

Referrer Spotlight:

Randall Jeffs

Randy is a detail-oriented litigator who practices in district court, administrative courts, as well as appellate practice. He handles all types of litigation, including contract, small business, non-compete, real property, probate, trust, and water disputes. He also handles select employment and personal injury matters.

Randall was appointed by the Utah Supreme Court in 2014 to serve on its Ethics and Discipline Committee and continues to serve on that adjudicative panel.

Randy speaks Spanish fluently. He is married with five children. He enjoys spending time with his family, reading, and enjoying the outdoors, especially hunting and camping.

(Personal note: Randy and I met at BYU when our wives-to-be were roommates. I've known Randy a long time, and he's one of the best men I know. I have referred countless clients to him, and he has done well by each.)



Attorney Advantage

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HELPING ATTORNEYS BUILD BETTER FIRMS SO THEY LIVE BETTER LIVES

Getting Paid 100%: Rule 7: Fire Your Worst Client — Today

Last month's rule was about specializing so you can work less and make more.

This month's rule is in the same vein, but it's so much more satisfying.

So, here's the rule: Fire your worst client — today.

I'll explain the why in a moment, but first, when you read the words, "Fire your worst client," a face popped into your head.

The person that face belongs to is your worst client. The client you just cannot stand. The client who makes your life miserable.

Fire that person. Fire that person today.

Now, here's the why.

Your worst client sucks up a disproportionate amount of your time and energy, and I guarantee this client is not paying you, or certainly not paying you enough. (And if you think you hate this client, your paralegal hates him 10X more than you do. Paralegals always take the brunt of abuse from these types.)

These terrible clients embody the Pareto Principle, which states that a majority of outputs and caused by a minority of inputs. The Pareto Principle is also called the 80/20 Principle.

For example, 80% of a firm's income tends to come from 20% of the firm's clients. 10% of people leave 90% of negative Yelp reviews.



And, specific to our discussion here, 20% of your clients cause 80% of your headaches and stress.

Now, imagine a world in which your worst client did not exist and didn't suck up all your time and energy. You would have much more time to market, refine your systems, find great clients who you enjoy working with, sleep, etc.

If you do this, if you fire your worst client, and then your next worst client, and then your next worst client, until all you have offloaded all your F, D, and C clients, and all who remain grade A and B clients, your world will change dramatically.

You will make significantly more money. You will work fewer hours. The stress in your office will decrease dramatically. You will enjoy your clients much more. Your staff will appreciate you. You will take more vacations and have more fun.

If you don't know how to fire a client out of the blue, here's what I did. I call it the "It's me, not you," or the George Costanza. (That's a Seinfeld reference for you young ones.)

You say something like, "John, I sorry, but I can't represent you anymore. I've thought about this a lot, and I'm just not serving you the way you deserve. I don't want to keep taking your money when I know someone else will do a



Demaree and I at the end of our 3-day hike on the Inca Trail to Machu Pichu. This is what summer is made for. Go, make some memories with your family this summer.

better job for you than I can."

Or something like that.

Whatever you do, couch the firing as a net benefit to the client, which it is (you're not doing your client any favors by hating him).

Okay, enough talk. It's go time. Get on the phone. Fire that client — today.

(Note: If you are nervous about this, that's understandable. Think about it this way. If you don't like getting rid of your F, D, and C clients, you can always backtrack acquire more of them. It's like getting out of debt. If you don't like being out of debt, you can easily get back into debt. But I have a sneaking suspicion that once you fire your worst client, you'll never go back.)

Team Spotlight: Melanie Cramer

Melanie Cramer was born in Salt Lake City, Utah and raised in Tooele where her family has lived since her great-grandparents settled here from Greece.

Melanie graduated from the University of Utah with her B.A. in Sociology with an emphasis in Criminology and Corrections.

Melanie has had a variety of jobs before coming to Brown Family Law. Some of the more interesting being working with ammunition and Air Force tooling for the B2 bomber with the Department of Defense. Melanie's legal experience comes from working at the District Court as a commissioner's judicial assistant, and then as the case manager for the domestic department.

When Melanie isn't at work, she enjoys spending time with her family on their farm full of special needs animals. She also loves working with her dad on his 1940 Chevy Pickup, that she helped install an LS engine, over the last summer.



Brown Family Law Is Hiring!

Brown Family Law is growing and hiring another attorney (or two). Here are our Mission Statement, Core Values, and Vision.

Mission Statement

We remove the fear of divorce by maximizing our clients' time with their kids and maximizing their money.

Core Values

1. Growth Mindset: We employ only those with a growth mindset.
2. Excellence: We are all excellent at what we do because our clients depend on us, and we depend on each other.
3. Impact: Our work is important because it deeply affects our clients and their families, as well as our team and our families.
4. Exclusive Focus: We focus exclusively on divorce because we want to be the best at that one thing.

5. Communication: We communicate with everyone systematically, openly, honestly, and in plain English.

6. Domination: We have a duty and obligation to dominate our market because we serve clients better than everyone else.

10-Year Vision

Brand: Help more people successfully navigate divorce than any other law firm in America.

Revenue: \$75 million per year.

People: Create opportunity for intergenerational wealth and legal excellence for 300 Brown Family Law team members.

How To Apply

If what I wrote above resonates with you and you are interested in applying, email Lei at lei.b@brownfamilylaw.com.

And if you know someone who would be a great fit with our team, feel free to refer them to us.

Recipe of the Month: Pasta Italia

It's summer, so a cold pasta salad is in order.

This pasta was the first dish I ate in Italy when I arrived there on my Mormon mission. I didn't take to it at first, but I also didn't like tomatoes when I got to Italy — yeah, I know, wrong place to not like tomatoes. After time, this pasta became one of my favorites, and now it's one of our family's summertime go-to dinners.

Ingredients

- 1 lbs pasta (whichever shape you like, I prefer a smaller shell shape)
- 8 oz of mozzarella
- 6 Roma tomatoes
- 4 tbsp parmigiano reggiano
- 10 fresh basil leaves (or 1 tbsp dried basil)
- 6 strips bacon
- 3-4 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Salt to taste

Directions

1. Heat water over high heat.
2. While water is coming to a boil, place bacon strips in a sauté pan and warm over medium high heat. Cook until crispy but not burned.
3. While bacon is cooking, cut the mozzarella into small cubes, and place them in a large bowl.
4. Cut tomatoes in half, seed them, cut them into small cubes, and place them into the bowl with the mozzarella.
5. Pour balsamic vinegar and olive oil over the tomatoes and mozzarella and stir together.
6. Slice the basil leaves into thin strips and set aside. If you're using dried basil, spoon up your tablespoon and set aside.
7. When bacon is done, remove the bacon, cut into ½-inch strips, and set aside.
8. When water comes to a boil, add salt and throw in the pasta.
9. When the pasta is just barely cooked through (i.e., al dente), remove from heat and pour into a colander. Run cold water over pasta until it is completely cooled. Shake off excess water and place pasta in the bowl with the tomatoes and mozzarella.
10. Sprinkle bacon, basil, and parmigiano over the pasta. Incorporate everything. Add salt to taste.



Brown Family Law
appreciates your referrals

We help our clients going through divorce
maximize time with their children, and
maximize their money

📞 801-685-9999

Figuring Out What You Really Want in Life: The 300 List

In other parts of this month's newsletter, I've talked about your goals and your vision.

Most people don't have goals, and almost no one has a vision, either for their lives or for their law firms.

Why?

I think it's because most people don't take the time to discover what they really want in life and in their legal career. They have only the vaguest notion of what's truly important to them, and they've almost certainly never put what's important to them in writing, which is a shame because writing concretizes things in our minds.

So, how do you go about discovering and writing down what's truly important to you?

What worked well for me is called the 300 List. I got the idea from comedian Steve Harvey. He has a list of 300 things — either material items or experiences — he wants from God.

The magic in the 300 List is that it's insanely difficult to complete. Once I got to about 60 things, I was out of ideas.

It was at this point that the thinking and introspection began. I had to really contemplate what was important enough to me that I desired to bring it to fruition. I spent many hours over quite some time just to get near 100, then 200, then 300.

I noticed that when I was done with the list, it revealed my true priorities, as well what I truly wanted to accomplish in this life, and it did so on a very granular level.

The 300 List clarified my vision. Reviewing it and working toward ticking off its items always moves me along toward that vision.

Here's a piece of advice when you put together your 300 List: Write what you truly want, not what you think others want you to want. Your vision is yours, and your goals are yours. They belong to no one else.

Another piece of advice: Look at your 300 list every day.



Let it inspire and guide what you do, and it will only do that if you review it as often as possible.

Good luck putting together your list. It really is a blast.

Your Retainer, A.K.A., Your Firm's Constitution

Have you ever wondered why attorneys have retainers?

Because of Utah Professional Rule of Conduct 1.5(b), which mandates we communicate to our clients the "rate of the fee and expenses for which the client will be responsible." 1.5 suggests this communication is "preferably in writing."

When the rules of professional conduct say "preferably," what it really means is, "Sure, you can roll the dice and not have a retainer, but if someone files a complaint against you and you don't have one, the powers that be will come for you."

So, at its basest level, we have retainers because we fear punishment.

That's all well and good, but retainers are so much more than fear an assuagement document.

Retainers are your law firm's constitution, but we usually don't treat them this way. Instead, we cobble them together from other people's retainers. We think, "Oh, that sounds good, I'll put that in mine." It's all random stuff from others.

This random hodge-podge approach is what I did when I started Brown Family Law in 2010. But then, after a couple years, I started to think differently. I thought I could use my retainer to explicitly communicate the following to my clients:

1. How the firm worked.
2. The firm's values.
3. How the firm would treat clients, and how clients would treat the firm.

So, I sat down and went to work, rewriting my entire retainer. It took weeks to draft, and redraft, and redraft, ad infinitum.

Here are a few lessons I learned while rewriting and redrafting:

1. Declaring your law firm values and your law firm operations in writing makes you really think about what you want your law firm to be and how you want it to work.

Really, what you're doing in this process is creating, or recreating, your law firm. Because of this, I suggest sitting down and really thinking about your goals and the vision you have for your law firm. Write down your goals and your vision, and then, through your retainer, create a law firm that will make them happen.

2. Your retainer is the first document your clients read when they hire you, and it communicates to them what type of attorney you are.

If your retainer is sloppy and vague, that communicates sloppiness to your clients. If your retainer reads like the IRS code or a contract to buy an oil tanker, that communicates aloofness

and uncaring to your clients.

Conversely, if your retainer is clear, readable, concise, and devoid of lawyer-speak, then that communicates thoughtfulness and accessibility.

3. If you don't spell out how your law firm works and how you'll deal with problems and difficult situations, your clients will convince you to make compromises and concessions for them.

And let me give you a hint, none of those compromises will benefit you. They will, instead, lead to frustration and a loss of money. Have a vision and stick to it. Don't let clients derail what your firm to be and how you want it to work.

What should you include in your retainer?

You can include anything you want in your retainer. Anything that's important to you is free game.

Here are some suggestions of things I think are important:

1. How you bill (flat fees, hourly), what you bill for, and exactly how you get paid
2. What happens in a client does not pay you.
3. How you communicate with your clients (how, during what hours, systemic communication, etc.)
4. Your obligations to your client
5. Expectations regarding client behavior/why you will fire a client
6. Vacations and holidays
7. Data storage
8. What happens if client fires you
9. What types of cases you will take and which types you will not
10. When representation begins and ends (spell it out for malpractice insurance purposes)
11. File retention policy
12. How to handle disputes between you and your client/choice of law
13. How you deal with trials

How often should you review and revise your retainer?

Most attorneys draft their retainers and then forget about them.

I think you should sit down every 6 months and go through your retainer with a fine-toothed comb. Read it out loud. Mark it up with a red pen. Add things, subtract things.

Make your retainer reflect your ongoing, changing vision for your firm.

I guarantee every time you do this you will find things to revise, and you'll think of things you want to add, subtract, or clarify.