



PROGRAM MATERIALS

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When the Attorney Becomes the Defendant: The Psychology of How Ethical Lines Are Crossed

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When the Attorney Becomes the Defendant:

The Psychology of How Ethical Lines Are Crossed

ABA Rules 1.1 · 1.3 · 1.4 · 3.1 · 3.3 · 3.4 · 8.3 · 8.4

Former Attorney Andreea Parc, LL.M.

Ethics / Professional Responsibility CLE | 90 Minutes

The Erosion Sequence™ USPTO #99926135 | Erosion Profile™ USPTO #99926212

Program Agenda

Time	Section	Content
0:00–0:10	Opening	The credential no other ethics speaker has — direct address, no slides
0:10–0:30	Part 1	Why high performers are most at risk — the four-element framework
0:30–1:05	Part 2	The Erosion Sequence™ — five stages of ethical drift with case studies and exit strategies
1:05–1:20	Part 3	The Decision Architecture — three questions and The Erosion Profile™
1:20–1:25	Closing	What the profession is not teaching
1:25+	Q&A	Open discussion

The Four-Element Framework

Identity makes the decision. Ethical self-regulation is the only element that can catch it.

1. Emotion

Sets the conditions. The weather — cloudy or sunny. The environment of the decision. Not the engine.

2. Identity

Makes the decision. We choose from who we believe we are — before we are fully conscious of choosing.

3. Logic

Justifies after. The story identity told you about a decision that was already made. It arrived after.

4. Ethical Self-Regulation

The only element that operates independently. Asks: what is driving me right now — duty or something else?

Think of it as the annoying kid at a gathering — oblivious to the situation, asking the question that stops you in your tracks. Ethical self-regulation was not available to most of us. Nobody installed the second alarm.

The First Accommodation Triggers

Every trigger ties back to the same thing: identity is at stake. The first accommodation is the price paid — without registering it as a price — to protect it.

Status

The need to be in a specific room, at a specific table, regarded as a specific kind of attorney

Proximity to Power

The need to operate near someone whose approval feels like protection and disapproval feels like extinction

Belonging

The need to remain inside or become part of a relationship, a firm, a power structure

Financial Pressure

The need to keep the practice running — payroll, mortgage, a structure that depends on having clients

Fear of Irrelevance

The belief that your visibility is fragile — and that one wrong move dissolves it

Threat to Self-Image

The impossibility of making a decision that contradicts who you believe you are



THE FIRST ACCOMMODATION

You bend the rule. You cut a corner. Just once.

What It Sounds Like Inside

'Just this once. This is just part of the role.'

'This is a special case. It's not my call.'

'I have worked too hard to raise questions now.'

WARNING SIGN

You are protecting a position or relationship at the expense of a quiet hesitation or intuition you already noticed. The hesitation was there. You chose not to follow it.

EXIT — PAUSE PROTOCOL

Your awareness is intact — highest leverage exit point.

1. Am I applying a duty or managing my discomfort?
2. Could I hand this decision in writing to the bar tomorrow?
3. What does this hesitation know that I am choosing not to know?

Your Actionable Exit:

Pause Protocol + Written Decision Log. On top of the page write: My profession is what I do — not who I am. Then write what you are doing, what you are telling yourself, and what you are feeling.

HYPOTHETICAL — STAGE 1: THE FIRST ACCOMMODATION — DANIEL MARSH

Fact Pattern:

A senior partner tells Daniel not to produce three internal emails clearly responsive to a discovery request. Daniel knows Rule 3.4 requires production. He also knows that questioning the partner — five weeks before the partnership vote — could cost him the relationship he spent eight years building. He does not produce the emails.

Internal Voice: 'He knows what he's doing. He's a senior partner. I'm not going to risk my partnership over three emails. If this becomes a problem, it's his call, not mine.'

ABA Rule 3.4(a) — A lawyer shall not unlawfully obstruct another party's access to evidence or unlawfully conceal a document having potential evidentiary value.

If the exit is taken:

Daniel asks the ethical self-regulation question: 'Am I applying a duty or managing my discomfort?' The answer is immediate. He requests a privilege basis. Two of three emails are produced. The sequence does not begin.

If the exit is not taken:

Six months later, opposing counsel asks a witness about a withheld email unprompted. Court orders a discovery conference. The partner tells Daniel to say the omission was inadvertent. Daniel is at Stage 2 before he registered Stage 1 had started.



THE NORMALIZATION WINDOW

You do it again. It gets easier.

What It Sounds Like Inside

'This is how the system works.'

'Other lawyers do the same.'

'The court will decide.'

WARNING SIGN

A decision that once required justification now requires none. The absence of friction is not comfort. It is the Normalization Window closing.

EXIT — PATTERN RECOGNITION

Your awareness is fading — Question 3 is critical here.

1. Which justification am I using — and have I used it before?
2. What happened the last time I told myself this?
3. If I mapped every similar decision this year, what would that map look like?

Your Actionable Exit:

Justification Audit: trace the justification back to its first use — not its most recent one.

Fact Pattern:

Eighteen months after the document production incident — which produced no visible consequence — Daniel withholds a responsive internal audit report from an arbitration without a documented privilege basis. Third time in eighteen months. Each time, nothing happened.

Internal Voice: 'This is how litigation actually works. You produce what you have to produce. They can ask for more if they want it. Nobody gets everything.'

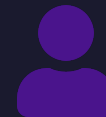
ABA Rule 3.3(a) — A lawyer shall not knowingly fail to correct a false statement of material fact previously made to the tribunal.

If the exit is taken:

Daniel runs a justification audit — lists the last three similar decisions. He sees the same language in all three. He recognizes the pattern and produces the audit report. The sequence stops at Stage 2.

If the exit is not taken:

Opposing counsel reconstructs the audit report's key finding through a different evidentiary pathway. The arbitrator notes a 'concerning gap' in Daniel's production. A sanctions motion follows. Daniel is at Stage 3 with no written record distinguishing his conduct from willful misconduct.



IDENTITY DRIFT

You are no longer who you were. You do not know it yet.

What It Sounds Like Inside

'I know where the line is.'

'I have always known where the line is.'

WARNING SIGN

You have not thought critically about a recurring practice in months. Familiarity has replaced your judgment. If I could tell you exactly when I drifted, it would not have been drift.

EXIT — EXTERNAL ACCOUNTABILITY STRUCTURE

Internal questions unlikely to activate — must be pre-installed.

1. Is there anything I'm doing that I wouldn't want my accountability contact to know?
2. When did I last ask someone to tell me something I didn't want to hear?
3. Who has no professional stake in my decisions?

Your Actionable Exit:

Pre-Committed Contact: installed before Stage 3. The half-second before the answer is the exit point. If you don't have one — name them today.

HYPOTHETICAL — STAGE 3: IDENTITY DRIFT — DANIEL MARSH

Fact Pattern:

Three years in, Daniel is partner. He trains junior associates on 'reading the request carefully before producing.' When a junior associate flags a potentially responsive document, Daniel says: 'That's not what they're asking for.' He does not explain further.

Internal Voice: 'I've been doing this for eleven years. I know where the line is. That's why they made me partner.'

ABA Rule 8.4(a) — It is professional misconduct to knowingly assist or induce another to violate the Rules of Professional Conduct.

If the exit is taken:

An accountability contact Daniel designated three years earlier calls monthly: 'Is there something you're doing that you wouldn't want me to know?' This month Daniel hears himself hesitate before answering. He calls outside ethics counsel the following week. Sequence stops at Stage 3.

If the exit is not taken:

The junior associate uses Daniel's framework on another matter. Her emails show she followed his specific instruction. The firm's general counsel is now reviewing Daniel's practices across six active matters. Daniel is at Stage 4.



THE LOCKED POSITION

You cannot go back without burning everything down.

What It Sounds Like Inside

'If I raise this now, I lose everything.'

'I just need this to stay quiet a little longer.'

'Amending all of them will look like fraud.'

WARNING SIGN

You are more afraid of the remedy than the condition. The thing that will actually destroy you is the silence you choose instead of disclosure.

EXIT — CONSEQUENCE SEQUENCING

Mitigation Protocol — personal responsibility and accountability are the only exit.

1. What is the realistic endpoint if nothing changes in six months?
2. What is the difference between voluntary disclosure now and discovery later?
3. Who has professional privilege — and can I tell them the complete truth today?

Your Actionable Exit:

Privileged Disclosure: two contacts required — one with privilege, one with trust. Not disclosing does not protect you. It creates the evidence.

HYPOTHETICAL — STAGE 4: THE LOCKED POSITION — DANIEL MARSH

Fact Pattern:

The firm's general counsel has begun a quiet internal review of Daniel's matters. A paralegal asks about a specific production set. Daniel tells her it was complete and documented. It was not. He is billing at full capacity and performing normally in every visible way.

Internal Voice: 'If I raise this now, I lose everything — the partnership, the clients, the reputation. I've worked fifteen years for this. I just need this review to close.'

ABA Rule 8.4(c) — It is professional misconduct to engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation.

If the exit is taken:

Daniel contacts outside counsel under privilege and discloses the full history. He faces serious professional consequences — but they are categorically different from what follows involuntary discovery. Voluntary disclosure at Stage 4 is not clean. It is the least bad outcome still available.

If the exit is not taken:

A junior partner finds an internal email in which Daniel instructed a paralegal to exclude a specific document with no privilege basis noted. The firm reports the matter to the state bar. Opposing counsel in three matters files sanctions motions. The bar investigation proceeds.



THE COLLAPSE EVENT

The outside world finds out what the inside world has known for years.

What It Sounds Like Inside

'I never thought of myself as this kind of attorney.'

'I don't know how it got here.'

WARNING SIGN

The warning sign for Stage 5 is Stage 4. You are managing a situation you cannot talk about openly with anyone. The gap between your public performance and your private reality has never been wider. If any of this sounds familiar — that recognition is your last effective warning.

EXIT — OUT OF SCOPE

Prevention requires architecture in place before Stage 4.

1. The disciplinary proceeding does not create the problem.
2. It dates it.

Your Actionable Exit:

Response over Reaction: acceptance over defensiveness, accountability over denial. The attorneys who navigate Stage 5 with the least damage stop fighting their identity and start telling the truth — to themselves first.

Fact Pattern:

The state bar investigation is now public. Two clients have filed malpractice claims. Daniel is on administrative leave. The bar complaint charges violations of Rules 3.4, 3.3, and 8.4. The discovery practices he had not experienced as decisions for four years are being reconstructed, document by document.

Internal Voice: 'I never thought of myself as this kind of attorney. I don't know how it got here.'

ABA Rules 3.3, 3.4, 8.4 — The bar complaint does not create the problem. It dates it. Daniel's sequence began eleven years earlier — and he did not write down why.

If the exit is taken:

At Stage 5 the exit has closed. What follows is crisis navigation — a different discipline requiring different expertise.

If the exit is not taken:

Daniel's sequence was never inevitable. It had five exits. Each one cost less than the one that followed. Stage 1 cost a conversation. Stage 5 cost a career.

The Erosion Sequence™ — Exit Cost by Stage



The willingness to see yourself clearly and accept where you are is always the first step.

The Decision Architecture

Three questions designed to install the second alarm system — the ethical self-regulation capacity that asks what is driving you right now, independently of how calm or certain you feel.

Q1: Am I applying a duty or managing my discomfort?

Most effective: Stage 1

Names the identity drive in real time. What is driving you right now — duty, or something else? You cannot bypass a force you have not named.

Q2: Would I make this decision if the outcome were public tomorrow?

Most effective: Stage 2

Reinstalls the external frame that motivated reasoning removes. Rationalization depends on you being the only audience for your own justifications.

Q3: Which justification am I using right now — and have I used it before?

Most effective: Stages 1–2

Pattern recognition is your most powerful early warning tool. The benefit of awareness at Stage 2 is clarity you can recover from. Awareness at any stage is a benefit.

If you do not have a similar framework in place — start now. The window is open at every stage. The cost of entering it rises with each one.

The Erosion Profile™ — Six Decision-Making Patterns

Not who you are. How you currently make decisions under pressure. Identity is not fixed — these patterns can shift the moment you name them.

The Architect

Exit closes: Stage 3

'I need the full picture first.'

Trigger: Status / Fear of irrelevance

Last exit: Written Decision Log — 'what does this hesitation know?'

The Performer

Exit closes: Stage 2

'Hesitation looks like weakness.'

Trigger: Status / Threat to self-image

Last exit: Q2 — make the external audience real

The Loyalist

Exit closes: Stage 3

'I am not going to let them down.'

Trigger: Belonging

Last exit: Pre-committed external contact

The Exceptionalist

Exit closes: Stage 4

'I know where the line is.'

Trigger: Certainty itself

Last exit: Q3 — pattern over judgment

The Incrementalist

Exit closes: Stage 3

'Each step is reasonable given the last.'

Trigger: Normalization

Last exit: Justification Audit — trace to first use

The Survivor

Exit closes: Stage 4

'I cannot afford to lose this.'

Trigger: Financial pressure / Fear

Last exit: Cost of Interruption table — show the math early

What the Profession Is Not Teaching

The attorney who will face a disciplinary proceeding next year is practicing right now. They are competent. They are respected. They have never had reason to question their judgment. And somewhere between their last decision and their next one, the sequence is already running.

Today you learned to see it. That is the difference between knowing the rules and understanding the psychology of how ethical lines are crossed.

The disciplinary proceeding does not create the problem. It dates it.

You see it now — and it cannot be unseen. Give it to someone else.

Share this program with your firm. Talk about it in your next team meeting.

Former Attorney Andreea Parc, LL.M. | PARC Productions Corp | andreeaparc.com

The Erosion Sequence™ USPTO #99926135 | Erosion Profile™ USPTO #99926212

When the Attorney Becomes the Defendant:

The Psychology of How Ethical Lines Are Crossed

Author, Speaker, and Advisor on the Psychology of Attorney Ethical Failure

Credit: Ethics / Professional Responsibility | 90 Minutes | Celesq

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This workbook is yours to use during the program and keep as a reference afterward. There are writing spaces at each stage and a self-assessment at the end. The questions in this workbook are the same questions that interrupt the sequence — use them.

PART 1

THE FOUR-ELEMENT FRAMEWORK

The primary driver of decision-making under pressure is not emotion. It is identity. We choose from who we believe we are — before we are fully conscious of choosing. This framework maps how that happens, and where the interruption is possible.

1. Emotion Sets the conditions. The weather — the background. Not the engine.	2. Identity Makes the decision. We choose from who we believe we are — before logic arrives.	3. Logic Justifies after. The story identity tells you about a decision already made.	4. Ethical Self-Regulation Asks: what is driving me right now — duty or something else? Operates independently of the other three.
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Think of ethical self-regulation as the annoying kid at a gathering — oblivious to the situation, asking the question that stops you in your tracks. Most of us never had that system installed. This program installs it.

THE FIRST ACCOMMODATION TRIGGERS

Every trigger ties back to the same thing: your identity is at stake. The first accommodation is the price you pay — without registering it as a price — to protect it.

Status — protecting who you are in the room

Belonging — protecting your place in the relationship

Fear of Irrelevance — protecting your visibility

Proximity to Power — protecting your access

Financial Pressure — protecting the practice that defines you

Threat to Self-Image — protecting the professional you believe yourself to be

Which trigger is most active in your practice right now?

PART 2

THE EROSION SEQUENCE™ — FIVE STAGES OF ETHICAL DRIFT

Nobody wakes up one morning and decides to become the attorney who ends up in a disciplinary proceeding. It happens in steps. Each stage has a warning sign and an exit. The cost of the exit rises with each stage.

Stage 1 — The First Accommodation

You bend the rule. Just once.

Warning Sign: You are protecting a position or relationship at the expense of a quiet hesitation you already noticed. The hesitation was there. You chose not to follow it.

Exit: Pause Protocol + Written Decision Log — Write: My profession is what I do — not who I am. Then write what you are doing, what you are telling yourself, and what you are feeling.

What quiet signal have you chosen to ignore recently?

Stage 2 — The Normalization Window

You do it again. It gets easier.

Warning Sign: A decision that once required justification now requires none. The absence of friction is not comfort. It is the Normalization Window closing.

Exit: Justification Audit — Write the last three similar decisions. Record the justification and what happened. If the same justification appears three times, you are inside the Window.

Which justification have you used more than once in the past year?

Stage 3 — Identity Drift

You are no longer who you were. You do not know it yet.

Warning Sign: You have not thought critically about a recurring practice in months. Familiarity has replaced judgment. If you could name exactly when you drifted, it would not have been drift.

Exit: External Accountability Structure — Someone outside your work relationships whose periodic question creates the half-second where you know the honest response before you decide what to say.

Who in your life could serve as your accountability contact?

Stage 4 — The Locked Position

You cannot go back without burning everything down.

Warning Sign: You are more afraid of the remedy than the condition. The thing that will actually destroy you is the silence you choose instead of disclosure.

Exit: Mitigation Protocol — Voluntary disclosure now produces different outcomes than involuntary discovery later. One attorney with privilege, one trusted person who can hear the truth.

Stage 5 — The Collapse Event

The outside world finds out what the inside world has known for years.

Warning Sign: The warning sign for Stage 5 is Stage 4. You are managing a situation you cannot talk about openly with anyone. The gap between your public professional performance and your private reality has never been wider. If any of this sounds familiar before you reach Stage 5 — that recognition is your last effective warning.

Exit: Response over Reaction — What remains available is how you respond. Acceptance over defensiveness. Accountability over denial. Willingness to see clearly what the sequence produced and take full responsibility for your part in it. The attorneys who navigate Stage 5 with the least damage are not the ones who fight hardest. They are the ones who stop fighting their identity and start telling the truth... to themselves first.

The disciplinary proceeding does not create the problem. It just dates it.

PART 3

THE COST OF THE EXIT BY STAGE

The sequence is not a cliff. It is a staircase. Every step has an exit. The cost rises with each step — but the exit exists at every stage.

Stage	Exit Mechanism	Cost
Stage 1	Pause Protocol + Written Decision Log	<i>A conversation</i>
Stage 2	Justification Audit + Pattern Recognition	<i>A correction</i>
Stage 3	External Accountability Structure	<i>An admission — and the honesty to make it</i>
Stage 4	Mitigation Protocol — Privileged Disclosure	<i>Everything that comes after disclosure</i>
Stage 5	Crisis Navigation (different expertise)	<i>Cost set by external parties</i>

Where are you on this staircase right now? Not where you think you are — where you actually are.

PART 4

THE DECISION ARCHITECTURE — THREE QUESTIONS

These three questions install the second alarm system, the ethical self-regulation. They never stop working. The earlier you install them, the less effort they require. If you do not have a similar framework in place — start now.

Q1 Am I applying a duty or managing my discomfort?

What is this discomfort telling me? What is it protecting? What is the real reason I am making this decision?

🕒 **Most effective at Stage 1 | Catches identity before the justification forms**

Q2 Would I make this decision if the outcome were public tomorrow?

Would I hand this to the bar tomorrow? Rationalization depends on you being the only audience for your own justifications.

🕒 Most effective at Stage 2 | Reinstalls the external frame motivated reasoning removes

Q3 Which justification am I using right now — and have I used it before?

Name the justification. Trace it back to its first use, not its most recent one. That comparison makes the drift visible.

🕒 Most effective at Stages 1–2 | Pattern recognition is your most powerful early warning tool

The benefit of awareness at Stage 2 is the clarity you can still recover from. Awareness at Stage 4 may mean a disciplinary hearing. But awareness at any stage is a benefit. The question is not when you became aware. The question is what you do with the awareness when you have it.

Which of these three questions would have been most useful to you in the past year?

PART 5

THE EROSION PROFILE™ — SIX DECISION-MAKING PATTERNS

These are not permanent character types. They map how you currently make decisions under pressure. Identity is not fixed when you are aware of it running your life. Read the six profiles. You will recognize yourself in one primary pattern and elements of one or two others. When you do, you will find your specific exit mechanism.

Erosion Profile™ — Trademark Notice

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1. THE ARCHITECT

'I need to understand the full picture before I act.'

Primary Trigger: Status and fear of irrelevance. You have built your professional identity around being the most prepared person in the room. A decision that threatens that identity is experienced as an existential threat, not a professional obligation.

The Defense Mechanism: Documentation as proof of soundness. Once a decision is thoroughly documented, you treat the paperwork itself as evidence the decision was sound — independent of whether the underlying choice was correct. The stronger the file, the less you question what's inside it. This is why intervention fails once the record is built: you are no longer defending the decision. You are defending the file.

Where the Exit Closes: Stage 3 — Identity Drift. By this stage, your documentation has become your justification. Every decision in the file has a paper trail that looks defensible — because you built it. You can out-argue any intervention with your own records.

ABA Rules Most Commonly Implicated: ABA Rule 3.3 (Candor Toward the Tribunal). ABA Rule 8.4(c) (Misrepresentation through omission).

2. THE PERFORMER

'Hesitation looks like weakness. I cannot afford that impression right now.'

Primary Trigger: Status and threat to professional self-image. You have invested more than most in the construction of your professional reputation. Any decision that threatens that reputation — even a correct one, like disclosing an error — is experienced as a cost that may outweigh the ethical obligation to disclose it.

The Defense Mechanism: Managed appearance as a substitute for resolution. As long as nothing looks wrong on the outside, you treat the situation as handled — whether or not it has actually been addressed. The absence of visible failure functions as proof of competence, not as a warning that something remains unresolved.

Where the Exit Closes: Stage 2 — The Normalization Window. Once the first accommodation produced no visible consequence, your identity system files it as evidence of sound judgment under pressure. The pattern normalizes before it is ever examined.

ABA Rules Most Commonly Implicated: ABA Rule 1.4 (Communication — withholding information from clients). ABA Rule 8.4(c) (Misrepresentation through the managed appearance of competence).

3. THE LOYALIST

'This person has trusted me. I am not going to be the one who lets them down.'

Primary Trigger: Belonging. Your first accommodation is almost always made to preserve a relationship you cannot imagine losing. The trigger is the specific fear of becoming someone who abandoned a person who depended on you.

The Defense Mechanism: Reframing the ethical question as a relational one. Without registering the substitution, you replace 'is this decision right?' with 'am I the kind of person who abandons someone who needs me?' The second question almost always produces a more compelling answer — which is exactly why the substitution goes unnoticed.

Where the Exit Closes: Stage 3 — Identity Drift. By this stage, the relationship has fully absorbed the justification. You are not rationalizing a decision — you are protecting a person. Ethical arguments fail here because you have already reframed the question from 'is this right?' to 'am I the kind of person who abandons someone who needs me?'

ABA Rules Most Commonly Implicated: ABA Rule 1.7 (Conflict of Interest). ABA Rule 1.3 (Diligence — overextending to preserve relationships).

4. THE EXCEPTIONALIST

'I know where the line is. I have always known where the line is.'

Primary Trigger: Certainty itself — which is the constant mechanism of The Erosion Sequence™ at its most concentrated. You are the clearest embodiment of the platform's core thesis: the attorney most certain they would never cross a line is structurally the most vulnerable to crossing it without awareness.

The Defense Mechanism: Track record substituting for present-tense scrutiny. Because you have been right before, you treat being right again as the default outcome rather than something to verify. The stronger your record, the less scrutiny each new decision receives — the inverse of what should happen as the stakes increase.

Where the Exit Closes: Stage 4 — The Locked Position. Your track record has by then accumulated enough weight that even the Locked Position reads as a temporary anomaly you will resolve through superior judgment. You are calm, certain, composed — and making the highest-stakes decisions of your career from inside a closed frame.

ABA Rules Most Commonly Implicated: ABA Rule 8.4 (Misconduct — certainty produces conduct not experienced as misconduct until external parties define it). ABA Rule 3.1 (Meritorious Claims).

5. THE INCREMENTALIST

'Each step I take is reasonable given where I was before.'

Primary Trigger: Normalization — you do not have a single identifiable First Accommodation trigger. Your pattern activates gradually across multiple decisions. The trigger is the absence of consequence following the first small step.

The Defense Mechanism: Local comparison instead of origin comparison. Each new decision is measured against the one immediately before it, not against your original standard. Every step looks reasonable relative to the last one, even as the cumulative distance from where you started becomes significant.

Where the Exit Closes: Stage 3 — Identity Drift. You have reorganized your professional identity around a set of practices that have drifted significantly from your original standard — but because each step felt proportionate, the drift has no felt weight. There is no moment you can point to as the decision that started the problem.

ABA Rules Most Commonly Implicated: ABA Rule 8.4(a) (Misconduct — cumulative pattern of small accommodations). ABA Rule 3.4 (Fairness to Opposing Party — incremental drift from full compliance).

6. THE SURVIVOR

'I cannot afford to lose this. Not right now.'

Primary Trigger: Financial pressure, fear of irrelevance, and belonging — often in combination. You are typically managing multiple simultaneous pressures, and your First Accommodation is made at the intersection of those pressures rather than in response to any single one.

The Defense Mechanism: Acute threat overriding delayed consequence. You weigh the immediate, visible threat far more heavily than a delayed one — even when the delayed consequence is larger. Under real pressure, the choice that resolves today's problem consistently outcompetes the choice that prevents next year's.

Where the Exit Closes: Stage 4 — The Locked Position. The short-term threat that drives your decisions is most acute at Stage 4, where disclosure feels like destruction. Your entire decision architecture is built around avoiding acute threat — and at Stage 4, disclosure is the most acute threat visible.

ABA Rules Most Commonly Implicated: ABA Rule 1.6 (Confidentiality — disclosure decisions under financial pressure). ABA Rule 8.4(c) (Misrepresentation made to manage an immediate threat).

Which archetype do you recognize most in yourself right now?

The full Erosion Profile™ assessment — twelve questions, six profiles, personalized Results Guide — is available at <https://www.andreeaparc.com/erosion-profile/>.

PART 6

SELF-ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

Read each indicator. Answer Yes or No. For every Yes, note the specific practice area, client, or decision that came to mind. Your answers are for your use only. The value is in what you notice in the space before you decide what to answer.

Behavioral Indicator	Stage	Applies?
You have overridden a quiet hesitation about a professional decision in the past year.	Stage 1	Yes / No
You made a decision you would not have made in year one — and told yourself it was a special case.	Stage 1	Yes / No
You have protected a relationship or position by not raising a question you noticed.	Stage 1	Yes / No
A decision that used to require justification now requires none.	Stage 2	Yes / No
You have used the same internal justification to explain more than one decision in the past year.	Stage 2	Yes / No
You have told a junior colleague 'this is how things work' to explain a practice you have not examined critically.	Stage 2	Yes / No
You have not thought critically about a recurring practice in months.	Stage 3	Yes / No
If someone you trusted asked whether there is anything you are doing that you would not want them to know, you would hesitate before answering.	Stage 3	Yes / No
You have reorganized your thinking about a prior decision to make it consistent with a professional identity you need to maintain.	Stage 3	Yes / No
You are more afraid of what disclosure would cost you than you are concerned about the underlying conduct.	Stage 4	Yes / No
You have told someone something about a professional matter that you knew to be incomplete or misleading.	Stage 4	Yes / No
You are managing a professional risk privately that you have not disclosed to anyone with privilege or standing to advise you.	Stage 4	Yes / No

Any Yes at Stage 1 or 2: The three questions will work for you right now. Use them.

Any Yes at Stage 3: Name your accountability contact today and call them this week.

Any Yes at Stage 4: Contact outside ethics counsel under privilege before the end of the week.

WRITTEN COMMITMENT

Write your answers to the three questions as they apply to your practice right now.

1. Am I applying a duty or managing my discomfort?

2. Would I make this decision if the outcome were public tomorrow?

3. Which justification am I using right now — and have I used it before?

My accountability contact — the person with no professional stake in my decisions:

My primary trigger from the list:

My Erosion Profile™ pattern (from Part 5 of these materials):

The attorney who will face a disciplinary proceeding next year is practicing law right now. Today you learned to see the sequence. You see it now — and it cannot be unseen.

Give this workbook to someone else. Share this program with your firm. That knowledge only compounds when it is shared.