

Welcome!

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 Publisher's Contribution



Heather Nelson *By Tonya Harrell*

A former classmate in my master's program asked (or told me depending on how you look at it), "Have you ever noticed that sometimes you're just too aggressive?" Mind you this was a music business program.

In a world where aggression can be seen as unladylike, entertainment attorney Heather M. Nelson, whose Law Office of Heather M. Nelson serves clients in Chicago and nationwide, was the first to compliment me on my aggression. Not the type of aggression that will run you down to get mine. But the type of persistent aggression that allowed me to connect with the busy attorney in the first place.

In a recent conversation, Heather shared some of the "it" behind her aggressive, don't-take-no-for-an-answer, qualities. Even more she shared another side, the giving back side of Heather Nelson, that few may realize exists.

I began our talk with this question, "What motivates Heather Nelson to do what she does?"

Being able to get results is the first thing she named. An original motivation for her was to get established career-wise, financial success, and the like. But one of the continuous motivations for Heather that stood out was being able to educate and help others get better. "Each day...why I do this...it has to be deeper than I get a check," she noted. "To get a note, a call, or e-mail from a mentee saying you touched me or that meant everything to me" is a powerful thing to her.

I recently read John H. Johnson's, "**Succeeding Against the Odds**," in which he discussed the "**advantage in the disadvantage.**" He had to leave Arkansas for Chicago because he wouldn't have been able to obtain a high school education had he remained. The rest is publishing history.

Heather noted that she's had many advantages in the disadvantage experiences. However, one that stood out was her struggle to remain in law school. Her first year in a three-year program she had no money to: be there, buy books, to live. So after making her rounds, Heather got an appointment with the dean of students at her Chicago law school and pleaded her case. "I sat at the end of this big mahogany desk in this \$40 million facility and said surely you have money for students," she recalled. The result of this conversation was the Dean telling her to get the money from mom or withdraw.

Tapping into her aggressive spirit the lawyer-to-be stepped out-of-the box and completed her program in 2 ½ years. "Being faced with getting out was not an option," she said. Later that same Dean handed the attorney (she already passed the Bar) her diploma.

I asked her what she would have been doing if she had dropped out of law school.

Heather noted that she'd still be self-employed. No corporate dreams for her. The attorney, whose original goal was to create an ad agency, delved into the talk of a "calling." "I never knew that what I had to say would really matter to people," she commented. "I enjoy being a voice in whatever platform there is to play a role as a motivator."

A big part of Heather's life is public speaking. The attorney, who is a guest on many entertainment-related panels, noted that she's been blown away by the impact of speaking at such events. From the reaction, she has sensed that there is more she is supposed to do. Therefore, the attorney spends a lot of time in the giving back sector – speaking to women in entertainment, artists, students, and the like. "As a professional woman I've been through a lot that young women can learn from, and I feel I have an obligation in particular to young women," she pointed out.

We talked for a while. I got some thought-provoking insight from Heather. Don't have room to share it all. Sorry. But before closing I asked her to share some motivational advice. **Heather's mantra: "Do you! Know yourself, know your purpose, act, and make your dreams come true. That's where success comes from. That's where it all begins and ends."**