

## PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND DISCIPLINE

By

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### COMMUNICATE!

I have long been satisfied that the failure to communicate causes more misunderstanding, not only in the legal profession but in all walks of life, than any other single failure.

Now that the Court has made it clear that it will not permit lawyers to neglect their clients' legal affairs, I hopefully assume that we will receive no more valid complaints of this type of professional misconduct.

However, I call attention to the fact that a failure to answer inquiries of clients or others entitled to information from the lawyer is a form of neglect and therefore is professional misconduct. Dozens of complaints we receive are that lawyers fail to answer letters or return telephone calls, even though investigation establishes that the lawyer is in fact handling the client's legal affairs properly.

More and more attorneys are adopting the practice of sending their clients a copy of all letters written by them on behalf of the client. This is a practice to be commended and will prevent a lot of complaints.

However, the failure to answer telephone or written inquiries is not only discourteous, it constitutes professional misconduct, and notice is hereby given that in situations where a lawyer *persistently* fails to communicate with his clients and others entitled to information, disciplinary action will be taken.