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**1. *Everyone knows that law school and the Bar are difficult and stressful; what helped to keep you focused and your head above water?***

"I came out of Duke, but then came out and took the California Bar. So, I actually moved there in the summer and did an in-person Bar review class at Stanford. That was incredibly important for me. I was surrounded by a class of my peers, had a physical place to go study and people to study with, and everyone was really smart and, obviously, fully-intended to pass the Bar. Nobody in that group was intending to fail. So I've done it that way, but then in 2011 I moved up to Washington and I had to take [that] Bar. As a mid-career person at that time, I did Bar prep totally online and studied for the Washington Bar by myself. So I've done both extremes, and I'm two for two, passing the Bar in two different states. Both were on my first try, so obviously I did something right. They were also 15 years apart, first in 1996 and then again in 2011, meaning I've passed the Bar at two very different stages of life.

What I will say is that both times, I took it very seriously. I did not treat it as a joke. I feel like I activated the same "competitiveness", or desire to succeed, that I through law school itself. A lot of times, I feel like people don't treat Bar review like an intellectual exercise. They treat it like the driving test at a DMV, and that's a huge mistake. I think you have to actually engage in the material and use as much of your intellectual firepower as you would in an actual class so that you actually think about what's going on, and you're not just trying to memorize stuff in some kind of mindless fashion. Because at the end, you have to be able to think. If you're just memorizing stuff, you're not actually thinking. Then when you get into [real-life] problems and your memory doesn't work, you're screwed. That's one of the reasons people fail, because they're just memorizing and not learning.

I took the test-taking portion of law school really seriously, and I think that helped me later [with the Bar]. I don't care what else you do in law school – if you're bad at exams, you're screwed. One of the most helpful classes I ever took in law school wasn't even a law school class. It was a private seminar that Duke did, and it basically taught you how to take law school exams. I really applied a lot of things from that seminar to school and Bar prep. The point is, I actually taking law school exams is a skill. They're not like other tests that you take in your academic career. By becoming good at the exams, you almost start to look forward to them rather than being freaked out. You realize that you're actually good at it, whereas a lot of your classmates aren't terribly good. So rather than the exams being this horrible thing, you're almost "revved up" to take them. The point is, getting your head around how you deal with exams is really, really important.

The second thing I'd say is, you need to have a study group. If you don't have a functional study group, I don't know how anyone... I would have never gotten through law school. It needs to be a group that you like and also challenges you; I don't think you can do it by yourself.

Third, you have to genuinely like the material on some level. If you're in law school and you hate everything about it... I don't know how to help you. Sure, maybe you can just soldier through it, but if you don't enjoy it, you're in trouble. A lot of people find themselves in that spot, and you need to figure a way out of it because you're not going to enjoy practicing law either. This doesn't go for every class, but I absolutely, genuinely enjoyed law school for what it was academically and intellectually.

The fourth thing I'd say is that while I was no joke in law school (I was top 10% at Duke, I made Law Review), I NEVER pulled an all-nighter. Ever. Never in three years. I wouldn't even consider it. And what I mean by saying this, is that whenever I heard that a classmate tried to pull an all-nighter right before an exam, I would just laugh because I knew that I would absolutely kick their ass. The reality is that pulling an all-nighter and not sleeping is the route to do terribly on exams. I never saw someone pull an all-nighter and actually have it work for them. Just don't believe that that works."

**2. July 2018 Bar pass rates in California saw a drop that hit a 70-year low, with 20 out of the 21 ABA-accredited law schools in the state suffering a [pass rate decrease ranging from 1%-21%](#). As a result, many students are preparing to take it again in 2019 (in addition to new first-time takers). Whether or not you passed on your first try, you did have to take the Bar twice since you've been admitted in both CA and WA; how did you prepare when you first passed, and (the second time) did you do anything differently having already taken it once before?**

"When I studied for the Washington Bar (the second Bar I took), I tended to do so later at night because I was at a different point in my life – I had little kids at that time. I wrote a TON of practice questions. I worried less about reviewing outlines and just focused my efforts on the written part because if you can't translate it into a practice exam, nothing matters. When I studied for the CA Bar I didn't get that as much, and I had to study for the multi-state, so there was more "studying" at that point. But for the WA one I would do the material, taking it very seriously like I was in a lecture, but then I would just go right into the practice exam. I didn't spend a lot of time in the middle, you know, creating beautiful outlines and really organizing stuff. To me, that's all nonsense. You've got to go right from the material to the practice exam so that you can apply it; everything else was a waste of time for me.

I only realized this as an older person because at the time, I didn't have the means to study full-time. I think when people study full-time, they don't actually manage their time very well because they almost have too much time to spend on it. I was working full-time while I studied for the WA Bar, so I had no time to mess around.

**3. After graduating, what were the first few years of your professional life like? How did that compare to the expectations you had during school?**

It was very consistent with my summer associate experience. If I didn't have that, I would have been totally lost. The transition from being a summer associate to an associate at Cooley was, to me, pretty smooth.

I'd also say that my third year at law school, I went crazy in terms of immersing myself in the industry and context that I was going to work in – for me that was Silicon Valley and venture capital. I went to the business school, I read every book that was ever written on the history of Silicon Valley, the history of venture capital, how V.C. works, how startups work. And again, this was above and beyond what I did as a third year law school student. At that point we had the Internet; I was on the San Jose Mercury news site on my dial-up modem daily, following everything that was going on in the Valley.

By the time I got to Cooley, I felt like a venture lawyer already. I wasn't just some random kid who didn't know anything about anything; I knew all of the terminology, all the history, how the game was played (at least at a high level). So when I got in and got to ride along with partners or go to board meetings with startups, I was into it from day one. But again, it was because I wanted to be there. I wasn't some kid looking for a job just to get a paycheck from a law firm. My attitude was, *I'm here to be a Valley lawyer, period. Being a Valley lawyer means understanding the Valley.* Regardless of where you're going or what industry you're working in, you need to go all in or not at all. I think that was enormously helpful for me; that's the reason why as a first-year associate and second-year associate, there were clients who thought I was a sixth- or seventh-year associate. By the time I was a third-year, people thought I was a partner because my sophistication was so much higher than everyone else about what the heck it is we're trying to do. I mean, there's a reason that I'm the president of Corum and I'm still in my 40's.

**4. Being able to effectively network with peers, associates, and employers is a major factor in furthering a professional career, particularly in the legal field. Are there any common misconceptions or outdated advice that you've heard regarding the "proper" way to network in today's work environment?**

I think there's "old school" and "new school", and people's perception of old school networking is going to cocktail parties, hanging out at the golf course and country club, or some nonsense like that. I don't think any of that works for younger people, I really don't. I'm not sure that LinkedIn actually works for younger people, either, because they don't have anything to offer to senior people on those public forms. Being a senior person myself, I'm not going to connect with totally young people on LinkedIn, I'm just not going to do it.

The thing that does work is actually getting involved and doing stuff. I'm a huge fan of things like Startup Weekend, helping out organizations like TechStars, mentoring, volunteering at places like WeWork and doing office hours. You really have to roll up your sleeves and do stuff. As a young person you've got to show that you are capable, otherwise I'm just going to meet you at some event and say, "Well, does this young person even know anything?" But if I see

that you're doing things, now I get intrigued and I'm impressed that you do actually take this stuff seriously, and you do want to add value to the world.

Traditional networking where you're just trying to socialize with people and expect them to do something for you because they're your friend... I don't buy it. You should try getting into pro bono or something at least vaguely related to what you want to do. I'm a big fan of pro bono, volunteering, mentoring – getting out into the world.

**5. *What are the top 3 things you learned as a lawyer that you wish you'd known when first starting?***

Law students have to be better on the business side. I knew that a bit and I took some classes at Duke's MBA school, but I still didn't do enough. For example, accounting. Lawyers suck at accounting. The number of law students who actually understand basic accounting is just horrific. Project management skills, the really basic stuff... the number of law students who understand how to manage a project: horrific. And what I'd call "basic business competency"; understanding different industries, business models, understanding how companies get financed or whatever aspect you're working in. That's where law students really fall down. Most think it's about being a technician and having a lot of technical legal knowledge, but once you get out there you realize that's all taken for granted and nobody gives a crap about how much technical law you know. All they care about is how well you understand their business, how well you understand their business problem, and how well can you apply legal solutions to real-world business problems which often involve money, accounting, numbers and math. If you can't do that stuff, you're just not useful. Most law students dramatically overvalue technical legal knowledge and still undervalue everything else.

**6. *What made you change career paths, and how has your past legal experience helped you in your current endeavors?***

It's hugely important, and the flip-side of what I was saying before about when you get out in the business world, the truly high-end legal skills are actually rare. If you're in a board room and you're the only one who's got a clue, who's ever really practiced law, you're unique. If you're working at an investment bank (like Corum) and you're the only one who's ever done a deal as a lawyer, you're unique. So the flip side of what I said early, if you develop a lot of other skills *and* you're a lawyer... I've always considered being a lawyer as a "both/and" thing. You don't want to be "just a-". If you're "just a lawyer" you've got a problem. But if you're really good at other things *and* you're skilled as a lawyer? That "and" part is kind of like your trump card, and I use that regularly, all the time. That's why I continue to maintain my Bar membership and try to keep my legal skills really sharp – so that I can bring that to bear in a way that other people just can't.

**7. *Any last words of advice for our students and recent grads?***

The last thing that I maybe haven't said yet is that technology was a passion [sic]. Law was a vehicle to get me where I wanted to go into my passion. It was a way to get into the technology

industry; that's how I really looked at Cooley and going to the Valley. The reason I think that works is because I genuinely had an underlying passion; even as a kid I was working with computers, writing code and all that. So I was able to combine something I really cared about with the law. What I see in unhappy lawyers is that they kind of practice law but they don't care about it. That, I think, is really hard to sustain; and it's really hard to be great if you don't actually care about what you're doing. That's why we have so many unhappy lawyers out there. They're trying to practice law with no passion or heart for the underlying subject matter. It's all head no heart, and that doesn't work. I found that if you truly love what you're doing *and* you're a good lawyer, that works and you make a life doing that. But just thinking you can be a lawyer for the money and not give a crap about your clients or anything else, you're going to be unhappy. Sorry to break it to you, but you're never going to enjoy it.