



The Good Lawyer: Seeking Quality in the Practice of Law

Douglas O. Linder, Nancy Levit

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Every lawyer wants to be a good lawyer. They want to do right by their clients, contribute to the professional community, become good colleagues, interact effectively with people of all persuasions, and choose the right cases. All of these skills and behaviors are important, but they spring from hard-to-identify foundational qualities necessary for good lawyering. After focusing for three years on getting high grades and sharpening analytical skills, far too many lawyers leave law school without a real sense of what it takes to be a good lawyer.

In *The Good Lawyer*, Douglas O. Linder and Nancy Levit combine evidence from the latest social science research with numerous engaging accounts of top-notch attorneys at work to explain just what makes a good lawyer. They outline and analyze several crucial qualities: courage, empathy, integrity, diligence, realism, a strong sense of justice, clarity of purpose, and an ability to transcend emotionalism. Many qualities require apportionment in the right measure, and achieving the right balance is difficult. Lawyers need to know when to empathize and also when to detach; courage without an appreciation of consequences becomes recklessness; working too hard leads to exhaustion and mistakes. And what do you do in tricky situations, where the urge to deceive is high? How can you maintain focus through a mind-taxing (or mind-numbing) project? Every lawyer faces these problems at some point, but if properly recognized and approached, they can be overcome.

It's not easy being good, but this engaging guide will serve as a handbook for any lawyer trying not only to figure out how to become a better--and, almost always, more fulfilled--lawyer.

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