



Challenges For Younger Lawyers

By Jake Evans, Thompson Hine LLP

Being a Young Lawyer Ain't Easy



1. Know Your Limitations

- Although you have graduated from law school and passed the bar, you don't know everything.
- Not an issue of intelligence or skill, an issue of experience.
- You don't know what you don't know.
- Focus on your area of expertise.

How do I address inexperience?

- Do not be afraid to ask questions.
- But, also do not be afraid to make mistakes. Sure, mistakes are not good, but they are often necessary to learn.
- If you can learn that the stove is hot without touching it, consider that a win and process the learning lesson.
- Do not use youth as a crutch, to the extent that you can, take ownership and accountability of your matters.

2. Pick Your Clients Carefully



Appropriate Screening

- For lawyers, beginning or experienced, it is exciting to generate new clients.
- Some clients are more likely to file malpractice claims than other clients.
- First, confirm the identity of the client.
 - Are you representing the individual?
 - The corporate entity?
 - Both?

What to look for in client.

- How many attorneys have been involved before?
- Number of times the person has been a party to litigation? Plaintiff or defendant?
- What is the earliest deadline in connection with the matter?
- What are the potential client's expectations? Are they realistic?
- Can the potential client pay?
- Most important, what does your gut say?

3. Do Not Forget the Ethical Rules

- Having recently taken the MPRE and bar exam, the model rules of ethical conduct should be fresh.
- They exist for a reason, and should be followed.
- The quickest way to turn a legal career upside-down is to have a bar grievance filed against you as a young lawyer.



Evaluating Conflicts

- Arguably the most important Ga Rules of Prof'l Conduct are 1.7 and 1.9, both of which relate to conflicts.
- Conflict systems are only as good as those who use it. The information contained in the conflict system must be accurate.
 - Name of client, with identifying information (address, d/b/a, etc.)
 - Name of all adverse and potentially adverse parties
 - Description of the representation.

Conflict Types

- The model rules divide conflicts into two categories:
 - Multiple Representation – two or more **current** clients.
 - Rule 1.7 of Ga Rules of Prof'l Conduct
 - Successive Representation – current client and **former** client
 - Rule 1.9 of Ga Rules of Prof'l Conduct

Current Clients

- Simple Test: Will the new representation adversely affect another client? Would I do anything differently?
- If so, is the conflict waivable?
 - Not waivable if: (1) prohibited by law/rules; (2) directly adverse or substantially related proceeding; (3) reasonably unlikely lawyer can provide adequate representation.
- Do you have informed consent?
 - Attorney must fully advise of the risks
 - Consent should be in writing

Successive Representation

- Primary Inquiry: are the matters substantially related.
 - If yes, conflict, but can obtain informed consent from client.
 - If no, no conflict.
- This shows the importance of appropriately limiting representations and promptly closing matters.

4. Proper Calendaring System



Make-up of Effective Calendaring System

- It must be systematic, and operate at habitual level.
- Designate a person to be in charge of calendaring all deadlines.
 - As a lawyer, you are accountable for your client's deadlines, not your assistant.
- The moment the deadline is established, it should be calendared.
- Do NOT rely on email inbox as a reminder system.

5. My Five Tips For Young Lawyers

- **1. Become Comfortable Being Uncomfortable**
 - Most important characteristic stated by Fortune 100 CEOs;
 - On a daily, or at the least weekly basis, seek to breach your comfort zone;
 - The moment you are fully comfortable is the moment you stop progressing.

- **2. Seek to be Great at Everything You do**
 - From doing document review, to drafting a brief, to volunteering; be great. Every opportunity is an opportunity to learn and grow.
 - The opportunities that will arise will be amazing.

My Five Tips for Younger Lawyers

- **3. Seek Out a Mentor and Listen, Do Not Talk**
 - The best mentors are found organically.
 - Time permitting, most people will be flattered to be a mentor.
 - Most efficient method to learn, and take the elevator.

- **4. Begin With the End in Mind**
 - To know what you need to do, you must know where you want to go.
 - This goal-oriented focus is indispensable to properly structuring your career and your short-term goals.

My Five Tips for Younger Lawyers

- **5. Life Isn't About Waiting For the Storm to Pass Its About Learning to Dance In The Rain**
 - Law is a regimented profession.
 - And a stressful profession.
 - But enjoy the journey, because, in the end, it all really does not matter.



Thank you.

If have further questions, do not
hesitant to contact me at:

[-Jake.Evans@ThompsonHine.com](mailto:Jake.Evans@ThompsonHine.com)