



Add “SPICE” to your Elder Law Practice

By: Rick Law, J.D.



“Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.” – Leonardo Da Vinci.

“A confused mind says ‘no!’” – Rick Law

There was no escape. I was standing before 100 estate planning attorneys from my own hometown bar association. I had not stood before a tougher audience since I was 19 and had to explain to my parents that I had totaled their car. My audience that day sat grimly quiet with arms crossed, waiting for me to prove that I was worthy of their time and attention. The CLE topic of the day was “Elder Law Essentials,” a presentation designed to demonstrate the distinctive value of the elder law practice as distinguished from traditional-tax-motivated estate planning. An interpersonal minefield surrounded me. One misstep and this audience could “blow up” and be offended. On the other hand, success was worth the risk.

A successful presentation would accomplish three goals:

1. The audience would decide to like me and to trust me;
2. The audience would learn to recognize a ‘good facts’ referral/target client; and
3. The audience would be motivated by the value of our solutions to refer prospects.

To accomplish these three goals, I needed to speak the language of my audience and to persuade them to follow me to a new way of thinking. At the end of that CLE presentation, even the wizened dean of the Estate Planning Committee gave me a smile. Victory on home court!

Persuasion is a skill that can be learned and then must be honed. Researcher/author Kevin Dutton says that the key persuasive factors can be summarized by the acronym “SPICE.” He states that human beings are persuaded by those who artfully communicate with:

- Simplicity;
- Perceived self-interest of listener;
- Incongruity (humor);
- Confidence; and
- Empathy.¹

Unfortunately, by the time we graduate from law school, most of our presentation skills have lost their “SPICE.” Moot court, law review, and classroom competition grind our communication style into a tasteless recipe with the flavor of hardtack. Excellent legal writing too often focuses on technical analytics/citations and a redundant “belt and suspenders” style.

To be more successful, we need to add the SPICE back into our professional communication recipe book. Prospective clients and only a few referral sources have the training to evaluate our legal technical prowess, so they evaluate us according to their own rules of perception. We had better have SPICE or they will choose someone else—or worse, download their ‘lawyer’ from the internet.

On August 13, I will demonstrate a model-presentation to use for professional audiences based on the SPICE principles. “Elder Law Essentials” is a hard-hitting and target-focused public presentation to motivate both non-elder law attorneys and other professionals by tagging the bases of three presentation goals: trust me; see my prospective client; value my solutions.

In just 100 minutes we will explore together how to season the communication cuisine so that both professionals and prospective clients are hungry to do business with you. I will humorously demonstrate five easy-to-learn-and-apply tips for improving your prospect-to-client closing percentages. In our office we have an 80% “yes-ratio.” The goal of the presentation is to provide you with motivating language and just the right SPICE to add to your own personal persuasive sauce in order to get decision makers to say YES!

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Prospects become clients and professionals become referral sources when we

- touch their hearts;
- protect their interests; and
- laugh together!

My personal guarantee is that when you attend this session and then apply the easy-to-learn techniques, you will make at least \$20,000 extra during what’s left of 2010. Join me in Chicago and let’s cook up something delicious for you, your firm, and your clients.

About the Author:

Rick L. Law, JD, is lead attorney for Law ElderLaw, LLP, serving seniors and those who love them in the Chicago metropolitan area. He is a popular presenter at national conferences and professional and public seminars throughout Illinois. Mr. Law is regarded as a master marketer who focuses his practice on elder law, taxation, estate protection, Medicaid, and VA benefits.

¹ *Scientific American Mind*, March/April 2010, “The Power to Persuade” by Kevin Dutton.