

One-Liners . . . That Changed My Life!

29 “*First, let’s determine the problem!*”

“What shall we do first?” asked the older company president facing me across his desk.

It was many years ago, and I was a young lawyer beginning to work in the area of labor relations. My client and I were discussing a crisis that I would watch repeated scores of times. Union agents were attempting to organize the plant workers and convince them to go union. The work force was torn, productivity was going down, and what had apparently been a peaceful, normal business, a few weeks before had become a hostile battleground.

With all the exuberance of youth, I quickly outlined my proposed solutions and courses of action. After patiently listening until I was finished, my older and wiser friend said, “I don’t think that’s what we should do first.” Then he added, “***First, let’s determine the problem!***”

His calm advice served me well over the years. Different problems required different solutions. But first I needed to figure out the problem. Getting the judge or the jury to answer the right question was often the difference between winning and losing. Realizing that issues are often more about relationships than about money, began to resolve disputes. Knowing I can’t see why others are upset unless I put myself in their shoes, started opening doors for dialogue and peace. And recognizing that God has instructed us to serve, rather than to win, can revolutionize our world.

Jesus has promised us answers if we ask Him. But it sure helps to know the problem—first!

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