

## [Success: You Can't Be Content](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on April 9th, 2014

Are you content with your law practice and your success attracting, retaining and expanding relationships with clients? I hope not. I can't help you if you are content and you can't create a more successful career by standing still.

Several years ago, in 2006, I was coaching a team of lawyers. After the second month, the managing partner asked me how they were doing. I told him that so far the firm was wasting money and the lawyers were wasting time.

He looked at me wide eyed and asked why I thought so.

They are too content with where they are. They are relatively busy, making decent money and do not feel pressure to build for the future.

Lawyers who are content likely do good work for clients and wait for the phone to ring. That strategy may have worked 25 or 30 years ago when there were fewer lawyers and when clients were local and loyal.

My Virginia bar number is in the 12,000s. That means from Jamestown until I was admitted 12,000 and a handful of lawyers were admitted to practice in Virginia. I bet the bar numbers now in Virginia are close to 100,000.

When I first began my practice all of the banks and hospitals were locally owned. I knew the presidents of most companies in my city and my firm's clients did not shop around for law firms. Just to give you a perspective, All in the Family and Laverne and Shirley were two top TV shows back then.

Just as television shows have changed, practicing law and developing business relationships in 2014 is far different. In the competitive environment we live in now, you do not have the luxury to be content. You must always strive to become a better lawyer, to better understand your clients' needs and to find new ways to help them.

I occasionally post poetry here. I like a poem by Robert Frost. It has been meaningful to me in my personal life and it causes me to reflect on the importance of never being content.

## **NOTHING GOLD CAN STAY** – by Robert Frost

Nature's first green is gold,  
Her hardest hue to hold.  
Her early leaf's a flower;  
But only so an hour.  
Then leaf subsides to leaf.  
So Eden sank to grief,  
So dawn goes down to day.  
Nothing gold can stay.

If you get a chance, do a search on the meaning of the poem. In the meantime, think about where you can make the greatest improvement.



**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).