

Client Science

Advice for Lawyers on Counseling Clients Through Bad News and Other Legal Realities

For most lawyers, effective client counseling is neither intuitive nor easy. Lawyers tend to avoid or delay communicating bad news out of a fear of client backlash, or because they feel torn between the obligation to clearly inform clients about weaknesses in legal positions and fear of damaging the client relationship. There is a perception that honest advice from a lawyer can make a client doubt the allegiance and zeal brought to a particular legal matter. Client Science helps lawyers to effectively communicate with their clients, particularly when delivering bad news or other legal realities. Author, Marjorie Corman Aaron, explains the applicable social sciences and translates insights from these fields into plain language to help improve a lawyer's ordering, timing, phrasing, and type of explanation, as well as style adjustments for the lawyer's voice, gesture, and body position. Ultimately, she demonstrates how the proverbial well-informed client--meaning a client who fully understands and appreciates the lawyer's information and advice--can also be a satisfied client who trusts the lawyer's competence and loyalty.

Lawyers know that client counseling can be the most challenging part of legal practice. Clients question and often resist the complexities and uncertainties inherent in law and legal process. Honest advice from the lawyer can make a client doubt his or her allegiance and zeal. Client backlash may be directed at the lawyer who communicates bad news. Thus, the lawyer may feel torn between the obligation to clearly inform a client about weaknesses in legal positions and fear of damaging the client relationship. Too often, the lawyer struggles to counsel a particularly difficult client, but to no avail. Client Science is written to provide insight and advice to lawyers on how to more effectively communicate with their clients with regard to legal realities and difficult decisions. It will help lawyers with the always-difficult task of delivering "bad news," which will result in better-informed and thus more satisfied clients. The book explains applicable social science research and insights and translates them into plain language relevant to legal practice and client counseling. Marjorie Corman Aaron offers specific suggestions related to a lawyer's ordering, timing, phrasing, and type of explanation, as well as style adjustments for the lawyer's voice, gesture, and body position, all to impact client counseling and to improve the lawyer-client relationship.

Marjorie Corman Aaron

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