



Taming The Bully Lawyer

“You’ve got to fight fire with fire!” “You’ve got to bow-up.” “Don’t be scared to start a fight. I did!” “That’s the only way you’ll get any respect.” That was the advice I got from other lawyers who had been dealing with this in-your-face, bully lawyer. In planning for a scheduled future meeting with this lawyer, in response to all the warnings I received, I thought to myself, “Maybe I’ll have a police officer present.” And various escalating, fighting-back scenarios started to roll through my mind.

Well, I didn’t do any of that. Instead, when the bully lawyer sent me dozens of emails calling me names and saying how stupid I was, I never once responded. When the bully lawyer called my office and wanted to stay on hold until I picked up the phone, I never did. Then, when the bully lawyer later told me, “I wanted to strangle you,” I didn’t say anything. Not responding to emails, not picking up the phone and yelling and not saying a word were the hardest things that I have ever done in my many years of law practice. My normal inclination would have been to blast the bully both verbally and maybe even physically. In fact, at one time in life, I would have enjoyed poking the bear.

Now that I am in recovery and following a spiritual program (and have been for the last several years), I no longer want to create or inflate conflict. Life is hard enough as it is without creating more difficulties. Now don’t get me wrong – my insides were churning, and I had a number of nights where I would wake up at 4 AM playing this over and over in my mind. There were even a few nights where I could not go back to sleep, so I just got up and went to work. Along the way, I sought spiritual guidance from trusted friends in recovery and even prayed for the SOB, asking only that God provide the SOB with that which I wanted in my own life (health and happiness).

After months of not responding even once, I felt strength. After a few weeks of praying for the SOB, I no longer thought of the lawyer as an SOB and began to feel sorry for the person. Along the way, I learned that the person has had a rough life and is bitter for some legitimate reasons.

So, after months of continuing to deal with this lawyer, we are actually getting along pretty well. I think it helped that I never once responded and finally one day, when the lawyer began an outburst, I was able to say, “You know, when you do this, it doesn’t work.” The lawyer has only done “it” once since then. That’s progress.