



Soothe pains, heal wounds, dry tears

How to be successful despite the present economic crisis? Here is the story of a law practice, one of the many businesses that are part of the Economy of Communion.

By Clare DuMontier

The nature of legal work is adversarial, and emotions often run high, including anger. My main area of practice is guardianships. I usually serve as Guardian ad Litem, the attorney who represents the best interest of the person in a guardianship case and files a report with the court.

The legal proceeding of a guardianship case is often the result of a person suffering from dementia or Alzheimer's Disease, both of which have symptoms of mental confusion. The legal proceedings are hard for them to understand and often lead to a feeling of helplessness. They are losing the right to make their own personal and financial decisions. Many tears are shed in the courtroom where these cases are heard.

I opened my law office in 2008, after attending an international conference of the Focolare association for lawyers, Communion and Law. It was a life-changing experience and convinced me to stay in the field of law.

"Every human being feels the need to be loved and to give to others the love he or she has received," Focolare founder Chiara Lubich wrote in a message for the occasion. "On the other hand, it is the love that is received and given that allows people to fulfill themselves and also to live in communion with one another."

During that conference I met Martha Uelmen, who at the time was running a law office in California. I called Martha in 2007, and she advised me how she handled her law practice as a business adhering to the Economy of Communion in Freedom (EoC), an innovative economic proposal launched by Chiara Lubich in 1991. At present there are close to 800 businesses worldwide following its guidelines, which include sharing part of their profit to help those in need and to foster the growth of the structures and programs of formation to promote a culture of giving (see edc-online.org and Living City's November issue).

I decided to open my own law practice and operate it under the EoC guidelines. I named it "Visitation Law Office," after Our Lady's visitation with Elizabeth, since I spend a lot of my time visiting nursing homes, assisted-living homes and families of the mentally ill and developmentally disabled.

The principles of the EoC help me so much in my effort to stay calm, persevere and love in the most stressful circumstances, and I shared my experience with some of my colleagues. It has been very fulfilling for me to know, day in and day out with my company, that I am working in union with others in the worldwide EoC network, and that my work will help others.

EoC members share experiences regarding all aspects of their businesses. We encourage each other and share successful business practices and our efforts at building true relationships with everyone we meet at work. We do this in quarterly conference calls, emails and posts on the EoC website.

Once when I returned to the office after a particularly exhausting, stressful day, I received an email from another EoC entrepreneur with some encouraging words about our working in unity. My spirit was revived, and my peace returned. I emailed back what I felt, and she responded, "That's what the EoC is all about."

In her book, *Mary: The Transparency of God*, Chiara Lubich shared how it seemed that God wanted to see Mary re-live in her. "You, all of you, will open your arms and hearts as mothers of humanity," she wrote. "It is you who should soothe pains, heal wounds, dry tears."

At work, I strive to remember these words and often repeat to myself, "soothe pains, heal wounds, dry tears," before getting out of my car to go to court or meet someone. The most important thing for me, in operating an EoC company, is to build a relationship of love with the client who is in front of me in every present moment.

Captions

Clare DuMontier's law office is located in Appleton, Wisconsin in Outagamie County.

Young participants at an international conference of Communion and Law, an international association of lawyers, judges and scholars. Inspired by the Focolare's spirituality of unity, they are committed to building relationships of fraternity in various areas of legal practice and administrations.

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www.eoc-online.org

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