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GAWL Means Influence

**Pilar Prinz,
GAWL President,
2010-2011**

Most of us seek to have influence - whether it is with our clients, our office, our industry, or our communities. As one of GAWL's objectives this year is "Influence," I have given much thought to what it means and how to become influential. From a review of the numerous publications and studies, it appears that several key factors are, well, influential in becoming influential.

Take initiative – People of influence don't sit in the corner and wait for something to happen; they take action.

Be involved– Being influential means going beyond your own firm or even your own practice area. It means being involved and being known. Building a reputation of influence requires getting to know your peers, taking on roles of significance, and working hard to make a difference in what you do.

Lead by Example – Being a person of influence requires making

the effort to "do what you say, and say what you do." If you want to encourage professionalism in your workplace, for instance, exhibit professionalism in everything you do.



Pilar Prinz

Speak Out – This can be surprisingly difficult for us (yes, even as lawyers), but in order to be influential, you have to make your mind known.

Considering these factors, how is GAWL influential, and how does GAWL help its members achieve influence in the legal community? GAWL has certainly taken the initiative, pioneering the way for women lawyers for more than 80 years, and encourages our members to do so on a regular basis. GAWL is involved in the legal community, and offers significant opportunities for our members to be involved. GAWL leads by example, setting forth a clearly defined mission, and actively pursuing objectives that

further that mission. On an individual level, GAWL offers leadership opportunities to our members, through programs, seminars, and opportunities to serve in board positions. And, finally, GAWL speaks out, by publicizing information on difficult issues (such as the It's About Time study), disseminating information about our Members on the Run, and providing a platform for members, non-members, and sponsors to speak out to the community at large.

As we enter 2011, it is my goal to continue the legacy of influence of GAWL, and for GAWL to continue to foster and develop the influence within each of you. Happy New Year!

Pilar Prinz is a partner in the Atlanta firm of Lawler Green Givelber & Prinz. Pilar's practice is focused exclusively in divorce litigation and negotiation, custody and support modifications, contempt, prenuptial agreements, legitimation and paternity actions. Pilar is married to Andrew Prinz, has two beautiful daughters, and in her "spare" time likes to run and practice Pilates.

LISTENING FOR BUSINESS

BY DOTTY PRITCHETT

Lawyers live in an era of information explosion. Constant interruptions and distractions on a regular basis throughout the day make tuning out a survival skill. The business challenge for lawyers in 2011 is to tune in – to listen, to connect with individuals.

Women lawyers are particularly skilled at certain forms of listening: small-talk listening, compassionate listening, information seeking and

critical listening. Although there is overlap in the various forms of listening, many women lawyers generally do not readily connect listening to business opportunities. Some shy away from any activity to build a relationship that seems contrived or structured. Listening for business, however, is about connecting, not convincing.

Connecting with one another to develop relationships is good business and much has

been written about how to network, how to be the go-to person, and how to collaborate for business development. These are effective strategies for growing a legal career and require adapting a just-do-it attitude.

Listening for business requires more than active listening and adapting a just-do-it attitude. Listening for business requires that you put yourself in a movie mode. Whenever you go to a movie,

you totally focus on the screen and the story that unfolds. You are quiet. You put aside your ego, your worries, your plans and become part of the story playing out on the screen. Rebecca Shafir, M.A., CCC, a certified speech and language pathologist, describes mindful listening as stepping into another person's movie. You filter out all inner and outer distractions to shift to the speaker's reality. It is not performing a structured list to demonstrate that you are listening. The focus is to understand the speaker.

When you listen for business you become part of the speaker's movie to understand her/his side of the issue. You become mindful of the speaker's concerns and problems. You involve both sides of the brain: the left side processes the logic of the words (the main point and facts supporting the position and perhaps something about the speaker's background) and the right side processes the tone and nonverbal gestures (the feelings about the topic). By engaging the brain on different levels, you can shift into mindful listening.

Consider the Chinese characters for listening attentively: standing still, ten, ear, heart and mind. Zen master, Dae Gak, interprets these characters as, "When in stillness, one listens with the

heart. The ear is worth ten eyes." Listening for business is an inside job!

Successful lawyers focus on solving problems as the keys to developing new clients and creating loyal existing clients. Solving problems (generating business) using mindful listening will happen when you:

- Are curious about new information
- Are willing to respect the speaker
- Encourage the speaker to converse without censure
- Process information by interpreting the whole message (words, gestures and body language) in an unbiased manner
- Retain the information to help solve current and future issues

"You've got the talking down, just not the listening." These are the lyrics of the song, "King Of Anything" and reflect a challenge for many lawyers. Talking is an essential skill for lawyers in all practice areas. Even when writing is critical, client contact requires good speaking skills. Lawyers learn how to prove a point of view, explain a legal implication, defend an action, and advocate a strategy but rarely learn how to listen.

Successful women lawyers already know the value of listening for business

and strive to improve these skills by

- listening to self talk that impacts bottom line results
- listening with their heart to attract clients
- listening for conflicts and connections
- listening in the silence
- listening for opportunities to solve problems in stressful situations

Listening for business is a process not a goal. It takes practice. In this era of information explosion, you may be surprised to learn that developing the skills to listen for business will not only impact your business in a positive way but will improve your personal life as well.

Dorothy M. Pritchett, ACC, CGC is the Founder and CEO of Andrew Grace Associates and the Legal Goddess Network. As a certified career coach, group coaching leader, and consultant, she works with lawyers to transform individual strengths into business development assets. Contact Dorothy at dpritchett@andrewgraceassociates.com. You can also find more information at www.andrewgraceassociates.com and www.legalgoddessnetwork.com.

Sharing Perspectives on Practicing Law While Parenting

On December 3, 2010, the Atlanta Bar Association's Women in the Profession Section, GAWL, the Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys, and several other associations* sponsored a timely panel discussion at the offices of Nelson, Mullins, Riley & Scarborough. The panel discussion "The Mommy Factor: Perspectives on Practicing Law While Parenting" featured prominent and dynamic attorneys who are mothers, including Chief Justice Carol W. Hunstein (Supreme Court of Georgia), Myra Coleman Bierria (VP of AGL Resources), Amy Howell (Deputy Commissioner, Department of Juvenile Justice), Jennifer Keaton (Founder of One Mediation), Elaine Levine (Partner, Levine & Dickman), and Jeong-Hwa

Lee "June" Towery (Partner, Nelson Mullins).

The panel, which was free and included lunch, was well attended. While panel members were quick to disclaim perfection, the discourse that followed could not have been more timely, insightful and valuable for all present. The diversity in the panel members' backgrounds was a gold mine. Discussion ranged from being a single mother during college and after, to laying the groundwork for juggling responsibilities with the spouse before growing families, to the challenges of adoption and life lessons learned along the way.

Here are a few gem stones from which any attorney-parent can benefit:

•In law school, you're taught to think like a lawyer—That is,

to dissect everything and find its weakness. Obviously, this is not conducive to child-rearing. Plan time to shift gears when you get home. Leave your stuff in the car when first get home so that your arms will be open to greet your family when you come in the door. Make the next 20-30 minutes all about them. Your smart-phone and briefcase can wait.

•There will be times you'll feel you're not a good parent. There will be times that you'll worry about being a good lawyer. If you're worried about it, you're probably doing fine. Don't let the problem at hand define you.

•Don't plan to multi-task work and kids. It happens, but don't plan your schedule that way. You'll be more organized and more present. Eye contact is precious and powerful. If

you look at your Blackberry, you cut off that eye contact.

•Find time to build connections with parents in your kids' circles. You'll find this network imperative when a crisis hits. You'll be able to call someone who knows parenting, knows you, and knows your family.

•Time with your children doesn't have to be all play. Involve them in doing chores with you – laundry, dishes, dinner, and shopping.

•Communicate! Can't be there? Let them know what to expect. Plan time for one-on-one with each of the kids. They'll be able to take the times you're absent when they know you'll make other time to be present—when they know that they are on your calendar, too.

•It's 2011! It's not about

what works for everyone else and traditional roles. A couple moms on the panel talked about splitting responsibilities and career planning with the spouse before growing families. There are a few stay-at-home dads out there!

•Likewise, if you're planning to work for yourself to have more control of your work

schedule, be prepared and plan wisely. It can be done and has worked well for many, but it can take five to ten years to truly establish stable income under your own shingle.

All panelists agreed: Practicing law while parenting isn't easy, but it's rewarding. As Elaine Levine said, "You know that you're a strong law-

yer when your child gets older and enumerates the points in his argument!"

Here's to growing happy, healthy kids and practicing law in the new year!

**Sharing Perspectives on Practicing Law While Parenting was presented by the Atlanta Bar Association's Women in the Profession Sec-*

tion, Georgia Association for Women Lawyers, Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys, State Bar of Georgia's Committee to Promote Inclusion in the Profession, Young Lawyers Division's Parents and Caregivers in the Profession and Young Lawyers Division's Women in the Profession.

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Don't Forget to Renew Your GAWL Membership!!

When you renew, join GAWL in celebrating the lives and legacies of Ruth and Ruby Crawford, two of Georgia's most prominent female lawyers. Admitted to the Georgia Bar in 1948 and 1950, Ruth and Ruby Crawford helped pave the way for all women lawyers in Georgia. Donate now to the Ruth and Ruby Crawford Endowment Fund and help GAWL honor these trailblazers. When you renew your annual membership in January 2011, please make a tax-deductible donation of \$19.50 (a tribute to the year of Ruth's admittance) to the Ruth and Ruby Crawford Endowment.

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Capstone Financial Partners has been offering comprehensive financial planning services in Atlanta for over 130 years and is a proud sponsor of GAWL. Valerie Fricks and Devon Haywood head the Legal Team at Capstone, where their practice focuses on helping attorneys fulfill their financial goals. Valerie and Devon are happy to announce that they have secured a discount on Disability Income Insurance and Long Term Care Insurance products for GAWL members. Other services include life insurance, investment products, and fee-based financial planning. Please contact Valerie Fricks at 404-926-1351 or vfricks@finsvcs.com or Devon Haywood at 404-926-1309 or dhaywood@finsvcs.com for further information. Learn more about Capstone Financial Partners at www.capstonefinancialpartners.com.