

[Success: Want More? Get Comfortable Outside Your Comfort Zone](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on August 14th, 2014

Success: For many lawyers, success is achieved when they become comfortable outside their comfort zone. Over time they succeed and wonder why the task was uncomfortable in the first place.

Want an example to make the point? Networking events are uncomfortable for many lawyers I coach, including one I coached seven years ago.

[Apple Sulit-Peralejo](#) is a [Fox Rothschild](#) Atlantic City Family Law lawyer I coached way back in 2007. She is vibrant and expressive and she lights up the room when she enters. Yet, when I first met Apple she was uncomfortable going to networking events and meeting new people.



During our coaching that changed. Apple shared with me what had happened. Here is what she said.

During my legal career, I have frequently attended bar functions, “marketing” or “networking” events. I went to these events because I needed to go, not because I wanted to go. Even though I attended many events, I never seemed to develop business contacts, clients or referral sources and for a long time I wondered why.

I finally figured out the problem during our coaching. Even though I attended many bar and community events, I only mingled with the handful of people that I already knew. I stayed mostly within my comfort zone. Even when I met someone new, there was only a brief introduction followed by brief interaction.

During our coaching sessions, I realized I was missing the opportunity to meet new people, develop new relationships and develop deeper relationships with new contacts. I realized that I had to work on meeting and developing relationships with people I did not know. That meant I needed get comfortable outside my comfort zone.

Working up my courage, I tried a new approach when I attended social events. Instead of looking for people I knew, I approached people I had not met before. As important, I also made a conscious effort to avoid “business talk” or have the “hello interaction”. I stayed away from “business talk” because it is much easier to have a conversation with someone and to get to know that person by finding something we had in common – - travel, children, sports, news, etc. I realized that the “hello interaction” is the easy thing to do, because all you do is say “hello,” make small talk, say “nice to meet you” and then move away.

At first, I felt awkward not being in my comfort zone, but it has gotten easier for me. More importantly, I no longer dread going to these events. I actually look forward to going because it is now enjoyable. The icing on the cake is that I am promoting my business while having fun!

I recently asked Apple if she had anything to add to what she told me years ago. She replied:

I have nothing to add, except it seems like a lifetime ago since I was apprehensive about events.

The world’s greatest athletes, artists, musicians and others get better by practicing and focusing on developing skills. That is what Apple did and now she had honed those skills to such a degree that it seems like a lifetime ago when she was uncomfortable.

I know you can experience the same success. So, what can you work on to get better?

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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.