



2025  
Nevada  
District Court Judges Seminar

# COMPASSIONATE JURISPRUDENCE

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**BREATHE**



# Learning Objectives

## Define

Compassionate  
Jurisprudence

## Identify

Identify  
compassionate  
behaviors and  
practices that can  
be used to care for  
self and others

## Practice

Provide practical  
examples and  
strategies for  
integrating  
compassionate  
behaviors into  
daily interactions  
with litigants.









**CAN THERE BE  
JUSTICE  
WITHOUT  
COMPASSION?**

















**LADY JUSTICE**





















**SUPREME  
COURT  
JUSTICE  
BRENNAN**

“Judging, properly understood, involves the interaction of reason and passion, of logic and experience, and a dialogue between the head and the heart” (Brennan, 1988).







**CAN THERE BE  
JUSTICE  
WITHOUT  
COMPASSION?**





# COMPASSION WORKING DEFINITION

Care and kindness especially  
the tendency to think about  
and respond to the suffering  
of others.



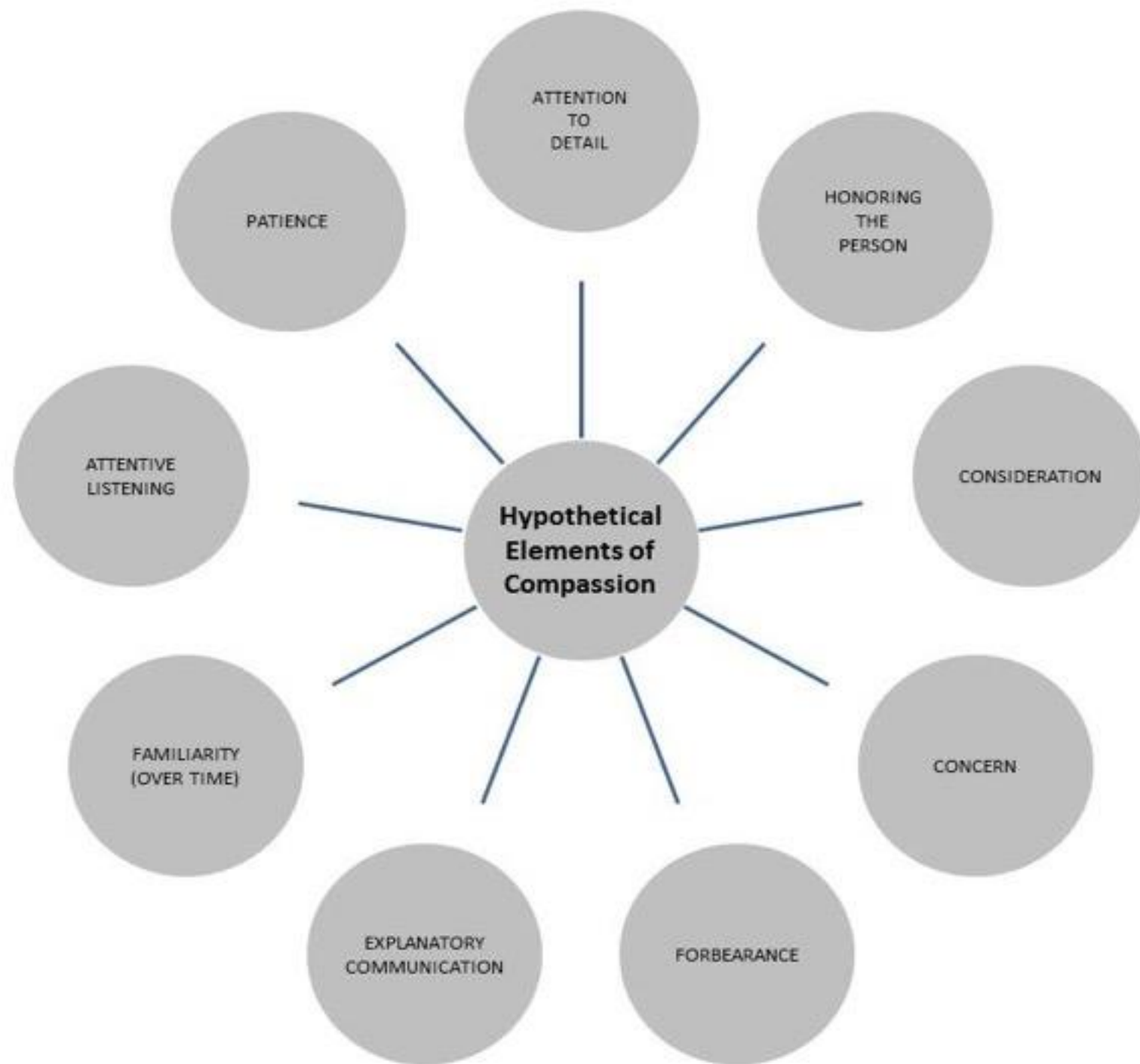


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**“COMPASSION IS  
THE KEEN  
AWARENESS OF  
THE  
INTERDEPENDENCE  
OF ALL THINGS.”  
THOMAS MERTON**









# COMPASSIONATE JURISPRUDENCE

- ☐ Sanctions
- ☐ The Rule of Law
- ☐ Reason
- ☐ Case oriented
- ☐ Ego
- ☐ Reaction
- ☐ Degree of Dispassion



- ☐ Rewards
- ☐ Restorative Justice
- ☐ Intuition and Experience
- ☐ People oriented
- ☐ Empathy
- ☐ Reflection
- ☐ Compassion

# ATTENTIVE LISTENING





A close-up portrait of a man with a concerned expression, resting his chin on his hand against a teal background. The word "CONCERN" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

**CONCERN**





# FORBEARANCE





**PATIENCE**



**ATTENTION  
TO DETAIL**





**CONSIDERATION**

# EXPLANATORY COMMUNICATION





A close-up photograph of two hands shaking in a firm grip. The hands are of different skin tones, one lighter and one darker, symbolizing unity and agreement. The background is dark and out of focus.

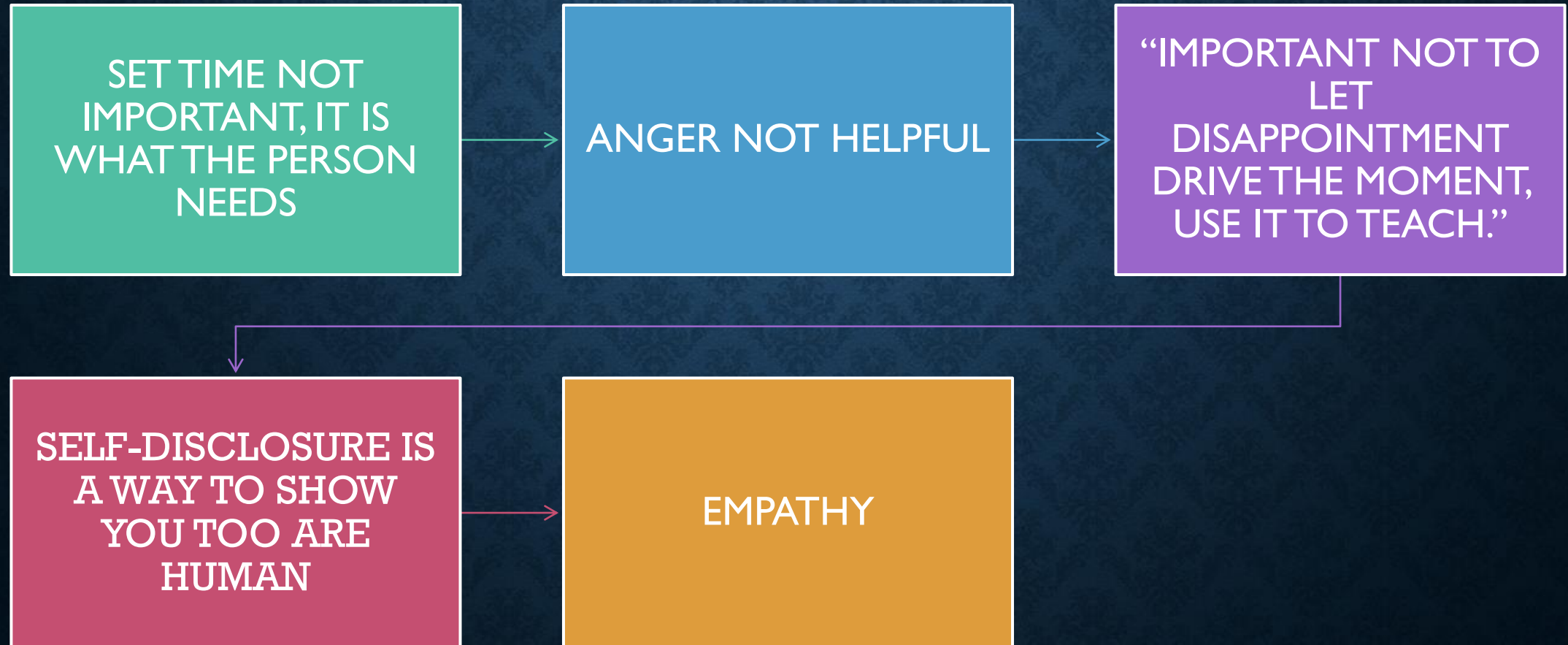
# HONORING THE PERSON

# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE DIALOGUE





# MORE HIGHLIGHTS





**COMPASSIONATE  
JURISPRUDENCE LOOKS  
LIKE...**



# TRANSFERABLE BEHAVIORS

BODY LANGUAGE,  
TONE, HUMOR, AND  
PRESENCE HELPS TO  
CONNECT

ENDING STRONG AND  
POSITIVE WITH AN  
INDIVIDUAL IS  
IMPORTANT

NOT RUSHING PEOPLE

ENGAGED LISTENING,  
LOOKING FOR WAYS  
TO MODIFY BEHAVIOR  
WITH PROBATION  
CONDITIONS

ADDRESSING  
UNDERLYING  
PROBLEMS AT  
SENTENCING

LEANING FORWARD,  
ENGAGED LISTENING

# COMPASSIONATE JURISPRUDENCE

A set of practices used by judges, court officers, justice professionals and their community partners that allows them to understand the feelings and perspectives of court involved people and themselves, and to use that understanding to guide their actions and decision-making for the betterment of everyone involved.





# IMPLICATIONS OF STUDY RESULTS

- The Power of Dialogue
- Compassionate Demeanor Humanizes
- Time is Important – Slow Down
- Dialogue Makes a Difference
- Transferability of Behaviors to Traditional Court
- Transferability to other Disciplines in Criminal Justice
- REFLECTION IS IMPORTANT.

# WHY BE COMPASSIONATE?

Mental and physical health benefits  
Less judgement and anger  
Peaceful atmosphere

Contagious  
We were born to  
connect









- • Most people coming to court are not happy
- • Trauma everywhere
- • Violence and threats are a part of your workplace
- • Security in the courtroom is necessary to protect you from the people you serve
- • You are under public scrutiny, constantly
- • And workload/volume is ridiculous.





# JUDGES SPEAK OUT

“It’s no fun to be disliked in a small community where you also need to be a member of the church, the neighborhood and raise your kids.”

“I always take work home. I’m the workaholic. I work evenings, seven days a week. If I didn’t do it, I’d be hopelessly behind. You speak of control? I can’t even control the thermostat in my courtroom.”

“I wasn’t prepared for the isolation of this position. It slowly overtakes you, and then you realize indeed how alone often you are, despite your friends and family.”

## JUDGES SPEAK OUT

“You’re always on - except in the sanctuary of your home. You watch in public what you say, how you appear, where you appear.”

“The sheer volume of each day’s work makes me fear I’m just processing people and have lost touch with my better self. Am I becoming indifferent to horror?”





Photo by [Timon Studler](#) on [Unsplash](#)

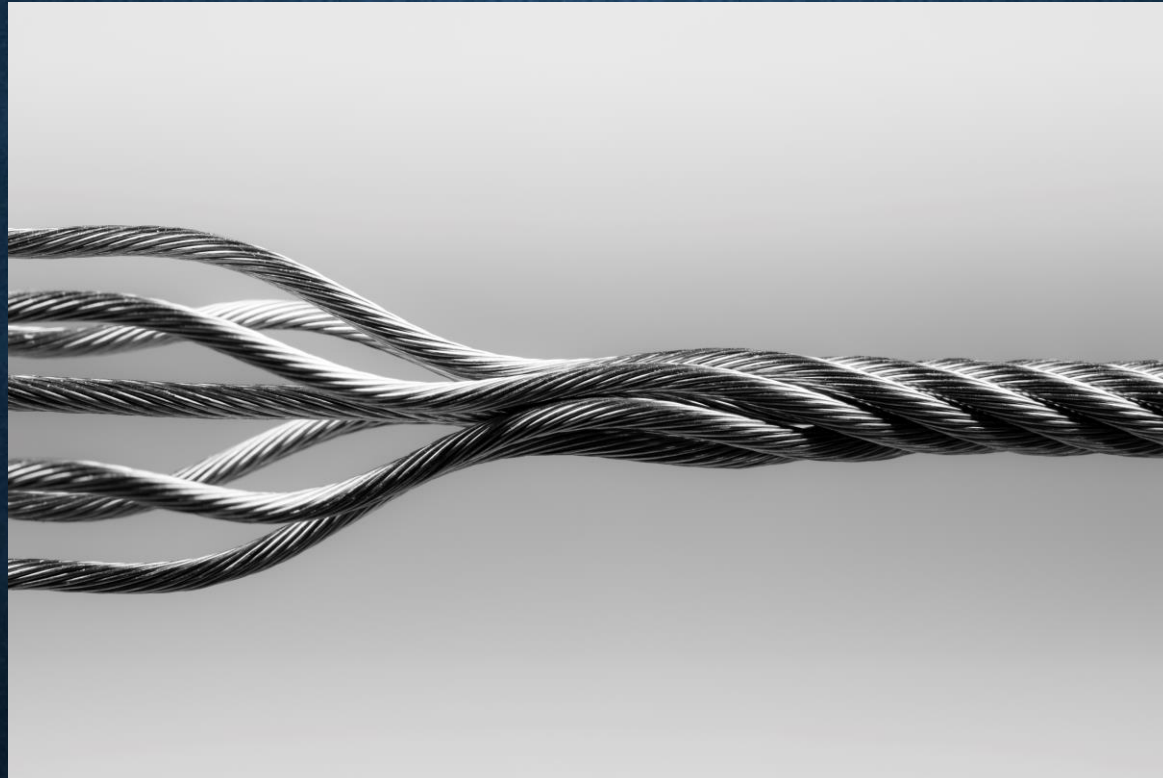
# **SELF- COMPASSION**

The practice of being kind and understanding toward yourself instead of being self-critical. Concern with the alleviation of our own suffering.



# **MYTH NO. 1**

## **SELF-COMPASSION MEANS WEAKNESS**





**MYTH NO. 2  
SELF-  
COMPASSION  
IS SELF-  
INDULGENT**



**MYTH NO. 3  
SELF-COMPASSION  
IS SELFISH**





# SELF-COMPASSION PRACTICES





Create Safe Space

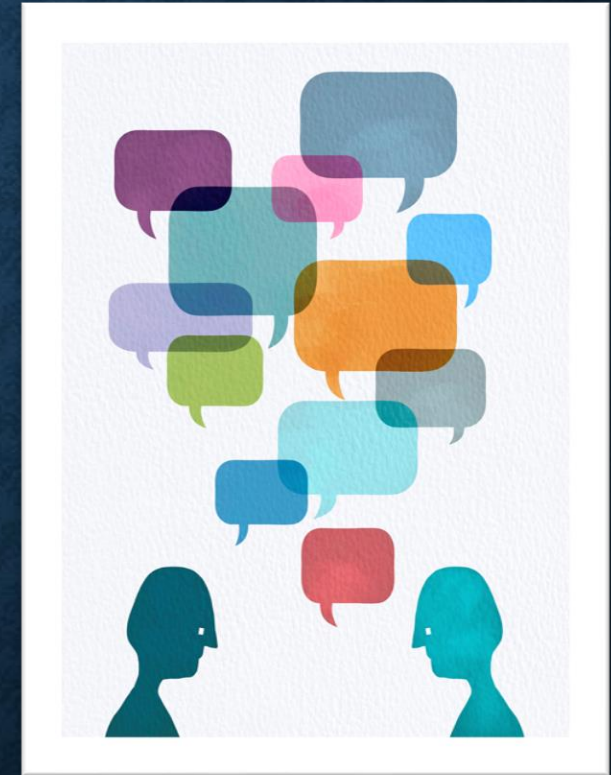
# DIALOGUE





# DIALOGIC PROCESS

- Look inside (Am I ready to have this conversation?)
- Look outward (Do I value the person in front of me)?
- Is the timing right?
- What is the purpose for the dialogue?
  - Is it to share perspectives?
  - Form or deepen relationship?
  - Share the impact of a situation, behavior, etc..?
  - Problem Solve?



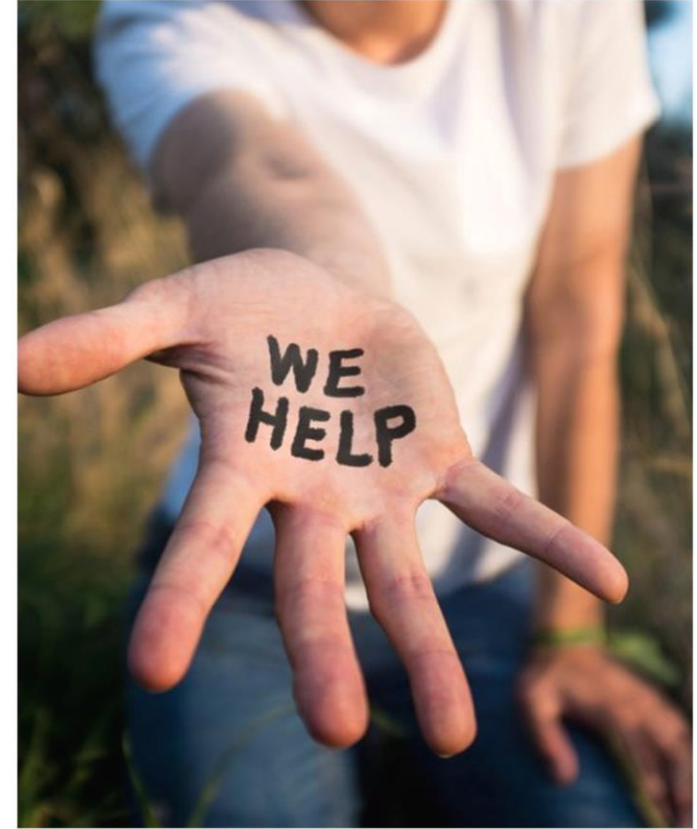


Slow Down





**OFFER TO HELP**





**SELF-  
KINDNESS**



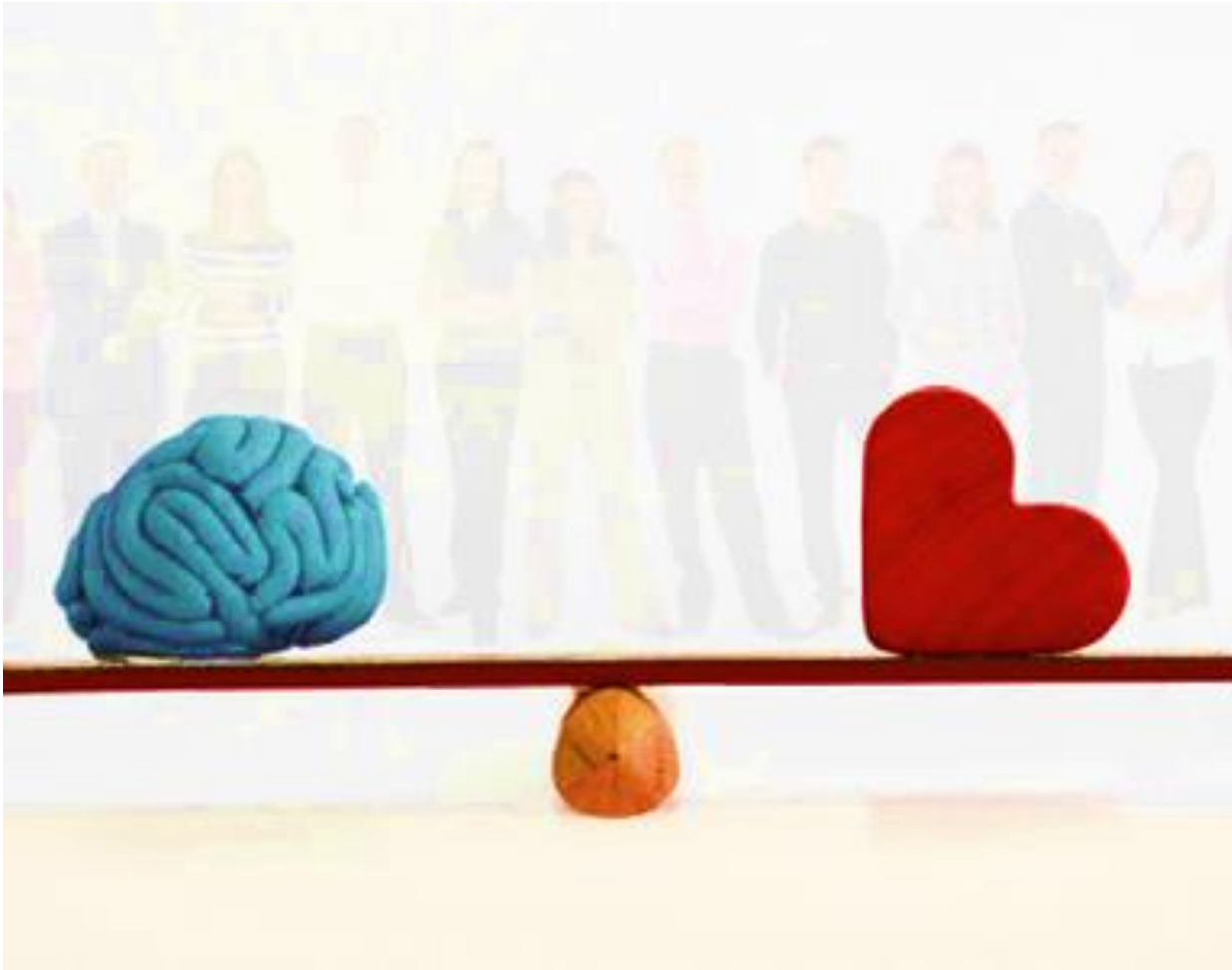


# MINDFULNESS EXERCISE



- 1) How am I feeling right now in this moment?
- 2) Who has annoyed me and how?
- 3) What am I proud of today?
- 4). What do I need to forgive myself for today?
- 5) What things are lovely in my life?
- 6) What am I grateful for?





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## 3 TAKEAWAYS

01

YOU MUST LOOK  
SUFFERING IN  
THE FACE

02

EVERYONE  
DESERVES  
COMPASSION

03

THAT  
EVERYONE  
INCLUDES YOU







SOULPANCAKE





**THANK YOU FOR LISTENING AND  
FOR ALL THAT YOU DO.**

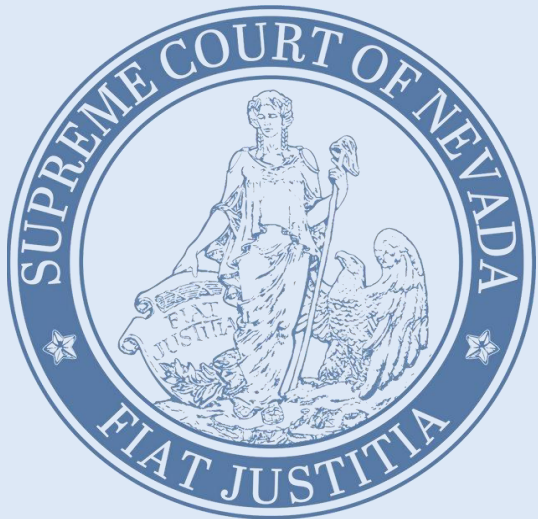
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## 2025 Family Law Conference & District Court Judges Seminar

Session Evaluation

Tuesday, April 15th - Friday, April 18th

Help us ensure that these conferences meet your educational needs. . .

**Please take a moment to  
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**SCAN THE QR CODE!**

Or check your email for the website link.

