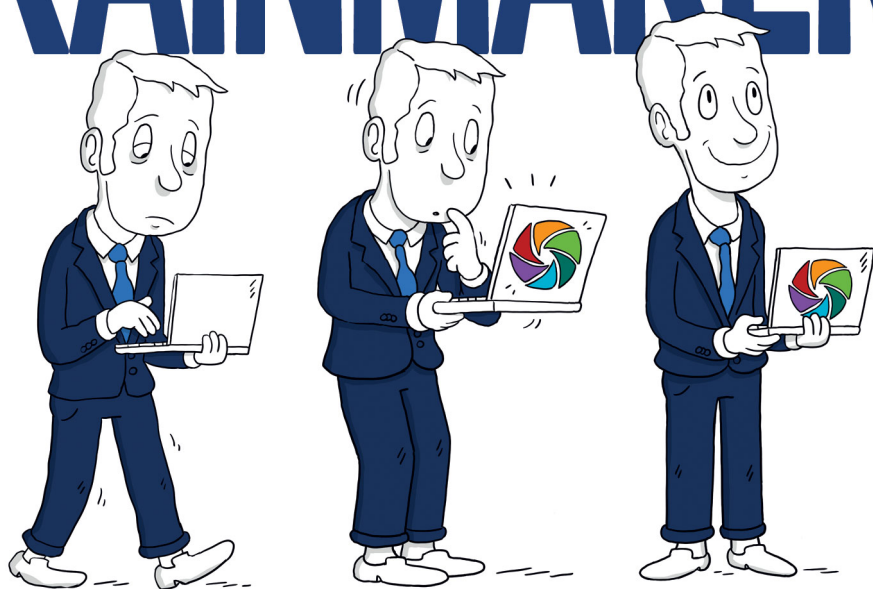


THE HAPPY RAINMAKER



A Little Tale About A Lawyer Who
Found Success And Happiness Too

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PART I

Once Upon A Time There Was An Unhappy Attorney



Meet Bob BigLaw, A Victim Of Undeserved Misfortune

Bob BigLaw groaned the groan of an unhappy man.

It was 2:30 a.m. and Bob was still at the office, poring over documents. If he finished soon, he might be able to get a couple of hours of sleep before he needed to be right back here to start on the next brief.

The 6:00 a.m. alarm roused the exhausted lawyer from his slumber, the ache behind his eyeballs an all too familiar feeling. He could tell this was going to be a triple-shot espresso kind of morning.

Bob was unhappy, but it was not his fault. He had fallen into a trap that many associates fall prey to. Bob bought into the myth that if you just worked harder than everyone else, it would all work out in the end.

That is a tragic mistake, a seduction of success that can prove fatal to a career and a happy life.

Bob told himself he actually didn't mind the late nights because he absolutely loved being a lawyer; it had been his dream job since he was young.

Shambling toward the bathroom past family photos on the wall brought up fond memories of his father sharing his knowledge of the law and instilling in him a desire for analysis and conflict mediation that had served him well. And while his father was a partner at a small law firm, Bob's ambitions went beyond following in his footsteps. Bob wanted to work on cutting-edge litigation, and to him that meant being at a prestigious big law firm.

Bob couldn't turn his legal mind off if he tried; it was overflowing with ideas for arguments and new angles for clients. Inspiration struck so often that Bob kept a notepad next to his bed for those middle-of-the-night ideas.

He even got a waterproof pad and pen for his shower, and jotting down ideas was as routine as washing his hair.

All this hard work was going to pay off soon, Bob knew it. He had been excelling at the firm for nine years, and his goal of becoming a partner was in sight. This singular vision to make partner had dictated nearly every decision he made in the last fifteen years and it came with plenty of sacrifices, most notably his complete lack of a social or romantic life.

When Bob joined the firm, he thought he could be a great lawyer and have a social life too. But then he had to start cancelling dates,

which caused women to lose interest in him rapidly. More than once, Bob was so exhausted he even fell asleep during a date. That was understandably a deal-breaker.

While Bob wanted to eventually have a family, he knew that he couldn't balance work and dating right now if he wanted to stay on this track. So, the dreams of a future Mrs. BigLaw and children would have to stay as just dreams, for now.

The first stop when arriving at the office was to hit the break room for another coffee and his go-to breakfast of a pack of mini Oreos (bite-sized, so no crumbs on the keyboard) from the vending machine. Bob couldn't remember the last time he cooked a meal; it seemed like he had consisted solely on vending machine food and coffee for years now, and it was taking a toll on his body.

Fitness was another thing Bob had pushed to the back burner, a future goal for when he made partner, and finally had the freedom to take even an hour off to hit the gym.

Bob preferred being in the office ahead of everyone and enjoyed the quiet calm before each boisterous day. But today's solitude was ruined by a familiar voice behind him.

"Morning, Bob. Getting a late start, I see," said his nemesis at the firm, Gunther Gunner.

Bob nodded a friendly greeting to his fellow senior associate while resisting the urge to roll his eyes.

But then Gunther happily filled the silence.

“I got here an hour ago, already done with the McCormick files,” said Gunther. “Greg wanted everything on his desk first thing. Do you need any help on your end?”

Greg was Greg Grinder, the partner who took a particular interest in Gunther because he saw him as a chip off the old block. There is a saying that “If you’re trying to make partner, you better have a rabbi,” or a partner to sponsor you and speak on your behalf. It was clear to Bob that Greg Grinder, Esq., had chosen Gunther and that Gunther was the senior associate he was betting on to make partner.

Gunther’s offer to help Bob was less than sincere. Gunther was only interested in making Bob seem less driven and hardworking than himself. As a fellow senior associate, Gunther also had his sights set on making partner, and both he and Bob knew full well that it was extremely unlikely they could both be promoted in the same year since they were in the same department.

What started as a friendly rivalry had soured. Gunther and Bob came from very different backgrounds. Whereas Bob’s upbringing had been comfortable, and his path always clear, Gunther had to fight to even get an opportunity to become a lawyer. Gunther wore the chip on his shoulder proudly, reminding Bob of his privilege whenever he could, and it served as a great motivating force, fueling Gunther’s long nights and tireless work ethic. Even Bob had to admit that Gunther worked his butt off, and he knew Greg and the other partners saw it too. So Bob returned to his office and got back to work.

After a 9 a.m. visit to the vending machines, Bob swung by the desk of his favorite legal assistant, Nina Nurture, to say good morning.

Nina had seen everything. She knew everything that happened at this firm. She knew how the lawyers worked. She knew how the inside politics worked, and she was a wealth of information to the people she trusted. She liked Bob. He was always nice, always respectful.

Bob only asked Nina for things that he really couldn't do himself, like how to format a certain kind of label or something that he knew would be quick for her, but really hard for him. But for most things, he tried not to put anything else on her plate. Bob only asked Nina to help with tasks that she was so much more efficient at than he was.

Bob knew Nina was extremely busy, and he was always kind. A lot of times when he was going to get a cup of coffee, he'd ask if she wanted one, and he remembered how she liked it. He remembered that she had a sweet tooth. Sometimes, when he was getting candy for his niece and nephew, he'd pick up some for Nina, too, and leave it on her desk. He didn't make a big deal about it, but she knew it was from him.

While Bob had a great rapport with Nina these days, he didn't always recognize her full value. As a rookie, he was practically allergic to asking Nina for assistance, keenly aware of how much the partners already put onto her plate. Though he had to admit, some of it was prideful ego on his part, a need to prove himself.

It wasn't until a fateful day when Nina rescued him that it finally clicked for Bob that he couldn't, shouldn't do everything himself. During one of his many late-night work sessions, a tired Bob hadn't realized he was working off an older, outdated version of the assigned brief. Nina caught the error with only an hour before it was due. For Bob, this felt like a disaster, and as he furiously scrambled to fix it, Nina calmly put a hand on his shoulder, told him to step back, and got to work.

Before Bob's eyes, Nina worked her magic, taking the work Bob had already done and merging it with the updated brief. Not only that, she improved it along the way, massaging the writing to be much clearer than Bob's exhausted late-night version. With minutes to spare, the brief was complete, and the partners never knew of Bob's mistake.

Nina took the opportunity to lay down some much-needed tough love.

"You're too proud, Bob," Nina said. "This is a team, we succeed as a team. Together. You need to rely on other people here, and if you want to advance in this firm, you need to rely on me. You're not weak for asking for help, and trying to do everything yourself doesn't make you a better lawyer, it just opens you up for mistakes."

Bob took those words to heart, and he and Nina quickly became friends. Having Nina as a teammate proved invaluable. Her years of experience with the firm meant she knew every partner's personalities, quirks, and schedules. She shared her wealth of knowledge, and Bob learned about when the partners were having

meetings, who was mad at whom, and even what the yearly bonuses would look like. Her office politics savvy gave Bob an edge that kept him ahead of his rival, Gunther.

A notification alerted Bob to a meeting on his calendar with Greg Grinder. Sure, he was a Gunther fan, but maybe this was the meeting Bob had been waiting for. Greg could make or break his career at the firm. He was the person to impress.

Little did Bob realize the shocking good news/bad news that was ahead.