

Choosing the Right Lawyer for the Job

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An event happens in your life and the effects are substantial, perhaps even potentially catastrophic in terms of the financial ripple effect and the reduction in your daily quality of life---what do you do? In many scenarios (injuries, accidents, instances of unfair treatment, occurrences of theft and fraud, etc), one of your first thoughts will be to get a lawyer, naturally. But where do you get a lawyer and how do you go about choosing the right lawyer?

Here's how most people do it: 1. get a referral from a friend, neighbor, or relative who has experienced a similar situation and has also required the services of a lawyer; 2. look in the yellow pages under a plethora of attorney categories; 3. look online.

And all of these methods can work quite nicely. However, if you've ever had to look for an attorney to handle a particular matter, you may have learned that being able to contact an attorney is not quite the same as being able to find the right attorney for what you need (this precludes traffic, bankruptcy, and wills and estates attorneys, of course---call any one of them and they can generally service your needs).

What constitutes the right attorney and, conversely, what does not? Think of this in terms of finding the right car mechanic. If you own a 1974 VW Beetle, it may not be sufficient to simply take your car to a general mechanic because even a certified automotive mechanic may have little to no experience working on "bugs". What you'd probably want, instead, is a mechanic who specializes in Volkswagens and not just Volkswagens, but vintage VWs.

When it comes to choosing the right attorney, you definitely want a specialist. But more than that, you want a legal representative who embodies the right characteristics that will allow you to comfortably work with him, or her. What are those characteristics? They can include a willingness and desire to keep you informed (i.e., do they keep you updated and do they bother to return your phone calls) and a solid expertise in their practice area (i.e. have they been practicing in your needed area of specialty for one year, or ten years---experience can make a tremendous difference). However, having said all this, choosing the right attorney for your particular needs may also draw demands from the individual seeking legal help as well.

Here's a good example. A disabled individual who is pursuing a social security disability or ssi claim may ultimately require the services of a disability attorney; however, that same individual will be better qualified to select the right legal advocate if they possess some understanding of how the process works (a disability claimant, in this example, would probably wish to "bone up" on how SSD works by referring to the Secrets Social Security SSI FAQ page.

And, certainly, selecting the right attorney for your need does not, or should not, stop with gaining a certain knowledge of the legal arena into which you are about to tread. Sometimes, in fact many times, finding the right representative can boil down to getting the "right feel" that emanates from a gut instinct level and only comes from actually meeting your possible future lawyer.

So, to find the right attorney for what you need, look in the right sources, look for experience, and learn at least a little about the issues that are at hand for you. But, consider personally meeting your prospective lawyer before retaining him, versus making your decision based solely on a phone call. The author of this article, Tim Moore, publishes a website that provides information on fibromyalgia at <http://www.fibrofactpage.com>