



November 2017

Dear Member:

Thursday night's program with Dr. Glenn Hammel was outstanding.

Dr. Hammel used a workshop setting to walk us through the factors of influence, and he provided us with an insightful analysis of undue influence. As a group, we discussed the factors likely to make someone susceptible to undue influence: loneliness, separation, a submissive personality, cognitive dysfunction, and dependence. Dr. Hammel highlighted the tenuous situation of a dependent person who is afraid of being abandoned, and how an abuser will often threaten to the dependent person unless the abuser's demands are met. The dependent person often asks "who will care for me tomorrow if the abuser leaves?" and so the cycle continues. Dr. Hammel described the "Stockholm Syndrome" where bank robbery victims in Stockholm, Sweden began to bond with their abusers, and they eventually refused to testify against their captors at trial. They even visited them in prison. Dr. Hammel observed that in these abusive kinds of situations, the victim often "fuses" their own needs with the needs of their captors or their abusers, which facilitates further abuse.

Dr. Hammel testifies as an expert witness in competence and undue influence matters, but he frankly observed that he is often brought in after abuse has occurred. He noted that professionals such as those in our group are often in a better position than he is to identify – and stop -- abuse as it happens.

Our meeting with Dr. Hammel was the last Council meeting for the calendar year 2017. We don't meet in December. Our next meeting will be on January 11 with Kyle Martin from the IRS. Mr. Martin has spoken to us before, and his message and information is always very well received. Diablo Valley Estate Planning Council will be joining us for this meeting, so we will likely have a very high attendance at this program.

We have put together a great lineup of programs for Winter and Spring of 2018. We'll hear from Denise Chambliss on important trust administration matters, and we are currently in the planning stages for a program featuring Adult Protective Services and the work they do.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, may I wish you a warm and wonderful Holiday Season.

Robert B. Jacobs
2017-2018 President
Tri-Valley Estate Planning Council