

## [Are You Getting The Best From Lawyers You Supervise?](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on June 10th, 2013

They never taught you leadership in law school and now, as a young partner, you are supervising associates. Where can you find ideas that will help you get the very best from the associates working on projects with you?



One of the very best books on leadership is [The Leadership Challenge](#), now in its fourth edition. [James Kouzes](#) and [Barry Posner](#) are the authors. In chapter 11, Kouzes and Posner say:

Exemplary leaders understand this need to recognize contributions and are constantly engaged in these essentials:

- Expect the best;
- Personalize recognition.

### **Expect the Best**

Kouzes and Posner remind us that growing up we wanted to live up to the expectations of our parents, coaches, and teachers. Do you remember that experience? I would bet you stretched to meet their expectations and felt blessed that they believed in you.

You are playing the same role when you are supervising young lawyers. Have you conveyed that you expect the best and that you believe in them? If you do, your young lawyers will strive to live up to your expectations. They will also become more confident in themselves.

## **Personalize Recognition**

Kouzes and Posner share that one of the more common complaints about recognition is:

Far too often it's highly predictable, routine and impersonal.

They further say:

By personalizing recognition, leaders send the message that someone took the time to notice the achievement, seek out the responsible individual, and personally deliver praise in a timely manner.

One of my favorite quotes from this chapter is:

Leaders get the best from others not from building fires under people but by building a fire within them.

As a coach, when I sense I have been able to build a fire within a lawyer I am coaching, there is nothing more satisfying. I felt the same way when I supervised young lawyers who worked for me.

I bet you have at least one highly motivated, talented young lawyer working for you. Are you building a fire within him or her?

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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](http://www.cordellparvin.com) or contact him at [cparvin@cordellparvin.com](mailto:cparvin@cordellparvin.com).