

One-Liners . . . That Changed My Life!

21 *“Then say it so I can understand it!”*

It was my first jury trial. I was excited, but also nervous and apprehensive. I wanted to do a good job and worked many hours on the Opening Statement. To get my wife Ellie’s reaction (and probably her assurance) I read it to her shortly before the trial. I expected her approval and was offended when she asked instead, “Why don’t you say ‘this’ and ‘this’ and ‘this’”. Hurt, I countered, “I did just say that!” She didn’t miss a beat and promptly fired back, *“Then say it so I can understand it!”*

Ellie’s candid but blunt response gave me two challenges:

- To let go of my pride and learn from honest reproof;
- To communicate so clearly and simply that others do comprehend and understand what I am saying.

The first required a change in attitude. It says in the book of Proverbs that wise men love those who reprove them. I decided to try and be wise.

The second required a lifetime of work. My role as a word-worker showed me a lot of lessons. Here are a few:

- Forget myself and get into the listeners’ shoes.
- Always speak the truth.
- Use bite-sized language.
- Follow Jesus’s example and tell stories with a point.

I was once told “Some people speak in three course dinners and some speak in hash.” Ellie, and everyone else who tried to help me be a better cook, have my sincere thanks!

From Grandpa With Love

A Note From the Writer

Moving into my nineties caused me to reminisce. It was eye-opening to realize how much I had been changed by one-liners. I decided some of these might give others a new insight or a chuckle, so—enjoy! You can reproduce this material, provided the copies are complete, including this copyright note, and circulated free of charge. © 2016 Marvin J. Martin