

One-Liners . . . That Changed My Life!

23 “*Who do you do business with—your enemies?*”

When I decided in 1956, at age 30, to open a new office, I had about \$300, a wife, three children and lots of hope! After practicing four years with an older lawyer, I had a sprinkling of new clients, but I knew I needed more to survive.

Since we couldn't advertise or solicit, we needed to find acceptable ways to grow. I gave seminars and did some other unpaid work, but remained troubled how to handle one area. I told my wife Ellie we were raised to believe you never did business with friends or relatives to avoid conflicts that might injure our relationships. With her usual practical sense and candor she asked pointedly, “*Who do you do business with—your enemies?*”

Her frank remark hit home. The result was to welcome close relationships and work with clients as people and not objects in a monopoly game. It took patience but it was worth it. Over the years many of our friends became clients and many of our clients became friends.

The practice of law is often an adversarial process. It may be easier to remain detached and indifferent to the human cost of conflict, but it can also make us hard and calloused. There are exceptions, of course, when we may be too close to be objective and we need to step aside. But, in the main, working with those we knew and getting to know those we worked with, proved to be much better.

Each relationship enriched my life, and I thank them all. And Ellie, too!

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. © 2017 Marvin J. Martin