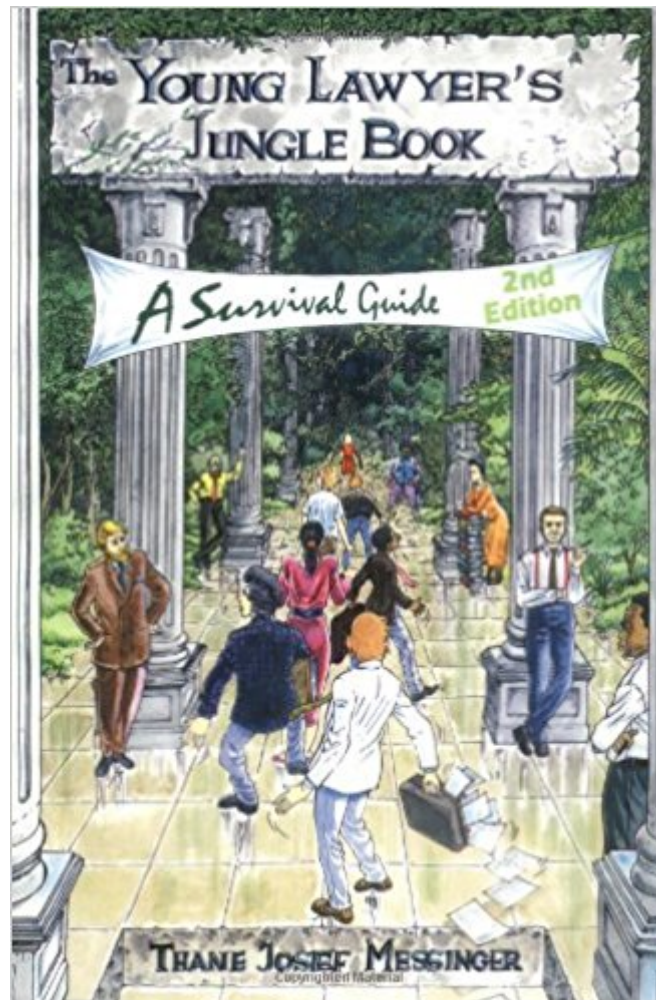




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# The Young Lawyer's Jungle Book: A Survival Guide



## Synopsis

In this survival guide for the new attorney, in-depth advice on law office life, includes how to work with senior attorneys, legal research, memos, drafting, mistakes, grammar, email, workload, timesheets, reviews, teamwork, deportment, attitude, perspective, working with clients (and dissatisfied clients), working with office staff, using office tools, and, well, not just surviving but thriving in a new career. This book is written for all law graduates, for any law office: a firm—large, medium, or small—agency, corporation, or the military. (Thane Messinger)

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I have found this to be an excellent book on the practice of law. After nearly two years in a medium-sized, boutique law firm, I think the situations and advice of the author are on-point. The book is a bit unconventional, but after a few chapters, I found it well-written and really funny, which makes it a lot easier to digest. I recommend this book to all new lawyers. It has information you won't find anywhere else - including stuff nobody ever mentioned to me - and you might pay a hundred bucks to duplicate it, if you could find a "Senior" lawyer who cared enough to tell you everything written in the book. Five stars - a definite "buy."

Best if read before law school, or the LSAT's for that matter. Nothing new here. The law is, for the most part, a thankless job. What other well paying job isn't? The first year of practice can be a make or break year for the unprepared. Most of the book is common sense, but should be read because your head will be somewhere else, and you need all the help you can get. It's a good book to read at

the gym on the stationary bike, and short enough to be finished in a few work-outs. Some of the reviews are crazy. This book will NOT put you on the fast track to making partner.

I was having problems with work. I never seemed to know what to do, or how to do something right, and I always seemed to say the wrong thing at the wrong time. Plus, it seemed that I never really knew what I was supposed to be doing. A partner came by my office last Friday and gave me a copy of this book, and asked me to read it. I was very embarrassed, and hid it in my carryall. I was very, very unhappy at work, but I started to read it. I spent all weekend reading it, and ended up reading it three times! This is an amazing book. I now see what I've been doing wrong, and I will change everything I do at the office. Thank you, thank you, thank you, Mr. Messinger. I certainly wish you had been one of my professors. I really wish I had known about this book months ago. I recommend it to everyone.

Our culture seems to run on the fuel of deception. Messinger's book is an antidote. It forewarns law students and young professionals of the realities of being a junior associate in a larger law firm. Ideally, THE YOUNG LAWYER'S JUNGLE BOOK should be consulted before entering law school. For example, in calculating the cost-benefit ratio of attending a particular school, it is important to realize that popular published school rankings are based in significant part on school prestige and placement. These latter are determined in large measure by the school's success in placing top graduates into prestigious large firms. Salary data at the top end of the higher ranked schools' post-graduation mid-range pay comes from these firms. These high figures skew the schools' private sector salary averages and medians unrealistically upward for the majority of students at all but the most elite schools. If Messinger's portrayal of law firm reality is not the life you want, you will need to rework the school rankings in light of what you can discover about legal work more suited to your goals. These other jobs will be, almost invariably, lower paying. This, in turn, will greatly affect the educational debt you can afford to carry. THE YOUNG LAWYER'S JUNGLE BOOK deals almost exclusively with larger firms and how to succeed there. It is not suitable as a review of other sources of legal employment, but works admirably in helping the reader determine whether the salary and prestige of the large firm is worth the diminution in quality of the rest of your life. (William R. Keates' 1997 book, PROCEED WITH CAUTION, is an even more insightful work on the same subject.) Middle-aged and trained in the medical sciences, I found Messinger's ironic, sometimes sophomoric writing style annoying. It masks clarity and blunts directness. Nevertheless, his is a perceptive, first-rate mind, and his book is well worth its price. It qualifies as a "must! read."

Mr. Messinger's book proposes that first-year associates can get ahead in the law business by looking right, talking right, and by playing duplicitous games of masks and daggers with their employers and coworkers. In defense of his advice, the author says that he's just describing the world as it is and not as it should be. Aside from the pervasive amoral attitude, the book is not all bad; the author is intelligent, and his generous advice about the basics of legal research, writing, and client relationships is sound. But his foul calculus of manipulation strikes me as a con. In effect, the author excuses the misery of associate life by saying, "Suffer, sublimate your soul, and do what you can to make partner. After that, the money will make up for your lost youth, and you can buy back whatever joy you gave up." As a matter of fact, the author's own life refutes the theme of his book. Mr. Messinger experienced life as an associate at a respected Honolulu law firm first-hand, and is admittedly well-qualified to write about that world. But his reaction to the practice of pinstripe law was to move to a remote tropical island where he lived a decidedly more relaxed life than the one he advocates in his book.

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