



Monday Monday

Connecting the Dots with Karen Kaplowitz



*Helping you create and reinforce the habits of successful career building,
gleaned from my work as a business development strategist, trainer and coach*

Volume 14, Issue 19

September 28, 2020

Dedicated to the Legacy of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg

It is stunning to see the outpouring of grief brought on by the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. It is also inspiring to hear the recollections and reflections of those who were lucky enough to work closely with her like former law clerks, colleagues, friends, and especially fellow judges and justices of all political and ideological persuasions. Who will forget the respect and love embodied in the [statements](#) of the other Supreme Court justices? Justice Ginsburg, the Notorious RBG, even achieved the status of a cultural icon. Which of her remarkable qualities will become part of our own lives? Which ones must we never forget?

- **Persistence.** Every stage of her career was marked by persistence and resilience. When doors were closed to jobs when she graduated from law school at the top of her class because she was a woman, and a woman with a family, she made her mark as a law professor and a civil rights advocate before being appointed to the federal bench. Her life's story overflows with examples of her persistence and resiliency. She was back to work on the Supreme Court the day after the death of her beloved husband. She never missed an argument while being treated for cancer. She engaged relentlessly with her fellow justices on their legal analyses in dissents, in oral arguments and in deliberations.
- **Strategy.** Her legacy as the leading advocate for women's equality was burnished in her work for the ACLU Women's Rights project and her six cases before the Supreme Court. Justice Ginsburg was a brilliant strategist. She took cases in which she could demonstrate that gender-based classifications and sex discrimination adversely affected men as well as women. This week, at the Working Mother Best Law Firms for Women awards program, Shafeeqa Giarratani, one of the leaders of Ogletree Deakins' Diversity and Inclusion practice group, and Sascha Grimm, a leader of Cooley's Women's Initiative, both emphasized the importance of empathy training in combatting bias. She was strategic as well as relentless in her pursuit of gender equality.
- **Dignity.** Despite the many indignities she suffered as a young woman shut out of jobs, even though she graduated number one in her law school class, there are only stories of Justice Ginsburg's constant dignity. Even her judicial attire, with her [iconic lace collars](#), branded her as the most dignified of advocates and justices.
- **Civility.** The fact that Justice Ginsburg was a close friend to Justice Scalia whose judicial philosophy was radically different than hers, is strong evidence of the civility which marked every part of her life. Justice Ginsburg famously said "Fight for the things that you care about. But do it in a way that will lead others to join you."

It is not enough for us to glorify Justice Ginsburg and her extraordinary life and career. As lawyers, we are not only "officers of the court". We are sworn to uphold the Constitution and the rule of law. We must hold onto her ideals by our own actions with persistence, strategy, dignity, and civility. That includes fighting for the things we care about — a constitutional democracy in which every eligible voter can vote, in person or by mail, and have their vote counted. Can we honor Justice Ginsburg's legacy if we do anything less than that?