One of the more interesting things about the practice of law is that there is no shortage of people out there (other attorneys, friends, spouses and family members) who are likely to encourage you to quit the practice of law.

- In many law firms, attorneys will encourage many of the best attorneys to leave because it means less competition for advancement, a share of the partner profits, and more work for themselves.
- Friends and spouses often do not get to see you very much because you are working long hours. They want to spend more time with you (and want you to be happy when they see you).

In addition, there are also a ton of other pressures that attorneys face to leave the practice of law (or stop working in a law firm). Losing cases, getting poor reviews, making mistakes, getting yelled at by superiors, getting bad (or no) bonuses, not being part of the “in crowd”, not having enough work and other factors can all influence an attorney’s decision to leave the practice of law.

See the following articles for more information:

- 10 Biggest Career Mistakes Big Firm Attorneys Make (10 Ways to Survive in a Big Firm)
- Why You Should Quit Practicing Law

Despite all of the negativity surrounding remaining an attorney, there are some huge benefits to doing so. In fact, many attorneys never fully appreciate all of the benefits of remaining an attorney and instead focus on the negative.

See: Concentrate on the Positive, Not the Negative and The Power of the Positive

My advice: Before leaving the practice of law, consider the positives of working as an attorney.

Here are some benefits and reasons to remain an attorney:

1. You Went to Law School for a Reason

Most attorneys went to law school for a reason. Whatever your reason was for attending law school, you should think long and hard about what awaits you if you forget about the source of your original motivation. This may have been a good or bad reason. Here are some reasons that people have for going to law school:

- To be happy
- To make money
- To impress people
- To meet like-minded people
- You enjoy reading and writing
- You like to advise others
- To be part of a glamorous profession
- To make your parents happy
- To help other people
- To grow

No one can speak for you, but you need to ask yourself if these reasons still apply to you. If these reasons no longer apply, then it may not make sense to remain an attorney.

An important concept to consider is whether the motivators you had to go to law school are relevant to your long-term happiness. For example, something like “growth” may be important to you over the long
run. Conversely, money may not. If you feel that your motivators for becoming an attorney are still strong enough, then you should remain an attorney.

It is important that you understand your motivations for becoming an attorney and remaining one.

See the following articles for more information:

- Are You Motivated by Information, People, Activities, Things or Places?
- Career Lessons from Mother Theresa

2. You Put a Lot of Effort into Being an Attorney (and Know More than You Think You Do) and a New Job May Force You to Start at the Bottom

Studying in college, taking the Law School Admissions Test, spending three years in law school and then taking the bar exam are all a lot of work. Are you going to have the time to put that much effort into a new profession?

While this does not mean you should continue doing something you do not enjoy, you should carefully consider this if you are serious about leaving the practice of law. You know a lot more than you think you do, and you are going to be at a serious disadvantage in most other careers that you go into. In fact, if you decide not to practice law, you should think about whether your degree will apply in your new profession.

Every job out there has its own set of stresses and problems that can make it difficult. If you are going into a new career, you will likely be starting at the bottom. Everyone likes to fantasize about doing something different and what that would be like; however, the reality is often less than a fairy tale.

See the following articles for more information:

- Why the Grass is Not Always Greener on the Other Side of the Fence
- Insider Trading, Ponzi Schemes and Making the Most of Your Assets

3. You Can Get Paid to Write, Argue and Think

If you know how to do something already, you have a marketable skill. If you majored in cultural anthropology and worked various odd jobs before law school, you are not going to have much to offer prospective employers. If you remain an attorney, you will be paid for what you already know how to do.

When you are an attorney, you get paid to read, write, think and argue. There are very few other jobs out there like that. I often hear attorneys tell me they want to be journalists. A journalist is lucky to make $50,000 a year at even a large publication, and a lot of stories they report on are mundane matters such as a protest in the town square or a fire at a department store.

4. Being an Attorney Has Good Earning Potential in Relation to Other Professions

The median annual salary for attorneys is over $100,000 a year, and it is not uncommon for attorneys in the largest law firms to earn over $1,000,000 a year. While the salaries of attorneys vary by the region that they are in, in general, attorneys make incomes that are far, far more than the average income in our society.

While I am not going to get too much into the benefits of earning more income, it does offer you the chance to:

- Save more money for retirement
- Take better care of yourself
- Live better
- Provide a better quality of life for your family

Money, of course, is not everything, but you will make more as an attorney than in most other professions. When you choose to leave the practice of law and go into a different profession, there may be financial drawbacks that you need to consider.

5. Being an Attorney is Prestigious
Being an attorney has always been considered a prestigious profession. The role attorneys as advisors and their ability to influence courts and other outcomes means that society holds them in high regard. Even television and the media portray them prestigiously.

If you are an attorney, people will say “she is an attorney” and they do not need to say much more. If you do anything else, people will say “she’s a businessperson” or “she’s a salesperson”. When you are an attorney, this presents you in a better light in society than most professions, and it is respected. The general public typically holds attorneys in high regard especially in smaller legal markets.

6. Working as an Attorney is Intellectually Challenging

When you are working as an attorney, you are constantly challenged intellectually in a number of ways. You may be dealing with a litigation strategy, a real estate transaction, or a corporate deal with complex issues. While there are very mundane aspects to the legal practice from time to time, in general, the career is quite challenging from an intellectual standpoint. The best attorneys are also quite creative, and the practice of law provides attorneys with the opportunity to use out-of-the-box thinking.

Few professions will involve the intellectual challenge that practicing law does. In fact, when attorneys go into other professions, they are rarely challenged to the extent that they can be when working on sophisticated legal matters. If you enjoy thinking, strategizing and using your head, few professions are as rewarding as practicing law.

7. You Can Genuinely Help Others and Advance Social Change With Your Degree

Using your law degree, you can help people and advocate for causes you believe in. Things like voter rights, gay marriage, racial discrimination and other social causes owe their advancement to the work of attorneys. People who are sick and injured, in debt, and persecuted by the government are also aided by attorneys. Attorneys are there to make certain the rights of people and society are protected. Attorneys in every practice area offer some sort of assistance to those they are serving. It is very rewarding for many attorneys knowing that they can help so many people and do so much good in the world. There are few professions where one person can make as much impact as he can as an attorney.

When attorneys are unhappy in the practice of law, it is often due to the fact that they may not feel like they are contributing or doing anything positive. When you feel like this, the smartest thing you can do is find an environment where you will be happy and feel like you are doing something positive.

8. Being an Attorney Offers Flexibility

Because a great deal of the work attorneys do involves billing by the hour, attorneys often have a lot of flexibility. They can choose when they work, they can choose their clients and choose the type of work that they do. This is all a function of the environment the attorney is working in, of course. If you find the correct environment, you can have a ton of flexibility in your work.

- I’ve seen attorneys making hundreds of thousands of dollars per year working from home.
- I know numerous attorneys who work as contract attorneys (when they want to). When they are not working, they have the flexibility to do things like write novels or play in bands.
- Government jobs may require attorneys to work no more than 30 hours a week.

If you are seeking a lot of flexibility in the legal profession, you can find it.

9. You Have a Ton of Options You Likely Have Not Even Considered

You should also think about doing other legal jobs that you might enjoy more.

- I have seen a ton of litigators in law firms who really disliked the practice of law because it did not involve any court time. Instead, they were spending their time writing memos, letters, discovery and motions. When these same attorneys went to work at the District Attorney or US Attorney’s Office, they found themselves going to court regularly and facing a new set of challenges. They loved it.
- Similarly, corporate attorneys working inside law firms often hate law firm life but absolutely love working as in-house counsel and being involved in the day-to-day decisions and strategy of a company.
- Many attorneys absolutely THRIVE when they open their own practices and start to service clients for their
I know many attorneys who became judges and loved doing this.
I've known numerous attorneys who became law professors and also enjoyed this.

Here are some other options you may consider:

- Associate General Counsel
- City Attorney
- Contract Attorney
- Contract Specialist
- Contracts Manager
- Criminal Attorney
- Family Law
- General Counsel
- Government Attorney
- Government Relations Attorney
- Law Professor
- Legal Consultant
- Legal Writing
- Part Time Legal

10. **Being an Attorney Requires You to Constantly be Learning**

I've known attorneys in their 90s who were still practicing law and enjoyed the fact that it is constantly changing. New laws, procedures and more are bringing in continuous change to the profession. Attorneys need to stay on top of the changes to laws on an ongoing basis.

Every week, many attorneys are learning something new. The idea that you never stop learning and can never know too much is very appealing for lots of attorneys.

11. **Being an Attorney is Competitive**

When you are practicing law, there is often a “winning and losing” side (or, alternatively, you are doing something in an attempt to get your own way). Many attorneys love the competitive nature of trying to get the best deals from courts, opposing counsel, the government and others in negotiations. There are few professions where you are constantly an adversary to the other side, competing to get your way all of the time. For many attorneys, the greatest part of their job is when they feel they have won a negotiation or a case.

Other attorneys enjoy the competitive nature that comes with working in a law firm (competing with other attorneys for clients, a larger percentage of the partnership profits, and work assignments). Being in an environment where they are competing with others on an ongoing basis keeps attorneys on their toes.

12. **There is a Huge Variety of Work**

Each new matter that comes in involves a different fact pattern, personalities and issues. There are tons of roles that attorneys fill:

- from advisor,
- to defender,
- to prosecutor,
- to advocate and
- even mediator.

The list is nearly endless.

The idea that new types of work are always going to appear is exciting for many attorneys and something they look forward to. No situation is ever the exact same as the last which makes practicing law quite enjoyable for many attorneys.

**See the following articles for more information:**

www.lawcrossing.com
13. **There are Constant Opportunities to Interact With Other Lawyers and (in Some Cases) Clients**

Many attorneys enjoy working with other attorneys and solving problems and other issues with them. Interacting with other attorneys can be exciting and intellectually stimulating for attorneys.

In most law firms and other environments where attorneys work together, attorneys are constantly discussing various issues with one another throughout the day. This constant interaction and back and forth is something that many attorneys look forward to.

14. **Being an Attorney Gives You a Sense of Purpose**

Attorneys get up and go to work every day knowing there is someone they are trying to benefit: the government, a criminal, a corporation, or an individual. While not everything an attorney does is good, the work gives many a sense of purpose that motivates them to constantly push forward.

Having a sense of purpose is something that is necessary for many people to be happy and drives them forward.

*See: The Greater Your Purpose the Greater the Obstacles You Will Face*

15. **Being an Attorney Makes You Accountable**

Attorneys are constantly being kept on their toes by opposing counsel, clients, the court and others. If you slow down or mess up, you are going to be held accountable (even as a solo practitioner).

Many attorneys enjoy this sense of accountability in their careers, and it motivates them to work harder and become better. This sense of accountability means that others are always watching them, and attorneys need to do their best.

*See: Prank Phone Calls, Accountability and Your Career*

**Conclusions**

There are several reasons to remain an attorney. I have seen many attorneys leave the practice of law who are happier for doing so. However, just as many leave and experience more dissatisfaction in other careers. You need to approach the decision to leave very carefully. In most cases, the unhappiness you are experiencing is a product of the environment and type of legal work you are doing. Your dissatisfaction is not simply caused by the practice of law.

*See Why You Should Quit Practicing Law* for more information.
*See Why You Should (and Should Not) Quit the Practice of Law* for more information.

I want to know!

Why do you enjoy being an attorney? Please comment below.

*See the following for more information about alternative careers for attorneys:*

60 Nontraditional Jobs You Can Do with a Law Degree (and Should Strongly Consider Doing) Practicing Law Not the Only Option for Attorneys