

[Your Career: What Can You Learn from a Special Education Teacher?](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on August 24th, 2015

Our daughter Jill starts a new school year teaching today.

Years ago when Jill was in college we were taking a father-daughter trip to a Virginia Tech football game. While on the plane, Jill said:

Dad, there is something I have to tell you.

With fear of what it might be, (I don't think any dad wants to hear something his child **has** to tell him).

I asked:

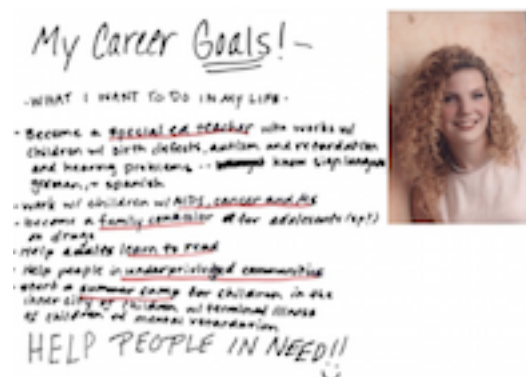
What's that Jill?

She said:

Dad, I don't want to be a lawyer. I want to teach.

I was quite relieved and I told Jill I admired her for following her passion.

Several years later when she and I were preparing for a high school youth group program at our church, Jill showed me her journal from high school which included her life goals at the time. One of her primary goals was to teach special education.



On Sunday, we met Jill and her husband for brunch after church. She described her experience at the “back to school” night last week. She enthusiastically told us about children she had taught who are now in high school and made a special trip back to the elementary school to see her and thank her.

Jill has been teaching now for 15 years. She first taught middle school, so those first students are now in their late 20s. Some of them regularly contact her.

What can you learn from Jill? First, follow your passion. She has a clear idea of what she wants to do. She is very focused on serving the needs of her kids.

Second, the real joy of practicing law comes when we know what we did made a difference for our clients and they appreciate us for it.

Third, help someone in need who will never be able to pay you. If you’ve done that, you know the feeling you get from it.

While it may not be easy for you, if you can find the same things in your law practice, you will have the same kind of satisfaction.

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.