

## [Are You Coachable?](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on September 9th, 2013

Several years ago a firm leader asked me to describe who would get the most out of our client development coaching. I told him to think about the lawyers in his firm who he thought really didn't need coaching; the lawyers that are constantly striving to get better.

I can coach those lawyers. They are coachable. Are you one of those lawyers? Are you coachable?



Let's start with a definition. I found this one in [What makes a player "coachable"?](#)

Coachability is the extent that we hear and utilize outside input and influences. To produce breakthroughs, we need to be coachable.

Now let's turn to what gets in the way of being coachable. A lawyer I coached who had put a lot into the program and got a lot out of it, sent a lengthy review of the coaching program to his firm leaders. In the very first paragraph he aptly described what gets in the way.

I think Cordell's coaching program is a transformational opportunity for people who buy in completely. The main shortcoming is that people who are **cynical/skeptical about the process** won't invest the time and effort to reform their daily lives to make the lessons (and the year-long program) work for them. Cordell's like a personal trainer – he's going to work if I show up at 6 am for our meeting and follow his plans but he's not much good to me if I still am eating Twinkies everyday after the workout.

The lawyer who wrote that was hungry to learn and open to try new ideas. He did very well while we worked together and even better when we had finished. He was one of several lawyers in his group who did well. But, as he pointed out, there were lawyers in his group that were cynical and skeptical about the program.

Do you remember just a few weeks ago, I posted: [Is Confirmation Bias holding you back?](#) In that post I shared with you how some people come into a situation with a bias (cynical/skeptical about the process) and then search for ways to confirm their bias.

Let me give you an example: I recently coached a talented young lawyer. For each of our coaching sessions he provided a detailed agenda of what he wanted to talk about. Each session as we went over the item he wanted to discuss, he would say things like:

Yes, but...

The problem is...

I would respond by saying:

Well, if you look at it that way, then it won't work for you. Let's explore ways you think it might work...

I don't think we ever found a way that he believed would actually work for him.

Are you coachable?

# Cordell Parvin Blog

DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LAW FIRM RAINMAKERS

**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).