



Essential Skills to Resolve Any Legal Issue

How to effectively navigate
your legal challenges with
calm, clarity and kindness

DUANE LIGHT, JD

5 Essential Skills to Resolve Any Legal Issue

How to Powerfully Navigate Your Legal Challenges with Calm, Clarity and Kindness

Duane Light, JD

Disclaimer: This material does not constitute legal advice and does not create an attorney-client relationship. When you are making important legal decisions or taking action, please consult an attorney. By following these steps, I cannot guarantee success in any life or legal situation, or guarantee the actions of any third person, company or government agency.

The Problem

Clients often come to me with so much anxiety, sadness or anger that they feel at a loss for what to do. They are often losing sleep, and experiencing negative impacts on their relationships, work, and joy in life.

This is understandable, since an important life issue is at stake for them, and the legal system can be distressing and expensive.

Over my 25+ years as a licensed, holistic attorney, and training as a coach and meditation teacher, I've learned and developed essential tools that help my clients to become more calm, clear and courageous so they can more effectively navigate their legal issues.

I've handled most types of legal cases, and have done dozens of mediations, arbitrations, negotiations and trials. I've seen witnesses, and sometimes clients, not follow the principles outlined in these tools, and end up making their cases costlier, longer and more stressful.

Here are the 5 tools:

- 1 Graciously Pause**
- 2 Compassionately Move Through Your Emotions**
- 3 Re-Vision Your Legal Situation – People, Circumstance, and the Legal System**
- 4 Gather Information / Meditate / Pray / Get Clear Guidance**
- 5 Plan and Move Forward**

The first three tools help my clients reduce reactivity that could lead to actions that could make their situation worse. Have you ever sent off an angry email and later regretted it (especially if it worsens a conflict)? I think we've all done that!

When we are under stress, research shows that the frontal lobes of the brain can lose 30% or more functionality. I've seen worse – I've seen clients and witnesses freeze, be unable to think clearly in deposition or trial, and answer in ways damaging to their case.

When my clients are well trained, and can show up relaxed, clear, and with their brain fully functioning, they become extremely persuasive witnesses. I have several case examples of how difficult legal situations turned around with this approach, and you can read a few at the end of this booklet.

The final two tools are practical and are only applied after my client first attains a more calm, focused, well-functioning mind and emotional tone.

Now, on to more details:

1. Graciously Pause

When our minds and hearts are racing, we can't think straight or make good decisions. So, we first need to PAUSE. This means that when we are in any intense emotion – fear, anger, sadness, feeling lost and confused – we take a break from making decisions or taking actions.

This Pause usually lasts at least one day, so we can "sleep on it" before making an important decision. Often three or more days are needed, so there's time to calm emotions and connect to a more peaceful, enlightened place.

My clients have successfully used meditation, contemplative prayer, movement, dance, yoga, nature, sacred reading, journaling, or talking it through with a spiritually oriented friend to find that place of quiet and stillness.

It's important to practice this, many times over, to retrain yourself from thinking you must do something right away. We often react quickly, such as send out a harsh email, as a way to get rid of the negative feeling, yet all we do is infuse a negative reaction into the situation and create an often-self-harming result.

2. Compassionately Move Through Your Emotions

There are many effective methods to compassionately meet, be with, and eventually calm your emotions.

This is not about stuffing, over-riding, denying or avoiding what you are feeling. In fact, these processes take some courage, a willingness to be real with ourselves. And you'll need to invoke some strength and intention to delay at least for a while any response while in the heat of strong emotions.

My suggestion is that you begin by connecting to your inner resource of peace, compassion and wisdom, however you define that.

You might do this through meditation, prayer, reading sacred words, listening to sacred music, time in nature, a hot bath with candles and calming uplifting aromas – whatever works for you. This will provide some support for you before you dive in.

Then I suggest that you gently feel into whatever feelings or emotions are arising (one at a time helps). Then there are processes for inner sensing, accepting, and perhaps dialoguing, to see, hear and feel what may be the source of the feeling. (My free meditation, below, can take you through an effective process).

I've continuously found over many years of practice that once our wounded, fearful, angry or freezing parts are seen, felt, and heard in a loving way, they can relax. And we often receive an important understanding or message.

The time for the emotions to calm may take minutes, a few hours, or a day or two or three. What is important is quality of the inner listening, with an approach of self-love and patience.

3. Re-Vision Your Legal Situation – People, Circumstances, and the Legal System

When we are facing a difficult legal situation, our defenses can quickly arise. We criticize and feel angry toward or fearful of the other.

These reactive defenses can lead to our injecting negative thoughts into the situation. And these usually lead to increased conflict, time, and stress.

So, Re-Visioning takes some more inner work – exploring what might be judgmental feelings inside. And, importantly, we continue to invoke our highest beliefs, values, and spiritual principles:

*Acceptance. Humility. Compassion. Empathy. Forgiveness.
Trust in a Higher Wisdom, Love and Peace.*

If we can move toward seeing everyone as having a soul, a spirit, a Higher Self connected to the Divine, then we can feel more compassion for them.

Gandhi did it. Jesus did it. Nelson Mandela did it. Martin Luther King, Jr. did it. And their actions changed the world. I've seen application of these qualities create great relief to my clients, and often create profound transformations in their cases.

We can be that kind of example in the world—to those in the legal system, to our family, our friends, our community. What better place to live and represent the Divine within us?

And this is so effective. If we are kind and respectful, even to someone who is angry, it tends to defuse the situation.

We do the same inner work with our attitudes toward the difficult life circumstance we are facing. If we are having resistance to the way things currently are – with “should have” and “could have” and “I wish they wouldn't” or “I wish they didn't” or “why did they have to _____,” then those can also generate more negative thoughts, words and actions, and unnecessary suffering for us and everyone around us.

With this acceptance, not fighting reality, we are gifted a sense of peace. We are then able to proceed in a more balanced and effective way.

The same holds true for our attitudes toward the legal system, judges and lawyers. I probably know more lawyer jokes than you do! (and many of them are deserved).

However, if we walk into court with judgment, fear and anger toward the judge, the clerk, other attorneys and our “opponent,” not thinking we'll be treated fairly, acting up-tight and defensive, let me tell you, that is not persuasive or effective!

Imagine this instead – you walk into court like it's your living room, nodding and smiling to the judge, the clerk, and even the other attorney and the person on the other side. You see through their external thoughts and actions to their souls, and you care for them on that deep level.

You're relaxed, confident and friendly. I'll tell you, when any of us raise ourselves up like this, it is a shock to the system! (in a good way).

Courts are so often filled with people who are dishonest, manipulative and blaming, that when a "whole human" walks in – kind, fair and friendly – it is incredibly powerful.

I've literally seen a light come into the courtroom when the words I and my client have spoken, calmly and truthfully, are borne out by the evidence. Most judges can see and feel who is telling the truth. It's really a beautiful experience to see people in the courtroom affected by these expressions of truth and love.

I've been in trials where, at some point, it becomes so obvious who is telling the truth that the judge and I look at each other, and I know the case is over!

This is the experience that I deeply want for you.

4. Gather Information / Meditate / Pray / Get Clear Guidance

Once you have worked with your emotions and attitudes, you will be better able to access that "still, quiet voice within." You will have access to higher wisdom, higher truth, and more clear guidance on steps you can take to be as strong as needed, while also moving toward peaceful resolution.

You are now ready to gather necessary information. That includes facts and evidence you may need for your case, and some understanding of the laws and procedures that apply.

If you are representing yourself in your legal issue, then you should at minimum do some research online. I often recommend Nolo.com books for a good overview of law and procedure (they have books and materials on over 150 types of legal issues).

Even if you have an attorney, it's best for you to be more informed as a client. You might also consult more than one attorney, or people with experience or expertise in your type of issue (doctor, accountant, etc.). Some attorneys will act as your coach for you.

For the meditation / prayer stage, one of my favorite spiritual teachers, Marinda Macpherson, counsels us to "come before God with empty hands."

That means relaxing, even if temporarily, our judgments, criticisms, pain, anger, fears, plans, and whatever else is churning in heart and mind. We can then approach the Divine with empty hands, in humility, completely open to receive guidance.

This also means letting rest, at least for this time, our preconceptions about what would be the best way forward or even the best outcome. If we believe that there is a higher truth or wisdom, then we need to “empty our cup” so it can be filled, and we can be guided.

Humility, surrender, and trust serve us best here.

5. Plan and Move Forward

Only after we have attained some degree of inner calm and peace, compassionately met our emotions, re-visioned our attitudes and feelings about people, the situation and the legal system, and taken time to seek higher guidance, do we plan next steps and take action.

Planning is best done on several levels, including:

- (a) The big picture. How do I want to BE in this situation? What kind of example do I want to set for my family, friends and community?
- (b) This specific life issue: What would be the highest outcome, on a soul/spirit and practical levels, for everyone involved?
- (c) The next significant stage in this process: This might be in the next month or three months. What is most important to focus on right now? What are reasonable goals? With my new approach of being compassionate, defusing tension, and raising the vibration, how can I reach out, how can I show some empathy, respect and care to everyone involved, while also being strong and taking care of myself?
- (d) The next week or two: What can I do on a personal level to ground these attitudes and practices of humility, respect, compassion, forgiveness, trust, and prayer or meditation? What can I do right now to begin to shift the energy and focus? Write an email or letter? Talk to my attorney about how I want to proceed, moving from “war” to “peace with strength?” Where can I find support from specific family members, friends, teachers or spiritual resources to help me ground more in this approach?

- (e) Today: What can I do today to connect to my Inner Peace, compassionately meet my emotions, re-vision my legal situation, gather needed practical information and seek higher guidance, so I can effectively move forward?

Rinse and Repeat! Make sure you keep cycling back through all 5 of these Skills for every major decision and action. The most important to train yourself in is the first part of Tool #1 – The GRACIOUS PAUSE – and then take time to find your Ground of Peace, Compassion, and Wisdom before taking any important action.

I wish you the best in your personal life as well as for your legal issue. And let me know if I can help you through personal coaching or my weekly low-cost online holistic coaching call.

Offerings for Further Support

Personal Coaching from me?

Rarely is a legal problem purely legal. Almost all disputes involve emotional and interpersonal dynamics. If you are in a middle of a difficult legal situation, I currently have space for five more clients.

To sign up for a free 45 minute Empower Your Case phone or zoom call, where we will explore whether it would be beneficial for you to work with me, click this link: <https://www.peaceinthelaw.com/coaching/>

Weekly Holistic Legal Coaching online

Beginning November 10, 2021, I'll host a weekly Zoom call through my **DISTRESS TO SUCCESS: Holistic Legal Coaching with Duane Light, JD** private Members group. I'll answer questions that are emailed to me at least a day in advance, selecting from the most universal or relevant each week. To find out more and take advantage of my special launch price of just \$29/month, available until December 1, 2021, click this link: <https://peaceinthelaw.kartra.com/page/Transformative-Legal-Coaching>

APPENDIX

A few holistic case examples

How treating an IRS agent as a friend disappeared the IRS debt

From my client SF:

I am a counselor. In 2002, I had a beautiful and profound outcome with an IRS tax issue, based on an “enlightened” approach suggested to me by my friend and Holistic Attorney Duane Light.

When I first spoke to Duane, I was afraid of the IRS and what they might do in response to my outstanding IRS debt. I didn’t know what to do and was especially afraid of calling them.

I called Duane, and he gave me guidance to approach the IRS agents with an open heart, honesty and compassion. He suggested that I “treat the agent as a friend in the making.” He told me that the average job turnover in the IRS is 9 months, and that many of these individuals are struggling with their work and rarely get to experience compassion and care from someone on the other end of the phone line.

After meditating and praying until I became calm, and when I sincerely felt that I could care for the person on the other end of the line, I made the call. My heart was open toward the IRS agent, and I know he felt that.

I was able to be friendly, direct and truthful about my financial situation. Amazingly, the agent reclassified my debts as uncollectible!

I continued to stay in contact with them over the years, and all my dealings with the IRS since that time have been completely benign and full of good will.

The work that Duane did with me has changed the nature of my relationships with people in positions of authority that used to intimidate me, such as the IRS and insurance adjustors. It’s just completely revolutionized the reactions and the results that I get from those people, in an atmosphere of fellowship with them.

It didn’t just change a skill set, it changed a mindset for me and opened my heart to people that I had been afraid of.

I have made reference to the benefits of the principals I learned from Duane to people often since that time. So the benefits have continued to ripple out and help others. The principals upon which his work is based are so solid and grounded in essential truths that I feel there’s been no diluting of their potency over the years.

How a client was able to come to peace while administering an estate and dealing with a combative relative

Kim's dear brother died, and she was tasked with administering the estate, including taking care of his ashes after the cremation. Kim is a very kind person. Her nephew (her brother's son) was having a very troubled time in his life, involving drugs and a lot of anger.

He and his dad's wife started to cause problems. They fought release of the ashes to Kim, even though she was going to fulfill her brother's wishes. In Kim and my discussions, we decided to split the ashes.

The son also created problems around the accounting, asking for every receipt and charge. Estates are rarely perfectly managed, and this put Kim through many hours of pretty useless work – the amounts were so small.

And then there were the yelling and blaming phone conversations, that Kim finally had to stop allowing.

Kim and I worked on how to communicate with him, mostly by emails. We talked about her love for him, in his core as a good person, and how helpful it would be for her peace of mind to forgive him, and release any further desire to change him.

This took some time, but Kim eventually came to more peace with the situation. She continued to love her nephew, and also create healthy separation so she would not be emotionally and mentally abused by him.

In doing this kind of inner work for ourselves, we can't expect that others will always change. We hope for that, but this holistic approach is first and foremost about our finding our peace of mind, our strong center, and moving forward as effectively as we can from there.

Kim wrote the following to me, near the end of the process: *“Duane, at times it has been difficult for me to maintain a balanced, loving stance in this situation rather than attempting to make things “right.” I feel a sense of peace to know that you are involved.”*

How a painful case settled on the day of trial, because of one sincere, kind statement

I was approached by a woman who was in the midst of a law case against a former friend and business partner. Ms. W's current attorney was the high-stress type. This attorney was handling the case in an anxiety-laden way, and this added to Ms. W's stress. (It's not a good sign when your own attorney increases your anxiety!).

The former best friends had decided to work together on a property development project, with the friend investing several hundred thousand dollars. Due in part to bad management on my client's part, and also the real estate crash of 2007, the project failed. Each person angrily blamed the other, and the lawsuit started.

By the time I came into the case, trial was only a few weeks away. I dove into five boxes of documents and prepared all necessary trial pleadings. As I was reading, I saw that the defendant, Ms. W's former friend, was a nurse and had created a nonprofit to bring health services to the poor.

I wrote the defendant's lawyer an email the day before trial, saying that I saw that his client was doing very good work in the world, and that it would be nice if the case could settle so she could get back to her wonderful service. This was completely sincere on my part (these statements need to be sincere – this is not a “technique”).

Trial was to start the next morning at 9 a.m.. I arrived with my client and we set up on our side. The former friend, now defendant, then walked across the courtroom to speak with me. This is exceeding rare! She told me that she felt that I was an honorable man, and because I was there she was willing to discuss settlement!

The judge gave us time to talk, and the case settled within an hour.

Later, this defendant contacted me about some details for wrapping up the case. She thanked me again for my approach to the case that helped it resolve peacefully. This is one of many, many examples where some simple recognizing of the Other, and sincere, kind communication, softens the conflict and creates the opportunity for resolution.