The Initial Attorney-Client Interview

1. **Goals of the Interview:**

   a. Determine the client's objectives and goals
   b. Determine if representation by your firm is appropriate
   c. Begin to formulate a plan to address the client's needs
   d. Develop a relationship of trust and open communication with the client

2. **Preparing for the Interview:** Prior to the interview, a lawyer will attempt to gather information about the client, the clients goals and objectives. Many transactional lawyers will use an "intake" form (similar to a medical office). If the client has any relevant documents, a lawyer will ask the client to bring the documents to the interview.

3. **Draft questions for the interview**: Begin with open- ended questions to generate broad, general information. To the extent that you can predict that the client's case will relate to a transaction (such as formation of a business entity), focus the open-ended questions on topics that will elicit general information relating to proposed deal. It makes sense to prepare questions about management and control, finances, investors, etc.

4. **Listen and ask relevant follow up questions:** Be an active listener. Give the client the opportunity to fully explain the situation and respond to your questions. Don't cut off the client.

   If you need to, respond to the client with narrower questions that clarify specific needs. *But don't get lost in the weeds!* You can gather only so much information in an hour.

   Honesty is the best policy: If you don't have a ready answer for the client, be honest and explain that you need to think about a response.

5. **Structure the Interview:**

   a. **Welcome & Roadmap:** Be cordial and welcoming. Describe the purpose of the interview & lay out a "road map" of what's going to happen over the next 45 minutes.
   b. **Introductions and roadmap:** Introduce yourself and allow the client(s) to introduce themselves.
   c. **Conducting the Interview:**
      - Discuss confidentiality
      - Determine client's objectives and goals.
      - Begin to gather info/data about the clients and their objectives & goals
      - Begin process of analysis & advice
      - Determine if there are any ***immediate*** needs or concerns

- Nurture the attorney-client relationship – including discussion of professional fees, scope of work & conflicts
- Review the important parts of the attorney-client contract
- Discuss the issue of representing multiple clients and the need for informed consent

d. **Concluding the Interview**:

- Restate your understanding of the clients objectives and needs
- Plan for future action.
- A/C Agreement & Deposit
- Gathering complete information
- Next meeting