

were sick of the decline in honor in their work and “profoundly pessimistic” about the condition of the legal profession. Two-thirds said that lawyers today “compromise their professionalism as a result of economic pressure.” Nearly 80 percent said that the bar “fails to adequately punish unethical attorneys.” Half said they wouldn’t become attorneys if they had it to do over again.¹⁷

A comparable study by the Maryland Judicial Task Force found similar distress among lawyers in that state. According to Maryland’s lawyers, their profession had degenerated so badly that “they were often irritable, short-tempered, argumentative, and verbally abusive” or “detached, withdrawn, preoccupied, or distracted.” When lawyers in Virginia were asked whether the increasing problems with professionalism were attributable to “a few bad apples” or to a widespread trend, they overwhelmingly said this was a widespread issue.¹⁸

Lawyers in Florida have been deemed the worst.¹⁹ In 2003 the Florida bar reported that a “substantial minority” of lawyers were “money-grabbing, too clever, tricky, sneaky, and not trustworthy; who had little regard for the truth or fairness, willing to distort, manipulate, and conceal to win; arrogant, condescending, and abusive.” They were also “pompous and obnoxious.” What more can I say?

The medical profession has its critics as well. The critics mention doctors who do unnecessary surgeries and other procedures just to boost the bottom line: who order tests at laboratories that are giving them kickbacks, and who lean toward medical tests on equipment that they just happen to own. And what about the influence of the pharmaceutical industry? A friend of mine said he sat waiting for his doctor for an hour recently. During that time, he said, four (very attractive) representatives of drug companies went freely into and out of the