

Vengeance is for Fools

Although the pundits always tell us it is a critical necessity, it is almost impossible to completely remove emotion from our business decisions. Sometimes we'll select to do business with one company over another because the people there gave us a "good feeling". Sometimes we'll sense we can trust one party more than another, even though the other has not given us any real reason to be uncomfortable. We call this a "gut feeling

It is debatable whether there is no place for emotion in business. Certainly rewarding someone for their good work is driven by a good feeling for them and an appreciation of the accomplishments. This is not a bad emotional decision, for example. True too, staying out of a business association because of an inexplicable uneasiness is not always a bad decision. Most experiences will confirm that if you thought you shouldn't be in the deal, you were probably right.

Perhaps the most damaging emotion in business however is anger. If the other emotions allow us to safeguard our business interests by being cautious or considerate, anger blinds us and causes us to place aside business interests in the pursuit of vengeance. In many instances, getting even becomes the unofficial objective, leaving behind all thought of what the revenge will actually cost.

Vengeance is for fools. The best vengeance is success and demonstrating to the offending party that their willful deceit and betrayal only served to better motivate you to succeed – that in fact, in some perverse way, it was the boost needed to drive your success.

The way to setting the score with someone who has done wrong is to be smarter than they are and work to preserve your interests – not work specifically against their interests. The difference in emphasis will allow you to see through the anger and not squash circumstances where your interests are aligned just to get back at the offending party. By defining and pursuing your interests you will win the battle of wills, because in the end someone who is wrong can't escape their own actions. And trapping them in their own lies and misdeeds – and using it to get what they had sought to deny you – is sweeter than revenge ever could be.