

Getting Off on the Right Foot – Managing Client Expectations & Relationships

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En casa de herrero, cuchillo de palo

- Client Expectations:
 - Professionalism (appearance, punctuality, respect, 100% effort)
 - Listens (learning and processing information)
 - Honest (tell the truth; live in reality)
- Why not a Two Way Street?

Red Flags

- Professionalism
 - Arriving late or “no shows” without explanation
 - Appearance (this is a legal consultation)
 - Disrespectful to staff or to you
 - Not invested in case (“I don’t have any court papers”)
- Listens
 - Will not let you speak
 - When you speak, “in one ear, out the other”
 - Too emotional
- Honest
 - Inconsistencies in the facts

Custody cases:

The past is prologue

- Physical Custody
 - Where does the child physically reside?
 - How is that child doing socially, emotionally, academically?
 - What is the visitation schedule like? How is that going?
- Legal Custody
 - Who is the one going to the doctors/dentist with the child(ren)
 - Who is the one attending parent/teacher conferences?
 - Who is the one dealing with the church, synagogue, etc.?
- Child Support
 - What do the tax returns says?
 - What do the childcare receipts show?
 - Run the Guidelines

Divorce cases:

No hay peor ciego que el que no puede ver

- Disinterest in fault-based divorces
- Alimony is an uphill battle in today's world. Expect little to nothing in majority of cases
- Absent a prenuptial, all marital property is generally a 50/50 split down the Form 9-207
- Ex-spouse has rights to pensions and retirement accounts
- Forget about attorney's fees
- Judges generally take middle-ground positions on most issues, no "winner takes all mentality"

Client's Abuse of Phone Calls

- Ostrich approach will lead you to a letter from Bar Counsel
- Hire a secretary or setup a voicemail to manage calls
- Respond to phone calls via text or e-mail to better manage time
- Develop protocols from first meeting
 - “If your call takes more than 2 minutes, you need a meeting here at the office”
- Once you pickup a phone after 5pm or on the weekend, be prepared to get calls at those times

There will still be business enough...

- Honest Abe never got it wrong
- Be very selective in your client selection
- Have high expectations for your clients

Common Challenges in MVLS Cases

- Misunderstanding of Scope of Representation
- Client wishes to pursue unrealistic goals
- Client becomes unresponsive to attorney attempts to contact them

What to do When a Client Issue Arises

- Contact client to try to talk it through
- Contact your MVLS paralegal who assigned you the case
- Contact Margaret Henn (443-451-4067) or Sarah Witri (443-451-4068)

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Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service

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<h3>Single Mom Can't Afford A Large Payment</h3> <p>Client is being sued by her former landlord for \$4146.59. She admits she owes some but not all of the debt and is hoping to reduce the amount she has to pay. Court date set for 7/20/18 at 1:30pm.</p> <table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Location:</th><th>Ref. #:</th><th>Case Type:</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Baltimore County</td><td>18-0138741</td><td>Debt Collection</td></tr></tbody></table> <p>Share Case Learn More</p>	Location:	Ref. #:	Case Type:	Baltimore County	18-0138741	Debt Collection	<h3>I Admit To The Debt, But Can We Negotiate A Settlement.</h3> <p>Client is being sued for \$933.00 for failing to make payments towards a debt. Client agrees that she owes the debt. There are no judgments entered in the case. Client has paid approximately \$300 toward the debt and would like to work out a settlement for the remaining. Affidavit Judgment Hearing: 7/23/18 at 1:00PM. Trial: 8/3/18 at 9:00AM.</p> <table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Location:</th><th>Ref. #:</th><th>Case Type:</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Washington</td><td>18-0138685</td><td>Debt Collection</td></tr></tbody></table> <p>Share Case Learn More</p>	Location:	Ref. #:	Case Type:	Washington	18-0138685	Debt Collection	<h3>You Have Left Me No Other Choice But To File For Rent Escrow.</h3> <p>Client wishes to initiate a rent escrow case after nothing has been done to make repairs. Client has lived in the property since October 2016 and problems in the unit began in December 2017. To date LL, has not tried to resolve the mold issue, flooding, falling attic stairs, and the hole in the ceiling.</p> <table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Location:</th><th>Ref. #:</th><th>Case Type:</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Baltimore County</td><td>18-0138671</td><td>Landlord-Tenant</td></tr></tbody></table> <p>Share Case Learn More</p>	Location:	Ref. #:	Case Type:	Baltimore County	18-0138671	Landlord-Tenant
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<h3>Landlord Requests The Move, Now Refusing My Security Deposit.</h3> <p>Client filed suit against her previous Landlord for the return of her security deposit and three times the amount. Client only lived in the property for 3</p>	<h3>Looking Towards A Fresh Start</h3> <p>Client seeks help with expunging her criminal record.</p>	<h3>Here's To New Beginnings!</h3> <p>Client seeks to go over her criminal record with a volunteer and to have the eligible cases expunged from her record.</p>																		

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April 2 – Guardianship of the Person and Property
Appointments

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- Recordings of past trainings are available in the following categories:
 - -Consumer
 - -Estate Planning & Estate Administration
 - -Expungement
 - -Family Law
 - -Housing
 - -Human Trafficking Prevention
 - -Tax
 - -Miscellaneous (business and soft skills)

- NOT A VOLUNTEER?

- SIGN UP TODAY!

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