

Litigation, like baseball, allows us to compete (although in a much less athletic way than professional athletes). In fact, the ability to compete is what draws many of us to litigation. When you compete, you inevitably will win and lose. The wins are euphoric and the losses are heartbreaking. Riding the emotional roller coaster that is litigation can be difficult. However, after a few years in the world of litigation (and having been taught by many of the wonderful people around me), I've come to learn several tips and tricks to handle the wins and losses, as well as what to do when it rains.

Sometimes you Win

Winning is one of the best parts of being a litigator. Whether the win is as little as a sustained objection or as big as a favorable verdict, the joys of winning are pretty sweet. But litigators are often so success driven (or so busy) that we move on to the next task before appreciating the success, particularly when the win didn't feel "big" enough to be celebrated. Research shows, however, that celebrating the little wins can be just as important as celebrating the big wins.² In fact, celebrating the small wins, the little steps that lead to the big wins, actually motivates us to work towards the next goal or the next win.³ Now, not every win should be celebrated with a week-long vacation; however, there are various ways to celebrate the small wins that actually provide motivation to move on to the next task. The small wins can be celebrated as simply as grabbing that fancy coffee, taking a little extra time at lunch, or grabbing a quick treat on your way back from the courthouse. Anything that provides a brief reflection on the success.⁴

One of my favorite ways to celebrate a win is celebrating with the team that played a role in that win, whether that's another attorney on the file, a paralegal, legal assistant, or other staff. Wins happen because of a team and celebrating with the team often brings joy of its own. Celebrating wins with the team can be as simple as running around the office giving high-fives or buying a celebratory lunch for the staff. There are a lot of ways to show the people around you that their efforts are appreciated. And celebrating their success is often just as rewarding as the win itself.

Sometimes you Lose

Losing, on the other hand, is one of the worst parts of being a litigator. Despite our best efforts, we inevitably lose. Sometimes we lose small; other times we lose big. And it's terrible. Losing can also be valuable, however. In fact, losing is one of the best tools we have to improve as litigators. Losing allows us to self-reflect on what went wrong and what we could have done differently. Research suggests

simple exercises such as analyzing a loss from the perspective of: "What would I advise a younger attorney with an issue to do in order to achieve a better

have to play it one day at a time.

Endnotes

1 Bull Durham (Orion Pictures 1988)

2 McNally, Melanie A., Psy.D., "From Small Steps to Big Wins: The Importance of Celebrating" Psychology today,
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/empower-your-mind/202406/from-small-steps-to-big-wins-the-importance-of-celebrating> (last visited Feb. 22, 2026).

3 *Id.*

4 *Id.*

5 Robson, David, "The Smart Way to Learn from Failure" BBC, Oct. 21, 2022,
<https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20221019-the-smart-way-to-learnfrom-failure> (last visited March 10, 2026).

6 Clark, Alicia H., "How to Stop Worrying About Things You Can't Control" Psychology Today, Jan. 30, 2026,
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/hack-your-anxiety/202601/how-to-stop-worrying-about-things-you-cantcontrol> (last visited March 10, 2026).

7 *See supra* note i.