



Episode #6 - The Cocktail Party

This is ***Think Like a Lawyer on Substack***. My name is John Hollander. In this episode, I will be departing from the format of the earlier episodes, which fit each technique within one of three categories.

- How to learn what your subject is.
- How to analyze, or assess what you have learned.
- How to apply what you have analyzed and assessed into a plan of action in your communications.

This episode talks about how to behave, how to keep your wits about you. And we're specifically using the metaphor of the cocktail party. Not to say that you will only use this during a cocktail party, but that is when it's most applicable.

Say you attend a cocktail party with your peers. These are people who are in the same employment, profession or trade. You may think of them as your friends or colleagues. But in fact, they are also your competitors. And they are possible sources of referrals. They could help you get a promotion. They can help you get another client. They could help you learn a technique. These are all people who can do something to advance your career in some fashion.

Well, it may seem the most appropriate way to behave is to drink whatever they're drinking. So long as what they're drinking won't impair your judgment and your behaviour, then there's nothing wrong with copying what they're doing. So go ahead and have that ginger ale or that glass of soda. But if they're drinking something alcoholic, or worse, if they're consuming some kind of drug, then don't go there.

You may have to *look like* you're doing it to fit in. That's a judgment call on your part. But you don't want to do anything that impairs your judgment. And here's the reason. Before you impair yourself, you're able to perform at your peak. You're able to present the real you. The problem is once you start drinking, and it may be as little as a single beer, or a single glass of wine or a single cocktail, you reduce your ability to learn, to assess, and to apply. In other words, you've abandoned the head start that you had by learning all the techniques that we've talked about so far in the Substack series.

What you should do is participate in the party. B all means, enjoy yourself. But you should not do anything that impairs your ability to compete - to present in the best way possible. You don't want to seem to be actively competing, trying to one-up everybody around you. That's not what this is about. But the idea is you want to show yourself off as the best version of you so that people will think well of you.

It's amazing how people will talk about you after you've had a few drinks, and it won't be complimentary. It won't be something like, "Oh, they really shined", but there will be some behaviour puts you in their memory and it won't be a good one.

So the idea is, even informally, when you're amongst your peers and colleagues and people that you trust, you should behave at your professional best. You should always put your best foot forward because that's the way to advance your career. And that's how lawyers think it is.

Go to a party and watch lawyers in action. And you will see that even those who drink too much in private don't drink too much in public.

I hope this podcast didn't come out as too preachy, but it's good advice. Always put your best foot forward. Alcohol and Other impairing substances prevent you from doing that, no matter how well you think of yourself. Once you're high. You are not presenting it the very best.

So this is ***Think Like a Lawyer on Substack***. My name is John Hollander. Thanks for listening.