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**Doing Good Legal Work Takes A Lot of Time
(Keeping Clients “In The Know”)**

Dear Client:

I would like to take this opportunity to explain our conferences and meetings and how we work.

As you may have heard me say, the people who’ve hurt me worst in my life are those who said, “Trust me! I know what’s best for you.” As a result, I never tell clients that I know what’s right for them, or that I know better than they do what they really want. Every person has the right, indeed the responsibility, of self-determination, and of deciding what’s best for themselves and attempting to achieve it.

To that end, I try to advise and inform clients about the different options available to them, and the advantages and disadvantages of each. I try to understand the client’s goals and I explain the repercussions of each of the decisions they might make. I try to recognize and point out issues the client have overlooked so that they too are considered. After considering all of the options and angles, I give clients advice and recommendation about which option will best suit their goals with a minimum of anguish and cost.

Doing all this, obviously, takes time. It would be quicker and cheaper to be more directive, to decide what needs to be done and then do it, without devoting the time that explanations and discussions require. But the results would not be the same.

First, people are empowered and feel more in control when they understand what’s going on and why. So even with the same results, a person feels more comfortable if the decision was their own and not one thrust upon them. This, in itself, justifies spending the time discussing and explaining what’s going on and why.

Second, in all complicated matters—and any adversarial process is certainly complicated—the more time you devote to a matter, the deeper and more clearly you understand it. (This was recently highlighted for me when, in about the 150th hour of writing an article, I gained additional insight into the issue that I hadn’t had 50 hours before.) Thus, in addition to helping the client understand the available options and their likely outcomes, the time we spend “chewing the issues” or “turning the cube” to analyze the situation from all angles, also helps me to gain a deeper understanding of the case and to develop better strategies. As I’ve learned, sometimes there is value to tossing and turning all night thinking about a case—a strategy that I come up with at 4:00 a.m., was not visible to me the evening before.

One final note. Sometimes we learn better by absorbing the lesson of a story rather than hearing a “rule of law.” As a result, I will often use stories of strategies I’ve successfully

employed in the past, to show clients what options are possible. Often, clients come to me only when they think they no longer have any choices left. If I can expand the range of possibilities, different options and opportunities arise some of which might be perfect for the client's situation.

Of course if you decide that, in your case, you don't want all this, feel free to tell me, "Chaim, I trust you to take care of this. You don't need to discuss the options with me, and I want you to decide what tack to take, and to implement it. I prefer not to be involved in my lawsuit. So just tell me what I need to do to help out, but otherwise, I want you to make the decisions and get it done, as much as possible, without me. I will pay you as we go along but, otherwise, try to keep me out of it." If that is what you want, I will oblige.