

[16 Things I Tell Associate Lawyers I Coach](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on April 8th, 2013

I love coaching associates. Why? Put simply, associates are eager to learn and open to new ideas.

Here are 16 things I tell them. If I coached you when you were an associate, share anything additional you remember:



1. The only security you have as a lawyer in a law firm is clients.
2. The earlier you start to learn, practice and implement client development efforts, the earlier you will see results.
3. If you are able to practice law in an area you are passionate about or for clients you are passionate about, you will find joy in your career.
4. Plan your career with some end in mind. Where do you want to be five years from now?
5. You can never find time to learn or to develop business. You have to make time.
6. Clients do not care about what you do. They care about how what you do helps them with problems, opportunities and changes.

7. Clients want to hire lawyers who have confidence inspiring personalities. You only get one chance to make a good first impression.
8. The principles of client development have not changed. The tools to implement those principles are changing every day. Keep up with the changes in tools.
9. Figure out your strengths and focus your client development efforts there. But, you will only get better at client development by taking small steps to get comfortable doing things outside your comfort zone.
10. Clients do not want to hire lawyers who are “needy” or “greedy.”
11. Search for the something that sets you apart and try to become “best in the world” at it.
12. Clients want to do business with lawyers they know, like and trust. Make your friends your clients and your clients your friends.
13. Make client development a habit. Try to do something no matter how small each and every day.
14. Finally, and maybe most important: Each and every day, try to become a better lawyer and think of ways you can more effectively help your clients achieve their goals.

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.