

[Key to Fulfilling Career: What is Your “Major Definite Purpose?”](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on February 20th, 2013

I keep track of my years on my birthdays by famous football player jersey numbers. Today is my [Ray Nitschke jersey number](#) birthday.

On birthdays I like to reflect back and fondly remember my experiences practicing law. Very early in my career, I asked myself a simple question:

Why did I want to become a lawyer?

I thought of that when I read a [Tony Schwartz HBR Blog: The Most Important Question You Can Ask](#). What do you suppose that most important question was?

Why are you here? It's arguably life's most important question, but is it one you ask yourself?

A few years ago I spoke at a [Texas Young Lawyers Association \(TYLA\)](#) event. I began by asking the lawyers: “How many of you are totally satisfied with your career and life?” Only a few raised their hand. I actually thought that was a good thing. Anyone who is totally satisfied is not growing as a lawyer. [Crossroads: Mapping Your Future - Introduction #1](#)



I shared with the group my thoughts on finding your “major definite purpose.” I got the idea originally from Napoleon Hill. A few years ago I posted a blog titled: [Definiteness of Purpose](#) with links to Napoleon Hill materials.

Years ago I decided that my major definite purpose was to help transportation construction contractors successfully build the nation’s highway, bridge, rail and airport projects. You can see that my purpose was not about me. Instead it was about my clients. Making that change in focus from me to clients gave more meaning to each matter I handled.

Instead of calling it major definite purpose, the late [Dr. Stephen R. Covey](#) talked about finding your voice. He shared a way to find it in [The 4 Steps to Finding Your Voice](#). If you are having any challenges finding what you are meant to do and become, answer these four questions from Covey’s blog post.

1. What are you good at? That’s your mind.
2. What do you love doing? That’s your heart.
3. What need can you serve? That’s your body.
4. What is life asking of you? What gives your life meaning and purpose? What do you feel you should be doing? In short, what is your conscience directing you to do? That’s your spirit.

Remember back to that day you decided you wanted to be a lawyer. There had to be something that drove you towards our profession. (Hopefully, it wasn’t because your parents urged you or you couldn’t think of anything else to do with your political science degree.) Rekindle that sense of purpose. Answer the “what” and “why” questions and the “how” will come to you in creative ways.

Cordell Parvin Blog

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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.