

# How “CIVIL” an Attorney are You

By John A. Chamberlain

**H**ave you ever noticed how everyone has a horror story about another attorney being irrational, paranoid, and obnoxious? Have you ever wondered whether there are a couple of stories floating about among your friends in the Bar involving you? Well, here is a quick reality check (very tongue in cheek) to determine if perhaps you are taking yourself and your practice just a bit too seriously. All you have to do is answer the following questions honestly and then score your responses using the handy scoring key at the conclusion of the quiz.

- QUESTION 1.** Upon receiving a “Third Request for Adjournment” for a deposition that has been dragging on for a year, you
- Contact the probate court to have opposing counsel committed for “observation”
  - Call all of your contacts on the Grievance Board to determine “what your options are”
  - Mail the paperwork back to the opposing counsel with a skull and crossbones drawn across it
  - Phone the opposing counsel to determine the reason for the adjournment and state how important you believe it is to keep the matter moving forward
- QUESTION 2.** Which of the following statements about road rage best describes your feelings about the subject?
- You wrote the “How To” manual on the finer points of road rage
  - You believe that road rage is a great spectator sport, but would not participate
  - Road ragers should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law
- QUESTION 3.** The most used reference book on your desk right now is:
- Russian Obscenities for Everyday Use*
  - Farmer’s Almanac*
  - Ms. Manners’ Guide for the 21st Century*
  - Black’s Law Dictionary*
- QUESTION 4.** When your eight-year-old daughter starts to speak to you about her day at school during dinner, you:
- Immediately object to the relevance of her statement
  - Instruct her to put her summation in memo format and have it on your desk by 11:00 p.m.
  - Listen attentively to your daughter, cherishing every moment
- QUESTION 5.** Your idea of rest and relaxation is:
- Participating in a toughman or toughwoman contest under the alias, *THE BRAWLING BARRISTER*
  - A week at a beach resort with the love of your life, while your spouse stays at home
  - Sitting in a courtroom waiting for your case to be called during motion call
  - Any time with your family
- QUESTION 6.** Your most likely reaction when someone tells you to take a vacation is to:
- Laugh uproariously
  - Sob openly for 15 minutes
  - Ask, “What’s a vacation?”
  - Take the time off
- QUESTION 7.** Your idea of drinking alcohol responsibly is:
- Using a coaster
  - Using a glass
  - Staying within the legal and YOUR limits at all times
- QUESTION 8.** How many four-letter words does it take you to describe your supervising attorney?
- 4
  - 3
  - 2
  - 1, but the word is “NICE”
- QUESTION 9.** When family or friends call you at work to congratulate you on your new partnership status, you:
- Send bills to every person that called you for the 15-minute minimum at your new partner hourly rate
  - Manage to eek out a mild, grudging thank-you to the irritating relatives, while making it clear they are bothering you at work
  - Receive the congratulations and attention gracefully and appreciatively

So how do you think you did? Here’s a hint, if you answered “a” to any question, there are probably several horror stories about you circulating among your fellow Bar members as you finish reading this quiz. If you answered “b” to any question, there is a good possibility that if there are no stories about you yet, there will be soon. If you answered all “c” or “d” you have probably escaped the wrath of your fellow attorneys, but remember, you can never be too civil. ♦

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