

Elder Law

Q. I am nervous about meeting with an attorney and I don't understand what he/she is talking about. Do you have any advice?

A. Some people are reluctant to ask questions for fear of looking stupid. It should not be that way when you speak with your attorney.

You are the client. This is about you.

Make sure all your questions are fully answered. Before you sign any document, fully understand it. If you don't understand, ask more questions.

Some lawyers use \$10 words which others don't understand. They spent three years in law school learning how to talk and write "like a lawyer", so we hear words like "Heretofore" and phrases like "On or about ...".

Nonsense.

Thoughtful attorneys prefer plain Eng-



Wendell W. Walsh
Elder Law Attorney

lish. If we truly want to help people take care of their affairs, it just makes sense to speak and write clearly.

It also makes sense to explain words often seen in legal documents. Generations ago, lawyers were paid by the word -- more words were written so lawyers could be paid more. That's not the case anymore. But many legal forms still have the old, hard-to-follow phrases. In a contract, we might see "party of the first part" instead of "Mr. Jones".

I believe the best client asks questions and makes me give clear answers. The best client is informed and fully understands.



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4100 Edison Lakes Parkway, Suite 100 • Mishawaka, IN 46545
(574) 243-4100 • maylorber.com