

## [Career Development: The Will to Prepare to Win](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on August 17th, 2015

In June, Nancy and I celebrated our 45th anniversary. Next month, I will be attending my \_\_\_th high school reunion.

I loved practicing law and Nancy was my biggest supporter. I frequently said:

My clients tolerated me, but they loved Nancy.

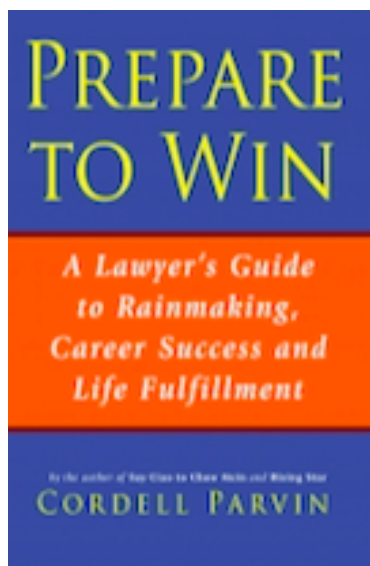
Plenty has changed since I started practicing law in 1971, but I know one thing that has not.

***The key to success in private practice with a law firm is the ability to attract, retain and expand relationships with clients.***

Many of you became lawyers, less because of loving "the law" and more because you could use your knowledge and skills to help your clients achieve their goals.

If attracting, retaining and expanding relationships with clients motivates lawyers, why aren't more lawyers doing what it takes to have that opportunity?

As you know, several years ago I wrote a book titled: "Prepare to Win." It is available from us, Amazon and is available for your Kindle, Nook or iPad.



I picked the title based on a quote I had seen many times attributed to various famous coaches.

The essence of the quote is:

Many have the will to win, but only a few have the will to prepare to win.

Many lawyers have the will to attract, retain and expand relationships with clients, but only a few have the will to do the hard work that leads to getting, retaining and building relationships with clients.

How many lawyers in your firm have a written plan for their career, with written goals, and a method of holding themselves accountable? Do you have one?

How many lawyers in your firm are making a concerted effort to build their profile or build relationships? Are you?

Regardless of your law school, your class rank, your family situation, your age, your firm, your boss, your firm's clients, you and only you are responsible for your success and only you can define what success is for you.

Over time you will also have to inspire yourself, motivate yourself, hold yourself accountable, stick with it when it is challenging and pick yourself up when things do not go as you had hoped. But, if I have coached you, then you know that encouragement at the right time is also helpful.

I was thinking about my work with lawyers when I read [Forbes](#) article: [The 3 Most Powerful Ways To Change People Who Don't Want To Change](#),

If we worked together you might notice some things in the article that we did in our coaching sessions. I encourage you to read the article and think back to our time together. If anything you read resonates with you, drop me a note.

When I worked with lawyers in my old firm, I learned a very important lesson. I could make an inspiring presentation on career and client development. But, if it was a one-shot program, very few lawyers changed. That was the reason I started coaching.

As you may know, my work is slowing down and I'm working on a novel (trying to exercise the right side of my brain). I still want to come to law firms and spend a day teaching at lunch and coaching the rest of the day.

Do you think it would be valuable for your firm's lawyers if I spent one day each quarter (4 days in a year) with them?

**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](http://www.cordellparvin.com) or contact him at [cparvin@cordellparvin.com](mailto:cparvin@cordellparvin.com).