Happy New Year! I hope your 2017 is starting out on a positive note. With each new year comes new opportunities, new beginnings, new plans and new resolutions to do better and be better than we have been in the previous year. Some of these well-intentioned resolutions go out the window by February or March, but others can stick with us for a lifetime.

On March 5, 2014, the Nevada Supreme Court modified the Attorney’s Oath to stress the need for more civility among those in our profession. Too often, experts (and members of the ABA) confirm that attorneys practice one of the most stressful professions in our society, and the lack of civility among lawyers is one of many factors that compound this stress.

The Attorney’s Oath reads:

I DO SOLEMNLY SWEAR, OR AFFIRM, THAT:

I will support the Constitution and government of the United States and of the State of Nevada;
I will maintain the respect due to courts of justice and judicial officers;
I will support, abide by and follow the Rules of Professional Conduct as are now or may hereafter be adopted by the Supreme Court;
I will conduct myself in a civil and professional manner, whether dealing with clients, opposing parties and counsel, judicial officers or the general public, and will promote the administration of justice; and
I will faithfully and honestly discharge the duties of an attorney at law to the best of my knowledge and ability. (Emphasis added.)

This year, I encourage each of you to revisit this oath and find ways to reaffirm its tenets in your professional life. Being civil in no way makes you a less-zealous advocate for your clients. In addition to striving to be more civil when representing clients, here are a few other new year’s resolutions I personally plan to adopt; I encourage you to consider doing so as well:

**Become a Mentor**

Not only is it personally fulfilling to mentor a less-experienced attorney, the mentoring experience can help polish your own skills and even provide opportunities to earn CLE credit. Consider participating in the state bar’s Transitioning Into Practice (TIP) mentor program.

Learn more at: [https://www.nvbar.org/member-services-3895/tip/apply/](https://www.nvbar.org/member-services-3895/tip/apply/).

**Use Technology More Effectively**

We all want to find more time to spend on hobbies or with friends and family, but it can be challenging to identify practical, useful ways to make this time. Many lawyers are using technology to manage their time, simplify routine tasks, communicate remotely and much more. Explore ways these tools can help you make the most of the one thing you can’t replace: your time. Apps such as Dropbox, ReaddleDocs, Fastcase, GoodReader, Penultimate, Square Register, TrialPad and iAnnotate are just a few of those available to potentially help you save time and money, and make you a more effective attorney.

**Do More Networking**

In my role on the boards of the State Bar of Nevada, the Clark County Bar Association and the Las Vegas Chapter of the National Bar Association, I’ve met hundreds of fellow attorneys whose work differs greatly from my own as a government attorney practicing in the area of zoning, planning and land use. I’ve routinely called on these attorneys for advice, help, referrals, tips and recommendations, and I might never have met them had I limited my professional circle to the attorneys with whom I regularly work. Networking doesn’t have to be dull – several of the best networking events (and my personal favorites) are fun socials. Consider attending a bar event, joining a section or even just following a few legal organizations on social media.

**Take on Some Pro Bono Work**

There are more reasons to participate in pro bono service than the obvious, feel-good ones. Pro bono work also allows attorneys to gain valuable new skills, work in—and discover—new practice areas, network with other attorneys and judges, and earn CLE credits.

A good place to start is the One Promise Campaign, which you can learn more about at [http://onepromisenevada.org/](http://onepromisenevada.org/) or by calling pro bono legal services provider in your area.
Ditch the Dead Weight

Not every resolution needs to focus on new tasks to tackle. Consider evaluating your commitments, both personal and professional, and seeing if you can reduce your stress by removing obligations that are no longer beneficial. The easiest time to end relationships – particularly with challenging clients – is the start of the year.

Say “Thank You” More Often

One of the easiest pathways to civility is a simple demonstration of gratitude. Consider writing short thank-you emails to your best clients, your professional colleagues and others with whom you interact on a regular basis. You’d be surprised at how effectively a simple thank you can be when it comes to rekindling good relationships or even mending fraying ones.

Stop Procrastinating... Now!

If you tend to procrastinate, commit to spending the first 15 minutes of each day working on a project that you’ve been putting off. After you start, you may find that the project isn’t as bad as you originally anticipated. Make sure to return client calls as soon as possible. One of the biggest complaints that the state bar receives is based on lawyers’ failure to communicate with clients. They have engaged you to do a job, and that engagement carries certain expectations and obligations.

Manage Your Time More Effectively

Time management is a challenge for all lawyers (and most people in general) at all levels, but learning to better manage your time will make your practice more enjoyable and more profitable. Remember to plan daily, develop useful routines and delegate non-legal work to your qualified staff; that is what you pay them for, after all!

Whatever you choose to do this year, make sure that you develop a plan, plan it well and plan to succeed. I wish you a happy, healthy, prosperous and civil 2017. NL