

before the Court and explain themselves as to “why they should not be disbarred or otherwise disciplined.”

Needless to say, one should show up if the Supreme Court asks for one’s presence. If one does not appear, invariably that respondent will be disbarred.

Even if one is facing a recommendation of disbarment, showing up and explaining oneself, can militate against harsh punishment. In the recent case of *Karina Pia Lucid*, 248 N.J. 514 (2021), a respondent who faced disbarment for knowing misappropriation of a client’s funds, was only censured. She showed up. She was contrite, did not use the funds for her own benefit and presented a sympathetic explanation that swayed the Court.

**Next issue:** Other Duties the DRB Performs for the Ethics System.



## WORKING WELL

### Don’t Just Practice Law— Practice Gratitude!

By Lori Ann Buza

*NJSBA Lawyer Well-Being Committee Chair*  
*KSBranigan Law*

*Gratitude breeds happiness.* “It is not joy that makes us grateful, it is gratitude that makes us joyful,” theologian David Steindl-Rast once said. Instead of searching outward for others and/or things to find happiness...start with internalizing an appreciation for that which you already possess. Developing skills to *practice gratitude* will naturally foster a richer and more fulfilling life as an attorney. Plus, you can lead others (friends, family and even clients) to their own place of gratitude and joy.

*What is gratitude?* The Oxford dictionary defines it as, “the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness.” This quality of thankfulness and appreciation can certainly be a natural responsive feeling; but, I also believe it can be one’s *choice* to be grateful. And as a choice, it flows that feeling gratitude is in our *control*. It is largely conditional on our *attitude* in how we receive information, see others, and choose to identify and

interpret that which is around us. With conditioning and practice, including meditation, reflection, and mindfulness—the joy of feeling gratitude is possible for even the most fierce attorney.

The *benefits* of practicing gratitude are priceless. Overall mental and physical health improve with a significant decrease in the body’s stress response. Accordingly, the risk of heart disease, anxiety, depression, gastrointestinal conditions, headaches, back pain and other stress disorders may all reduce, as well as the decreased tendency for alcohol and substance abuse.

*Practice, how?* Start by thinking about your own individual list of what to be grateful for—your unique gifts and talents, your meaningful legal work, education, special moments, the people you cherish, your health and abilities, etc. Write them down, then re-visit this list each day, adding to it as you recognize more and more for which to be thankful. Bring your consciousness to a place of appreciation for what you acknowledge on your list. Do so in a quiet space and allow the feeling of thankfulness to subsume your thoughts and energy as you review your writing. Soon this list will become a journal...and then with practice, several journals. Go back and read them frequently.

*Meditate* for 10–20 minutes each day; schedule and prioritize it for yourself as you would any other client appointment. You may meditate quietly seated or laying down, with or without gentle music, unguided or guided (there are several apps you can use). Research what types of meditation are best for you. And remember, that even if you do not have time for formal meditation, you may engage in *meditative acts* (i.e. walking your dog, playing an instrument) which can be mindful experiences with similar benefits to meditation.

*Breathe!* Be sure to take time to appreciate nature by going for “outside” breaks from work, breathing in the fresh air, and visiting parks when time permits to observe the beauty and relish the oxygen-rich greenery. In all these moments, focus on your breathing and feel deep gratitude for the *breath* that sustains you. There are many breathing techniques you can learn that may help in your gratitude practice. Throughout your day, acknowledge and appreciate *all five of your senses* and what they explore and enjoy, with mindful reflection.

Make a point to express your thankfulness to *others* with smiles, compliments, and praise. Try to engage in volunteer and service work where the satisfaction of doing good can help *fill your gratitude cup*. Consistently, remind yourself throughout your day to have an optimistic perspective, and remember that it is largely *your choice* as to how you interpret your life’s unique fact pattern.

#### **Buza’s ABCDs to practice gratitude:**

- A**ppreciate and acknowledge the good in your life.
- B**ring a positive attitude in how you see the world.
- C**ontrol your thoughts and choose to be grateful.
- D**eliver kindness and the best version of yourself to others. ■