

## Don't Do It: Legal Temptations to Resist

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“I can resist everything except temptation.”

- Oscar Wilde

Judge Tanya Garrison, 157<sup>th</sup> District Court, Harris County

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## Why Does This Need to be Discussed

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- Should be second hand, but everyone needs a reminder.
- Sometimes eating your vegetables isn't fun.
- It's always hardest to be nice when you're mad.

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## The Rules vs. The Standards

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### Rules of Professional Conduct

- Define proper conduct for purposes of professional discipline.
- Codified rules attempting to regulate conduct – a mandatory minimum.
- They do not undertake to define standards of civil liability or legal duty of lawyers.

### Standards of Appellate Conduct

- Much like the *Texas Lawyer's Creed*, it is a statement of how lawyers should strive to comport themselves.
- Hopes to assist in resolving conflicting duties lawyers face.
- A suggestion for civility, not a tool of sanctions.
- Aspirational guidelines for lawyers wanting to reach high levels of professionalism.

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## #1

### Don't Refuse a Reasonable Request

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- Ever, but especially as a way to gain an advantage in a negotiation.
- Standard #2 – Lawyers' Duties to Lawyers, "Counsel will not unreasonably withhold consent to a reasonable request for cooperation or scheduling accommodation by opposing counsel."
- Standard #3 – Lawyers' Duties to Lawyers, "Counsel will not request an extension of time solely for the purpose of unjustified delay."
- Rule 3.02 – "In the course of litigation, a lawyer shall not take a position that unreasonably increases the costs or other burdens of the case or that unreasonably delays resolution of the matter."

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## #2

### Don't Attach Your Email Fight to a Pleading

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- Standard #5 – Lawyers' Duties to Lawyers, "Counsel will not make personal attacks on opposing counsel or parties."
- Standard #6 – Lawyers' Duties to Lawyers, "Counsel will not attribute bad motives or improper conduct to other counsel without good cause, or make unfounded accusations of impropriety."

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## #3

### Don't Go Outside the Record

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- Standard #1 – The Court's Relationship with Counsel, "The court will take special care not to reward departures from the record."
- Standard #2 – Lawyers' Duties to the Court, "Counsel should not misrepresent, mischaracterize, misquote, or miscite the factual record or legal authorities."

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