RAISING THE BAR THROUGH EMPOWERMENT

STRATEGIES FOR EXCELLING AS A MINORITY IN THE MAINSTREAM LAW FIRM

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STRATEGIES FOR EXCELLENTING AS A MINORITY IN THE MAINSTREAM LAW FIRM

MAINSTREAM OR MAJORITY LAW FIRMS ARE NOT EVERYONE’S CUP OF TEA
STRATEGIES FOR EXCELLENTING AS A MINORITY IN THE MAINSTREAM LAW FIRM

**MY PERSPECTIVE:**

- Senior associate, small-medium sized firm
- Senior associate, small firm
- Partner, large statewide firm
STRATEGIES FOR EXCELSiating as a minority in the mainstream law firm

MY PERSPECTIVE.

Michael Robert Milken

- American financier best known as the "Junk Bond King" of 1980s era Wall Street
- The biggest player in the insider trading scandals of 1980s.
- Highly influential in developing the market for junk bonds (a.k.a. "high-yield debt") during the 1970s and 1980s.
- Fueled the 1980s boom in corporate raids and hostile corporate takeovers.
- Has been called a financial innovator and the epitome of 1980s Wall Street greed.
MY PERSPECTIVE:

- **RESOLUTION TRUST CORPORATION**
  - A corporation formed by Congress in 1989 to replace the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation.
  - Responded to the insolvencies of about 750 savings and loan associations.
  - As receiver, it sold assets of failed S&Ls and paid insured depositors.
  - In 1995 its duties, including insurance of deposits in thrift institutions, were transferred to the Savings Association Insurance Fund.
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MY PERSPECTIVE:

- SELF EDUCATION
- EDUCATED AND INTELLECTUAL ACCEPTANCE OF THE PLACE AND ROLE OF RACE CONSCIOUS LEGAL ADVOCACY
- ADVOCACY FOR SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF ME/MY COMMUNITY
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MY PREMISE:

IF YOU ARE EMPOWERED THEN YOU ARE:

• MORE THAN CAPABLE

• POISED TO SUCCEED

• IN YOUR PREDESTINED PLACE FOR PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL GROWTH
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MY PREDISPOSITION

Empowerment refers to increasing the spiritual, political, social or economic strength of individuals and communities. It often involves the empowered developing confidence in their own capacities.

From Wikipedia
MY PREDISPOSITION

Empowerment is the solution to Marginalization.

Marginalization refers to overt or covert trends within societies whereby those perceived as lacking desirable traits or deviating from the group norms tend to be excluded by wider society and ostracized as undesirables.
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MY PREDISPOSITION

Empowerment is state of mind and predicated upon:

- Self teaching
- Observation and emulation
- Recruitment and strategic team building
- Disciplined adherence to established principles
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MY PREDISPOSITION

Empowerment means to listen, observe, learn and execute:

- The art of practicing law
- The pathways to a successful business practice
- The integration of both law and business, all while
  - Adding VALUE to your clients and community
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MY PREDISPOSITION

- You Cannot Simply “Survive” in a majority law firm
- Marginalism in the practice assures an early exit
- Marginalism from a business perspective is likewise not tolerated
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MY PREDISPOSITION

- Survival/Success demands excellence!!!
- Successful lawyers always leave a trail of good deals and deeds
- The firm, clients and community know successful lawyers as People Who Get It Done-And Well!
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MY PREDISPOSITION

- Successful lawyers utilize their professional skills of advocacy, knowledge of the law and relationships to build, maintain and enhance their communities.
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RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE FIRM:

- You want people to know, like and respect you
- You want to make whoever is giving you work look good
- You want those giving you work to challenge and talk to without inhibition
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RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE FIRM:

- Your work product speaks volumes!!
- Hesitate to give an unsolicited and unwritten opinion
- Learn the art of billing
- **Practice being productive**
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RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE FIRM:

- Understand and utilize the firm’s technology assets, particularly those that record or document your empirical performance and standing within the firm.
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RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE FIRM:

- Accept and attack your billable hour budget i.e. plan and constantly evaluate your workload
- Every successful lawyer is constantly asking/begging for work!!
- Deliberative self promotion/bragging is good
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RELATIONSHIPS
OUTSIDE THE FIRM:
- WHERE IS YOUR COMMUNITY?
- WHAT KIND OF ANIMAL ARE YOU? GRASS ROOTS SOCIAL, POLITICAL, ACADEMIC, ECONOMIC
- PROFESSIONALLY: CHOOSE A LOCAL AND NATIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION
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RELATIONSHIPS
OUTSIDE THE FIRM:

● IN EVERY CIVIC OR PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION BECOME A LEADER-
VOLUNTEER TO WORK!

● REMEMBER—YOU ARE EXPECTED TO BE “THE PROFESSIONAL”
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RELATIONSHIPS OUTSIDE THE FIRM:

- Study and know Roberts Rules of Order
- Read the organization’s by-laws and incorporation documents
- Read and understand applicable laws related to the organization, its mission, and obligations
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RELATIONSHIPS OUTSIDE THE FIRM:

- Get to know your fellow board members
- Avoid appearances of being better than non-lawyers
- Remember differences and consensus can be resolved quietly in informal settings—out of the lime light, where appropriate
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RELATIONSHIPS

OUTSIDE THE FIRM:

- OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSINESS WILL COME OVER TIME AND AFTER SOME SHARED EXPERIENCES

- SHARED EXPERIENCES EQUATE TO TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IN YOUR ABILITY

- HOW WELL CAN YOU SERVE!
RELATIONSHIPS OUTSIDE THE FIRM:

- YOU GIVE SERVICE - YOU RECEIVE OPPORTUNITIES TO SUCCEED
- THE QUALITY OF YOUR SERVICE WILL DO MORE TO TRANSCEND YOUR RACE THAN ANYTHING

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RELATIONSHIPS
LAWYER TO LAWYER: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
- FRIENDS, CLOSE COLLEAGUES
- PROFESSIONALS WHO VIEW YOU AS AN EXPERT
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RELATIONSHIPS

LAWYER TO LAWYER: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT FRIENDS, CLOSE COLLEAGUES

- U-PICKEM!
- INFORMALLY MEET, EAT AND DO STUFF TOGETHER OFTEN
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RELATIONSHIPS
LAWYER TO LAWYER: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT FRIENDS, CLOSE COLLEAGUES

- FIND OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP THEM PERSONALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY!
- YOUR COMMITMENT TO THEM IS UNPARALLELED
- UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE THEIR LIMITATIONS
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RELATIONSHIPS

LAWYER TO LAWYER: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

FRIENDS, CLOSE COLLEAGUES

- GROW THE CIRCLE OF FRIENDS SLOWLY BUT SURELY
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CLOSER ON THE BASICS

KEEP IT SIMPLE:

- REMEMBER YOU ARE PRIVILEGED TO BE A RESPONSIBLE PROFESSIONAL
- THINK AHEAD AND AVOID APPEARANCES OF IMPROPRIETY
- DON'T TAKE AN UNFAIR ADVANTAGE, ESPECIALLY OF NON-LAWYERS
- BE A GENTLEMAN OR LADY
CLOSER ON THE BASICS

KEEP IT SIMPLE:

- PAY ATTENTION TO DETAIL AND PREPARE IN ADVANCE FOR EVERYTHING
- ALWAYS BE EARLY AND ON TIME
- STRIVE TO ERROR FREE