

[If You Want to be a Rainmaker, “You Gotta Believe”](#)

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

I wrote this blog five years ago and it was one of my most read of all time. Since some of you may not have read my blog back then, I thought it was worth re-publishing.

I recently read “[Top Women Rainmakers Absent at Half of Large Law Firms](#)” and was surprised to learn that 46% of the large law firms in the United States have no women in their Top 10 Rainmakers. Another third of the law firms only have one woman among their Top 10 Rainmakers.

The data in the report did not explain why women are underrepresented. I know from experience that most of the reasons have nothing to do with rainmaking ability. I coach many women who have the skills to become a top rainmaker in their firm if that is what they choose as a goal.

EQ (emotional intelligence) plays a key role in becoming a rainmaker. I have intuitively believed that women generally have greater EQ (emotional intelligence) than men. I recently read in a [2001 Report](#) that I was wrong.

According to the report, women do not have greater EQ than men, they just have different EQ skills. Women are more aware, more empathetic and have better people skills. As Daniel Pink has [written](#), these “right brain” skills are more important now than ever before. Men are more self-confident, optimistic and adaptable and handle stress better.

In my coaching I have found self confidence to be more based on age and experience than gender.

Regardless, having self-confidence is incredibly important because your potential clients will make a snap decision on whether they are confident you can handle their matter. If you do not pass the “confidence inspiring” test, you will never get the chance to show you are aware, empathetic and have people skills.

So, what can you do to become more self- confident? Here is the advice I give to the lawyers I coach:

- “You gotta believe” you are the right lawyer for your potential clients. Tug McGraw coined the phrase about the 1973 underdog New York Mets and it applies to you as well. You will only be as successful as you believe you can be. When you believe you are successful and the right lawyer for your potential client, you have more energy, you exude confidence and your body language reflects that confidence.
- Dress for Success and be aware of your body language. Whether you like it or not, part of the first impression you make will be based on how you are dressed and how you appear.
- You don’t have to be an extrovert and life of the party to exude confidence. It is far better to be “interested” than it is to be “interesting.”
- Decide what you really want and focus your time and energy on it. One size does not fit all. Do not compare yourself to others. You have your own unique talents, dreams and challenges. Focus your time and energy on your highest priorities.
- Find someone who encourages you and whom you trust so that you can be brutally honest about who you are and how you are doing and get feedback. The better I know the lawyers I am coaching, the better I can identify their skills and enable them to use those skills.
- Pay attention to your self-talk. Instead of saying to yourself “my problem is...” say “my opportunity is...” Instead of saying “I need to...” say “I want to...” Instead of saying “I’ll try to...” say “I will...”
- Stay hungry, keep learning and always seek to become a better lawyer.
- Become the “go to” lawyer for your clients. If you feel you are the “go to” lawyer, your confidence will show.
- Focus on the journey (actions) and the destination (bringing in business) will take care of itself.
- Work on small steps that get you outside your comfort zone. Each time you make a step outside your comfort zone, you gain confidence.

- Practice, practice, practice speaking in public and one-on-one. Have someone video tape you and get feedback on your body language.
- Be patient and persistent. Making rain takes time.
- Avoid distractions.

One final thought: Self-doubt is natural and it can be actually be healthy. I have had it my entire career. I used it to motivate me to be a better lawyer. You should also.

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.