

[Career Success: Richard Branson Has Some Powerful Ideas for You](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on January 6th, 2014

I enjoy reading about successful people and how they describe their success. I find it especially valuable when the lessons can be applied to lawyers like you and the lawyers I coach.

Several years ago I read an autobiography: [Losing My Virginity: How I've survived, Had Fun, and Made a Fortune Doing Business My Way](#). Reading it made me a [Richard Branson](#) fan.



If you have worked with me in a coaching program, you likely recall me paraphrasing one or more of these Richard Branson quotes:

1. Entrepreneurial business favours the open mind. It favours people whose optimism drives them to prepare for many possible futures, pretty much purely for the joy of doing so.
2. You don't learn to walk by following rules. You learn by doing, and by falling over and it's because you fall over that you learn to save yourself from falling over.
3. My biggest motivation? Just to keep challenging myself. I see life almost like one long university education that I never had – every day I'm learning something new.

4. My interest in life comes from setting myself huge, apparently unachievable challenges and trying to rise above them.
5. I don't think of work as work and play as play. It's all living.
6. You only live once, and I just don't want to waste a minute of my life.
7. Respect is how to treat everyone, not just those you want to impress.
8. People have to decide on priorities if they want to get anywhere. The best lessons I learned was to just do it.
9. It is only by being bold that you get anywhere. If you are a risk-taker, then the art is to protect the downside.
10. I was the captain of my ship and master of my fate. I believe in myself. I believe in the hands that work, in the brains that think, and in the hearts that love.
11. Screw it. Just do it.

Each of these quotes applies to you and to lawyers I coach. Let's take a look at each one.

1. Generating business as a lawyer requires an open mind. The lawyers I coach who are most successful find joy in both attracting clients and in helping their clients succeed.
2. You won't learn client development by reading about it, or hearing a presentation. You will learn by trying something, failing and trying again.
3. When you are admitted to practice law your learning has just begun. To achieve success, you must strive to become a better lawyer each and every day.
4. You will be energized by setting huge goals and making the effort to achieve them.
5. Make your clients your friends and make your friends your clients. There is no professional life and personal life. It's all living.
6. You only live once. Without a plan, you are likely wasting either time, energy or both.

7. Treat the person who cleans your office at the end of the day with the same respect you treat your best client. You will feel better about yourself.
8. If you are seeking work-life balance-Stop! Identify the priorities in your life and focus your time and energy on those priorities.
9. Are you afraid to try something bold in your career? If so, that is holding you back.
10. You are responsible for your career success and life fulfillment.
11. Are you a procrastinator? Many lawyers are. Stop pondering what to do and just do it.

Which of these quotes most resonates with you and your career thoughts?

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.