

THE DAILY RECORD

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The care and feeding of your attorney

By **ROBERT L. BRENN JR.**
Daily Record Columnist

This column is the first in a series of "How To" manuals that you should keep in a safe and dry place to ensure you have the best relationship possible with your attorney.

Hopefully it will serve as a guide to those of you who are unaware that the care and feeding of an attorney is very similar to that of other humans. Also, if at least a million of the readers of this column would be kind enough to send me \$10 each, I could take more time off to write my upcoming book, which denounces greed and materialism. This would allow me greater leeway to meet the deadlines required by this column, in the midst of what has become a rather hectic time of my life.

This past weekend I had the pleasure of celebrating the 12th anniversary of my radio program, the "Brenna and Brenna Law Forum," which has kept me busy every Sunday morning for the last 12 years. When it started, my kids were too young to care where I was at 8 a.m. Sunday, so I didn't feel as though I was abandoning my duties as a father. When they got older, I found out they didn't care where I was at any time, so I felt better about the fact that I had been unavailable on Sunday mornings for such a long time.

By the way, I would like to update those of you who read last week's column: I did not die in the fighter jet, as I had feared I might. So many people stopped me during the past several days to ask about the flight that I finally found the perfect way to summarize the experience: I simply say it was the best experience of my life, without my wife Judy. (You get the idea.) The ride was absolutely exhilarating, and the pilot was fantastic. We did barrel rolls, and we went up to about four Gs, which is pretty much the maximum allowed since our jet was not equipped with a G suit. For those of you who are not familiar with the terms, three Gs — three times normal gravity — is accompanied by whimpering and mumbling while crying out for one's mommy. At 4 Gs, you forget your name, and then you forget why in the heck you are subjecting yourself to the experience in the first place.

Anyway, the flight was amazing, and I even managed to get a few pictures from the jet, which surprised me since I assumed I would be shaking too much to even hold a camera, let alone get a shot in focus. I got to meet many members of our military, who are unwaveringly dedicated to preserving our freedom and democracy; it was truly an overwhelming experience.

As you may already know, our small firm performs military law work all over the world thanks to our attorneys Lt. Col. Don Rehkopf and Maj. Todd Gustafson — without whom we wouldn't

be doing it. I won't be doing my column next week, by the way. I'm applying to get into ROTC at a nearby college because, when I graduate again four years from now, I know there won't be enough over 60-year-old fighter pilots.

Flying was on Friday. On Saturday I attended the first annual Passion for Life Gala, held in memory of Barbara Fogarty to benefit the Wilmot Cancer Center. That, too, was a wonderful experience in and of itself.

It was a somewhat hectic weekend, leaving little time to contemplate what I would write for this column. I was considering just having a blank spot with no text, to see if any of my readers noticed the difference, but it seemed that would not live up to my responsibilities to *The Daily Record*. I decided, instead, just to put my head down and get the project done.

Anyway, on the topic of caring for your attorney: For those of you who need to begin with the absolute basics, attorneys are, for the most part, members of the species known as *Homo sapiens*. They should be fed on a regular basis, unless they are on trial, in which case all bets are off.

Although attorneys do not require constant attention — my wife takes exception to that premise — some basic facts are overlooked by many people. Attorneys come in different sizes, colors, shapes, levels of intellect, varying degrees of ability to perceive humor, and general attitude toward their clients.

You should not be afraid of walking too close to your attorney. If you feel you are in danger, you can always start out with a friendly greeting: "Hello. How are you today?" which provides a general overview of how your attorney may react to an ordinary conversation with a fellow human. If your attorney reacts by grumbling, growling, or pulling out a handgun, it's probably a good idea to walk away, slowly, and proceed directly to the receptionist to reschedule your appointment. It's most likely the case that you caught him or her at the wrong moment.

Generally, perhaps surprisingly, attorneys need to be loved — fake it if you have to. If you can't quite muster enough emotion to rise to the level of "love," you may find it easier to at least make him or her feel as though he or she is "liked." Remember at all times that yours is a purely platonic relationship, and although most attorneys generally do not bite, it is a good idea not to touch your lawyer. (Once again, if your attorney is on trial, all bets are off.)

Well, there I go, managing to have squeezed enough words on this page to qualify as this week's column. I should add, however, that I really would appreciate some feedback, be it about this col-

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umn, the radio show or anything in between. Feel free to call the show or e-mail questions, comments, disparaging remarks and/or, as I mentioned before, fund transfers directly into my account. If you call the show on Sunday between 8 and 9 a.m., we can talk about anything you like, or e-mail me at brenna@brennalaw.com. It's not a mutually exclusive approach. You can do either, the column, the radio show, or both. And I must let you know I appreciate all of the kind words from my listeners and those of you who

are gracious enough to spend a few moments reading my column.

Robert L. Brenna Jr. is a partner in the Rochester law firm of Brenna, Brenna & Boyce PLLC, which his father founded. He is president of the New York State Academy of Trial Lawyers and concentrates his practice in the areas of estates and trusts and catastrophic personal injury. Brenna also hosts a popular Sunday morning radio program entitled "The Brenna & Brenna Law Forum," on WHAM 1180 AM and online at 8 a.m. at www.wham1180.com.