



## Larry's Comment by Scott D. Abel

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One of the benefits of being a lawyer, is meeting and speaking to new and interesting people. Sometimes those experiences are positive, and sometimes they are negative, but it is always interesting.

I was recently discussing a matter with clients where we were trying to decide the best manner in which to approach the file. The clients are local farmers, and I will say that working with these clients has been a pleasure. The clients are articulate and knowledgeable.

In the process of discussing matters I was attempting to have the clients approach a decision from a business point of view. The clients were focusing on matters of principle, which is fine, but I wanted to ensure that the clients understood the financial consequences of their decision.

One of the clients said something that I will probably always remember. The client said "If I made all of my decisions from a business point of view, I probably would not be farming."

Beyond the obvious humor of the statement, there was something more profound, and not from the farming point of view, but from a lawyer's point of view.

Lawyers tend to approach matters dispassionately. That is not to say that we do not care what happens to our clients. Sometimes it is quite the opposite – we care very much about the outcomes that our clients must face and live with.

However, we are retained to provide a professional opinion, not an opinion that is based on emotions. If there is an emotional decision to be made, that can be done without the involvement of a lawyer.

As a lawyer, however, we must remember the point of view of the client, and their background, in making decisions. While we try to have the client focus on the business or financial aspect of the file, the client in their approach to the file, brings all of their history, background, and emotions. Even if the client is attempting to focus on the business aspect of the file, their

"business" sense will be affected by their history, background, and emotions.

That is not to say that I will radically change my approach in dealing with clients. It is still important and incumbent upon a lawyer to give his or her opinion based on their understanding of the facts and their knowledge of the law. However, my recent discussion with my clients reaffirmed the importance of a lawyer, or any professional for that matter, attempting to understand and know the client, so that the advice of the lawyer can be given in the context of a bigger picture, not just one of dollars and cents.