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The Difference Between Slander, Libel, and  
Defamation

# Slander, Libel, and Defamation

## What's the Difference?

In a time when attack politics are at the forefront of media and politics, we often hear terms like slander, libel, and defamation. While the First Amendment gives us our freedom of speech, not all speech is protected. It's more important than

ever to understand the difference between slander, libel, and defamation and know how to ensure your speech does not cross into these areas.

### What is defamation?

Defamation is the all-encompassing term that describes both slander and libel. When an untrue and damaging statement, *presented as fact*, injures a third party's reputation, it's defamation of character. For example, you can't hurt a person's reputation by simply saying they're annoying; however, saying they participate in illegal activities when they actually do not can be extremely damaging.

It should be noted that you cannot be sued for defamation for simply stating an opinion. However, if the statement is untrue and damages the person's reputation, whether it be written or oral, you could be sued for defamation.



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# Welcoming a White Christmas

## Embracing a New Experience This Holiday Season

In our family, our holiday traditions have been pretty consistent. We are a family who loves to build gingerbread houses! Some years, I have very carefully baked my own gingerbread and cut it out to be put together with the help of the kids; other years, we have bought the kit at the store and put them all together that way. No matter how we build them, our gingerbread houses always get stacked with candy, and my kids enjoy picking at it in the weeks leading up to Christmas.

Christmas stockings are another tradition we carry out in our family. Growing up, my mother would always put a lot of time and effort into our stockings. I would be more excited about the stockings than the actual gifts because the stockings would be loaded up with jewelry, nail polish, puzzle books, and funny trinkets that had reminded my mother of me. I also prepare elaborate, personalized stockings for my children. To find some of the best items, I like to check out pawn shops to find special pieces of jewelry. I frequently tuck in gift certificates to our favorite books store, or a child's guilty pleasure fast food joint. I always have had fun and took a lot of time personalizing each stocking for my five kids — it's a holiday extravaganza.

**“This year for Christmas, I’ve made plans that look nothing like any other I’ve made before.”**

However, while I love our traditions, this year for Christmas, I’ve made plans that look nothing like any other plans I’ve made before. With my husband’s recent passing, I didn’t want the holidays to feel like our usual routine with something missing. Instead, I want a new experience. Keeping the magic of the holidays alive is important and this year, for our family, this is the best way to do that.

My daughter, Sierra, is finishing up her college education at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, and while all of my kids usually come home for the holidays, this year, with the exception of my oldest daughter, Savannah, who will be with her in-laws, we will all be going to Montreal. When Sierra first decided she wanted to go to school at McGill University, my husband and I flew up there to tour the campus with her. However, it was not winter then. I’ve never taken my children skiing or ridden a public underground, or walked through streets with them where all the passersby were speaking French.

We will be tourists in Montreal as Sierra shows us around, and I will try on my first pair of skis in over 20 years. I plan to continue our usual holiday traditions in the years to come, but this year, to help us all, we needed some change and new experiences. This year will be our family’s first white Christmas together!



*-Ruby Bolton*

# The Next Big Health Secret

## Why Seeing an Attorney May Be Good for You!



Consulting with an attorney when you are facing legal trouble allows you to have an advocate and expert in your corner who is fighting for you and your rights. And according to recent studies, it may be good for your health too!

According to NPR, a 2017 study of Veterans Affairs offices in Connecticut and New York found that veterans who saw clinic attorneys reported improved mental health within three months after their initial meetings. Additionally, in Colorado, a five-year survey of 69 patients from 2015 to 2020 found that patients in Medicaid programs who saw attorneys at their clinics had a decrease in the amount of physical health problems they were facing.

While further studies are needed to corroborate this evidence, the message is clear: Finding solutions to your legal concerns through an attorney is healthy!

This idea has led to several states permitting Medicaid patients to use some of their health care dollars toward legal clinical programs.

For example, in Colorado, some chronically ill patients are struggling with immigration issues or problems as a result of losing their jobs in the COVID-19 pandemic. By consulting with lawyers — in addition to psychiatrists, social workers, and medical doctors — patients are lowering their stress levels, improving their physical well-being, and staying closer to their families.

But how does this work? To answer that question, we have to examine the toll stress takes on our bodies. Constant stress, like concerns about visitations or deportation, can cause our bodies to fail. This often leads to headaches, heartburn, a weakened immune system, insomnia, stomach problems, and more. These problems then compound into other issues, causing the body to spiral when intervention isn't possible.

However, when the source of stress is relieved, the side effects are eliminated as well. This can powerfully help people who are facing potentially life-altering legal situations.

So, while your attorney may not be able to perform heart surgery or help alleviate your knee pain, their expertise may be just what you need to feel better in the long run.

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### What is libel?

Libel is a method of defamation expressed in print, writing, pictures, signs, effigies, or any communication embodied in physical form. Libel used to refer to things printed in newspapers and other forms of print media, but in our digital world, things like blogs, Twitter posts, and online publications can now be subject to libel lawsuits.

Tabloids have been a reliable source for drama and libel cases for years. Many celebrities have repeatedly sued them for publishing stories with false or untrue allegations. For example, the British tabloid Daily Mail published multiple untrue stories regarding Keira Knightley's weight, claiming she was anorexic. She sued the tabloid for libel and won. J.K. Rowling and Kate Winslet have also successfully sued Daily Mail for libel.

### How does slander differ from libel?

Where libel is a physical form of defamation, slander is spoken defamation, whether it be on television, radio, or even just rumors spread around the water cooler at work. Like libel, slanderous statements need to be expressed as fact, not just opinion. Since slander is spoken defamation, it can be much harder to prove than libel. Not only do you have to prove the person said it, but you also have to prove the person was negligent with the truth. Politicians have to prove actual malice in addition to all the other stipulations regarding slander.



### Just tell the truth.

If you are ever accused of defamation, the best defense is the truth. If you can prove what you said or wrote was truthful, there is no case. The bottom line is this: The easiest way to avoid defamation lawsuits is by simply telling the truth about people. If you're not sure something is true, don't spread it around. Find out the facts before needlessly ruining someone's reputation. Telling lies and spreading rumors can cost you big in the long run.

# TAKE A *BREAK*



## DIY HOLIDAY EGGNOG

Inspired by  
[TastesBetterFromScratch.com](https://tastesbetterfromscratch.com)



### Ingredients

- 6 egg yolks
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 2 cups milk
- 1/2 tsp nutmeg
- 1 pinch salt
- 1/4 tsp vanilla extract
- Cinnamon and whipped cream, for garnish

### Directions

1. In a medium bowl, whisk the egg yolks and sugar until light and creamy. Set aside.
2. In a saucepan over medium heat, stir together the cream, milk, nutmeg, and salt. Bring to a simmer.
3. Add a spoonful of the milk mixture to the egg mixture. Whisk vigorously and repeat, one spoonful at a time.
4. When most of the milk is whisked in, add the egg mixture to the saucepan.
5. Whisk until the liquid thickens slightly or reaches 160 F. Remove from heat and add vanilla extract.
6. Pour the eggnog into a glass container and cover. Refrigerate.
7. When the eggnog has thickened, pour it into glasses, garnish, and enjoy!

## SPENDING THE HOLIDAYS ALONE?

### BOOST YOUR MOOD WITH THESE TIPS

Many Americans spend the holidays alone every year, and the pandemic has only made it more difficult for people to see their loved ones, as travel has become more restricted and strenuous.

If you're one of these people who are spending their first holiday season alone this year, here are a few strategies you can try to make the situation a little easier.

#### Don't hold yourself to the usual standards.

One of the best things about spending the holidays alone is that you can do things your way. You don't have to worry about meeting everyone else's standards. Instead, you only have to make yourself happy. Simply telling yourself that you are not going to have the usual holiday environment can slightly help, but redefining what the holiday means to you can remove a huge weight. Trying new things or looking toward the future are great ways to reduce the stress of spending the holidays alone. Keeping up with old traditions may remind you of what you're missing out on, so it can greatly help to create your own traditions.

#### Plan ahead.

If you know in advance that you're going to be spending the holidays alone, planning ahead can prevent negative feelings. While being spontaneous can sometimes keep things fresh, it could leave you with a feeling of hopelessness about what to do next. There's no need for your list to be extensive or highly detailed, but even just planning to watch a movie or cook some of your favorite dishes can give you something to look forward to.

#### Take care of yourself.

Just because you're not seeing people during the holidays does not mean you should forgo your basic needs. Stick to your regular hygiene habits and do not let them get away from you. The same goes for eating and sleeping. Staying clean, well-fed, and well-rested goes a long way toward improving your happiness.

As with all mental health advice, what works for some does not work for everyone. Do what you think will work best for you and help you keep your thoughts happy.

