

**THE
HAPPY
RAINMAKER**

Praise For *The Happy Rainmaker*

“This short yet profoundly impactful book is destined to leave a lasting mark on the legal profession. For far too long, lawyers have been told they must sacrifice well-being for professional success. This is an exhausting false choice that has simply been accepted as inevitable. In this wonderfully-written parable, Jennifer Gillman dismantles that myth with clarity, warmth, and hard-won insight. Through the fictional journey of senior associate ‘Bob’ and his wise mentor ‘Polly,’ she illustrates how it’s possible to thrive professionally without burning out personally. By the final page, Bob isn’t just surviving Big Law; he has become the fulfilled, high-performing, genuinely happy rainmaker the title promises.

If you are in Law School, a new associate just staring out and trying to find your footing, or a seasoned lawyer who feels perpetually drained by the demands of the job, pick up the book, read it, study it, embrace the principles and suggestions, and begin applying them immediately. And if you’re a parent, grandparent, spouse, or friend of someone considering or already in the profession—buy this book and place it directly into their hands. Few gifts are as thoughtful, timely, or potentially life-changing. *The Happy Rainmaker* isn’t just good. In an industry notorious for burnout, it’s urgently necessary.”

—**Bob Burg**, Award-winning coauthor of *The Go-Giver*

“*The Happy Rainmaker* provides an all too familiar story of burnout and exhaustion that we experience in our profession together with action-oriented advice on how to be happy and successful while practicing law.”

—**Ayesha Krishnan Hamilton**, Trustee, New Jersey
State Bar Association

“*The Happy Rainmaker* arrived at the perfect moment as I was mapping out my own path to equity partnership. With warmth and wisdom, it distills what truly matters for lawyers: building business, protecting your wellbeing, and designing a career you actually want. Essential reading for anyone in Big Law who wants success and happiness, too.”

—**Emily Logan Stedman**, Partner, Husch Blackwell

“*The Happy Rainmaker* is an energizing and timely guide that speaks directly to the heart of attorney wellness and sustainable success. Jennifer brilliantly offers practical strategies for building a thriving practice without sacrificing mental health, balance, or purpose. As a past President of the New Jersey State Bar Association who founded and organized the Putting Lawyers First task force that surveyed, studied, and confirmed we are a profession in crisis as well as the reality that the pace of the practice is not sustainable, I deeply appreciate how clearly the book aligns with our mission to support lawyers as whole people, not just professionals. I highly recommend it to any attorney looking for a healthier, more fulfilling path to growth and congratulate Jennifer on authoring a masterful must-read.”

—**Jeralyn Lawrence**, Past President, New Jersey State Bar
Association, Past Chair of the Family Law Section
of the NJSBA

“I highly recommend *The Happy Rainmaker* by Jennifer Gillman for any attorney seeking to build sustainable success without sacrificing personal well-being. Through an engaging business fable and practical six-pillar framework, Gillman offers a refreshingly honest roadmap for developing both a thriving practice and a fulfilling life—proving these goals aren’t competing forces but complementary strengths. Her approach resonates deeply with The Free Lawyer® philosophy: you don’t have to choose between professional excellence and personal freedom when you build the right foundation.”

—**Gary Miles**, Founder, The Free Lawyer

“*The Happy Rainmaker* is the mindset shift so many high-achieving lawyers have been waiting for. Jennifer Gillman dismantles the belief that your only path to success is sacrifice and exhaustion, and offers an empowering roadmap for achieving excellence without abandoning yourself in the process.”

—**Jordana Confino**, Founder & CEO,
JC Coaching & Consulting

THE HAPPY RAINMAKER

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

JENNIFER L. GILLMAN



THE HAPPY RAINMAKER

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

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Preface

Are You A Bob BigLaw, Sam Solo, Or Suzy SmallLaw?

For twelve years, I was a practicing attorney, and I'm still very type A. I bought into the myth that if you work harder, you'll get better results.

Now that I own my own legal recruitment business, it's really important to me to help as many unhappy lawyers as I possibly can. However, much like some of the lawyers that I care about, I don't always make time for personal appointments.

I wrote this novella for all the lawyers like three of my fictional characters: all the Bobs who work for big firms, all the solo practitioners like Samir (Sam), and all the attorneys at small firms like Suzy.

You all deserve health and happiness. Our motto is "Successful lawyers deserve to be happy too."

And Then Something Happened

Some years back, my stomach had been bothering me. I went to my doctor, who said, “Oh, well, you’re fifty, you should have a colonoscopy. I’m signing you up for a procedure in six months.”

I agreed, thinking that six months was far away.

But, before I knew it, it was the week of the scheduled colonoscopy. That week turned out to be hectic because I was helping a lawyer who already had a job offer through another recruiter, but really wanted to work at a particular big firm’s office in Houston, Texas.

Listen To Mom

The firm told us they were going to get us an offer early in the week. Since the colonoscopy was on Friday, the timing should have been fine. But the offer still hadn’t come in by the end of the day on Wednesday, and I was thinking I should put off that colonoscopy. That’s because once we received the offer, I would have to help with any necessary negotiation and be a resource to the candidate in making the decision.

My mom urged me to keep the appointment. “Honey, after COVID, there is a big backlog of people who need all of these tests done,” she said. “If you cancel, it’s probably going to be at least six months until you can get another appointment.”

Little did I know, heeding her advice probably saved my life.

Getting The Colonoscopy Wasn’t Easy

If you know about colonoscopies, you know the prep step is the worst part. For colonoscopy prep, you’ll drink a prescribed

laxative solution, often mixed with clear liquids like water or Gatorade. I went through the prep on Thursday evening and on Friday morning, and it seemed like no big deal.

But then, while I was sitting at my computer typing emails before leaving for the procedure, I started projectile vomiting. I called the doctor and asked if I should cancel.

The doctor's office said, "No, don't cancel, but go lie down. When this happens, a lot of people end up fainting and hitting their heads."

But Duty Called

Just then, we finally received the offer we'd been waiting for. I texted my candidate and emailed the firm that made the offer. The candidate called me to discuss the offer, and I negotiated. And in between, I was still throwing up.

I finally told my candidate I had a medical test that I had to go and do. "So, I'm going to be under an anesthetic for just a few minutes, but I'm sure this seems like it's the final offer."

Crossing My Health Crisis Finish Line

Good thing I kept the colonoscopy appointment because they discovered I had stage one colon cancer and had to have surgery. The doctor did say if I had canceled that appointment and waited for their next opening, it could have been a very different story.

Health matters. We always tell our candidates that we work with, "Yes, it's inconvenient for your clients to have you be away from the office for two hours for a cancer screening, but it's even more

inconvenient if you have to take six months off to treat the cancer that you didn't catch. And it's extremely inconvenient if you die and they have to work with different lawyers.”

To all the Bob BigLaws, Sam Solos, and Suzy SmallLaws out there, the moral of the story is to take care of the important aspects of life. My wish is that this book inspires you to do just that.

Jennifer L. Gillman,
Gillman Strategic Group
Westfield, New Jersey

P.S. My candidate took the offer in Houston and worked happily at that firm for several years. And I remain cancer-free.

PART I

Once Upon A Time There Was An Unhappy Attorney



1

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 wasn't 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 a child.

Stumbling 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, local 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, coffee, and greasy takeout 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 jam-packed 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 as 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 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 also 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 performed 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.