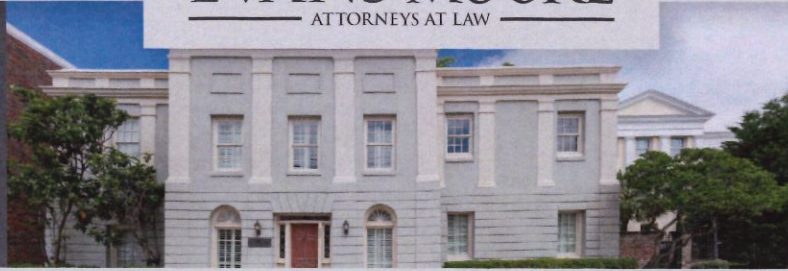


- Medical Malpractice
- Car Accidents
- Personal Injury
- Truck Accidents
- Wrongful Death



- Workers' Comp.
- Dram Shop Liability
- Nursing Home Abuse
- Hospital Negligence
- Jail Misconduct

The Art of Listening

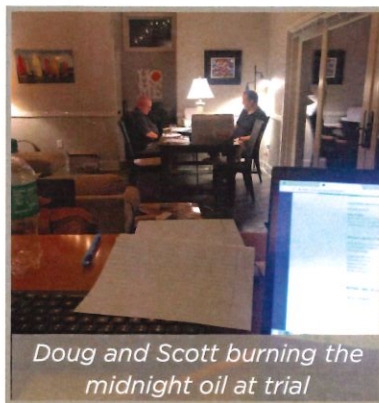
What Every Attorney Needs to Know

Everyone wants to feel heard, especially after a life-altering event. World Listening Day on July 18 reminds us that sometimes the best thing we can do is close our mouths and open our ears. It takes some personal injury attorneys a while to learn that. But while most assume a lawyer's persuasion skills are their most valuable asset, the ability to listen to others may be even more important.

We meet most clients at a low point. They walk through our doors because someone has hurt or wronged them. They're confused, frightened, and often unsure of whom they can trust. No one wants to be in their situation and few have been in it before. Launching into a speech about our credentials is not the best way to help. Instead, we want to allow them to speak.

Any solid attorney-client relationship must be built on honesty and trust. However, we can't convince anyone to open up to us if we spend all our time talking. We must demonstrate a genuine interest in the people we meet and what they have to say. Further, many people are eager to tell their stories. We're not therapists, but we've seen that talking to someone who understands their situation can feel therapeutic for many people.

We both learned one valuable lesson for our friend and mentor, trial lawyer Ed Bell. Ed always insists that before giving any opening statement at trial, he will sit down and break bread with his client. This takes place within our clients' home if possible. There is just something about listening to one another



Doug and Scott burning the midnight oil at trial



Doug Jennings, Mason King, Scott Evans, our client George Johnson, and James Moore after a successful win at trial

across from a dinner table rather than across a conference room table that leads to a greater level of understanding. This is a tradition that we have adopted from Ed and continue to this day.

Frequently during a trial, we insist that we take a break from the breakneck pace of work and sit down to dinner with our clients and co-counsel so that everyone can check in together on the progress. We try to make sure that this happens in someone's kitchen or dining room rather than a restaurant when possible. While it is hard to pull everyone away from whatever temporary workstation they have created during the trial (sometimes the corner of a hotel lobby or the back porch of an Airbnb), often the most useful ideas are generated within these dinner table sessions. One of our co-counsel with whom we love to team, the legendary Doug Jennings of Bennettsville, South Carolina, will even host a nightly meal (with substantial assistance from his lovely wife Suzanne) in his dining room for all members of the trial team, all clients, and any out-of-town witness who may be in the area.

These lessons are not limited to the courtroom. As we approach World Listening Day, we encourage everyone to sit down across from the meal table and listen to what our loved ones have to say. Cheers.

