Foreword

In *Defining Moments: Insights into the Lawyer’s Soul* Melanie has captured the essence of some of the most outstanding lawyers in the legal community to illustrate the dynamic reality of the practice of law and the incredible demands it places on the human spirit and the physical body. No effort of this magnitude goes without a cost and lawyers know the high price of success. There is little margin for error when prosecuting a legal case or defending an innocent victim. Lawyers have the ability to fashion the law and thus affect every area of life—from our infrastructure, to our legal systems, to our legislative work, our education, our health, and more. The boundaries of the law are infinite, and the lawyers Melanie highlights in this book are examples of the best of the legal practice in America, covering a variety of areas of practice, geography, and time periods.

The “LEAD Line” is a success principle for lawyers and really any profession to follow in their practices and their daily life. Just by incorporating these LEAD lines into your daily life you will see a shift in your energy, and you will begin to experience better outcomes.

Having written and edited more than 200 *Chicken Soup for the Soul*® books, I know very well the time and effort it takes to interview people and to distill their words into meaningful stories. The depth and breadth of these lawyers’ lives and their vulnerabilities are presented in such a way that nearly every reader can relate. When Melanie began this project, she wisely asked me how to get the people she was going to interview to be vulnerable and transparent in their interviews. I told her that the secret to getting people to be vulnerable, was to be open and vulnerable herself. From the quality of the stories in this book, I can see that she took my advice.

Before Melanie became Chair of the Solo, Small Firm and General Practice Division of the American Bar Association, she brought her leadership team to my hometown of Santa Barbara to spend a few days of meeting and planning. I had the pleasure of working with the
group for one of those days and teaching them some of the principles of success I have learned. Later the next year I got to know the group more deeply when I was asked to be a keynote speaker at the Joint Young Lawyers Division/GPSolo Fall Conference in Charleston, South Carolina. I spent three days and nights with both young and older lawyers from all over the United States. During that time, I learned a lot about lawyers and the service they provide in their communities. As a result, I now have a greater appreciation for the work they do and the stresses the profession places on them. When you finish reading this book, you will too.

I believe *Defining Moments: Insights into the Lawyer’s Soul* should be a must read for all lawyers and the public they serve. Lawyers have complex, deep, and insightful lives that we can all learn from and grow as we work on making the world a better place.

Jack Canfield
Coauthor of the *Chicken Soup for the Soul*® series and *The Success Principles™: How to Get from Where You Are to Where You Want to Be*