

When a Former Boss Calls after Firing You

Written by Steve Marr

Monday, 23 December 2019 16:46

A person who had been fired from a position asked a question. The employer, who let the person go, made a contact for information and guidance. The question for me was, *Should I respond?*

Here is my counsel:

First, former employers need to be respectful regardless of personal feelings. While they may want to use this as an opportunity to get back at the one who hurt them; the Lord wants us to treat all persons with kindness and respect, regardless of our feelings. However this doesn't mean we become doormats.

Second, be willing to answer simple questions. These might include: where did you leave the key to the men's room, the password for a business account or similar inquiries regarding routine activities. I would simply answer the questions as a courtesy.

When questions migrate to more complicated work issues, like personnel, processes, files, customer relationships, my short answer would be yes. However, I would add conditions. I would offer my help as an outside consultant at an hourly wage for my time, and I would ask for a consulting agreement. I would explain to my former employer that if he provided outside consulting, he would expect payment.

Generally, you can find a simple consulting agreement form on the Internet. However, my experience has been that not many are willing to take this route. Frequently, the person involved in dismissing someone doesn't want to admit a mistake or a need to call the person back for important information. Again, in a friendly way, offer to help but find out whether they're asking for 15 minutes or 15 hours or more. I would ask for payment if providing the help involved more than a simple answer.

After I left my corporate job, I was contacted for several questions which I responded to without charge. I was also called as an expert witness which I could have charged a day fee for, but I decided not to since we had been on very good terms, and I didn't want to charge for a limited

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amount of time. After all, I was not dismissed. Later the owners of the office building wanted to sell the property that my former employer leased. My previous employer asked for my help since I had not insisted on payment earlier. All parties were able to cooperate more effectively to make a new tenant agreement.

Paul reminds us that "Scripture says, 'Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain, and 'The worker deserves his wages.'" (1 Timothy 5:18, NIV) Even after you have been discharged you are still worthy of wages when someone asks you for assistance.