

## [What One Trait Do You Need to Succeed?](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on February 5th, 2013

There are many traits you must have to be successful. I assume that you have many of them. One of the most important traits that will set lawyers apart in the future is the ability to **focus** in an age of distraction. You likely have not thought about it, but your smartphone could be your greatest distraction.

If you are an “experienced” lawyer, you remember when we did not have smartphones. We didn’t even have phones that were not smart. If you are even more experienced, you remember when we did not have computers in our offices.

In those days it was much easier to stay focused for hours at a time. Our only interruptions in those days were telephone calls and when someone from down the hall came in your office.

Today is so different. Have you ever unintentionally left your Smartphone device in the office or at home? Did you all of a sudden feel lost because you could not look at it?

Nancy and I sat at a bar recently and I looked around the bar and the majority of people had their smartphones laying on the bar and almost every minute they picked them up and looked at something. I did not put mine on the bar, but I continually looked at it. Nancy was texting.



I recently found an interesting article that seemed to address this situation: [Can’t make new friends? Keep your smartphone off the table.](#)

Letting your smartphone keep you from making friends in a social setting is one thing. Having it on and looking at it while a senior lawyer is giving a presentation, or when you are meeting with a client or potential client, could adversely impact your career.

To be successful you must be able to focus. [Leo Babauta](#) is the creator of a blog [Zen Habits](#). You might enjoy perusing this [list of all the posts](#). Leo Babuta also wrote: [Focus: A simplicity manifesto in the age of distraction](#). Babauta points out our addiction:

There's instant positive feedback to such constant activities as checking email, surfing the web, checking social networks such as blogs, forums, Twitter and Facebook. That's why it's so easy to become addicted to being connected and distracted.

Babauta suggests:

Separate your day: a time for creating, and a time for consuming and communicating. And never the twain shall meet.

I found a blog he had written titled: [The 7-Step Method to Find Focus for Writing](#). I think you will agree the 7-Step Method is one lawyers can use.

I absolutely agree with the approach. Can you totally focus on what you are doing for 20-30 minutes at a time without being distracted in any way? I urge you to try because in an age where we are increasingly addicted to consuming and communicating on our smartphones, the most successful lawyers will be able to focus.

P.S. [Dr. Heidi Grant Halvorson](#) has written a book that will be coming out soon titled: Focus. Check out [FOCUS Pre-order Giveaway!!](#)

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