

10 Things to Look For in Choosing a Lawyer

(1) A lawyer who will devote individual, aggressive attention to your case. You do not want to select a lawyer who is trying to shove cases inside cookie-cutter molds in an effort to handle as many as possible. You want to pick a lawyer who carefully limits the number of cases he or she takes in order to devote aggressive attention to each one. Handling each case individually takes a lot more time, but it can make a big difference in the results for the individual client.

(2) A lawyer who cares about you and what you have suffered. What happened to you turned your life upside down. A case that is important to you should be important to your lawyer, too. What you have to say is important to the case, and your lawyer should listen carefully to what you say.

(3) A lawyer who will thoroughly prepare for each phase of your case. You do not want a lawyer who is unwilling to do extensive discovery and fact-finding about a case. You want a lawyer who thoroughly prepares for every phase of the case, including for depositions, mediations, hearings, witness interviews, and trial.

(4) A lawyer who will thoroughly investigate your case. The pre-trial investigation is the most important part of the case. You want a lawyer who will take the time to dig for the key facts during discovery. Your case should be thoroughly investigated.

(5) A lawyer who is competent to handle your case. Obviously you want a lawyer who is educated and experienced. Yet many clients do not realize that they also need a lawyer who is educated in how to handle the type of case the

client has. Beware of the lawyer who lacks the skills to handle your case, but will take it on, anyway, if it offers the prospect of a good fee. Your lawyer should be able to handle the kind of case you have.

(6) A lawyer who is willing to see your case through to completion, including to trial. Some lawyers take cases that they have no intention of trying. Their only goal is to get the case in the door, and settle it. Insurance companies know what the lawyers are doing, and consequently they offer bottom dollar for the cases in those lawyers' office. You want a lawyer who is willing to try cases to get fair compensation for his or her clients.

(7) A lawyer who will treat you courteously. You are the reason the law firm exists, and everyone at the firm should treat you that way.

(8) A lawyer who will inform you about what is happening in your case. You do not want to be left wondering whether your lawyer is really working on your case. You want to be kept informed about where the case stands and what will happen next.

(9) A lawyer who recognizes that you should be allowed to cooperate in preparing your case. Nobody knows more about your case than you do. You should be consulted as your case is prepared for trial.

(10) A lawyer who spends your money frugally, as if it were the lawyer's own money. Ultimately the case expenses come out of your pocket. You do not want a lawyer who will spend more on your dime than on his or her own. You want your lawyer to ask the questions, "Is it necessary?" and "Is there a cheaper alternative that will accomplish the same result?"