

A small claims court case

I recently had a disagreement with a customer, the first in 50 years gardening, but they took me to the small claims court for and over payment which of course I disputed. I received the summons 3 days after I had completed the job to the apparent satisfaction of the customer but during that time she turned on me with the assistance of someone else in her family. On Tuesday we had a mediation session and although the other side were lying through their back teeth and insisted on taking me to court I negotiated the sum of the claim by 50% and reached agreement.

So they settled for £150 which I felt I did not owe but I decided not prolong the agony and wait a few months for the case to come up. Having something hanging in the air is detrimental for peace of mind; it is just not worth it. There was no question that the relation of my customer was a nasty piece of work and I felt dehumanized by the whole thing but there comes a time when you have to just wash your hands of things and move on. Insofar as they abused me they will have to pay the price as there is always a bounce back. As it says in the Bible, you reap what you sow, so I will leave it to the universe to sort out. As some would say 'karma is a bitch'.

It may be worth a mention about mediation. This is part of the small claims court, a free service to avoid escalation of costs. If you appear in court in front of a judge you have to bear your own costs and who wants that? The mediator, a very nice Indian lady was very patient and supportive. She called the the plaintive and then she called me and acted as a negotiator.

This happened over a 1-hour period by phone. It was such a relief not to have direct confrontation with the other party. After agreement has been reached both parties have to agree that it was a full and final settlement so that was a great

closure for me.

Lesson – people can be perfectly nice but turn on a sixpence and become another character entirely. Maybe I am too trusting. Anyway my integrity was not compromised but my pride hurt. This will pass.