

# Coloring Outside the Lines

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Nothing builds self-confidence more than Knowledge, especially in the ever changing Legal Arena.

The following scenario unfolds: You are at a Jr. High School dance. You observe that the boys are huddled on one side of the auditorium and the girls are huddled on the other side. While they are there, ostensibly to dance, they are secretly hoping that no one will ask or accept. The reason is they really do not know how to dance, and each is afraid to be embarrassed. Sound familiar? How many of you complain that you aren't being given substantive legal work, yet secretly fear an attorney will assign you a task you do not know how to perform? If this sounds like you, ask yourself, "Are you ready to dance?" If not, you should not complain. However, if you are ready to dance, the dance floor is all yours in today's fast expanding paralegal profession. Some suggestions:

## **Education, Education, Education**

Nothing builds self-confidence more than knowledge, especially in the ever-changing legal arena. If you have the proper continuing education, you will have the ability to perform your work better and faster, and to undertake new and different projects.

## **Never Say "No" to Any Assignment**

The beauty of the legal profession is that experience, like education, is a building block for paralegals. Do not limit your participation solely on the basis of lack of training and experience. Trust that you have the basic knowledge, training and experience to successfully complete any project. Go for it and use the talents you already possess.

## **Use All Resources Available to You**

Fellow legal support personnel, i.e., other paralegals, legal secretaries, law clerks, etc., are a tremendous source of information. They, collectively, possess more knowledge, training and experience than you, alone, will ever be able to obtain. You should consider them to be another source of information and consult them in your work.

## **Take Chances**

This cannot be emphasized enough! This is the only way you will grow professionally. Make opportunities for yourself. You will only grow personally and financially if you look for projects on which to work. You should not wait to be asked, but offer at every opportunity to assist with or handle entire matters. Your eagerness will not go unnoticed or unanswered. You cannot be too aggressive in the legal profession.

Remember, you, and you alone, are the keeper of your destiny. You can be your own worst enemy, or your own best friend. You choose, because in today's paralegal market, "the sky's the limit." It's time to soar!