

## Is My Lawyer Any Good - by SJD

Choosing a lawyer can be a difficult task, so here are a few guidelines to help you. The first thing you need to remember is that you do not need a personal lawyer like you need a tax adviser or a family doctor. Lawyers should be chosen for specific tasks such as when selling property, when you are making a will or when starting a business, divorce or separation. Lawyers should be used when you are in a crisis situation such as personal injury has occurred or in a wrongful death situation.

So, choosing the lawyer depends partly on the work to be done. There are many lawyers in the phonebook and each of them may specialize in a different area. When choosing a lawyer do not look at his or her age, good and bad lawyers come in all ages. Some people will look at what school the lawyer attended; this is not a good suggestion. Many of the top schools have turned out less than top lawyers. In personal matters the issue of small firm versus large firm sometimes comes up, this is really relevant.

There are a few things that you should look for in a good lawyer. What really matters when choosing a lawyer is the person. Look for a someone who has common sense, someone that knows what they are talking about; you will determine this either on the phone or in your first meeting. A very important factor that you should check for is discretion, is this lawyer discreet in his business. Make sure you obtain references and check them. Make sure the lawyer you have chosen is appropriate for the circumstances. An excellent real estate lawyer could make a very poor divorce lawyer.

A very important issue in choosing a lawyer is his competence. Is he a good lawyer or bad? This can be hard to determine, so this is where obtaining references comes in. Don't just rely on word of mouth! Obtain every reference you can and check them out in detail. While at your first meeting ask questions; make sure he or she has handled the type of case that you need assistance with. Check to see what the results were in his former cases. Did he win or lose. How where the cases handled? Where they handled professionally? These are all valuable questions that will help you get the best lawyer for your case.

Beware of lawyers who try to get to get personally close to you; all legal relationships should remain on a professional relationship at all times.

Also don't forget that lawyers come with hefty price tags; it is very advisable to set up a pay-as-you-go agreement, preferably on a monthly or quarterly basis. This way when it comes time to pay, you can ask yourself if you are receiving the best deal for your money. Since all these fees are coming out of your pocket it is very important at all times to deal with your lawyer in a business like fashion until you are satisfied with the services.

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