

Atemi Waza in Life  
Sandan Paper  
Frank Bloksberg

This story is about a high-stakes lawsuit involving my horribly injured client and a multi-national corporation. You know the company. Everyone does. The results could mean forever financial independence for my client – in other words, big money. With virtually unlimited resources, the company resisted mightily. My client had just me.

The company hired one of the leading defense law firms. One of the firm's most experienced partners lead the defense team. Let's call him George (not his real name). George led the defense team of 6-10 professionals assigned to the case.

The case has been ongoing for years and I knew George pretty well by now. George is highly skilled. George will do pretty much anything to win, including lying and cheating. He also considers himself highly ethical.

By now, I am really sick of George's shenanigans. His deviousness and ruthlessness are wasting tons of time, money and, worse yet – they're effective. While the lawsuit is going well for my client, things could change very, very quickly. Sometimes, the judge falls for George's tricks. I need to do something, but I don't know what.

I considered my aikido training. George was an uke who felt he could do most anything – and he was right. When dealing with difficult ukes, I knew that atemis worked well in gaining cooperation.

George called. We discussed a particular aspect of the case that we would be arguing in court soon. George was his usual self. By that, I mean that he kept lying about every little thing – the facts, my arguments, his arguments, the time of day . . . you get the picture. The time for atemi waza had arrived.

(I have loosely paraphrased the conversations from what actually happened.)

Me: George, you know what you said isn't true. Please tell the truth.

George: Of course it's true! You're arguing that the moon is made of cheese. Since you can't prove the moon is made of cheese, you're going to lose!

Me: Have you lost your mind? I never argued anything of the sort. I understand that you think lying to the judge might work. But, you can't possibly imagine that I would be convinced or swayed by your lies about what I have said.

George: You made the moon-cheese argument and now you're stuck with it.

Me: George, you're a deeply religious man, aren't you?

George: Yes.

Me: Do you take the ethical teachings of your religion seriously?

George: Yes. My religion and its ethical teachings are about the most important things in my life.

Me: OK, then. Do you lie to your wife and children to get what you want?

George: (In an irritated tone of voice) Of course not! I am completely truthful with them!

Me: Do you teach your children that lying is good if it gets them what they want?

George: (George is obviously getting mad) Of course not! I teach them that lying is wrong.

Me: When you put your head on your pillow at night and contemplate how you've behaved through the day, do you congratulate yourself for being a liar and a hypocrite?

George: What?! (George is hopping mad now.)

Me: You understand what I am saying to you, George. You claim to be deeply religious, following ethics that are incredibly important to you. But, you're not living up to your supposed ethics, George. You lie to me and to the judge constantly. You're a liar and a hypocrite. Knock it off.

George: (In a furious tone of voice) That is the most unprofessional thing I've ever heard! You are completely out of line!

Me: Actually, I think this is the most professional conversation you've ever experienced. It's time for you to conduct yourself honorably and ethically.

George hung up on me.

I didn't hear from George for a couple of weeks. That was a really long time, because the case was active and we had a lot of things to discuss.

And then the phone rang. The caller I.D. told me George was calling.

Me: Good afternoon.

George: (In a soft, meek voice) Frank?

Me: Yes, George. What can I do for you?

A long silence.

George: (Continuing in an unusually soft voice) You were right. It will never happen again.

Me: I believe you, George.

George: I'll talk to you later.

And with that, I knew the case would ultimately settle.

George was good to his word and never lied to me or the judge again.

Frank Bloksberg is an attorney, mediator and chief instructor of [Aikido'Ka](#) in Grass Valley, California.