

[Women Lawyers: Self Confidence Key to Your Success.](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on May 13th, 2014

I have been working on my novel about lawyer, Gina Caruso. My work includes brainstorming with many women lawyers I have coached and getting ideas. I have shared with you some potential first lines for my novel. Here is a new one I am considering:

The story I am about to tell you would have never happened if I, Gina, had been born, Gino Baretta, the first born son my famous Texas trial lawyer father, Leo, had wanted.

In my story, Leo Baretta loves Gina and tells her so each and every day. He encourages her throughout her childhood to express opinions and join in the adult conversations. Gina knows she is loved, and as important, knows she is respected. While growing up, Gina was a top student, a young phenom golfer, and a natural leader. She finished number 3 in her University of Texas law school class and clerked for a federal judge.

Yet, with all her success, Gina was still not totally convinced that she was a super-star. She needed the praise and positive feedback. At her first review, Gina is devastated when she is told that she is not being noticed by the senior lawyers in her firm. She is taken aback when her reviewer suggests that she change her last name to Baretta-Caruso, so the lawyers in the firm would know she is Leo Baretta's daughter.

Gino would have never been in doubt. He actually would have been overconfident and likely would have thought he was his father's equal in the courtroom after only a few trials. His confidence would have shown up in his posture, body language and speech.

Why would Gina look at her achievements and not feel the same level of self-confidence that a boy named Gino would have felt?



Last week I wrote: [Self Confidence Skills: Two Key Points](#). I hope you had a chance to read it.

Yesterday I found this Atlantic article: [The Confidence Gap](#), written by [Claire Shipman and Katty Kay](#), the authors of [The Confidence Code: THE SCIENCE AND ART OF SELF-ASSURANCE](#) What Women Should Know.

The Atlantic Article sub-heading read:

Evidence shows that women are less self-assured than men—and that to succeed, confidence matters as much as competence. Here’s why, and what to do about it.

For many years, I have said if a man and a woman lawyer were essentially at the same level of client development skills, the woman lawyer would think she is less skilled, while the male lawyer might think so much of his client development skills that he is making a fool of himself and doesn’t realize it.

When you read the Atlantic article you will find a self-perception study done by Brenda Major, a social psychologist at the University of California at Santa Barbara. She found:

...men consistently overestimated their abilities and subsequent performance, and that the women routinely underestimated both. The actual performances did not differ in quality.

The Atlantic writers found an interesting lesson from Cameron Anderson, a psychologist who works in the business school at the University of California at Berkeley, has made a career of studying overconfidence:

For decades, women have misunderstood an important law of the professional jungle. It’s not enough to keep one’s head down and plug away, checking items off a list. Having talent isn’t merely about being competent; confidence is a part of that talent. You have to have it to excel.

Are you self confident? The authors have a [Confidence Assessment](#) on their webpage. Take the assessment and discover for yourself.

Cordell Parvin Blog

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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.