

Center for Judicial Ethics

Ethics Awareness Month Weekly Tip



NCSC
NATIONAL CENTER FOR STATE COURTS
Center for Judicial Ethics

Like all other humans, judges can get frustrated, angry, wake up on the wrong side of the bed, or simply have a bad day. At times, the conduct of lawyers, witnesses, or litigants can cause any person to become exasperated. This is where you are in grave danger of saying something or engaging in behavior that could lead to discipline for being “indecorous,” “discourteous,” “intemperate,” “undignified,” or otherwise inappropriate. Remember to take a deep breath and “Count to 10”!

But that’s not all: Did you know that a judge can be disciplined for the very same behavior by their law clerks or other court employees who are subject to the judge’s supervision? So be sure to monitor them and train them to “Count to 10” also. Even if your jurisdiction has a separate code of conduct for court staff, you can still get in trouble if they act in a manner that brings the court into disrepute.

Sample Resources:

- [McCartney v. Comm’n on Judicial Qualifications](#) (California 1974)
- [In re Seitz](#) (Michigan 1993)
- [In re Schwartz](#) (Florida 2000)
- [In re Lamdin](#) (Maryland 2008)
- [In re Wulle](#) (Washington 2012)
- [Alabama Advisory Opinion Op. 14-926](#)

