

[Want to know what it takes? Here is a great example](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on July 29th, 2013

Last week I posted: [Want to know what it takes?](#) I mentioned three main points:

1. Knowing what you want.
2. Believing you can achieve it.
3. Taking action and persisting until you achieve it.

Today, I want to share with you a concrete example. My daughter Jill posted something on Facebook that made clear to me she paid great attention to what I was teaching her when she was growing up.

She also inherited some important traits from her mother. Nancy does nothing just half-way. She was all-in when she went to college and became the first in her family to graduate. She was all-in when she ran the blood bank at the local hospital and the Red Cross. She was all in when she was running and bicycling. She was all in when she took up golf when she was 40 (and still is today). She was all-in when she recently took up needle point.

I am very proud of Jill. I also feel she has expressed what I hope lawyers I coach take away from our work together. I asked if I could share what she wrote with you and she gave me permission.

I earned two stripes on my belt at jiu jitsu today. I was a little upset because my knee is messed up and I couldn't roll. I just keep telling myself that God did not grant me with natural athletic ability so I have to work harder than most of the guys. I will show up and train every day no matter how tired I am. My goal is not to earn a black belt (although I believe that will happen) or win any tournaments (got to enter them first), but to be better than the jiu jitsu player I was yesterday. I am not competing against other guys but against myself and my own self doubt and my fear of failure. I can't bench press as much as Réne (her husband) and I do not have the skill of more seasoned players, but I will win in the long run because I am going to work harder through the tears, blood and sweat and I believe my passion will help me to

overcome my physical short comings. I will be the best I can be. No excuses! I will be better than I was yesterday. It's me vs. me.



What are the main points for you? There are several in her short paragraph. I love coaching lawyers who have Jill's attitude about striving and working hard each and every day. More importantly for you, I think the takeaways are:

1. Have clarity on what you want to accomplish.
2. "Life is a journey, not a destination." -Ralph Waldo Emerson
3. If you are following your passion, it is easier and more enjoyable to work hard at it.
4. John Wooden correctly defined success as: "peace of mind, attained only through self-satisfaction and knowing you made the effort to do the best that you are capable."

5. Truly successful people are never content when they reach plateaus. I know far too many lawyers who reach a certain point in their career and stop learning and striving to be a better lawyer.
6. To be successful you have to have “grit,” that determination to persevere in pursuit of a long term goal. (See my post: [Grit: The One Trait that Lawyers Need to Break Through.](#))
7. Too many lawyers believe they will never be successful at client development because they do not have the natural skills (the gift of gab or schmoozing). In truth, for almost every lawyer, the quality of the effort made trumps natural ability.

Final question: What is the quality of effort you are making to become a more valuable advisor for your clients?

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.