



Why you should question received wisdom

If you haven't heard of Peter Thiel, chances are you've used a platform he's invested in. He's one of the co-founders of PayPal and Palantir. He also made the first outside investment in Facebook and was an early investor in companies like SpaceX and LinkedIn.

I first became aware of him when I read his book, *Zero to One: Notes on Startups, or How to Build the Future*. In *Zero to One* Thiel encourages us to think and question what's widely accepted to be true. This is something we do at Moot Hill every day, when we help our clients resolve their disputes through a range of creative strategies.

One thing in particular from Thiel's book struck me. It was the question he likes to use when he's interviewing someone for a job: What important truth do very few people agree with you on?

Thiel says: 'This is a question that sounds easy because it's straightforward. Actually, it's very hard to answer. It's intellectually difficult because the knowledge that everyone is taught in school is by definition agreed upon. And it's psychologically difficult because anyone trying to answer must say something she knows to be unpopular. Brilliant thinking is rare, but courage is in even shorter supply than genius.'

Most commonly, I hear answers like the following:

"Our educational system is broken and urgently needs to be fixed."

"America is exceptional."

"There is no God."

These are bad answers. The first and the second statements might be true, but many people already agree with them. The third statement simply takes one side in a familiar debate. A good answer takes the following form: "Most people believe in x, but the truth is the opposite of x."



Who dares wins

Thiel says the question helps him single out applicants who are innovative thinkers with an abundance of ideas - how we think of ourselves here at Moot. He says it helps him find the type of person who can survive in Silicon Valley's competitive atmosphere.

"It sort of tests for originality of thinking, and to some extent, it tests for your courage in speaking up in a difficult interview context," he says.

This kind of thinking is part and parcel of our work at Moot. We represent our clients' interests with courage, while calmly working through the complexities of their dispute to secure a lasting resolution.

Who knows what the future holds?

People believe a lot of things about disputes, probably because, until you're embroiled in one yourself, it's not something you'd give any thought to. You should though. The kinds of dispute we help resolve don't happen to everyone and they don't happen every day. But when they do happen they can be extremely expensive, stressful and have long-lasting and potentially life-changing implications.

For example, previously happy families have been torn apart over an unexpected will. Long-term trading partners have fallen out over the failure of one piece of equipment. And local authorities have had to commit public money to go into battle with their service providers.

So it's worth understanding what you can do to resolve a dispute so that you're prepared in case you do ever find yourself in one. This knowledge is a little like having house insurance - most of the time you don't need it, but when your house is burning down you absolutely do.

Knowledge is power

Over the next few weeks we're going to run a series of short articles highlighting some of the most common misconceptions about dispute resolution. We hope you read and enjoy them.

THE MOOT ROUTE



It's worth it. Because when you know what your options are, if you should ever find yourself caught up in a dispute, you'll have an advantage over your adversary. As Sir Francis Bacon (allegedly) said, knowledge is power.

In the first post we'll explain why, contrary to what most people think, you may be better off resolving your dispute without a lawyer.

We'll go on to dispel seven more myths in the series so do look out for them.

And please get in touch if you'd like to know more about what we do or would like us to help you resolve your dispute. We can help you win – on your terms.