



# Andrew M. Ayers

AndrewMAyers.com

877-262-9377

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## SCALING PEAKS

### *How Independence Frees Us to Meet Vital Responsibilities*

"Every mountain top is within reach if you just keep climbing," a well-known mountain climber once said.

Starting my own law firm looked like a mountain peak beyond reach when I first considered it 13 years ago. Back then, I thought that to go solo, an attorney had to be much older and better established than I was. But sometimes, the mountain you're facing in life isn't actually as tall as you think. In recognition of Aug. 1 as National Mountain Climbing Day, this is a good time to reflect on the experience.

When I was working for a solo practitioner in Manhattan early in my career, balancing the demands of having a family and succeeding as an attorney was a significant challenge. My first child had just been born, and the boss had strict rules (that applied only to me I later found out) about work schedules that left me strapped to my desk. Even though I had made agreements about when I could pick up our daughter from day care, when it was time to leave to pick her up, I would endure a variety of obnoxious comments about "leaving early" for the day. Office morale was so low that everyone ate lunch at their desk. When I started leaving the office to eat lunch outside, I got negative comments on that, too. As those tensions mounted, I began to realize that working in that toxic office suite for the rest of my career was a terrible idea.

I remember flipping through email at home and thinking about next steps. I realized, *Wait a minute. Why don't I start my own firm?* I had spent more than eight years building systems into an office stuck in the 1980s (it was the first office I had worked in that had "dial up" internet access over a phone line instead of high speed internet), and the clients I worked with were becoming increasingly frustrated with other aspects of the practice and asked, "Why don't you start your own firm now?" Those clients I cared about were the biggest motivators when it came time to open my own law firm.

The first few months were exhilarating and invigorating as I was able to implement and grow the systems I had been working on for years. A toxic Manhattan office suite was replaced with a vibrant Brooklyn



coworking space that I looked forward to going to each day. I found a community of small businesses and solopreneurs that were welcoming and found that my clients also appreciated the upgrade in office space (and likely the upgrade in my personal happiness as well). Some of my clients even stopped by just for the coffee and tea we had on offer if they were in the neighborhood. It was a much more welcoming atmosphere.

The autonomy of running your own business can be surprising to some people. After years of working for someone else, they are surprised to find that when you are your own boss, you get to make the rules and manage your time in the way you see fit. I've found that being my own boss makes it so much easier to balance the demands of the workday with the activities of my three kids, now 14, 11, and 9. I spend a lot more time with them. Going to your child's school at 9 a.m. on a Tuesday for a parent reading session or a class party are not opportunities I could have enjoyed when I was working for that solo practitioner.

Thirteen years later, I remember that starting my own firm looked like a mountain when I was preparing to launch. Looking back on it, I would tell anyone starting a business that being satisfied and present for your family is more important than overpaying for a prestigious office address. As we approach National Mountain Climbing Day, I wish you all the best in surmounting the mountain peaks in your own life.

*- Andrew M. Ayers*

# Brand Mascots That Stand the Test of Time

Brand mascots can make a surprisingly deep cultural impression. Some, such as GEICO's famous talking gecko, have become almost universally recognizable. Others, such as the M&M spokescandies, evoke a backlash that banishes them to oblivion. Those with warmth and personality tend to last because they spark pleasant emotions, according to a survey of 1,630 people by Crestline Promotions.

The most enduring brand mascots, such as the iconic Betty Crocker, manage to evolve with the cultural zeitgeist. The mythical homemaker was invented in 1921 by the predecessor company to General Mills. In the Flapper Era, she became a radio personality, then evolved into a World War II-era heroine creating recipes for homemakers beset by food rationing. From the 1950s through the 1990s, she morphed from a friendly, curly-coiffed homemaker to a stylish Jackie Kennedy lookalike and then to an increasingly confident career woman. The 2022 publication of the 13th edition of Betty Crocker's famous cookbook attests to her astonishing longevity.

Another enduring mascot, the Quaker Oats Man, originated in 1877. His pleasant visage, which leaves nothing to dislike, is one reason he has served as the Quaker brand image for over a century. Most people say the Quaker Man was adopted because of the denomination's values of integrity, honesty, purity, and

strength. Today, he endures as a slimmed-down version of his former portly self, with a more genial smile.

Other mascots have been sidelined after colliding head-on with cultural trends. Ronald McDonald debuted in national TV ads in 1965, and Generation X grew up with him. By 2016, however, Ronald was under fire for persuading small children to eat unhealthy food. After reports of creepy clown sightings further darkened his image, McDonald's benched him. Today, Ronald is mainly confined to promoting Ronald McDonald House Charities, the nonprofit that provides housing for families with seriously ill children.

Other once-popular mascots have ended up on the ash heap. Aunt Jemima, the figure who adorned millions of boxes of pancake mix, was abandoned as a caricature from the era of slavery. The same fate befell Uncle Ben of Uncle Ben's Rice. The company tried to salvage Uncle Ben by promoting him to chairman of the board, but they eventually deemed his image beyond repair.



## America's Wackiest Traffic Laws

*STEER CLEAR OF THESE ODDITIES ON YOUR NEXT ROAD TRIP*

As you buckle up and hit the road across the U.S., you might want to brush up on more than just your driving skills — some local traffic laws are as quirky as the attractions dotting the country. From the bizarre to the downright hilarious, cruise through four of the weirdest traffic laws that could have you scratching your head or chuckling all the way to your next stop.



### California's Speedy Ghost Cars

Head to California, where no vehicle without a driver may exceed 60 mph. Yes, even those futuristic self-driving cars have to obey the speed limits. It's an interesting precaution against our potential AI driver's need for speed and flipping into joyride mode.

### Denver's Color Coordinated Sundays

In Denver, Colorado, black cars are banned on Sundays. The origin of this law is murky, but it adds an extra layer of consideration for your Sunday drive. You'd better pick a different color for a leisurely weekend cruise.

### Oklahoma's Driving Distractions

Put down the comic books if you're driving through Oklahoma. It's illegal to read them while driving, which sounds reasonable enough considering the focus required to operate a vehicle safely. Save

Spider-Man and Superman for later, and keep your eyes on the road!

### Drunk Driving ... by Association?

Strangely enough, in Texas, any driver who is within arm's reach of alcohol while driving is breaking the law, and this includes a passenger's bloodstream! So, Texas drivers must think twice before offering their tipsy buddies a ride home. As for Virginia, drunk passengers can also receive a DUI if they're riding with an intoxicated driver! So, always call an Uber if you and your buddy have had a drink or two.

Whether born from safety concerns or legislative sessions that got wildly out of hand, these rules add a dose of humor to road-tripping across the U.S. Remember these oddities as you navigate the highways and byways — they're not just funny anecdotes but actual laws that could impact your journey!

# TAKE A **BREAK**



## The Pitfalls of Providing Solutions

### How to Help Our Children Solve Problems Independently

Our children will encounter countless challenges and complex problems throughout their lives. As parents, we want nothing more than to put them on the right track and help them find solutions, but we might not always take the best approach. Often, we try to give them the answers to the problems they're facing to provide support. While this helps them overcome the obstacle, it could also stunt the development of their problem-solving skills.



Let's say your toddler is working on a puzzle. They keep placing pieces in the wrong spot and grow frustrated when nothing fits properly. You may want to offer a helping hand and direct them to the pieces they need, but this isn't going to help them in the long run. Any time they encounter a problem, they'll look to others for a solution. Instead, encourage and support them by saying something like, "Those puzzles can be hard, but you'll get the hang of it." That encouragement will help them push through the challenge until they figure out the solution independently.

You can use this same tactic throughout your children's lives. When they're learning to read and experience difficulty pronouncing words, encourage them to sound them out instead of telling them directly how to pronounce them. When teenagers struggle with a friendship, don't offer solutions that may have worked for you in the past; simply confirm their feelings and tell them you've had similar experiences.

By supporting your kids' efforts and affirming their feelings, you're empowering them to problem-solve and overcome any obstacles in their path. It's not easy watching your children struggle with problems, but they must work out solutions independently or else they will likely struggle to form solutions well into adulthood.

The next time your child comes to you with a problem, or you notice them struggling on their own, try to offer support instead of a solution. It can go a long way toward their personal growth!

## LIME CHICKEN WITH CORN AND POBLANO SALAD

Inspired by [PureWow.com](http://PureWow.com)

### Ingredients

#### Chicken

- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp cayenne pepper
- 1 1/2 tsp salt
- 3/4 tsp black pepper
- Zest of 1 lime
- 8 chicken thighs

#### Corn and poblano salad

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 poblano peppers, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 14-oz can of corn
- 4 scallions, minced
- Juice of 2 limes
- 1/3 cup chopped cilantro
- Salt and pepper

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 F.
2. In a large oven-proof skillet, heat olive oil over medium heat.
3. In a bowl, whisk flour, spices, and lime zest. Dredge chicken in the mix to coat.
4. Add chicken, skin-side down, to skillet, then place skillet in the oven for 30–35 minutes.
5. In a medium skillet, heat olive oil and add poblanos. Sauté 4–5 minutes. Add garlic and sauté for another minute.
6. In a bowl, add poblano mix, corn, scallions, lime juice, and cilantro, toss and serve with the chicken.

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## The War of the Jelly Rolls

### BAND BATTLES IN COURT

Country singer and rapper Jelly Roll has risen to fame in recent years, winning Best New Artist honors at the 2023 Grammy Awards. But Jelly Roll has run into some unlikely opposition on the way to the top — from Jellyroll.

You read that right. A Pennsylvania band called Jellyroll is suing Jelly Roll over charges



that the famous entertainer violated the band's trademark. The band Jellyroll claims in court papers to have performed at various celebrations and charitable events for more than 40 years, including an appearance at the White House during the presidency of George W. Bush. Jellyroll claims to have begun using the name in the 1980s, before Jelly Roll, whose birth name is Jason Bradley DeFord, was even born. Jelly Roll says his mother gave him his stage name as a young child.

Now that Jelly Roll has risen to fame, members of Jellyroll say they must work much harder to be discovered for performance opportunities. According to court papers, Jelly Roll surfaces 18–20 times in internet search rankings before any user even sees a first mention of the Pennsylvania dance band.

Other famous bands have clashed in trademark disputes. Original members of

The Beach Boys sued each other over the use of their iconic band's name after they split up, although they eventually settled the dispute. Members of the rock band Van Halen sued one member's ex-wife, who had taken and kept her ex-husband's surname, for using the band's name for her interior design company. (The ex-wife eventually prevailed.) In another case, The Stone Temple Pilots and their former lead singer sued and countersued each other over alleged misappropriation of the band's trademarked name.

In the battle of the jelly rolls, Jellyroll is seeking to force Jelly Roll to change his name. Meanwhile, Jelly Roll has gone on a concert tour and is no doubt soaring even further past Jellyroll in web searches. Mandy Kay Schendel, a Seattle area influencer and public relations specialist, described the situation on TikTok as the most unique trademark battle she has seen. "This lawsuit is honestly very dramatic," she says, "and I love it."