

Don't Allow Others' Problems to Become Yours

Written by Steve Marr
Monday, 22 July 2019 01:31

Frequently, I'm tempted to insert myself into situations which are not my business. While there are ministry circumstances where the Lord leads us to put ourselves into other people's problems; generally, I belong to the mind-my-own-business club. King Solomon instructed, "Like one who grabs a stray dog by the ears is someone who rushes into a quarrel not their own." (Proverbs 27:17, NIV)

I was consulting with a couple who owned a small business. They had major communication issues between them which added conflict and made working through business issues difficult. On some occasions, each tried to bring me into their conflict to "straighten out the other person," something I would not and could not do. I'm not a marriage counselor. In this circumstance I stayed focused on some business issues while I referred them to a Christian marriage counselor whom I thought would help them with their communication challenges. I easily could've let their marriage problem become my problem, much to the detriment of all of us.

In another situation, a church member was telling me some issues he had with the pastor and wanted me to help communicate these concerns to the pastor. The issues were not mine, and from my perspective, I'm not sure they were valid. However, I did not want to insert myself into the situation. I suggested that my friend make an appointment with the pastor and sit down one on one with him to discuss these concerns rather than gossiping with me or others.

On numerous occasions I've had employees bring me a lot of personal issues. I've learned that I should give a limited amount of time to listen and allow them to express themselves appropriately. However, I don't want to become involved. Frequently, I have referred people for counseling or other services. For instance, if they have financial budgeting issues, they need a budget coach, not me, who is their supervisor.

Furthermore, in the damage restoration business that I am involved with; often we receive a call from a tenant expressing concern over items like mold. The tenant wants me to come over, usually free of charge, and prepare a report that they can give to their landlord to "demand" remediation. I explain to the tenant that if that they hire us; we will do an evaluation and prepare a report. The tenant needs to pay our bill, or the landlord would need to agree to bring us into the job. In the past I have been drawn into what was essentially a tenant versus landlord

Don't Allow Others' Problems to Become Yours

Written by Steve Marr
Monday, 22 July 2019 01:31

dispute. The customer tried to make their dispute my problem. Instead, I need to let the problem stay where it belonged, with the tenant and landlord.

In some situations, we do need to intervene. Recently a friend had been hospitalized with a serious blood infection and released. Later in the evening my friend experienced a fever spike, elevated kidney pain and increasing nausea. My friend didn't want to go back to the hospital, even though she had been told to return if these symptoms occurred. This was a situation where my wife and I intervened. We insisted that she go to the hospital. Fortunately, our friend agreed to allow us to drive her back. This is an example where we broke our rule of interjecting ourselves without being asked. We did so because our friend was not thinking clearly, and we believed that her health, and maybe even her life, was at risk.

Don't borrow problems. Stay focused on the skills and services you offer. Manage but don't meddle. Everyone is better served that way.