

Preface

I have been practicing law for almost 29 years and, except for my first few years where I was learning to navigate a law office myself, I have been in some mode of training attorneys ever since. I have trained men and women that are right out of law school, and laterals that come to us from other law offices, but not all of whom had been properly trained as a young attorney. As a result, I have trained by myself or at least in part, what seems like a hundred lawyers.

Some have been successful, some not, but throughout the process, patterns emerge and this book is a collection of ideas, techniques, observations, and basic rules of life in an office environment that, if followed, will heighten the ability for, if not guarantee, success in the early years of your career.

Accepting these bits of advice and integrating them into your day-to-day activity is critically important to be successful. It begins by being open to being coached. However, the success of the early career attorney, is not only on the new attorney, but also on the mentor and the pedagogical style with which he or she teaches, coaches, and advises.

This book offers a consistent message to attorneys to follow to be successful in the early part of their career. Again, it takes a person who is coachable to absorb the information, but it also requires discipline to carry this guidance out on a day-to-day basis. I truly believe that like exercise and a good diet, sometimes it takes a while to break in a new habit (what is the old adage, six weeks of the new behavior and it will become a habit?) But when the habit becomes as regular as showering or brushing your teeth, and it occurs naturally and consistently as a matter of course, success will be the sole byproduct.

Be forewarned, the daily grind in the practice of law has never been intended to be playground fun. It is, after the investment of time, energy, a commitment to learning and having an intellectual curiosity, a wonderfully rewarding career. People will rely on you for critically important issues that aside from their health, are the most important issues in their lives. While you may be on track to change the world, it all starts with improving the life of one client at a time.

Lastly, and above all else, we are in the service business for everyone regardless of their race, religion, country of national origin, sexual orientation, abilities or disabilities, so please make sure that everyone has equal access to justice.