

RECOMMENDED READING



The Power of One: First with the Head, Then with the Heart

by **Bryce Courtenay**



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In the professional environment in which lawyers work, expectations are high and pressures constant. In this context, the concept of the “power of one” or one’s “inner strength” may seem distant or abstract. However, Bryce Courtenay’s *The Power of One*¹ teaches us a fundamental lesson: every individual has the ability to influence their surroundings, even in the most difficult and challenging circumstances. Applied to daily life, even when we feel small within the large corporate structures we operate in, our everyday actions, decisions, and strategies have the potential to generate a significant impact.

In *The Power of One*, Peekay, the protagonist, faces rejection and persecution in an environment of great adversity, yet what defines him is not his suffering, but his ability to maintain his identity and fight for what he believes in. In the legal world, we often face a similar challenge: the need to remain faithful to our values and principles while navigating an environment where competitiveness and pressure are the norm. For a lawyer, the path to the top requires not only technical skill but also defending one’s individuality and principles. Often, being a successful lawyer is not only about winning cases, but about knowing when to step back and ask: What do I want to achieve in my career? How do I want to achieve it? These questions define not only professional success but also the personal impact a lawyer can have, both in the workplace and in life.

¹ See Bryce Courtenay, *The Power of One* (Sydney: Penguin Books, 1989).



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Resilience is the central theme in *The Power of One*. Peekay faces a system seemingly designed to defeat him, yet what sets him apart is his ability to adapt without losing sight of his ultimate goal. He teaches us: “First with the head, then with the heart.” This lesson is crucial and must be applied every day—not only in the legal field but in any profession. Challenges are inevitable: changes in the law, client expectations, tight deadlines, and pressure for quick results. Like Peekay, a successful lawyer depends not only on strategic reasoning and intelligent solutions (the head), but also on managing the emotions that arise from these pressures (the heart). This allows not only survival amid chaos, but the ability to use it to one’s advantage, employing both mind and heart to overcome adversity and keep moving forward.

In *The Power of One*, Peekay’s small victories—though seemingly insignificant—accumulate and have a profound impact on his life. This translates perfectly into a lawyer’s daily reality. Often, true power does not lie in grand gestures, but in the small everyday actions that make a difference.

A lawyer may feel their influence is limited by the hierarchical structure of their firm or organization, but in reality, every interaction, every decision, and every action taken with integrity and determination has the power to change not only their immediate environment but also corporate culture. From offering ethical advice to a colleague to defending a key case with conviction, each of these actions reflects the power of one. Instead of yielding to external pressures, my invitation to every lawyer is to choose to become an agent of change—in their professional environment and personal life. The power of one is not measured by the size of accomplishments but by the strength of the everyday decisions we make to remain true to ourselves and our principles, even in the chaos of corporate life. In the end, the question is not only how to survive the profession, but how to thrive and make a difference—one day at a time.

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