



I'm Not **JOSIE GROSSIE ANYMORE!**

IN NEVER BEEN KISSED, COPY EDITOR JOSIE GELLER IS GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY to become a reporter by going undercover as a high school student. During her first time in high school, Josie was bullied and given the nickname “Josie Grossie.” After Josie struggled with returning to high school, her brother Rob gave her a pep talk, telling her she just needs the right person to help her get her foot in the door with the popular crowd. According to Rob, the first step was for Josie to believe—as Josie ultimately shouts—“I’m not Josie Grossie anymore!” As Rob put it, “All you need is one person. Once the right person thinks you’re cool, you’re in. Everyone else will be too scared to question it.”

Young attorneys who find success in law generally have others to thank—trailblazers, support networks, and mentors, to name a few. I recently learned about “sponsors.” A sponsor is an influential leader in the organization who advocates behind the scenes for a younger attorney. Like mentorship, sponsorship can help a young lawyer navigate and advance their career both inside and outside of the organization. To put it in Rob Geller’s words, your sponsor is that person who thinks you’re cool and helps you get your foot in the door. But because sponsorship tends to occur behind the scenes, it’s not always apparent that you might already have a sponsor.

For me, the person I have to thank for her mentorship and sponsorship is Justice Luz Elena Chapa, with whom I worked for over six years at the 4th Court of Appeals in San Antonio. When I started working with Justice Chapa in 2014, I was a bit rough around the edges. She certainly helped me smooth out those edges and mentored me in areas where I needed improvement. Justice Chapa was always supportive of me and encouraged me to get involved in the legal and local communities with reasonable, healthy limits. While working with her, I not only got my start in bar service and started pursuing professional advancement through board certification and other areas, but I also became a better attorney and public servant and gained more confidence. What’s more is that, as with some sponsors, I wasn’t always aware that she was advocating for me behind the scenes. For everything, I’m eternally grateful to Justice Chapa. I wouldn’t be where I am today without her.

If you’re looking for a mentor or sponsor, you might consider whether you already have such a relationship. For those working in smaller organizations or in solo practice, sometimes finding mentors and sponsors comes through bar service or pro bono work. Building meaningful relationships in the legal profession can be challenging, but it gets easier with the more effort you make. And sometimes, those efforts can start with reconnecting with and thanking those who have already helped you out along the way.

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