

# Why People Don't Trust Real Estate Agents, CPAs, Dentists, Auto Repair Shops, or almost anyone else? Why Would They? Part 1

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In our economy, whenever we hire a professional, we make several important assumptions. Some of those assumptions, in one business affair or another, will be proven false. First, we assume that if the professional operates in a given field, that the professional is well trained, knows the rules, and remains current with regard to new developments in that field. Second, we assume that the professional won't "bite off more than he can chew", that is, if the services we require are beyond the ability of the professional to provide, he will withdraw and refer us to someone else who is able to provide those services. And last, as regards this article, probably the most important assumption we make is that the professional is ethical. By that, we assume that the professional won't take advantage of our ignorance, our situation in life, our lack of training in his area, or our failure to "watch carefully." We assume that the professional will do what's best for us. We expect the professional to do the "right thing". We expect the professional to be our advocate. We expect to pay the professional a fair amount for his efforts and we assume that if the professional agrees to that and if he agrees to represent us, to work for us, to advise us, that our interests, as they are represented by him, will come first. Following is an example of ethics and character.

I received an interesting email from a friend recently. If true, it was very moving. And since I don't like to pass on urban myths or other drivel, I researched the facts and the facts checked out. The email, slightly edited for brevity, was as follows;

*You're a 19 year old kid. You're critically wounded, and dying in the jungle in the Ia Drang Valley, 11/14/1965, LZ X-ray, Vietnam . Your infantry unit is*

*outnumbered 8 to 1, and the enemy fire is so intense, from 100 or 200 yards away, that your own Infantry Commander has ordered the Medi-Vac helicopters to stop coming in.*

*You're lying there, listening to the enemy machine guns, and you know you're not getting out. Your family is half way around the world, 12,000 miles away, and you'll never see them again. As the world starts to fade in and out, you know this is the day.*

*Then, over the machine gun noise, you faintly hear that sound of a helicopter, and you look up to see an un-armed Huey, but it doesn't seem real, because no Medi-Vac markings are on it.*

*Ed Freeman is coming for you. He's not Medi-Vac, so it's not his job, but he's flying his Huey down into the machine gun fire, after the Medi-Vacs were ordered not to come.*

*He's coming anyway.*

*And he drops it in, and sits there in the machine gun fire, as they load 2 or 3 of you on board.*

*Then he flies you up and out through the gunfire, to the doctors and nurses.*

*And he kept coming back...13 more times...and took about 30 of you and your buddies out, who would never have gotten out.*

*Medal of Honor Recipient, Ed Freeman, died Wednesday, August 20, 2008 at the age of 80, in Boise, ID...May God rest his soul.*

Now what on earth does this have to do with the world of business in general and the world of **Real Estate Agents, CPAs, Dentists, Auto Repair Shops, Etc.**, specifically? Well, nothing. And everything. It's pretty doubtful that any of us in business will have to make the kind of decisions that faced Captain Freeman that November day. Also, it's doubtful that whichever

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decision we make will be life and death, for us or for others. And undoubtedly, Captain Freeman's behavior that day set the bar pretty high, almost impossibly high. After all, he made snap decisions and put those decisions into practice without regard to his personal safety. And in so doing, he saved lives. He had reasons aplenty to justify not doing anything. He wasn't Medi-Vac. His helicopter wasn't armed. His wife and kids were home waiting for him. He had a mortgage. None of that mattered. He did the "right thing". He was ethical. He had character

Our business decisions may have a profound impact on others. Like Captain Freeman we still have the choice of doing the right thing. Or not. And if we decide to not do the right thing, it will be because we're putting our own self interest ahead of doing the right thing. Which means someone else, usually the person who trusted us because we're the experts, will have to pay, somehow, for our decisions or our advice.

For example, it's likely, not certain but likely, that if **CPA Ed Freeman** was faced with an ethical challenge in which, if he made "the ethically correct choice", he could suffer financially, or if he made "the unethical choice", he would not suffer financially, and in all likelihood, no one would ever know, **CPA Ed Freeman** would make "the ethically correct choice", because that's who he was. It was hard coded into his character.

Or if **Real Estate Agent Ed Freeman** is handling a home sale and the sale is taking a bit longer than he anticipated, it's likely that he will continue to try to get the best deal for his client and it's likely he'll give his client the best advice he can, even if he, **Real Estate Agent Ed Freeman** suffers financially as a result of his advice to his client. And his client would be comfortable in the knowledge that Ed Freeman was putting his, the client's, interests first.

And that really is the way it's supposed to work.

But does it?