

About Ettinger Law Firm

Ettinger Law Firm
Elder Law Estate Planning



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ELDER LAW ESTATE PLANNING

Protecting your future



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by

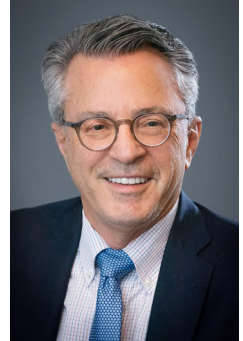
**Michael Ettinger, Attorney at Law
Ettinger Law Firm**

About the Author

Michael Ettinger was born in Montreal, Canada.

He graduated from McGill Law School with honors in 1977 and obtained his Masters of Laws degree from The London School of Economics in 1978. Mr. Ettinger joined the New York Bar in 1980.

Michael was a founding member of The American Academy of Estate Planning Attorneys and Past President of The American Association of Trust, Estate and Elder Law Attorneys. He is a contributor to the New York Bar Journal and has published over two hundred articles on Elder Law Estate Planning.



In 1991, Mr. Ettinger founded Ettinger Law Firm. Today, the firm maintains offices in twelve New York locations: Albany, Fishkill, Huntington, Islandia, Lake Success, Melville, Middletown, New City, Rhinebeck, Rockville Centre, Staten Island and White Plains.

The Ettinger Law Firm Elder Law Estate Planning Process

So many people are afraid to go and see a lawyer for estate planning. And for good reason! They may not want to look foolish, knowing so little about the subject. They may feel intimidated by the knowledge and authority of the attorney. They are frightened about the cost or of being taken advantage of. They may have had a bad previous experience with a lawyer, either in the same or in another field of law, and so on.

For this reason, we start with the premise that we must first build the client's confidence. We do this by offering a free initial consultation where we explore the client's social and financial issues. It's often like chatting with someone in their living room. We like to get to know you and your overall situation. It's a low-key, judgment-free zone. We park our egos at the door when we come in and endeavor to treat our clients as the peers and equals they are.

Next up, we review the client's current documents to see if they are still legally valid and personally valid -- in other words are these still the people you want in charge and is this still the way you want to leave your estate. Following, we review the client's personal and financial situation, and then make our recommendations as to what we feel the client should do and quote a fee. We then give the client a copy of our book "Ettinger Law Firm's Guide to Protecting Your Future" and advise them which chapters apply to them and their family. For those who prefer to watch video, we direct them to our 37 minute estate planning video on the homepage of our website, trustlaw.com.



You, the client, are invited back for a second free consultation in two or three weeks to have any questions answered that you may have from the initial consultation and from the chapters you read. Then we draft the estate plan together with you by asking who you wish to have in charge for legal and financial matters, who do you want to make

medical decisions for you and how would you like to leave your estate -- all at once or over a period of time, equal or unequal amounts, etc. At the same time we provide you with feedback by the way of options and ideas.

At the end of the second meeting we have usually gotten to the point where we feel that you fully understand the plan and then provide you with a three page proposal outlining the work to be done, the benefits, the cost and the terms of payment.

Unique among elder law estate planning firms, we do not have the client sign a Fee Agreement, or pay a retainer fee as is the standard. Instead, we provide a Fee Proposal which states that we will prepare all the documents at your request. We ask that you come in for a third meeting to review all the documents and, once all have been executed and you are satisfied, you pay at the end. However, our proposal states that until you complete the matter you have no obligation to the law firm.

Our thinking is this: if you, the client, are in control of the process the whole time then it's the best place for you to be. If we're here to serve you, and it's the best place for you to be, then we feel it's the best place for us to be.



Once you become a client we will contact you every three years to come in for a free review. The review makes sure your plan is up to date both personally and legally so that it works when you need it -- not when you wrote it perhaps decades earlier.

We also send you our weekly law letter, The Ettinger Elder Elert, to further help keep you and your plan current. Finally, we do not charge our clients for telephone calls or emails so you can feel free to communicate with us without charge.

Features of Our Practice

1. **Experience.** Over thirty-five years practicing exclusively Elder Law Estate Planning.
2. **Knowledge.** Authored the treatise “Ettinger Law Firm’s Guide to Protecting Your Future” updated annually. Complimentary copy given to each client at initial consultation.
3. **Comfort.** Low key approach. Clients are advised when it may be better to wait or if their current plan is adequate.
4. **Service.** Serviced over thirty thousand satisfied clients since 1991. We charge fees based on our knowledge and experience of the work required to address our client’s needs.
5. **Oversight.** Principal attorney Michael Ettinger was admitted to the New York Bar in 1980, is the Past President of The American Association of Trust, Estate, and Elder Law Attorneys and was a Founding Member of The American Academy of Estate Planning Attorneys.
6. **Comprehensive.** Ettinger clients have effective plans for disability instead of just estate or death planning alone. Thousands of successful Medicaid cases filed.
7. **Continuity.** Attorneys on staff in their 30’s, 40’s, 50’s, 60’s and 70’s to ensure mentoring and continuity of your elder law estate planning firm.



8. **Satisfaction.** Free initial consultation, free follow-up consultation, and no fees payable until the work is completed and you are satisfied.
9. **Systems.** Our trademarked process keeps you up-to-date on law changes and includes a free review every three years for changes in your health, your assets and in your family. An Ettinger plan is designed to work in the future when you need it.
10. **Convenience.** Twelve offices statewide for your convenience and the convenience of your other family members.
11. **Reviews.** Over three hundred and fifty client reviews at [trustlaw.com](https://www.trustlaw.com) with a 4.9 out of 5 rating.

Ettinger Law Firm's Mission Statement

- To provide timely and accurate legal advice to our clients and to the community;
- To assure that our clients receive the highest level of safety and security in a changing world;
- To defend our clients' rights and champion their just causes; and
- To see to it that those who interact with us are satisfied beyond their expectations.

The Ettinger Law Firm Way

Every law firm has a unique culture. Ours is captured in 30 fundamentals we call The Ettinger Law Firm Way. All 30 of these may be found on our website, trustlaw.com, under “Resources”.

1. Do What’s Best For The Client. In all situations, do what’s best for the client, even if it’s to our own short-term detriment. Put their needs ahead of our own. There’s no greater way to build a reputation than to steadfastly do what’s right for others.

2. Share Information. With appropriate respect for confidentiality, share information freely throughout our organization. The more people know, the better we can collaborate. Learn to ask yourself, “Who else needs to know this?”



3. Focus on Solutions. It’s easy to point out problems. It’s better to identify solutions; but it makes a true difference when you step up and become a part of the solution.

4. Find A Way. Take personal responsibility for making things happen. Respond to every situation by looking for how we can do it, rather than explaining why it can’t be done. Be resourceful and show initiative. Don’t make excuses or wait for others to solve the problem. See issues through to their completion.

5. Be Positive. You have the power to choose your attitude. Choose to be joyful, optimistic, and enthusiastic. Give people the benefit of the doubt. Your attitude is contagious. Spread optimism and positive energy.

6. Collaborate. Work together. Be open to new ideas and different approaches. Collaboration generates better ideas and solutions than does working alone. Be inclusive.

7. Look Ahead and Anticipate. Solve problems before they happen by anticipating future issues, planning for contingencies, and addressing them in advance. Work with appropriate lead times. Preventing issues is always better than fixing them.

8. “Bring It” Every Day. Have a passion for what we do and be fully engaged. Make the most of each day by approaching every task with energy, focus, purpose, and enthusiasm. Work with a sense of urgency to get things done.

9. Work Smart. Be organized and plan your work for maximum efficiency. Have all the tools and resources necessary before starting your work. Be thoughtful about your schedule, and have a game plan for your calls, your tasks, and your workday.



10. Work on Yourself. Be a lifelong learner. Seek out and take advantage of every opportunity to gain more knowledge, to increase your skills, and to become an expert. Be resourceful about learning and sharing best practices.

11. Be A Mentor. The best way to influence others is through your own example. Walk the talk. Take responsibility, both formally and informally, to coach, guide, teach, and mentor others. Be the change you want to see.

12. Listen Generously. Listening is more than simply “not speaking”. Give others your undivided attention. Be present and engaged. Minimize the distractions and let go of the need to agree or disagree. Suspend your judgment and be curious to know more, rather than jumping to conclusions. Above all, listen to understand.

13. Think Team First. It’s not about you. Don’t let your own ego or personal agenda get in the way of doing what’s best for the team. Be there for each other and be willing to step into another role or help a co-worker when that’s what’s required for success. Help each other to succeed.

14. Make Quality Personal. Demonstrate a passion for excellence and take pride in the quality of everything you touch and everything you do. Have a healthy disdain for mediocrity. Good is not good enough. Always ask yourself, “Is this my best work?”

15. Speak Straight. Speak honestly in a way that helps to make progress. Say what you mean, and be willing to ask questions, share ideas, or raise issues that may cause conflict when it’s necessary for team success. Be transparent and courageous enough to say what needs to be said. Address issues directly with those who are involved or affected.

16. Honor Commitments. Do what you say you’re going to do, when you say you’re going to do it. This includes being on time for all phone calls, appointments, meetings, and promises. If a commitment can’t be fulfilled, notify others early and agree on a new deliverable to be honored.

17. Get Clear On Expectations. Create clarity and avoid misunderstandings by discussing expectations upfront. Set expectations for others and ask when you’re not clear on what they expect of you. End all meetings with clarity about action items, responsibilities, and due dates.

18. Show Meaningful Appreciation. Recognizing people doing things right is more effective than pointing out when they do things wrong. Regularly extend meaningful acknowledgement and appreciation – in all directions throughout our organization.

19. Deliver Effortless Expectations. Find ways to make working with you/us easier. Provide simple and complete instructions. When in doubt, do more rather than pushing the work back to others in the firm or the client. Streamline our processes. Simplify everything. Be unusually helpful.

20. Walk In Your Clients’ Shoes. Understand your clients’ world and perspective. Know their challenges and frustrations. The better you understand them, the more effectively you can anticipate and meet their needs.

21. Create A Great Impression. Every conversation, phone call, e-mail, letter, and even voicemail, sets a tone and creates an impression. Pay attention to every interaction and be sure you're setting a tone that's friendly, warm, and helpful.

22. Take Pride In Your Appearance. Your personal appearance makes a strong statement about the pride you take in your performance. Dress neatly and professionally. The appearance of our office takes a similar statement about the quality of our work. Take responsibility to see that our office environment is clean, neat, and professional.

23. Make Healthy Choices. Take care of yourself at home and at the office. Eat well, exercise, and get adequate sleep. Support each other in making healthy choices. The healthier you are, the more you'll thrive personally and professionally.

24. Communicate To Be Understood. Know your audience. Write and speak in a way that they can understand. Avoid using internal lingo, acronyms, and legal jargon. Use the simplest possible explanations.

25. Pay Attention To The Details. Missing just one detail can have an enormous impact on a client. Be a fanatic about accuracy and precision. The goal is to get things right, not simply to get them done. Double-check your work. Get the details right the first time.

26. Embrace Change and Growth. What got us here is not the same as what will get us to the next level. Get outside your comfort zone, rather than stubbornly hanging on to old ways of doing things. Embrace change and the possibilities that change and growth bring. Be flexible.

27. Be Relentless About Improvement. Regularly reevaluate every aspect of your job to find ways to improve. Don't be satisfied with the status quo. "Because I was taught that way" is not a reason. Guard against complacency. Find ways to get things done better, faster, and more efficiently.

28. Treasure, Protect and Promote Our Reputation. We're all responsible for, and benefit from, the Ettinger Law Firm image and reputation. Consider how your actions affect our collective reputation, and be a proud ambassador for the firm.

29. Go The Extra Mile. Be willing to do whatever it takes to accomplish the job ... plus a little bit more. Whether it's starting early, staying late, or doing something that's not in your job description, it's the extra mile that separates the ordinary from the extraordinary.

30. Keep Things Fun. While our passion for excellence is real, remember that the world has bigger problems than the daily challenges that make up our work. Stuff happens. Keep perspective. Don't take things personally or take yourself too seriously.



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- Read informative articles
- Schedule a free consultation
- Subscribe to weekly Elder Elert
- Online library and resource center
- Watch an elder law estate planning seminar

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