and their clients. The general population of lawyers generally does not. Rainmakers are generally outgoing and enjoy people. The general population of lawyers are introverted.



## X. There is No Magic Formula to Map the Rest of Your Career

Any lawyer can see from reading this article that there is no magical formula for career and life success. There is nothing here that is novel or earth shattering. So, the key for us is not so much discovering what we need to do, but rather finding what will cause us to have the passion, commitment and discipline to do it. For me it was the events on that record breaking cold day in Roanoke, Virginia on October 9, 1978. What will it take for you to have the passion, commitment and discipline to achieve career and life success?



## EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. Where are you now?

---

---

---

---

2. Where do you want to be?

---

---

---

---

3. What is the one thing that you could do that you are currently not doing that would help you get there?

---

---

---

---

## APPROACH



## YOUR PURPOSE

1. What do you believe is your life purpose?

---

---

---

2. What caused you to want to become a lawyer?

---

---

---

3. What is the one thing that you could do that you are currently not doing that would help you get there?

---

---

---

---

4. What is your reason (purpose) for pursuing being a lawyer now?

---

---

---

5. What are you really good at doing that will be needed by clients or customers in the future and that you have a passion to do?

---

---

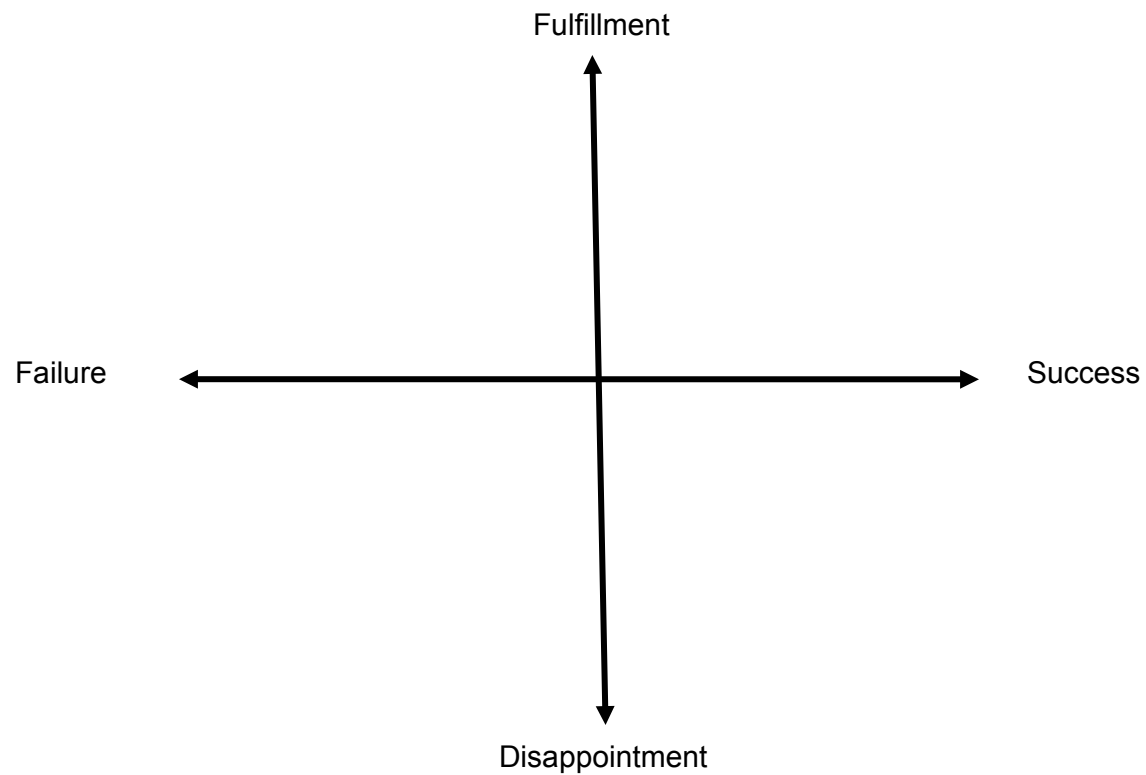
---



## FOUR AREAS OF LIFE

1. Physical/Economic
2. Mental
3. Emotional
4. Spiritual

## IMPORTANCE OF PURPOSE



## YOUR CORE VALUES

What are your core values (the things you value most)?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## YOUR ROLES

What are your roles?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## YOUR GOALS

What are the top three things you want to accomplish this year?

1. 

---

---

---
2. 

---

---

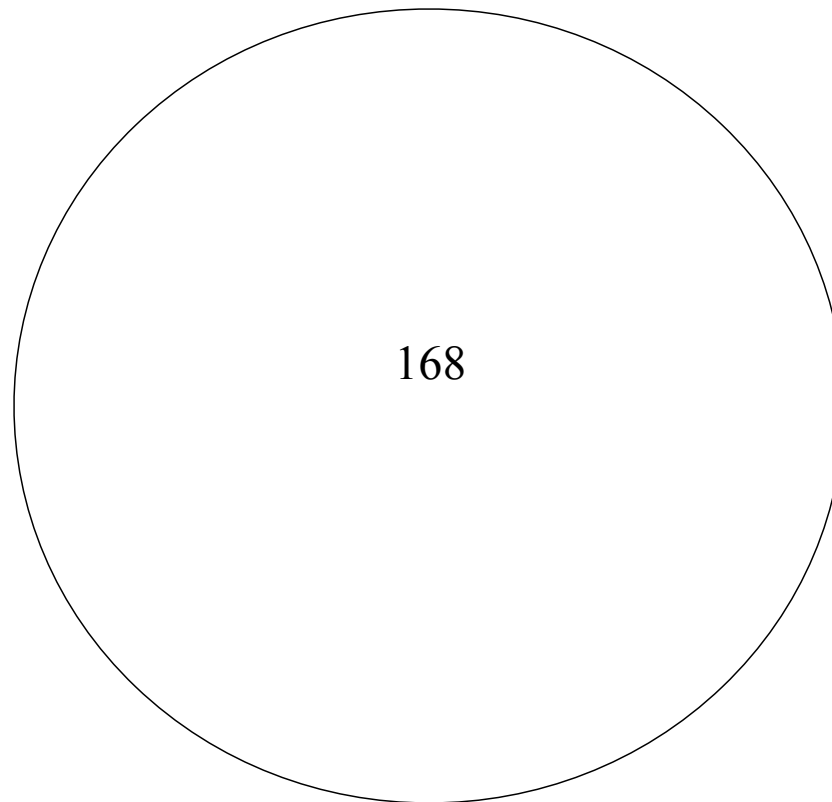
---
3. 

---

---

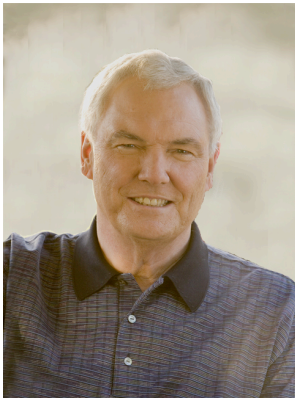
---

## HOW YOU SPEND YOUR TIME WEEKLY





## About the Author



**Cordell Parvin** was among the nation's most widely known and respected transportation construction lawyers. With thirty-seven years of experience, he established himself within his field as a writer, speaker, advocate and developed a national practice working for large and small construction contractors throughout the United States.

Cordell is passionate about teaching young lawyers. He works with them individually and seeks to inspire them based on their specific career goals. His enthusiasm for helping firms and lawyers achieve greater success prompted him to leave Jenkins & Gilchrist in January 2005 to open a consulting practice. He now works with lawyers and law firms on career development and planning, client development, leadership and strategic planning.

Cordell earned his law degree from the University of Richmond and his Bachelor's degree from Virginia Tech. Cordell makes his home in Dallas with Nancy, his wife of thirty-nine years and greatest supporter. Nancy is an avid golfer who started playing when she was forty years old. She now plays in tournaments in Texas and across the United States. While Cordell is proud of the work he has done for clients and, more recently, for lawyers, law firms, and law students, he is most proud of his daughter, Jill, who follows her passion and teaches elementary school special education.

## Also by Cordell Parvin

**Say Ciao to Chow Mein:** Conquering Career Burnout

**Rising Star:** The Making of a Rainmaker

**Prepare to Win:** A Lawyer's Guide to Rainmaking, Career Success and Life Fulfillment

**To purchase Cordell's books, please visit Life Career Publishing:**

[www.lifecareerpublishing.com](http://www.lifecareerpublishing.com)

---

**For other articles, publications, audio and video clips, please visit Cordell's website:**

[www.cordellparvin.com](http://www.cordellparvin.com)

**Cordell has a blog site with lots of very informative blogs. You may want to visit the Law Consulting Blog site at:**

[www.lawconsultingblog.com](http://www.lawconsultingblog.com)

## Cordell Recommended Readings

[www.cordellparvin.com/resources/recommended\\_books.html](http://www.cordellparvin.com/resources/recommended_books.html)

## Services Available

Cordell Parvin speaks at law firm retreats and conducts training and development programs on mentoring, client development, developing the next generation of rainmakers, and practice group leadership. He coaches lawyers on career and client development, setting goals, and rainmaking skills.

Cordell Parvin LLC  
17300 Preston Rd.  
Suite 310  
Dallas, TX 75252  
214-866-0550  
[coaching@cordellparvin.com](mailto:coaching@cordellparvin.com)

Visit us on our Web site:  
[www.cordellparvin.com](http://www.cordellparvin.com)

## Social Networking

To follow me on my social networks click on the icons.

