

## Rules of Professional Conduct, the Creed of Professionalism and A Lawyer's Aspirational ideals Resource 2

This resource is meant to facilitate a meaningful discussion about the Rule of Professional Conduct, A Creed of Professionalism of the New Mexico Bench and Bar, and a Lawyer's Aspirational Ideals with suggestions about the practical application of the concepts contained in these documents.

- Review the New Mexico Rules of Professional Conduct, found at New Mexico Compilation: <a href="http://www.conwaygreene.com/nmsu/lpext.dll?f=templates&fn=main-h.htm&2.0">http://www.conwaygreene.com/nmsu/lpext.dll?f=templates&fn=main-h.htm&2.0</a> OR <a href="http://www.law.cornell.edu/ethics/nm/code/">http://www.law.cornell.edu/ethics/nm/code/</a>
- Review and discuss the Preamble to the Rules of Professional Conduct. What are the functions of an attorney? (See attached).
- Reflect together on what it means to be an attorney and how *The Creed of Professionalism* shapes that meaning.
- Identify different roles that an attorney must play. Discuss how *The Creed of Professionalism* supports an attorney's actions in each of those roles.
- Review and discuss in depth at least two of the following rules and how each subject is treated in the New Mexico Rules of Professional Conduct and in *The Creed of Professionalism for the New Mexico Bench and Bar.* 
  - Conflict of interest with current clients
  - Candor towards the tribunal
  - Communications with person represented by counsel
  - Dealing with the unrepresented person
- Discuss with the new lawyer the differences between the New Mexico Rules of Professional Conduct and *The Creed of Professionalism for the New Mexico Bench and Bar*.
- Give the new lawyer examples of how you, as an experienced attorney, incorporate the concepts of the creed into your everyday law practice.
- Discuss the attached "Ethics Checklists for Solo and Small Firm Practice" and Adler, M. & Dimmerman, H. "What We Never Learned in Law School." <u>GP/Solo Magazine</u> Oct./Nov. 2005.
- Discuss the attached "Mistakes We've Made that We Hope You Can Avoid" summary of common mistakes. To view the 2015 CLE covering this topic, go to:

# The Creed of Professionalism of the New Mexico Bench and Bar Lawyer's Preamble

As a lawyer, I strive to make our system of justice work fairly and efficiently. In order to carry out that responsibility, I will comply with the letter and spirit of the disciplinary standards applicable to all lawyers, and I will also conduct myself in accordance with the following Creed of Professionalism when dealing with my client, opposing parties, their counsel, the courts and any other person involved in the legal system, including the general public.

- A. In all matters: "My Word is My Bond."
- B. With respect to my clients:
  - I will be loyal and committed to my client's cause, and I will provide my client with objective and independent advice.
  - I will work to achieve lawful objectives in all other matters, as expeditiously and economically as possible.
  - In appropriate cases, I will counsel my client regarding options for mediation, arbitration and other alternative methods of resolving disputes.
  - I will advise my client against pursuing matters that have no merit.
  - I will advise my client against tactics that will delay resolution or which harass or drain the financial resources of the opposing party.
  - I will advise my client that civility and courtesy are not weaknesses.
  - I will counsel my client that initiating or engaging in settlement discussions is consistent with zealous and effective representation.
  - I will keep my client informed about the progress of the work for which I have been engaged or retained, including the costs and fees.
  - I will charge only a reasonable attorney's fee for services rendered.
  - I will be courteous to and considerate of my client at all times.
- C. With respect to opposing parties and their counsel:
  - I will be courteous and civil, both in oral and in written communications.
  - I will not make improper statements of fact or of law.
  - I will agree to reasonable requests for extensions of time or waivers of formalities when legitimate interests of my client will not be adversely affected.
  - I will consult with opposing counsel before scheduling depositions and meetings or before rescheduling court hearings.
  - I will cooperate with opposing counsel's requests for scheduling changes.
  - I will not use litigation, delay tactics, or other courses of conduct to harass the opposing party or their counsel.

- I will refrain from excessive and abusive discovery, and I will comply with reasonable discovery requests.
- In depositions, negotiations and other proceedings, I will conduct myself with dignity, avoiding groundless objections and other actions that are disrupting and disrespectful.
- I will not serve motion and pleadings that will unfairly limit the other party's opportunity to respond.
- In the preparations of documents and in negotiations, I will concentrate on substance and content.
- I will clearly identify, for other counsel or parties, all changes that I have made in all documents.
- D. With respect to the courts and other tribunals:
  - I will be a vigorous and zealous advocate on behalf of my client, but I will remember that excessive zeal may be detrimental to my client's interests or the proper functioning of our justice system.
  - I will communicate with opposing counsel in an effort to avoid litigation or to resolve litigation.
  - I will voluntarily withdraw claims or defenses when they are superfluous or do not have merit.
  - I will refrain from filing frivolous motions.
  - I will voluntarily exchange information and work on a plan for discovery as early as possible.
  - I will attempt to resolve, by agreement, my objections to matters contained in my opponent's pleadings and discovery requests.
  - When hearings or depositions are cancelled, I will notify opposing counsel, necessary parties, and the court (or other tribunal) as early as possible.
  - Before dates for hearings or trials are set, or immediately after dates have been set, I
    will verify the availability of participants and I will also notify the court (or other
    tribunal) and opposing counsel of any problems.
  - In civil matters I will stipulate to facts when there is no genuine dispute.
  - I will be punctual for court hearings, conferences and depositions.
  - I will be respectful toward and candid with the court.
  - I will avoid the appearance of impropriety at all times.
- E. With respect to the public and to other persons involved in the legal system:
  - I will be mindful of my commitment to the public good.
  - I will keep current in my practice areas and when necessary, will associate with or refer my client to more knowledgeable or experienced counsel.
  - I will willingly participate in the disciplinary process.

- I will strive to set a high standard of professional conduct for others to follow.
- I will respect and protect the image of the legal profession, and will be respectful of the content of my advertisements or other public communications.
- I will commit to the goals of the legal profession, and to my responsibilities to public service, improvement of administration of justice, civic influence, and my contribution of voluntary and uncompensated time for those persons who cannot afford adequate legal assistance.

## A Creed of Professionalism of the New Mexico Bench and Bar Judge's Preamble

As a judge, I will strive to ensure that judicial proceedings are fair, efficient and conducive to the ascertainment of the truth. In order to carry out that responsibility, I will comply with the letter and spirit of the Code of Judicial Conduct and I will ensure that judicial proceedings are conducted with fitting dignity and decorum.

### A. With respect to parties, lawyers, jurors and witnesses:

- I will be courteous, respectful and civil to parties, lawyers, jurors and witnesses. I will maintain control in the courtroom to ensure that all proceedings are conducted in a civil manner.
- I will not employ hostile, demeaning or humiliating words in opinions or in written or oral communications.
- I will be punctual in convening all hearings, meetings and conferences.
- I will be mindful of time schedules of lawyers, parties and witnesses.
- I will make all reasonable efforts to decide cases promptly.
- I will give all cases deliberate, impartial and studied analysis and consideration.
- I will be considerate of the time constraints and pressures imposed on lawyers by the demands of trial practice.
- Within practical time limits, I will allow lawyers to present proper arguments and to make a complete and accurate record.
- I will not impugn the integrity or professionalism of any lawyer on the basis of the clients whom or the causes which a lawyer represents.
- I will do my best to ensure that court personnel act civilly and professionally.
- I will not adopt procedures that needlessly increase litigation expense.
- I will be open to constructive criticism and make such changes as are consistent with this creed and the Code of Judicial Conduct when appropriate.

### B. With respect to other judges:

- I will be courteous, respectful and civil in my opinions.
- In all written and oral communications, I will abstain from disparaging personal remarks or criticisms, or sarcastic or demeaning comments about another judge.
- I will endeavor to work with other judges to foster a spirit of cooperation and collegiality.

## Preamble — A Lawyer's Responsibilities

A lawyer, as a member of the legal profession, is a representative of clients, an officer of the legal system and a public citizen having special responsibility for the quality of justice.

As a representative of clients, a lawyer performs various functions. As advisor, a lawyer provides a client with an informed understanding of the client's legal rights and obligations and explains their practical implications. As advocate, a lawyer zealously asserts the client's position under the rules of the adversary system. As negotiator, a lawyer seeks a result advantageous to the client but consistent with requirements of honest dealings with others. As an evaluator, a lawyer acts by examining a client's legal affairs and reporting about them to the client or to others.

In addition to these representational functions, a lawyer may serve as a third-party neutral, a nonrepresentational role helping the parties to resolve a dispute or other matter. Some of these rules apply directly to lawyers who are or have served as third-party neutrals. *See, e.g.,* Rules, <u>16-112</u> and <u>16-204</u> NMRA of the Rules of Professional Conduct. In addition, there are rules that apply to lawyers who are not active in the practice of law or to practicing lawyers even when they are acting in a nonprofessional capacity. For example, a lawyer who commits fraud in the conduct of a business is subject to discipline for engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation. *See* Rule <u>16-804</u> NMRA of the Rules of Professional Conduct.

In all professional functions a lawyer should be competent, prompt and diligent. A lawyer should maintain communication with a client concerning the representation. A lawyer should keep in confidence information relating to representation of a client except so far as disclosure is required or permitted by the Rules of Professional Conduct or other law.

A lawyer's conduct should conform to the requirements of the law, both in professional service to clients and in the lawyer's business and personal affairs. A lawyer should use the law's procedures only for legitimate purposes and not to harass or intimidate others. A lawyer should demonstrate respect for the legal system and for those who serve it, including judges, other lawyers and public officials. While it is a lawyer's duty, when necessary, to challenge the rectitude of official action, it is also a lawyer's duty to uphold legal process.

As a public citizen, a lawyer should seek improvement of the law, access to the legal system, the administration of justice and the quality of service rendered by the legal profession. As a member of a learned profession, a lawyer should cultivate knowledge of the law beyond its use for clients, employ that knowledge in reform of the law, and work to strengthen legal education. In addition, a lawyer should further the public's understanding of and confidence in the rule of law and the justice system because legal institutions in a constitutional democracy depend on popular participation and support to maintain their authority.

A lawyer should be mindful of deficiencies in the administration of justice and of the fact that the poor, and sometimes person who are not poor, cannot afford adequate legal assistance. Therefore, all lawyers should devote professional time and resources and use civic influence to

ensure equal access to our system of justice for all those who because of economic or social barriers cannot afford or secure adequate legal counsel. A lawyer should aid the legal profession in pursuing these objectives and should help the bar regulate itself in the public interest.

Many of a lawyer's professional responsibilities are prescribed in the Rules of Professional Conduct, as well as substantive and procedural law. However, a lawyer is also guided by personal conscience and the approbation of professional peers. A lawyer should strive to attain the highest level of skill, to improve the law and the legal profession and to exemplify the legal profession's ideas of public service.

A lawyer's responsibilities as a representative of clients, an officer of the legal system and a public citizen are usually harmonious. Thus, when an opposing party is well represented, a lawyer can be a zealous advocate on behalf of a client and at the same time assume that justice is being done. So, also a lawyer can be sure that preserving client confidences ordinarily serves the public interest because people are more likely to seek legal advice, and thereby heed their legal obligations, when they know their communications will be private.

In the nature of law practice, however, conflicting responsibilities are encountered. Virtually all difficult ethical problems arise from conflict between a lawyer's responsibilities to clients, to the legal system, and to the lawyer's own interest in remaining an ethical person while earning a satisfactory living. The Rules of Professional Conduct often prescribe terms for resolving such conflicts. Within the framework of these rules, however, many difficult issues of professional discretion can arise. Such issues must be resolved through the exercise of sensitive professional and moral judgment guided by the basic principles underlying the rules. These principals include the lawyer's obligation zealously to protect and pursue a client's legitimate interests, within the bounds of the law, while maintaining a professional, courteous and civil attitude toward all persons involved in the legal system.

The legal profession is largely self-governing. Although other professions also have been granted powers of self-government, the legal profession is unique in this respect because of the close relationship between the profession and the processes of government and law enforcement. This connection is manifested in the fact that ultimate authority over the profession is vested largely in the courts.

To the extent that lawyers meet their obligations of their professional calling, the occasion for government regulation is obviated. Self-regulation also helps maintain the legal profession's independence from government domination. An independent legal profession is an important force in preserving government under law, for abuse of legal authority is more readily challenged by a profession whose members are not dependent on government for the right to practice.

The legal profession's relative autonomy carries with it special responsibilities of self-government. The profession has a responsibility to assure that its regulations are conceived in the public interest and not in furtherance of parochial or self-interested concerns of the bar. Every lawyer is responsible for observance of the Rules of Professional Conduct. A lawyer

should also aid in securing their observance by other lawyers. Neglect of these responsibilities compromises the independence of the profession and the public interest that it serves.

Lawyers play a vital role in the preservation of society. The fulfillment of this role requires an understanding by lawyers of their relationship to our legal system. The Rules of Professional Conduct, when properly applied, serve to define that relationship.

## **ETHICS CHECKLISTS**

## FOR SOLO AND SMALL FIRM PRACTICE

The following information is intended to provide information for solo and small firm practitioners to help avoid the pitfalls that can occur in a busy law practice.

- ✓ The New Mexico Advisory Ethics Opinions Summaries from 1983 to present are all available under Ethics Opinions at: 
  <a href="http://www.nmbar.org/Nmstatebar/About\_Us/Ethics\_Advisory/Ethics\_Advisory.aspx">http://www.nmbar.org/Nmstatebar/About\_Us/Ethics\_Advisory/Ethics\_Advisory.aspx</a>
- ✓ To obtain an ethics advisory opinion concerning a specific concern, contact the State bar of New Mexico's Ethics Committee at 800-326-8155, or visit their web page: http://www.nmbar.org/Nmstatebar/About\_Us/Ethics\_Advisory/Ethics\_Advisory.aspx
- ✓ Avoiding the Ethical Traps of Lawyer Websites
- ✓ <u>Technology and Ethics: Tips and Traps</u> by Jeffrey Allen printed in the GPSolo Magazine, October/November 2010.
- ✓ <u>Disciplinary Actions: When Bad Things Happen to Good Lawyers</u> by Cydney Batchelor, printed in the GPSolo Magazine of October/November, 2006.
- ✓ The Solo and Small Firm Resource Center of the ABA has a wealth of information and connections at: <a href="http://www.americanbar.org/portals/solo\_home/solo\_home.html">http://www.americanbar.org/portals/solo\_home/solo\_home.html</a>
- ✓ All practitioners and especially solo practitioners should have a concrete plan that will protect clients and provide a smooth transition in the event of death, retirement, or disability (even short-term). The *Succession Planning Handbook for New Mexico Lawyers* provides you with all the necessary checklists, forms, and guidance.

### Mistakes We Have Made That We Hope You Can Avoid

- 1. Set realistic expectations when you discuss the case with the client, and in any settlement demand.
- 2. The other attorney is not the enemy. Look upon the attorney as your colleague. Remember, demeaning opposing counsel only reflects poorly upon you and damages the profession.
- 3. Write engagement letters, fee agreements or DIS engagement letters on every case and keep track of your time on every matter, contingent or hourly. If you practice criminal law, recognize that the retainer fee will probably be the only fee you will receive.
- 4. Do not blame your staff for being late, unprepared, etc. It's your oath and your license.
- 5. Do not share your personal "beefs" with opposing counsel with the judge. It's rarely, if ever, germane to the issues.

#### **How To Handle the Problem Client**

- 6. Don't frighten off the client with your fees quote. Instead of a big retainer, consider plateauing your fees, such as payment in advance for 10 hours of work and then reevaluating at that point.
- 7. If you're in a new area of law, ask questions of other attorneys. Experienced attorneys are more than willing to consult or even mentor. Join State Bar practice sections and talk to lawyers in those sections. Take a lawyer to lunch. Others' experience can be crucial to your success.
- 8. If it is an area in which you have no interest, refer the case.
- 9. Read the case. Do not rely on a head note or annotation summary.
- 10. Return all phone calls and emails. This is the No. 1 complaint against lawyers. Whether the news is good or bad, it won't get any better by sitting on it.
- 11. Beware the use of the form, and be sure you read the fine print.
- 12. Try to move the case to mediation as soon as possible. If you cannot obtain the other attorney's cooperation in doing this, seek a court order for mediation. And do this before the deposition costs and the attorney fees mount up.
- 13. Be a problem solver, not a problem maker.
- 14. At the start of your argument, tell the judge what you want.
- 15. If your judge asks a direct question in a hearing, do not continue to read your brief, even if you don't like the question.

- 16. Don't over-promise to clients, co-counsel, opposing counsel or judges. You will wind up under-delivering and no one will be happy.
- 17. Go over that critical letter and your opening and closing argument to the court with your client before you go to court or before you send out that letter.
- 18. Calendar, calendar, calendar.
- 19. Your word is your bond. You only get one bite of the apple. The word will get around if you cannot be trusted, and you do not want that to happen. And recognize that judges, like lawyers, talk among themselves.
- 20. The key to a successful law practice: courtesy, courtesy, courtesy.
- 21. Keep the overhead down. You don't need the best office furniture or storage cabinets when you start out.
- 22. Do you really need a secretary and, if so, for what functions? Perhaps you can accomplish what you need to with efficient, modern technology.
- 23. Beware the sharing of a secretary.
- 24. Know your judge. Different personalities and techniques affect your case.
- 25. Have a plan for your case.
- 26. File for a scheduling conference early in the case to set deadlines that will help move your case.
- 27. Give that first requested continuance, and maybe even the second.
- 28. Do not be swayed by the possible loss of the fees if you can arrange an early settlement. If the case settles early, you will have gained a client for life.

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## GPSolo Magazine - October/November 2005 What We Never Learned in Law School

By Harper J. Dimmerman and Michael E. Adler

Getting a solo or small firm practice off the ground presents a host of obvious obstacles and traps for the unwary businessperson: excessive spending, albeit with the best intentions; overly well appointed digs; liberal policies for case acceptance and contingent-fee commitments (because 98 percent of the cases settle anyway).

But what of the obstacles that are less well known? In this article, we offer ten suggestions that we hope will give some insight into the daily facets of practice we were never told about in law school, particularly concerning ethics, civility, and professionalism. Our experience in the legal field, and within the Philadelphia Bar Association, reflects our two different practice settings: one at a large firm, one as a solo. This article has given us an opportunity to share our experiences and to compare our legal careers so far. We also sought stories from colleagues. We were surprised that despite some obvious differences, we had many common observations.

Get involved in bar associations and pro bono activities. Bar association and pro bono involvement tend to improve relationships between lawyers and judges. The authors became acquainted during local bar association functions. When lawyers connect in both social and professional activities, we tend to get along when we are adversaries—it's human nature that we treat people we know better than we do strangers. Moreover, active involvement in the bar association has helped us sharpen our practice skills, increase our expertise, keep up with changes in the law, and have fun doing it.

Be prompt and responsive. Keep your clients advised, and return phone calls and e-mails promptly. We both try to maintain a rule that the sun does not set before a call is left unreturned (obviously, this is much easier during the summer than the winter). We both carry Blackberries and use them, even if just to say that a full response will arrive once the present meeting or hearing is done. If you can't personally return the message, have someone else do it. Lack of client communications is often cited as the most aggravating complaint by clients; keeping clients in the loop keeps them invested in their case.

Zealous representation does not mean scorched-earth tactics. We didn't learn in law school that there is an extremely fine line between zealous advo-cacy and deceptive or manipulative techniques. Silence from the experienced lawyer in the face of a greener attorney's misinterpretation is a dilemma we never anticipated. During law school's Socratic debates, all of us were forever together, presenting a unified front. Not so in the real world. Do not rely upon your confidence in the human

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family of attorneys collaborating to achieve a common good. With the goal of pleasing that well-funded client, a more seasoned practitioner might seize upon every opportunity to succeed, at times treading some very delicate ethical lines in order to do this.

But don't react to such unfortunate experiences by repeating the questionable behavior yourself. Neither of us refuses opposing counsel a favor when we have the ability to grant it; it costs nothing and builds trust and credibility with other lawyers.

Be professional in your communications with the court. Each court has its own procedures, but you will find that some rules of professional conduct are universal.

When addressing or writing to the court, identify who you are and whom you represent. Although this case might be the most important matter in your mind, we have learned it is likely only one of many matters being addressed by the court during that hour.

When in court before a judge, do not address opposing counsel, but speak directly to the judge. After all, it is the judge who must decide the issues, not your adversary. Address the court as "Your Honor" or "Judge." Remind yourself to speak slowly and don't be afraid to pause and think before answering questions.

Misrepresentations to the court are always unacceptable, even over such seemingly trivial matters as calendar conflicts or joint stipulation for extension of time to respond to a filing. We are constantly amazed how opposing counsel misrepresent agreements to the court.

Facts that are not properly introduced in the case or part of the record should not be used in written briefs or memoranda of points and authorities.

Always carry an extra copy of the motion or brief, in case the court cannot locate the copy that you filed.

Court staff should be treated as an extension of the court. Anyone who thinks that the judge will never hear how rudely his or her staff was treated has plainly never worked or clerked for a judge.

Show up on time for all court appearances. Character, integrity, and reputation are our most valuable assets; they are not worth trading for any client.

High volume does not equal high quality—or even high profits. Our law school experience did not prepare us for issues that can threaten the profitability of practice. Lawyers who approach specialties in volume are generally seeking economies of scale. The combination of special knowledge and volume might translate into profitability. Remember, however, that high-volume work requires

significant administrative and legal support, especially in practice areas such as bankruptcy law. Because of such infrastructure costs, high revenues might not go hand in hand with high operating incomes.

Additionally, despite the degree of knowledge and focus that can accompany specialization, high-volume practice might actually dilute the quality of representation. Paralegals may be taking on work not necessarily in their area of ability or expertise, and more efficient yet less tailored representation may become necessary to generate a net profit. These survival tactics might potentially lead highly personable and even hands-on lawyers astray from the origin of their original success.

Choose your clients carefully. The practice of law is much easier if you can avoid difficult clients. Beware of a client who moves from firm to firm. Watch out for clients who make legal fees and costs a major issue. Such concerns may seem paranoid at first blush. Yet, they have been borne out by our experience and have become part of our analysis in accepting new clientele. Consider, for example, the overly savvy client who comes bearing handsome retainers and uttering convincing representations. Although we'd like to believe that such clients come because of our own brand or quality of representation, our guard is up.

A wise lawyer also once taught us that when evaluating a case, don't become so focused on liability that you forget about damages. The most compelling case of fault without any damages is worth . . . nothing. Similarly, when evaluating a case, if you are so focused on the damages, but there is no liability, that case is worth . . . nothing.

Always be professional in marketing. The Rules of Professional Conduct govern the outer limits of the advertising and claims that lawyers may make to entice clients. If you are in a small firm or you are a solo, consider limiting the type of clients and business that you take. This will allow you to focus your efforts more effectively. One of the best ways to develop business is to establish a referral network to exchange business with other attorneys. The local bar association is the best way to learn about the practices of other attorneys. Write articles and participate in seminars to get your name out there. Don't oversell yourself.

In small practice, owing to the intensity of the competition in the marketplace, some practitioners employ dubious techniques to acquire more clients and more money. For example, in the area of simple divorce, attorneys in a more expensive filing county might lowball potential clients with figures from less expensive filing counties. Remember: Potential clients using the Internet or even being referred to a particular attorney will ordinarily shop quotes.

Be professional during discovery. Much has been

written about the effectiveness or costs of discovery in litigation. We merely note below some of our observations about the unprofessionalism we have experienced. Lawyers routinely delay producing documents to prevent opposing counsel from inspecting them prior to scheduled depositions or for other tactical reasons. Document demands and interrogatories are routinely propounded to harass or impose undue burden or expense on the other party. Responses with boilerplate objections to the discovery requests are presented.

In scheduling depositions, rather than unilaterally scheduling dates for depositions, lawyers should cooperate to accommodate the schedules of opposing counsel and the deponent. Objections during depositions should be limited to those that are well founded and necessary for the client's interest (such as preserving privilege). When making objections during a deposition, the attorney must refrain from coaching the deponent or suggesting answers or making self-serving speeches. It is amazing how often we see this happening, particularly by older lawyers trying to intimidate younger lawyers.

**Be prepared.** Thorough preparation can level the playing field—or even tilt it in your favor. Attention to detail is probably the most important trait of a good lawyer. Nothing is more glaring in written work product or letters than a typo. Proofread, proofread, proofread. Know your case better than the other side does. Anticipate the questions from the judge or opposing counsel.

Appreciate the practice of law. When we were awarded a license to practice law, we were granted a tremendous opportunity to make a difference for ourselves and our clients. Appreciate challenges, for they make us stronger and better as lawyers, with new ways to argue or represent our clients. Appreciate losses, for they make us wiser, and vow never to make the same mistake(s) again. Appreciate (and savor) victories. Keep a "good job" file and make copies of all the winning court decisions or even the congratulations or thank-you letters you have received. Even on a very bad day (and we all have them), opening the "good job" file will remind us why we went to law school, and why, even though law school did not prepare us for all we have witnessed in terms of ethics, civility, and professionalism, we are lucky to be young attorneys, looking forward to the rest of our careers.

Harper J. Dimmerman operates a solo practice in Philadelphia. He can be reached at harper@harperlawgroup.com. Michael E. Adler is an associate at Blank Rome LLP in Philadelphia. He can be reached at adler@blankrome.com.