

# Do you fit the attorney profile?

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All too often, attorneys find themselves on the receiving end of unflattering jokes. That's partly because generations of legal practice have created widespread beliefs about attorneys and what makes them tick.

Let's have a little fun. Here are some common characteristics associated with lawyers. See if you fit the profile.

1. **Glass half empty.** Did you hear this warning on your first day of law school? You will never view the world the same. It turned out to be true, didn't it? Attorneys are often characterized as negative people, seeing the glass as half empty instead of half full. That's because law school taught you to think of everything that could possibly go wrong and then avoid it. Relax. It's not necessarily a bad thing. After all, isn't that what your clients pay you to do?
2. **Control freak.** Lawyers are trained to pay attention and notice the smallest of details. Add this to the high level of education and expertise it takes to practice law, and you have the perfect recipe for a person who needs to be in control of... everything... all of the time.
3. **Allergic to risk.** This goes along with the pessimism characterization. Lawyers are known to be risk averse. Lawyers like to know the outcome well in advance. They are trained to identify all possibilities and prepare for each of them. While this is an attractive trait in the legal profession, it may drive your friends and family completely crazy.
4. **Winning is everything.** Attorneys want to win... all the time. There is no second place and there is definitely no room for losing. This is another characteristic that starts from law school, or even earlier. From day one, law students are pitted against one another for class ranking and the professor's recognition. This level of competition often seeps over into practice, where competition evolves into winning a case or convincing a judge.
5. **One end of the social spectrum.** Lawyers are generally placed at one end of the social scale or another. They are either characterized as

social butterflies and the life of any party, or introverts with absolutely no interest in social events. Thankfully, regardless of where you fall on the scale, there is a practice area that will fit your social preferences.

How do you measure up to these lawyer profiles? Are they spot on or are you proudly atypical? Wherever you fall, remember that there's no specific recipe for a being a great attorney.

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**About Erika Winston:**

*Erika Winston is a freelance writer with a passion for law. Through her business, The Legal Writing Studio, she helps legal professionals deliver effective written messages. Erika is a regular contributor to [TimeSolv](#) and a variety of other publications.*