



The Grievance Committee

I have come to the conclusion that lawyers are some of the biggest beefers known to man. In fact, it would be difficult to find a grumpier group in the world than our gang.

Not that we don't have some legitimate gripes.

First, there's the clients. Nobody really loves their lawyers, like they do their doctors or their housekeepers or their pool boys. They come to see us because they've got a big problem and generally walk in the door hacked off about it. Given the nature of the system, most results

involve some sort of compromise, which leaves everyone at least somewhat dissatisfied. About the only thing they can agree upon is that their lawyers charged too much and could have done a better job.

In this way, we are slightly down the totem pole from plumbers. I have realized that people generally call me when they have the equivalent of their toilet overflowing and ruining their bathroom. I get paid more than the plumber, but I still have to roll my sleeves up and slosh around to try to unplug the pipes. The difference is that the plumber can usually fix the problem, and we sometimes can't. Regardless, both jobs can involve dealing with a lot of other people's crap.

We're also like the plumber in that we have to actually put in the time to make the money. This seemed logical when we were growing up and making career choices. But now that we see other businesspeople and entrepreneurs making money while they sleep, the flaw in our economic model is obvious. Regardless of your hourly rate, the 24-hour day puts a cap on your earning potential. I guess that realization is why someone invented associates. But for the folks whose name isn't on the door, it's a tough lesson to be learned late.

Then there is the fact that we, more than anyone else in society, have to deal with lawyers all the time. When unhappy complainers interact all day with other unhappy complainers, the results are predictable. So they often take it out on each other, which in the end just makes everyone even more unhappy.

So, for all the unhappy beefers out there, I offer the fol-

lowing perspective.

You really don't have it so rough, so you need to lighten up a little. If you think your clients are difficult, try working in the service industries for awhile. The coffee wasn't warm enough, so the old lady stiffed you on the tip. The little kid in Room 405 threw up on the carpet, can you get on that? The fat guy in 12D wants more peanuts.

Or you could try really working for a living. Spend a few hours on the jackhammer this August. Try teaching a classroom of lethargic teenagers. Go to beauty school and practice giving pedicures to homeless guys.

I promise you that rewriting that motion won't seem so bad after a few days doing what most people have to do every work day of their lives.

So we won't be as rich as the guy in Paradise Valley whose grandfather invented the disposable diaper. We missed out on the lucky sperm club and won't be playing for the Diamondbacks or yachting in the Greek Isles. We probably won't be getting the update from the accountant that another million dollars has come into our account this month.

Too bad, I know. But it is still a whole lot better than what most people have to put up with every day. We get to do some good every now and then, and we actually help people solve some important problems in their lives. We get paid well enough to put us in the top one percent of earners in the world. And most days there is no heavy lifting required.

All and all, not much to complain about. **BT**

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