



Education (degrees & institutions): JD, City University of New York School of Law; BFA, New York University, Tisch School of the Arts

Company Name: Cohen Ziffer Frenchman & McKenna

Industry: Legal

Company Headquarters Location: New York, NY

Number of Employees: 32

Words you live by: "Service is the rent we pay for being. It is the very purpose of life, and not something you do in your spare time."
– Marian Wright Edelman

Personal Philosophy: Cultivate community wherever and whenever possible, and practice gratitude always.

What book are you reading? *The Nightingale* by Kristin Hannah

What was your first job? Server at a neighborhood family-run restaurant

Favorite charity: Mercy Center, God's Love We Deliver, Natural Resources Defense Council

Interests: Attending the theater and concerts, traveling to and exploring new places, farmers markets, hiking in the Hudson River Valley

Family: My husband, Michael, my two awesome step-children, Tessa and Peter, and a large extended family scattered across the country

Empathy, passion and work ethic – the 51 percent that really counts

Fifty-one percent doesn't turn heads. At best, it's mediocre. In school, it's a failure. I've yet to hear someone pledge to give 51 percent of themselves to any endeavor, striving instead to deliver the whole, impressive 100 percent. But when I was hired at Gramercy Tavern, one of restaurateur Danny Meyer's acclaimed New York City restaurants, 51 percent was the magic number.

"The 51% Solution," a hallmark of Meyer's business philosophy, centers on the idea that an ideal employee's skills are divided 51-49 between emotional skills and technical excellence, i.e., "51-percenters." 51-percenters have five core emotional skills: optimistic warmth, intelligence, work ethic, empathy, and integrity. These skills are usually instinctive and are developed and nurtured from childhood, making them far more difficult to teach than skills that are required to achieve technical excellence.

Recognizing that my employment at Gramercy Tavern was based on my 51 percent—the emotional and personal qualities I brought to the table—led me to appreciate the intrinsic value of these traits, not just in a professional setting but in every aspect of my life. This philosophy also gave me the courage and conviction to explore other interests, which prompted a complete

career change.

At the time I was hired at Gramercy Tavern, I was an NYU Tisch-trained musical theater performer, tenaciously pursuing my dream of Broadway success. After a nearly decade-long theater career and much discernment, I applied to law school. Career transitions are challenging to say the least, but I knew I could rely on my curiosity, passion, perseverance, and work ethic—all 51 percent of me—as I undertook the challenge. And I trusted that, as before, I could acquire the technical skills needed to excel in my new career.

Today, I am privileged to practice law alongside a team of experienced and accomplished litigators who continually inspire me to develop my legal expertise, refine my craft, and pursue excellence. And while I certainly apply my 51 percent skills as a lawyer, I have been pleasantly surprised at the transferability of many of the technical skills I honed as a musical theater performer. I am grateful to those people in my life who recognized and nurtured the qualities in me that allowed me to redirect my energies and find fulfillment on an entirely new path. I look forward to doing the same for others.