

**You Might Be ...**

I recently received a phone call from a structural engineer in California, a person that I have never met. He started the conversation by explaining that he has had one my old listserv posts displayed on his office wall for many years. When I asked which one, he quoted the first few lines. That brought back memories, and a subsequent Internet search successfully retrieved the post. Here it is, with apologies to Jeff Foxworthy.

You might be a (happy, productive, successful) structural engineer, if ...

- 1. You take considerable pride in being a structural engineer. In fact, you view structural engineering as one of the "highest callings" imaginable.**
- 2. You understand that a typical structural engineer plays a larger role in public safety than nearly anyone else, and you strive to practice accordingly.**
- 3. You view structural engineering as a career, not as a job. Moreover, you view structural engineering as a profession, not simply as an occupation.**
- 4. You consistently place ethics, integrity, and quality above any and all business pressures.**
- 5. You strive to team effectively with those in other professions and treat them as respected peers, but you make all structural engineering decisions independently.**
- 6. You take considerable pride in the tangible, constructed results of your efforts.**
- 7. For the most part, you truly love your work and genuinely wake up each day looking forward to going to your place of employment.**
- 8. You typically work somewhat in excess of 40 hours/week because you want to, and you could care less about "the clock."**
- 9. You expect to be fairly compensated with a salary and bonus based on the value of what you accomplish, not with a wage based on the hours that you spend.**
- 10. You understand and accept the obligation to eventually give something back to the profession of structural engineering through active participation in professional organizations, financial support, or some other means.**

When I found this post, I also found a long thread of follow-up posts. Reaction was mixed. Some engineers thought that all of the points were spot-on, while others sadly grouched that they viewed Points 8 & 9 as nonsense. Then the thread degenerated into an unrelated discussion of slow payments by clients.

Excluding Point 2, and perhaps also Point 6, how might the points apply to you and to your profession? To find out, just substitute "lawyer" or "attorney" for "structural engineer", and "the law" or "legal" for "structural engineering." How did you fare?