

Your Courtroom Behavior

During the court hearing in divorce court in Freehold, the Judge repeatedly, with increasing frustration, told Susan to stop rolling her eyes, to stop smirking, to stop tugging on her lawyer's arm, and to stop raising her hand asking for permission to talk.

When Susan's cell phone rang, the Judge's face turned bright red and he left the courtroom, saying he would get a written decision out in the case soon.

When the written decision came, Susan was upset with the results.

Is it possible that Susan's conduct in the courtroom had anything to do with these results?

Perhaps. After all, Judges judge. First and foremost, they Judge the content and quality of the papers submitted to them as well as the courtroom presentations of counsel.

However, when divorcing couples do not agree and a Judge is asked to help make a decision, the Judge may need to also judge the credibility of the husband or wife.

A person's in-courtroom appearance, demeanor, and conduct sometimes cannot help but make some type of impression upon the Judge that influences the Judge, either consciously or unconsciously, on the issue of that person's "credibility" or "believability."

To help insure that you maximize your chance of being believed by the Judge and thereby increasing the likelihood of receiving a favorable decision, make sure that the impression you are making in the courtroom is a positive one.

Toward that end I offer my "Nine Rules of Courtroom Behavior":

1. Dress appropriately.
2. Be on time.
3. Turn your cell phone and pager off.
4. Do not talk in the courtroom (unless, of course, you are testifying).
5. Tell the truth.
6. Do not distract your lawyer during the courtroom presentation.
7. Do not make faces or other gestures when you hear comments that you do not like or agree with.
8. Be respectful.
9. If you lose, be dignified-at least until you are out of public view.

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