

BUSINESS, SOCIETY & ETHICS

Reconsidering Employment at Will

As you read the material for our next class, keep the questions below in mind. To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages. Keep in mind that there are two basic kinds of information that you need to look for in the reading:

1. What are the main points or conclusions that an author accepts with respect to a particular issue?
2. What are the reasons, important considerations, and evidence that lead the author to accept that conclusion?

For our purposes, *it is information of the second sort that will be our primary concern* since our most basic task is to *evaluate the reasons and evidence* that are offered to support accepting one possible conclusion about an issue, rather than another.

Although I strongly suggest that you write out brief answers to these questions, you do not have to turn in written responses. You do, however, need to be prepared to speak intelligently about these issues at our next class meeting.

Reading

- Tara J. Radin & Patricia H. Werhane, "Employment at Will, Employee Rights, and Future Directions for Employment".

Questions

1. What is Radin and Werhane's argument that, in practice, employment at will is unfair?
2. Radin and Werhane say that employers should treat their employees as citizens. What does that mean? What rights and responsibilities does this give an employee? Why is treating its employees like citizens actually good for a business?
3. According to Radin and Werhane, what does it mean for an employee to be a professional? Given that employment at will remains the default for most businesses, why should employees—including contingent workers and unskilled low-wage workers—start treating themselves as professionals?