

[Career Success: Get in “the Zone”](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on December 22nd, 2014

What are attributes of the most successful lawyers I coach?

Even if you are not a sports fan, you likely would enjoy watching [Michael Jordan](#) play in the NBA championship or [Wayne Gretsky](#) play in the Stanley Cup Championship. These two great athletes made it look effortless and were at the top of their game when it was needed by their team the most. I loved watching them because they were so focused on what they needed to accomplish.



In the book [Michael Jordan Speaks](#) by [Janet Lowe](#), Michael explains what it means to be in the zone on the court.

Once you get into the moment, you know you're there. Things start to move slowly, you start to see the court very well. You start reading what the defense is trying to do. And I saw that, I saw that moment.

Wayne Gretzky was once asked the difference between a good hockey player and a great one. He reportedly answered:

A good hockey player plays where the puck is. A great hockey player plays where the puck is going to be.

What then is the lawyer equivalent of being in the zone? I think first it means being in the moment. The best lawyers I know work when they are working and are focused on what they are doing. For many of us we are so very easily distracted by emails or someone coming in the office to chat about the weekend.

What can you do to start 2015, “in the zone?”

What is the lawyer equivalent of playing to where the puck is going to be? I think it is anticipating our clients’ needs before they have expressed them. We can really differentiate ourselves from other lawyers when we are looking ahead in that way.

Cordell M. Parvin built a national construction practice during his 35 years practicing law. At Jenkins & Gilchrist, Mr. Parvin was the Construction Law Practice Group Leader and was also responsible for the firm’s attorney development practice. While there he taught client development and created a coaching program for junior partners. In 2005, Mr. Parvin left the firm and started Cordell Parvin LLC. He now works with lawyers and law firms on career development and planning and client development. He is the co-author of *Say Ciao to Chow Mein: Conquering Career Burnout* and other books for lawyers. To learn more visit his Web site, www.cordellparvin.com or contact him at cparvin@cordellparvin.com.