

# Association of Corporate Counsel

Houston

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What Abraham Lincoln Can Teach Today's Trial Lawyer  
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## A. Background Facts

1. Entirely self-taught
2. Had a relentless work ethic
3. Incredibly versatile
4. Used law as a springboard for politics

## B. His Sense of Ethics

1. **Diligence:** Leave nothing for tomorrow that can be done today. Never let your correspondence fall behind. Complete tasks without distraction or disruption.
2. **Practice and cultivate extemporaneous speaking:** However, don't become so enamored of your own voice that you claim an exception from the law's drudgery.
3. **Discourage litigation:** Persuade parties to compromise. Point out the nominal winner is often a loser. Be a peacemaker.
4. **Never stir up litigation:** Those who do harm society.
5. **Charge a fair fee:** Make sure your fee arrangement keeps you incentivized to maintain diligent performance.
6. **Be honest in everything:** That includes intellectual honesty.

## C. His Powers of Persuasion in the Courtroom

1. **Precision in word choice with goal of maximum clarity:** Say exactly what you mean. Eliminate unnecessary words.
2. **Have an acute sense of audience:** If you speak their language, you can touch their hearts and change their minds.
3. **Never misrepresent or overstate anything:** Intellectual honesty is essential to credibility.
4. **When persuading, use an earnest, impassioned tone:** It shows strength and sincerity – but don't get emotional!
5. **Use wit/humor with calculated restraint:** It builds rapport with the audience – but don't try to be a comedian!
6. **Use a deliberate, rhythmic cadence:** Only then will the listening audience be in harmony with your message.