

[What Are the Top Attributes that Make a Mentor Most Helpful?](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on February 15th, 2013

If you know me, and especially if you ever worked with me, you know that I always mentored younger lawyers. I suppose that is why I am coaching lawyers now.

In my old firm, and more recently, I have done programs for mentors and mentees on mentoring. I like to ask group members to share their most memorable mentoring experience. Then I like to have group members describe attributes they believe make a mentor great. Finally I like to have the mentors describe what they expect from the mentees and have the mentees describe what they expect from the mentors. That always leads to an interesting discussion.

Just for a moment, imagine you are sitting in on the program and suppose I told you that you had to choose the top 3 attributes of great mentors. What top 3 attributes would you choose from this list?

- Role model
- Patient
- Motivated
- Talented
- Inspiring
- Unselfish
- Thoughtful
- Encourager
- Straight forward
- Gives good feedback
- Takes time to know the younger lawyer
- Confident
- Good listener
- Open to different ideas
- Accessible



What was your most memorable mentoring experience? What was the number one attribute that mentor had? What other attributes do you think are important?

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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.