

Michael Cowen:

This is Michael Cowen and welcome to Trial Lawyer Nation.

Voiceover:

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Welcome to the award-winning podcast, Trial Lawyer Nation, your source to win bigger verdicts, get more cases, and manage your law firm. And now here's your host, noteworthy author, sought after speaker and renowned trial lawyer, Michael Cowen.

Michael Cowen:

Today on Trial Lawyer Nation, I am joined by my partner Natalie Arledge. Natalie, how are you doing today?

Natalie Arledge:

I'm good. How are you, Michael?

Michael Cowen:

I'm doing great. And since this episode is dropping on December 31st, of 2023, we're going to talk about our goals for 2024.

Natalie Arledge:

All right. I love it.

Michael Cowen:

But before we jump in, I wanted to say thank you to someone that met one of my goals for a past year. That's LawPods. LawPods is the company that produces, edits, distributes this podcast for us. They make life so easy because you and I just need to talk and they handle all the rest. They do all the production. They sat with us and mess with our mics before this to make sure they sound decent. They will then do all the editing, put out all the little ads, and make sure it actually gets out on all the podcast platforms. So thank you to LawPods and I highly recommend them if any of you all want to start your own podcast. So Natalie, let's talk a little bit about goals. This is our year-end podcast, so happy New Year's Eve or Happy New Year, depending on when you're listening to this. Do you set goals every year?

Natalie Arledge:

I don't, and that sounds bad, but I don't set goals every year, but the older I get though, the more I set goals for myself. Maybe not year long goals, but I definitely do short-term goals. But this is probably one of the first years I've decided to set myself some yearlong goals.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah, I think it's super important, and I'm changing that by the way. So when we finished our meeting that you and I did half of at lunch and have to do the other half after this podcast. Now you're on the spot. You're going to have to have some goals that we're going to hold you accountable to.

Natalie Arledge:

Okay.

Michael Cowen:

You're getting coached on next year. I have done it and I think I need to do a better job of it because I ran into when I was 49, about turned 50, I wrote down some goals for my next decade and I've done a couple of them, but I need to make sure that every year I move towards them or I'm not going to, they're not like goals I can get all done in one year. So I can't wait until I'm 59, get them all done before I turn 60. So I think it's really important that we come up with goals and that they're realistic goals, they're a stretch, they're going to make our lives better or make our practices better, but also that there's something we can really achieve.

Like I said, I'm going to win the Boston Marathon next year. No, I'm not. I could quit practicing law. I could train 24/7 and this body is not going to win any foot races, but I think I can try cases, I can make more, if making money was my goal, I could do that. I could do things to make my life better, to make my practice better, but to say something impossible or even outside our control, like I think one goal is like, I'm going to try this many cases. That's a good goal. Saying I'm going to get a verdict for this amount or more, well, you don't control that. I mean you'd like to.

Natalie Arledge:

Right. Right.

Michael Cowen:

But you can try the perfect case and do everything right and not get that big verdict and you can have a mediocre case and get lucky and get the big verdict. So I do think that we should try to get things that are within our control. Why do you think goals are important?

Natalie Arledge:

Well, we've got to have direction. I mean, got to have direction of where we're going and what we want to do, what we want to accomplish. One of my goals is making money. I love making money, right, but it doesn't just happen. I got to figure out how to get there. And so I think making goals, it's the only way to get what you want at the end of the day.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah, it's interesting. I'm looking at my goals for the next decade is there's health related goals, there are fitness goals, and there are professional goals as well.

Natalie Arledge:

So one thing I kind of thought about though, so when you're setting a goal, do you think it's better to have a specific goal. If your goal is for health, would you want to say, I want to run a marathon by the end of the year, or would you have set a goal that just says, I just want to be healthier, I want to exercise more?

Michael Cowen:

I think a specific goal is so much more important because what is, a wishy-washy goal, how do you know if you met or not? How do you know if you're working towards it? If you say, I want to be healthier. Well, if I'm 450 pounds on January 1st and I'm 449 pounds on December 31st, I am healthier. I lost a pound. But I don't think that's really what the goal should be. So I think they need to be realistic. They need to be something that [inaudible 00:05:10] though be enough of a reach where they'll make a change. I think we should be looking for big bang stuff, like what really would make my life better, but something you could measure. It's within your control. You can figure out how to get there. So yeah, I think saying, I want to lose some weight. Well, I want to lose this much weight by this day and this is my plan for getting there, then that's something you can check in towards and every month, like how am I doing on that? Every week I can weigh in, I can see if I'm making progress.

Natalie Arledge:

And I guess that's why it's important to be so realistic because there's nothing more disappointing than not meeting your goal.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. And I've done, well, I just did that. My goal is to run a marathon in January and I fell off on my training. I got up to 14 miles and I fell off, and that goal is not canceled, but it's deferred. I'm not going to run a marathon in January. I will run a marathon in 2024. I'm not going to run in January of 2024 just because between getting busy and frankly getting a little bit down, I just kind of stopped running. I'll get back to it and I could go run a half-marathon now easily, but I've run a marathon without enough training once before. It was awful. I don't want to do it again. So I would rather just get back into the habit of running and then, but I'm still not giving up on it, but I'm deferring it. But I am mad at myself for not. That was one of my goals for the year, and I'm not going to meet that one and I am a little disappointed, but we're going to fix it for next year.

Natalie Arledge:

There you go. Well, give yourself a little grace, right? I mean you were going to do it January 2024. Maybe you'll do it August 2024 instead.

Michael Cowen:

So what did you do to set goals?

Natalie Arledge:

What did I do to set goals?

Michael Cowen:

Yeah, you said you've come up with a list and we'll get to them in a minute, but I'm more interested, like how did you come up with what your goals are?

Natalie Arledge:

Oh, well, this is so terrible to admit, but I guess it's always because of the end of the year, I just feel like a total mess. I think a lot of people probably feel like a total mess at the end of the year. Right. You're just scrambling trying to keep it together, trying to get stuff done, and you're doing stuff like half assed. Can I say assed? I guess.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah, you can.

Natalie Arledge:

You're doing things half assed and you feel bad. So that's usually kind of what gets me thinking like, okay, what am I going to do better next year? Next year's a fresh start. What am I going to do different next year? I mean, I'm sure next year at the end of the year, I'm going to be scrambling like a maniac again. But it's always a good point to think like, where can I improve? What can I do better for next year?

Michael Cowen:

Yeah.

Natalie Arledge:

So I just sit in the quiet and just think about, well, this weekend I was thinking about my cases and some of the things that I wanted to do in them and what I wanted to do more of in the future. I came up with a list of some specific ones. I don't know if you want to hear those yet.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. So let's share goals. Then I want to share how we came up with and why there are goals, and then talk about what our plan is and then we can follow up within the next year to see whether we really did them or not.

Natalie Arledge:

Oh my gosh, the pressure.

Michael Cowen:

I'm putting real pressure on you. See, I got to get someone to hold me accountable. Maybe we'll do it with each other because when we have our monthly meetings, I'm going to ask you about your progress towards your goals. Maybe you can ask me too. We can do a shared accountability here.

Natalie Arledge:

Okay, that's good. I like that. We could do that.

Michael Cowen:

Okay, so what are your goals?

Natalie Arledge:

Okay, so the first goal I have written down is I want to spend two to three hours looking at and analyzing the FOIA documents in the cases that I get FOIA documents in. I want to really take my time and look at them because there's always such good nuggets in them always, and I always find something to beat up on the deponent about.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah, that's a very good goal. What other goals do you have?

Natalie Arledge:

Okay, so still kind of on the trucking topic. So the driver logs, so I don't always get them in every case, but when I do get them, I want to spend more time looking at and analyzing those because those are another gold mine for information. I think if I spent some more time looking at them, I would find more nuggets to use in my cases.

Michael Cowen:

You will. Yeah. Talk to me after this. I just did a presentation last week on how drivers cheat on electronic logs, so,-

Natalie Arledge:

Oh, okay.

Michael Cowen:

Give you a little reminder.

Natalie Arledge:

Okay, so the next goal I have is I want to draft a pattern jury charge after the ICM with the client. Those are all words I probably need to explain too.

Michael Cowen:

Yes.

Natalie Arledge:

So the ICM here at our law firm stands for the initial client meeting, and it's the first contact we have with the client when we first get the case and we talk to them and we kind of learn about them, we learn about the crash, learn about their injuries. And then after that initial client meeting, we're off to the races, we're drafting our petition, we're filing it, and we're going. But I know you've coached us many times about drafting the jury charge before we even start, before we even write the petition, really if we can. Well, because it's kind of like setting goals. Right. I mean, I've got to set the goals for my case. What do I need to prove in my case, and I need to figure all that out in the beginning.

Michael Cowen:

Especially if you want to get to a punitive damages case, you need to figure out who needs to have done what in order to get there. So you need to know how to plead it to know what to look for in discovery to

get the information you need to defeat summary judgment and then hopefully to convince a jury that you're right. So that's a great goal, is drafting that jury charge early in your case. You know what your mission is. What else?

Natalie Arledge:

Okay. So my next goal, so I kind of got this idea from Sonia. I want to have, well, I just have pictures of all of my clients, at least one good picture that I can put up on their case file. So when I open their case, I could see their picture. Sonia is so good. She finds a really nice picture of all of her clients and puts it on her case file so she's not just looking at a blank or their driver's license picture.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah.

Natalie Arledge:

Kind of reminds you that these are real people that we we're working for.

Michael Cowen:

Great lawyer in Florida, Joe Camerlengo actually on all his wrongful death cases, he has pictures of all the people that passed away and he tapes them to his monitor. So every day when he goes to work, he's like, this is what I'm working for. And also like, Hey, somebody got killed. This is serious. I got to focus on it.

Natalie Arledge:

Yeah, it's so important. I mean, because we get so bogged down in the everyday technical stuff and we're working with the courts or the court reporters, depositions, hearings, mediations, and you kind of just, sometimes the last thing you think about is like, okay, this is a real person. It's like, no, that should be the first thing we think about. And that's kind of what gives you some passion too, right, for your case, is you thinking about this is a real person that needs real help.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. Any more?

Natalie Arledge:

I do. I have two more.

Michael Cowen:

Okay.

Natalie Arledge:

I want to empower my, this is kind of a general goal. Maybe I need to specify or figure out a way to specify more, but I want to empower my team to feel confident in making decisions on the things that are within the scope of their role on this team. But I haven't figured out how to do that yet. It's kind of just a thought.

Michael Cowen:

Can you give an example?

Natalie Arledge:

So my medical coordinator, Nelly, she is in charge of helping our clients get to the doctor, helping them make doctor's appointments. If they need transportation to the doctor, she'll set all of that up. So that's her role. She was just asking me after lunch, a client couldn't make it to an appointment. His car was broken down, he needs to rent a car. She wants to know can we rent him a car?

Michael Cowen:

Yeah.

Natalie Arledge:

That's not something that I need to make a decision on. Right. That is totally within her role, her abilities, her responsibilities. So I want her to feel more confident in the future that she doesn't have to ask me that kind of stuff. She doesn't have to come hunt me down, look for me while I'm at lunch. That's something that she should feel confident in just taking care of.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. Absolutely. To be clear, for all our defense lawyer listeners, we do not make referrals to the doctors. We just make sure that our clients are able to get to the doctor's appointments that they have the, whatever copayments they need, if they're using the health insurance, if not, that whatever arrangements have been made to make sure they can get there. Just remind them, give them a gentle reminder of their appointment and again, help with the logistics, like do they need help with transportation and that kind of thing.

Natalie Arledge:

Yeah, exactly. I mean, it's just like the job description. It's medical coordinator. She coordinates everything for them.

Michael Cowen:

Exactly. And then the last one?

Natalie Arledge:

The one is, is that I want to use more visual aids, and this is kind inspired by Sonia too. She is such a whiz on PowerPoint.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah.

Natalie Arledge:

I wish I had her skills. She can work on PowerPoint in the middle of the depo and change it up. I have tried it. It scares me. I don't do it right. I mess it up. So maybe PowerPoint's not for me, but I want to figure out a way to be more visual in my depositions and my hearings and in trial.

Michael Cowen:

I think that's a great goal. Well, I have four.

Natalie Arledge:

Oh, okay.

Michael Cowen:

So my first one is I want to hire someone to take over the administrative part of running this law firm. I want to spend more than 50% of my time actually being a lawyer instead of being a manager or an administrator so that I want to no longer have to meet with the accounting person every week. And I want to no longer have to meet with the marketing person every week. And I love them. They're great people, but I don't want to be taking time doing those things, meeting with our operations person every week. I want someone else to just take the bull by the horns and run the firm for me and let me practice law.

Natalie Arledge:

That's a good goal. That's a whole nother job.

Michael Cowen:

It is. And I feel like sometimes I've traded a really good lawyer for a really mediocre manager. I want to get back to being that good lawyer.

Natalie Arledge:

You're a good manager, Michael.

Michael Cowen:

I know, but I'm a better lawyer.

Natalie Arledge:

Well, probably so, yes.

Michael Cowen:

If you look at what I can bring in fee wise practicing law, we could hire a pretty damn good CEO [inaudible 00:14:24]. The second one is I want to try two jury trials at least, no less than two, no more than four. More than three or four, it gets to be too much, especially because you have to prep for two or three for every one you ever get reached on. But I want to try at least two cases to a jury next year. I'm not going to make a goal on what the verdicts are because I don't have control over that. Obviously we always want them to be as big as possible, but what I do have and within my control. So I can find two cases to try.

Natalie Arledge:

Yes.

Michael Cowen:

If ones big enough. We'll figure that out. I did it last year. I did it the year before. I'll do it again. The third goal is to get back to my health routine that I was on, which is going to be running at least five days a week and going back to tracking what I eat because I had lost about 80 pounds and I found 25 of them back, and I don't want to find, I want to at least get back to where I was and I don't want to find any more of what I lost. The hold, lost and found in weight happens pretty easily.

Natalie Arledge:

It's so much easier to find than it is to lose.

Michael Cowen:

And the last one is I want to hike up to the top of a mountain that is more than 14,000 feet.

Natalie Arledge:

Oh my gosh. So what would that be? What mountain?

Michael Cowen:

Mount Elbert in Colorado, right outside of Leadville. It's all hikeable. It doesn't require special climbing equipment. One of our referral partners, Mike Cray and I are going to go. We haven't scheduled a date yet, but we've decided we're going to do it. So that'll go hand in hand with the training. And that's one of the things that's on my bucket list that I have to do before I'm 60 and I want to knock that out next year, is climbing what they call a fourteener.

Natalie Arledge:

Okay, that's very cool. Okay, so that's why it has to be over 14,000 feet.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah.

Natalie Arledge:

Okay.

Michael Cowen:

Because they call them fourteener. So I want to do a fourteener. I've done 13 five before. I've never done 14, so I want to break, and that was 1987. So it's been a little while.

Natalie Arledge:

Oh wow. Okay. Well those are good goals.

Voiceover:

Each year the law firm of Cowen Rodriguez Peacock pays millions of dollars in co-counsel fees to attorneys nationwide on trucking and commercial vehicle cases. If you have an injury case involving death or catastrophic injuries and would like to partner with our firm, please contact us by calling 210-941-1301 to discuss the case in detail and see where we can add value in a partnership. And now back to the show.

Michael Cowen:

So let me go back to your goals. So how are you going to make sure that you're, like your first are really specific, your first are real specific, that you're going to spend two to three hours looking and analyzing the documents we get from the federal government on the trucking company. Make sure you're spending more time looking at the driver logs in each case to look for what we call the teleporting trucks or the evidence that they're falsifying their logs even though they're electronic now and that you're drafting a jury charge right after the initial client meeting. How are you going to make sure you get all that done?

Natalie Arledge:

That's a great question. I didn't think that far ahead. Well, the good thing is, is that there's specific. So I feel like I can put bulleted board right here behind me.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah.

Natalie Arledge:

I could put up a reminder. I'm definitely going to need reminders.

Michael Cowen:

Yep.

Natalie Arledge:

That's a great question though. But other than just having something visual in my face every day telling me to do it, I don't know. You know what I probably will do though is I'll probably tell my team about my goals because they're the ones when we get documents in, they see them before I do. They know when the initial client meetings are scheduled, and so I might ask them too, like, hey, remind me, help keep me accountable.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah, we do need to enlist your support system. Both, I guess from what I say, the top down, which is Brett, who's our chief galvanizing officer that helps me manage attorneys and me. Tell us what the goals are and then when we have our regular meetings with you, we can be going over them. But also the biggest thing you got to tell your team, tell your paralegal, remind me when we get this document in, I need to block off two to three hours looking at it. So when we have our weekly meetings, you need to remind me, hey, I don't see this on the calendar. When are you going to do this? When you have that initial client meetings, you need to remind me, Hey, when are you going to do the jury charge? And then keep track of it somewhere. Either give yourself a task and our case management system or keep a chart somewhere, but if you don't track it, it's not going to happen.

Natalie Arledge:

Oh. That's a good idea, to actually put it on the calendar. I hadn't thought of that, but the calendar keeps me more honest than anything else.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah, if you schedule it, it'll happen.

Natalie Arledge:

Yes, exactly. Because otherwise, it's okay, I'll do it tomorrow and then things come up and okay, I'll do it Friday and then it's like, okay, I have other stuff to do. I don't have time for it anymore. That's me.

Michael Cowen:

What's your plan for getting pictures of all your clients?

Natalie Arledge:

Well, so we already kind of asked them at our initial client meeting. We'll ask them throughout the life of their case, but I think maybe I just make it a specific point to our clients the first time I talk to them like, Hey, I want to know you and I want to know, I want to put a face to your case and you're the whole reason we're doing all of this, and so send me a picture of yourself. Take a selfie right now, text it to me. We have this awesome case management software that they could just text directly to the file. So maybe during the initial client meeting, Hey, just take a selfie, send it,-

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. Or you can even take a picture of them.

Natalie Arledge:

Oh, that's true. I could.

Michael Cowen:

Okay. Here's the bigger one. Empowering your team to feel confident to make decisions within their scope. So it seems like it's a couple parts. One, they got to figure out what decisions are within their scope and which aren't. So how are you going to do that?

Natalie Arledge:

I don't know. I think that one probably needs some more thinking time by me. But I mean definitely just keeping, I mean over communicate. I feel like I have to over communicate for me personally, but I think for everybody else too, I've got to just talk to them all the time about it and just remind them like, hey, you are allowed to do this. You're allowed to do this. You're allowed to do this. You don't have to ask me. Some team members that have been with me longer than others, it's like I feel like they have a better sense of the decisions they can make. And so hopefully over 2024 with over communication and constant reminding that they can make some decisions, they'll start doing it.

Michael Cowen:

And then the final was using more visual aid. How are you going to meet that goal?

Natalie Arledge:

Well, so the first thing that comes to my mind is my depositions because I feel like that's probably the easiest place to kind of add visuals. And you've got the time, the jury's not staring at you or judge isn't staring at you. And if it's your deposition, you can take all the time you want changing your visual aid. So

I'm probably going to have to work it into my depo prep somehow. I need to think of one or two visuals every time I'm depo prepping and just make it part of that.

Michael Cowen:

Do you already have the skillset to make your own visuals or do you need any either help or development training in that area?

Natalie Arledge:

So I guess I should, right? I mean, I know the basics of PowerPoint, but I feel like I could always use more training. I want to be a wiz like Sonia.

Michael Cowen:

So how are you going to do that then?

Natalie Arledge:

Well, I bought a book that I haven't read yet, Beyond Bullet Points.

Michael Cowen:

Cliff Atkinson, one of our former guests. Yeah.

Natalie Arledge:

Yes. Yeah, so I've read part of his book, but I probably need to have it on my desk with me and while I'm doing my depo prep and kind of use it more as a reference. That might help and then maybe just taking some classes online, somebody showing me how to use PowerPoint.

Michael Cowen:

That same company, I don't even remember their name anymore, but we had to do the Microsoft Word training, they also do a PowerPoint training.

Natalie Arledge:

Oh, okay. Maybe I'll check them out.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. And it's not that expensive. I mean it's in the hundreds, not the thousands, and I haven't read it yet. Michael Leizerman said he uses a book called Presentation Zen. I saw him speak last week. So it's on my desk. I just bought it. So if you want it next.

Natalie Arledge:

Oh, okay. Yeah.

Michael Cowen:

I'm bringing some reading with, I've got some long flights coming up for my Christmas vacation, so I'm bringing some reading materials with me, but when I get back, you're welcome to it.

Natalie Arledge:

Okay. Awesome. Thank you. So Michael, what's your plan for meeting your goals in 2024?

Michael Cowen:

Yeah, so mine are pretty specific. So one I've been working on for a long time. So I want someone to come in and really, there's a book called Traction that talks about having an integrator, which is the idea of between traction as a good business has a visionary that comes up with the ideas and you have an integrator that actually makes ideas come to pass and runs the business. And we're just big enough where we need an integrator. And so I've been working by myself with a coach actually, with a recruiter to find the right person. I'm going to make a job offer tonight. Hopefully it gets accepted for the right person. I guess we'll know one way or another by the time this episode airs in 13 days. And then if she or whoever it ends up being accepts, then I'm going to have to just go and really define what I want that person to do and then work with that person over the next year and with goals. In fact, that person's compensation is going to be tied to meeting these goals of learning something, taking it off my plate.

What are the things that we need to have that person, like me still involved and someone, like legal strategy. I still need to be, I think I add a lot on legal strategy. I can't hire a non-lawyer to handle legal strategy for me. So for me to be available to talk to you about how to strategize your case is great. For me to be the one to say, hey, the depo's gotten done on this case, someone else can do that, and someone else can make sure that other person is doing it. And so same for getting the bills paid and all the other things that I do. So that's how I want to do that, is just hiring the right person and then meeting with them very regularly as they learn the job so I can make sure that I can start handing off one part after another, the business to her.

Natalie Arledge:

And hopefully that person starts very beginning of 2024.

Michael Cowen:

Whatever the notice period is. Yeah, we'll find out, like I said. It would be nice if that person can start before our firm trip to Santa Fe so she could get to know everybody, but we'll see.

Natalie Arledge:

What was your next goal?

Michael Cowen:

Yeah, my next goal is trying two cases. That is just a matter of I'm really spoiled at the firm because I get to choose which cases I come in to try. So it's making sure that I'm looking at people's dockets and looking at, okay, what are some cases that I want to try that are realistic to go to trial? And I'm really looking, it's funny, I'm not just looking for the big hit, although I'm tired of trying smaller cases at this point in my career. I do have trials that because it's a lawyer that hasn't tried a case solo at our firm, so I'm going to go in there and the goal of that one is to make sure that I can go teach and mentor that lawyer, not just go try the case of my own. And then there's other cases. Malorie, and I have a death case set in February.

I want to try that case and we work so good all together. It's going to be nothing but fun. Whereas Kayla, our New Mexico lawyer, and I have a minimum policy limits soft tissue case set for trial in Albuquerque, New Mexico in November. That one's also exciting to me, even though it's not going to be, even if we hit

a home run in that case, it's not going on our website. It's not a catastrophic injury or death or anything. But I've not tried a case in New Mexico yet. I've practiced there for years. I've yet to go to trial in that state. I want to go trial there.

I've not tried a case with Kayla yet. She's brilliant. I want to see her develop, I want to work with her. And that'll be more of a coaching trial for me. But I'm just looking at every quarter, what trials do I have. And if it gets to October, September, October, I haven't tried enough cases, then I'll jump in and try some shittier cases I'd rather not try. Whereas if my plan goes, I can try a big one in February, then I can be pickier.

Natalie Arledge:

Right. So you tried two cases last year?

Michael Cowen:

Yeah, no, I tried two. I tried the rear end collision against SpaceX that I got a mediocre verdict on, and I tried that product case that I got a good verdict on.

Natalie Arledge:

Oh, okay. Was that your goal last year too, to try two cases?

Michael Cowen:

Two is what I want.

Natalie Arledge:

At least two.

Michael Cowen:

Two is good.

Natalie Arledge:

That's good. Keeps you in good practice.

Michael Cowen:

Three to four would be ideal for me as long as I have someone else doing a lot of the technical part of running the firm.

Natalie Arledge:

Well, yeah. Yeah. Hopefully when your integrator comes, free you up to do three or four.

Michael Cowen:

That's my hope because I love, I would much rather be trying cases than having meetings in the office and not everyone feels that way, but that's me. That's what I like. The health, I have the tool. There's a company called mybodytutor.com and actually pay to have a woman call me five days a week, sometimes six days a week, and I'm supposed to log my exercise, log what I eat, and we talk about it and talk about the mindset. I've been falling off, but I have the tool there, I just need to recommit. I talked to

her on Friday saying, "Look, I'm burned out for the year. I'll talk to you Monday and Tuesday, then I'm going on vacation, but I promise you January 1st we're coming on strong." So I've got to do that.

And then for the fourteener, yeah, I got to go pick the date. That's the big thing. So I'm going to try to get that done actually by January 1st. I've got to just go talk to, my running coach does a lot of mountain stuff and figure out what's a good time of year where it's not too hot, not too cold to get up there, not going to have crazy weather hopefully. And then pick the date, hire a guide, and then start the training program.

So I've got so many coaches in my life. I've got a fitness coach, I've got an eating coach, I've got a running coach, I've got a business coach, but it's what I need. And so I'm sure he's going to have me running a lot on the treadmill with like big incline. He's done that before. Put me on an incline for an hour at a time. It's not fun, but that's how you get your body ready to do that. And then I'll have to figure out what I can do for the higher elevation. I guess when I'm in Albuquerque or Santa Fe, I'll have to do the uphill stuff.

Natalie Arledge:

There you go.

Michael Cowen:

But it'll be fun.

Natalie Arledge:

Okay. Well that sound good and you've got a plan and you're already executing your plans.

Michael Cowen:

I do. I've learned a lot. That failure to plan is planning to fail, and so I've worked a lot more in my life about being a lot more purposeful on what I do so that I actually get things done.

Natalie Arledge:

Well, that's good. Well, I'll have to take notes from you because I need to be better about my goals.

Michael Cowen:

We all do. Well listeners, let us know what your goals are and maybe we'll talk about them on a future podcast episode and if you want any advice on how to reach your goals, we can talk about that too. Just send me an email Michael@cowenlaw.com, C-O-W-E-N-L-A-W.com. Also, I'd ask everyone to do two favors for me if you like the podcast. The first one is, if you've read my book, Big Rig Justice, go on Trial Guides, and if you think it's good enough to leave a five star review, please leave a five star review. If you don't think it's good enough to leave a five star review, if you can keep that to yourself and not leave a review, I'd really appreciate it. Halfway kidding there. The other is, if you do trucking or company vehicle cases, we are having our Cowen's Big Rig Bootcamp. That's going to be here in San Antonio, Texas on July 12th. It's going to be a great seminar we're going to put on. Again, please sign up at bigrigbootcamp.com and look forward to seeing you all in person there in San Antonio.

So I hope everyone has a great 2024. Happy New Year, and I look forward to talking to you all next year on Trial Lawyer Nation. Thank you for joining us on Trial Lawyer Nation. I hope you enjoyed our show. If you'd like to receive updates, insider information, and more from Trial Lawyer Nation, sign up for our mailing list at triallawyernation.com. You could also visit our episodes page on the website for show notes and direct links to any resources in this or any past episode. To help more attorneys find our

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Voiceover:

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