



## Episode 135 – Leaving the Law (w/Casey Berman)

Alison Monahan: Welcome to the Law School Toolbox Podcast. Today we're talking with Casey Berman, creator of [Leave Law Behind](#) about how lawyers can transition out of law and into a non-law career. Your Law School Toolbox host today is Alison Monahan, and typically I'm with Lee Burgess, my co-host. We're here to demystify the law school and early legal career experience so that you'll be the best law student and lawyer you can be. We're the co-creators of the Law School Toolbox, the Bar Exam Toolbox, and the career related website Career Dicta. I also run the Girl's Guide to Law School.

If you enjoy the show, please leave a review or rating on your favorite listening app and if you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to us. You can always reach us via the [contact form on lawschooltoolbox.com](#), and we would love to hear from you. With that, let's get started.

Welcome back. Today we're talking with Casey Berman, creator of Leave Law Beyond, about how lawyers can transition into non-legal careers. Welcome Casey.

Casey Berman: Thank you, Alison. So great to talk to you again and thank you for having me.

Alison Monahan: Oh totally my pleasure. First off, can you just give us a bit of your background so that our listeners will understand a little bit better where you're coming from. What was your work background and how did you get into Leave Law Behind? What motivated you to start the site?

Casey Berman: Yeah, I graduated law school in 99 at University of California Hastings College of Law here in San Francisco.

Alison Monahan: Nice.

Casey Berman: And I went to technology first here in San Francisco back then.

Alison Monahan: I'm shocked. I'm shocked to hear that.

Casey Berman: I didn't go the, let's just say I wasn't the best OCI interviewee and so went actually, clerked for the public defenders' office. Kind of bounced around a little, was looking for job. But then went into technology doing business development, some legal stuff for a small start up and then I actually went in house for another company called Work Share way back when in 2000 and I was there for about five years doing software licensing.

Really interesting. Great company. It was many lawyers may know of it because we had the DeltaView product that redlining tool back then. I did primarily software licensing and all the other stuff that you work on with a startup. Really enjoyed it. Great experience, but the one thing I realized was even though I had the, many would say the plum job that most attorneys wanted, which was an in-house counsel job at a tech company, at a startup, in an office that was out of the dot com movies. The role itself just wasn't a fit for me. Very active, I just negotiated deals all the time. I was kind of the, had to be the adult in the room. I couldn't really create things. If I negotiated something and the deal didn't close, you better believe the sales person was looking at me funny 'cause their commission was contingent on it.

While it sounded great, in-house counsel, I really, it just wasn't a fit for me. I looked elsewhere within the company, but there weren't really that alternatives back then, so in 2004 I left. Everyone thought I was crazy and I did a number of things. Did some consulting. Did operations work. Started my own company and have done other things. But over the years from 04 to really 2009, this is where Leave Law Behind really started, coming into my mind was the University of California Hastings Career Services Office would send me people maybe a few times a year saying, "Hey you're a student. You don't really want to practice. We don't really know what to do with you, but go talk to Casey he's downtown." I was sort of that guy.

Alison Monahan: Have a coffee with him. Maybe he'll figure out some way to help you. We have no idea what to do. We don't know what to tell you.

Casey Berman: Yeah, and they're great people at the career services offices. They just didn't really know what to do with those three or four people a year who said, "I really don't want to be a lawyer."

In 2009, they had an alternative career session at Hastings during the summer, middle of the recession. They asked me to speak. I just sort of talked about what I had done. It had been five, six years since I'd been out. I thought there'd be five people there. There were 55 people there. I talked for an hour afterwards and it really hit me there's a pain. People want to leave the law. They want to find alternative careers. They don't know how to though. I started writing at the end of 09. I started the blog end of 09, 2010, which is kind of my private diary that I started making public, and it's just since grown from there.

Alison Monahan: That's awesome. And I'm kind of curious, what types of reactions now and at that time have you gotten from kind of the establishment of the legal profession, like the law schools, bar associations, things like that. Has that changed at all?

Casey Berman: It has. Yes and no. Back then, so when I left in 2004, everyone thought I was nuts. My family too until recently. My parents even said, "Could you ever do any

law stuff maybe on the side?" I said, "Yeah right. Casey Berman of Leave Law Behind would do legal work on the side."

Alison Monahan: Right. Just out of curiosity, are you still licensed? Are you inactive? How did you handle that?

Casey Berman: I'm still licensed. I pay the 400 plus a year. I have a Jewish mother and she likes to see it and it also helps, back a long time when I was getting a mortgage, seeing that I was a licensed attorney actually the bank really liked seeing it, so I've kept doing it and you know, it's also ironic, right? I have left the law and I help people do it, and here I sort of keep that status, and that's something that we talk about through the coaching that I do is really this identity as an attorney that we all have and even I have a little. But I have kept my licensing. I consider it a donation to the bar.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I just went inactive in California. I was licensed in two places, so I was licensed in Massachusetts where I never actually really practiced. They let you retire but you can go and pay back all the money if you ever decide you that you want to un-retire. California, of course, does not offer that option because they would like to keep your money every year, so I'm inactive, but I think of it as sort of my security blanket. Well, if I ever need to be a lawyer again, at least I don't need to go sit for the bar. I would not go through that hell again. I'll pay them a couple hundred bucks a year to know that if I ever need to I can just pay them a lot more money and start being a lawyer again.

Casey Berman: And I thought about it, trust me. I thought about going inactive, and one reason why I've kept it is because when people come to Leave Law Behind, 'cause will call me and say, "I just want to see if you're a real person. Are you really real? Is this really happening?"

Alison Monahan: What do they think you are?

Casey Berman: They Google at midnight. So many people are frustrated with being attorneys, they Google at midnight hate job, JD, alternative. Help me with life. Whatever they Google. I come up 'cause I've been writing for so long and they check my bar number to see that I'm real. To see that I really am an attorney.

Alison Monahan: That's the most attorney thing I've ever heard in my life.

Casey Berman: Right, right?

Alison Monahan: Of course, you've got to do your due diligence to see if the guy really is a lawyer or not. Can't trust him.

Casey Berman: Yeah, exactly. Oh, he is a lawyer. Ironically, they'll hire me to help them leave the law due in part to the fact they have trusted me 'cause I still pay my license.

Alison Monahan: You still have to do the CLE. That was the main thing that caused me to quit. I got to the three year period where they wanted all my CLE and I think I'd done five hours and I was like oh, this is going to be really painful. I should just go inactive.

Casey Berman: Right. Well, you know, the CLE, what's helped me do it is I built my course and I've seen how the CLE actually is really well, many of them are really well done online with a lot that you can do here, so the technology has been interesting to see.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. That was super off topic.

Casey Berman: But no, there are so many, it's not off topic 'cause there's so many little intricacies of the emotions people have about leaving the law and about finding a new career. On top of all this, there's this gloss of go to law school, become an attorney, retire. And even with things changing nowadays, there's still that traditional story but underneath all of this when people are actually feeling how they feel, anxious and desperate and want to do something else, searching me at the state bar site, listening to my YouTube videos or trying to call me. These are what people do, and I'm open to it because they need the help, and I've realized that's kind of why I'm here. You help people go through this crazy journey of passing the bar, and I'm help ...

Alison Monahan: We get a lot of those pretty wacky emails too. Particularly, we're recording this a few weeks before the next bar exam, and we're getting a lot of emails from people who are like can you help me? I'm like it's two weeks before the exam. No. We can't help you sorry. Talk to me if you don't pass.

Casey Berman: That's right.

Alison Monahan: But next time talk to me two months before, not two weeks.

Casey Berman: I get emails, someone just wrote me an email today. It is about 12 paragraphs long.

Alison Monahan: Oh, yeah, oh yeah. I get those several times a week at least.

Casey Berman: And I will reply. I read all my emails. I reply to them, but really I don't know if I can do anything for him because I think he got it all out and anyways, he just needed to vent it to me, right?

Alison Monahan: We got a really interesting the other day from someone who was considering going to law school but had been in jail.

Casey Berman: Right.

Alison Monahan: And I was like wow. I don't really know what to say, but I'll try to help you with your exact questions and do keep in touch because this is a really interesting story line.

Casey Berman: That's right. I've had that. I've been disbarred. I'm in litigation. Can I leave the law? It's interesting, and I want to help everybody. I want to help everyone.

Alison Monahan: Well all do. That's why we do this, right?

Casey Berman: That's why we do it. No, I love it.

Alison Monahan: So, when you talk to these people. When you talk to unhappy lawyers of all types, why are they so dissatisfied? What about the legal profession is it that makes people so desperate, in some cases, to leave?

Casey Berman: Yeah, and so, and to close the loop on your previous question about the reaction, weird back then. People still think it's weird, but for instance, I'm speaking at the San Francisco Bar Association on March 1st.

Alison Monahan: Nice.

Casey Berman: About alternative careers. There are little baby steps that are happening where not only are many people in America nodding their heads going yeah, that makes sense, but slowly the establishment is realizing that it's not such a taboo topic and to help people be happy, help attorneys find these careers.

To your point about why they're so unhappy, obviously it depends on the person but really the first thing that I see is there's a total disconnect between what the person is good at and what the attorney job description requires.

Alison Monahan: Well, in that case, my question would be how did this person go to law school and get through law school to begin with if they're terrible at everything the law requires?

Casey Berman: I'm a perfect case in point. I went to law school because I was a Jewish kid who didn't like blood. I didn't go to medical school. I spoke well and I could write pretty well and probably since I was 12 everyone said, "You should be a lawyer." Sprinkle in a little LA Law or whatever law was on TV growing up, and you're like "Yeah, I could do that."

Alison Monahan: That looks fun. I'd like to get in front of a jury.

Casey Berman: All lawyers drive big cars and they're never in front of a computer. They're always walking around and making decisions. We all know that so many attorneys are just behind a Word doc every day. They sit alone in their office. The anxiety of the fiduciary duty. The anxiety of the deadlines. There's so much that goes into it whether, and I ask people in the beginning, the world does

need attorneys. Are you just in a low spot and need a different firm or a different practice or a break? Or is this to your core not what you should be doing? Usually, and the people I work with to their core, they are a, for example, a collaborative team builder who's win-win, who likes to tell stories and here they are in an adversarial litigation spot where they're not, they're kind of using a templated Word doc brief over and over and they're bored and they're scared. Because they're not a bulldog and they don't deal with anxiety well and so on, so on.

A lot of these reasons disconnect with the job description. I just spoke with a woman today who did who 12 years has been practicing IP law, golden handcuffs.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, that's a big one. When I quit the firm I was working at, a partner came in my office past midnight, went off one night after I had given notice and he's like, "You gotta tell me how you did it. You've got to tell me how to get out of here." I said, "It's pretty simple. You quit. You're a partner, I don't know what else to say here." I think he's still there which is really sad.

Casey Berman: Right, right.

Alison Monahan: He told before in all seriousness, "I just don't see how anyone can possibly live in San Francisco on less than half a million dollars a year." I was like, "You do realize what you pay your associates? And your secretaries. Come on, are you serious? You cannot be serious."

Casey Berman: With the thing about what they need to teach in law school is basic Excel usage and financial forecasting which isn't that big of a deal because so many people say, "Well Casey I can't leave the law. I can't afford it." Yeah, let's take an Excel sheet out. Let's see how much you actually make. Oh and your student debt, you know you can call them and sort of throttle that up and throttle it down. And you know this other debt you have and you know this and you know that, oh is your spouse working? I have seen it so many times where we went from on day one, "There's no way I can leave the law, I can't afford it." To about three months later where they find this fantastic job, a non-law job and they've said, "You know what? I've made it work."

And you just need to look at the numbers. You can't just keep them in your mind. You can't put it on the back of an envelope. You actually need to sit and make the numbers work. But when you do that and you find a job that connects with you, your life changes. The people I've worked with are just testament to it.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think that's the fear of living under the bridge thing that I hear from everyone who works with lawyers who are thinking of leaving. They're like, oh my God, every single person almost comes in and like, "I really want to get out but I can't leave because I'm going to end up living under a bridge." And they're like to get people out of that, I think your approach sounds really great. Okay,

let's actually examine this. 'Cause maybe it's true. Maybe you have nothing and you have huge debts and you do have to keep doing this for a while but probably not forever.

Casey Berman: I've identified four main fears. There's the fear of I won't be able to make enough money in a non-law job. There's the fear of social disapproval. I'll disappoint everyone in my life if I leave the law. There's the general fear of risk. Leaving the law is too much of a risk for me which is broader. And then there's this fear of the unknown and really all of these fears, all of our fears as people but the fear of the unknown is really the fear of death. And what I mean by that is I'm going to leave the law, I'm going to go in a non-law job, they're not going to like me, they're going to fire me after a day 'cause they realize I'm a fraud. My spouse is going to hate me. My kid, she's going to take my kids. I'm going to lose all my money. Everyone's going to laugh at me. They're going to hire a blimp and make fun of me. I'm going to be kicked to the curb and die in a box on a street.

And I'm being a little extreme but we're all afraid that if you leave the law and go to a non-law job, you're going to end up under a bridge. You're going to end up in a box dead and it just doesn't happen. It doesn't.

Alison Monahan: Maybe I'm just a weird case 'cause I've done a lot of really random things that were totally different and I made it work in all of them. I went to architecture school, I worked as a programmer. I was admitted to med school, didn't go thank goodness. I don't know, I feel it's like, do you think there's something unique to whether legal training or being a lawyer or the mindset that really causes people to go down this pathway? I feel like people I know in other professions who are interested shifting they just don't look at it that way.

Casey Berman: Yeah, we by, yes, we by profession, we attorneys are taught to mitigate risk as you know. We are taught to worry. We are taught to, we get paid to do that. We get paid to worry. That's one reason why I left my plum in-house job is I was the worrier. I was the, "I think that violates our reseller agreement. Oh that great idea that you have, yeah, I don't know if we can do that." I was that guy.

Alison Monahan: I know. Even now when I talk to our lawyers for trademark stuff and whatever they're like, "Well, I don't know." Maybe we're not going to get the trademark and we're just like, "Just file it and see." Come on, stop wasting my time with this. I'm willing to pay the whatever couple thousand bucks just to throw it out there. I don't care. And they're just like, "Well we don't know." I'm like, "I understand that. I get what you're saying. Just file it anyway. See what happens. I don't want to be on this call anymore."

Casey Berman: That's right. Well you know that it may not happen. I get it. Just try it. I'm not going to come and burn down your house 'cause we didn't get approved.

Alison Monahan: And I will say in every single case we've gotten the trademark we filed for but hey, I understand that maybe I wouldn't happen.

Casey Berman: I'm 44 years old now, I realize everything that I, my wife, people I know, have worried about in their lives, really hasn't happened. I think that the shift and when it happens, when it unlocks in attorneys that I work with, it's so beautiful. It's this shift of, wait a minute, I don't have to worry anymore. I can be creative? I can be optimistic? I don't have to be the, I can get paid to do something else than worry and mitigate risk? And so that's one of the major blockages that we have but once we get through it, when we work through them, it just opens up everything.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, one of the things I found interesting is that I think for whatever reason a lot of people who go into legal practice go into it thinking that something only has value if it's really, really hard. This idea of like oh I could do something that actually aligns with my skills and interests that I don't find totally boring. That's okay, that's not cheating somehow. There's an idea it's cheating if you're not miserable every day.

Casey Berman: I'm so happy you brought that up. One of the things I battle with myself and also that we work through is belief systems. You name it. No pain no gain. Money doesn't grow on trees. Hard work. Save a penny for a rainy day type stuff. What that means is, I think I butchered that last one. But what that means is that we work really hard and we save money for a, we don't spend it and we just focus and now we're 65.

Alison Monahan: You never know what's going to happen.

Casey Berman: You never know what's going to happen. And so it's kind of not an abundant viewpoint of life. It's a lack viewpoint and worrying about who knows what can happen. And so not the take that we need to just sit kumbaya and get rid of everything but the focus is when you look at the wealthy people of the world, when you look at who's really rich, when you look at who's really happy, sure we all grope and say, "Well look at those rich kids on Instagram and they don't have to work for a dime." But there are so many people that have systems in place. They have systems working for them. A system could be a senior partner who has 20 people working for him so he can go on vacation. But really it's nowadays with technology and the automation that we have and artificial intelligence and everything that we have and everything that these non-law alternative companies are doing, you whether you're entrepreneurial or whether you want to be part of a bigger organization, it doesn't need to be that hard to be fulfilled and to be, to make money.

Alison Monahan: I guess on that point, are there certain types of non-law jobs or positions that you think people trained as attorneys are particularly well suited for?

Casey Berman: Yeah, it's a great question. There are a ton of jobs out there in the world beyond transactional and litigation as you know.

Alison Monahan: I heard there's family law, too. No, I'm kidding.

Casey Berman: Right, and family law. That is one of the big fears. I just know transactional or litigation work, what else is out there? It's like peeking behind the curtain. There are a lot of jobs and the people that go through Leave All Behind have filled across all industries and all types of roles. But when you really think about it, there are about, we were talking earlier, about five to 15 job areas that are so right for attorneys. When you think about everything attorneys are good at, we write well, we tell stories, we speak convincingly, we can talk in front of executives, we can present well in front of VIPs, we can be the adult in a room, put out fires, upsell, we can work very hard. Working past 6:00 PM is not a big deal for us. We're great editors, we're attention to detail. We make sure the trains run on time. We meet deadlines. On and on and on.

There's a lot of jobs out there in the non-law world that call for it. Project managers, product manager, analyst roles. You've got account managers. You got sales and business development. You've got operations, HR, administration. And there's specific ones. If you're a tax attorney who wants to get out there are a ton of jobs I know in the high tech world for SEC and tax analysts where you use your tax subject matter everyday but it's really about plus and coupled with strategy. Okay, well how does Google for example, make sure it structures its initiatives in a tax compliant way where it can have enough money for that next moon shot they want to do? That sounds really cool.

Alison Monahan: Someone had to come up with the Alphabet idea.

Casey Berman: Yeah, right? Exactly, right? There are so many jobs out there and there's a logistics procurement job that a client of mine moved into. She was a prosecutor, federal prosecutor and she moved into logistics procurement. You say, "How would that happen?" Well she ran 10 month long nationwide trials. Think about all the different balls that were in the air that she needed to do where a logistics type job is a perfect fit.

Alison Monahan: Certainly if you're doing, if you're a prosecutor at a jury trial. I remember the one jury trial I did when I was an associate, getting yelled at because we didn't have the right number of copies made to pass out to people. It's that level of detail that somebody has to be in charge of. I didn't know. No one told me. They should have.

Casey Berman: That's right. That's exactly right. Imagine for listeners out there, if they don't know exactly but if you imagine that there is a whether you're working for a consulting firm or whether your internally, there's these project, these things that need to get done. There's software that helps you and you just need to make sure things are running on time and be the adult in the room but it's more

creative. And if believe in what you're creating in that project, oh man, the sky's the limit.

Alison Monahan: Well what about, as I'm listening to this, I'm like, "Oh, all those jobs sound really boring to me, I've got to be honest." I think personally I am just not a person who needs to work for someone else. I'm a terrible employee. How many of the people do you talk to, are any of them interested in doing their thing, starting their own business? Is that something you hear a lot? And is that feasible? How can people do that?

Casey Berman: Yeah, many are. Those jobs, there's one client who does sales operation and he loves it because he's able to build his own process around optimizing the sales team of a certain company. For him he loves it. He's not fully entrepreneurial. He likes going in the office. He likes building around the team. Extremely smart and they've given him a ton of opportunity in that sense. For a person like that, the jobs that I listed are just right there. They're either stepping stone up the career. You can make a lot more money with equity options. There's all of that. For someone like you, someone like me, who is entrepreneurial, who wants to work from anywhere. Who may not want to work for someone else, there are I would say a smaller subset of the people I work with who feel that way. And many of them just want out. I just don't want to be in a big firm anymore, a big company, I want to do my own.

Alison Monahan: I'm going to go do cupcakes. Cupcake bakery.

Casey Berman: Exactly.

Alison Monahan: There's cupcake bakery, there's Pilates yoga studio.

Casey Berman: You see that all the time.

Alison Monahan: Career coaching. It's like okay, you've never even gotten another job. Life coach, all these things.

Casey Berman: That's right. And a lot of times they're great stories, they make good articles but they have another working spouse that can fund it.

Alison Monahan: Some people were like, ethical clothing line or whatever. Okay, that's probably not paying your bills in New York City. You do you.

Casey Berman: When you're the sole provider and you're the one that has to leave, starting a cupcake shop is likely not the best thing to do right off the bat. But when it comes to entrepreneurial, some, and many of them who've run their own business, they've run their own practice, they're just not making as much money. Maybe they pull in half a million dollars but the money that actually comes to them at the end of the day just isn't that much. They know how to run a business. They have only worked for themselves or worked for themselves the

past 10, 15 years. Those are the people where I'll help them, it's the same process what are you really good at? But instead of filling the gap for a company, it's more of how do I fill the gap for the market?

Alison Monahan: How do I find someone who'll pay me for what I'm good at that I want to do?

Casey Berman: Exactly. Exactly. But it's a shift because you need to look at the technologies out there. It's not even about taking on the risk of an entrepreneur that we hear in the movies or that you read in the newspapers or Entrepreneur magazine. It's really about, do I have this, talk about belief systems, do I really believe that I can add value to people? That's something that I've wrestled with. As a lawyer leaving law and also as someone starting their own business. Really Casey? As I speak to myself, is this really helpful? Do people really need this? Is my course really, have I built it well? Does it really help? And it's only through actually getting out there and shipping version one and having people respond. I've said to them in the beginning, "So this thing I created, this course, you like it?" And they said, "Casey it's great. Yeah, add this here. I'd like a little more of that a little more of that. But are you kidding? This is, I love this." And I'm like, "Oh okay, yeah, thanks, I knew that. Yeah, thank you."

Alison Monahan: I think that has been one of the big shifts for me in moving from a legal job to doing something more entrepreneurial and actually selling something is that adjustment of you have to put something out there before it's totally perfect or before it's at the level you think might be completely perfect which is probably some unattainable level this just really is there to prevent you from actually putting anything out there that might get negative feedback. I think people like Seth Godin are really great on this point. You've just got to ship it.

Casey Berman: You do.

Alison Monahan: If you have something, you've got to put it out there because more and more the thing I've found is you just can't predict what people are going to react to.

Casey Berman: And imagine if the iPhone, if they held out until iPhone X.

Alison Monahan: If you think back to iPhone 1, that was terrible. And we were all so happy to pay them so much money for it.

Casey Berman: That's right. And it was horrible.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, awful, totally awful.

Casey Berman: Or you could say it wasn't horrible but wow they've improved it a lot.

Alison Monahan: If you look back you're like wow, did it really not do any of those things. The stuff that we're just so used to. That didn't exist.

Casey Berman: That's right. That's right.

Alison Monahan: What advice do you have for people who are lawyers or maybe interested in becoming more entrepreneurial? I guess I would say, you've got to, I think it's so much about community. You've got to go meet the people or read the people or connect with people in some way that are actually doing entrepreneurial things because the mindset is 180 degrees from the average lawyer.

Casey Berman: Yeah, so my advice for attorneys who use the E word there, I want to be entrepreneurial, I have it in me or so on, one is forget perfectionism, you have to get rid of it, you can't listen to it anymore and if you keep saying, "Well I'm a perfectionist and I'm only going to do X when Y happens." It'll never happen. You have to get over that. Like Seth Godin says, "Ship it, get out there and just bear any criticism that comes with it." And like everything you've worried about, it really won't happen. The criticism you're worried about likely it'll be constructive.

Alison Monahan: Oh no, not always. Sometimes people are writing me emails about like, "You have a misplaced comma in this blog post." It's like, okay, great thanks for your input. Guess what, I'm not personally editing this at this point 'cause I have other things to do.

Casey Berman: Yeah, that's okay. And I've gotten that too. There's the perfectionism and then the other part is like you said, get out there. I call it volunteering. If you ever want to do something and you're wondering how it is to test it just volunteer. People have said many attorneys are teachers and they say, "Well Casey I don't want to be a high school teacher." And I say, "You know the teaching is everywhere in the world." We're teaching on this podcast. You teach in companies. Teaching is needed everywhere. And if you really think you want to be a quote unquote teacher, volunteer. Go to a boys and girls club and tutor or go to your local chamber of commerce or some tech incubator and teach people and see if you really like it 'cause you may think you want to be a teacher but really you're impatient and you can't deal with people.

If being an entrepreneur is what you want to do then go volunteer or go, like you said, do informational interviews with other entrepreneurs. Like what is your day like? Tell me what it's like. Can I buy you a cup of coffee and just 15 minutes? I think I'm good at A, B and C, do you think this is something that's a fit here?

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I remember when I was thinking, I was still working at the law firm and was thinking okay, I really don't think I want to be doing this anymore but I don't know what else to do and I went to this thing that I just happened to see on Facebook or whatever called Startup Weekend. Where the idea was, it was actually one of the very first ones that they did. So the founder was there and we're still friends and but it was like build a company in a weekend thing. Okay, I'd been a programmer so I could kind of be like well I'm a lawyer and a

programmer and a designer so people kind of wanted to talk to me. But it was one of the things where it was like, well is this crazy? Do I have time for this? Should I be doing this?

I remember leaving my office at 5:00 PM on Friday or whenever it started, it was like, all right why are you leaving so early? It was like, "Oh 'cause I'm getting ready to do this crazy thing for the whole weekend that I don't anything about but somehow it seems like maybe something will come out of it." And you know I met some amazing people. One of them actually years later kind of counseled us when we were trying to figure out what was our business actually doing? Was it going to work? And should we keep doing? I had a couple of hour conversation with him and he completely changed everything. You've got to put yourself in a position to meet those people.

Casey Berman: What I've seen in my life the emperor has no clothes, that fable, I really look, I'm not a conspiracy theorist and I'm not an anarchist but I do have looked at these belief systems that we have in our life and where we get uncomfortable. Why are you doing a hackathon on a weekend? People don't do that. Why would you meet those people?

Alison Monahan: Who are these people? They sound dangerous.

Casey Berman: That's right. What do you mean do an informational interview with a stranger I don't know. Why would that person meet with me? I'm not saying to give the middle finger to the world or do an Evel Knievel jump on a motorcycle across a canyon but I am saying to push it a little. To go to that startup weekend thing. To go do [informational interviews](#) and to realize that just because everyone else, the attorneys in the firm or everyone you see on the sidewalk downtown as you go to lunch, just 'cause everyone is doing a certain thing, doesn't necessarily mean it's a fit for you. If you've got that inkling inside of you, you're ego is going to say, "No, no, no, stay safe, stay smart." Our ego is that part of the brain that helped us stay safe when we were cave women and cavemen and that's where the anxiety comes from but nowadays there's no saber tooth tiger hunting us on the streets. We're worried about our boss, we're worried about a deadline. We're worried about malpractice but we really don't have that much to worry about anymore.

So we can now, I am going to say this, connect with our soul a bit, listen to our purpose. And the irony of this all is that when you listen to your soul, when you really connect with your purpose on life how to help people, you can really make so much more money. You can really work a lot less. You can really have a much easier life that flows when you get into a zone. I'll end it here by saying we talk about star athletes or star celebrities or singers who get in the zone and it just connects for them and they weren't even thinking. But when you think about professionals in suits and collared shirts, getting in the zone, that's kind of meditation mumbo jumbo but we can really get in a zone in the same way that

that top sport stars can but it's about us really finding this new position, this new role where our skills are really used in that way.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, Lee and I were talking about this recently there can be some group think in a lot of legal positions where whether it's at a firm or an organization or wherever it is, where everyone is, "Well of course this is normal. This is totally normal." It's totally normal that you would never see your spouse or kids and just work constantly and fly all over the country. Why are they complaining about this?

Casey Berman: That's right. Grin and bear it. You have an attorney job. You make a lot of money. You have high stature.

Alison Monahan: If you're going to get out of that you do have to take a step back and go, "You know what? A, I don't really think this is actually that normal on average, I don't think most jobs are really like this." And B, even if it is, as my therapist used to say, "I don't really know what normal is. Can we use a different word here." But also I was like, even if it is 90% of the people in the world are doing this, I don't want to do it.

Casey Berman: I don't want to do it. I don't want to do it, exactly. Exactly. And that's trusting your soul. That is trusting your inner voice, that inner voice that we know even if we push it down, even if we have that ego of no, no, no, don't listen to it. Don't listen to that. I need to focus on what the society is telling me. What my boss is telling me to do. When you do listen to that voice of this doesn't feel right to me, that's the soul. That's the purpose. And once you start listening more and more to that, life creates a new path for you but it's something that really aligns with it, connects with you.

Alison Monahan: And I found too if you don't listen that 'cause trust me for many, many, many years I was well trained not to listen to anything other than just gotta get the A, gotta get the A, gotta get the job done. And I think I was 25 maybe when I had shingles, I was clinically depressed, I was sick all the time. At some point all this stuff comes out. There's a reason incidence of drinking problems and that kind of thing are so high in legal profession.

Casey Berman: So high.

Alison Monahan: If you talk to a psychologist or psychiatrist they'll say, "Well look, this is basically the id coming out."

Casey Berman: 30%, 30% of the people in the past month who've signed up with Leave it All Behind, have all had severe health issue.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, it comes out in other ways if you don't deal with it. So point being, deal with it.

Casey Berman: Deal with it.

Alison Monahan: All right let me ask you one last question 'cause we're running out of time. So say I'm an unhappy attorney or I'm an unhappy law student, I'm listening to this, I want to think about transitioning to some other type of job, what do you suggest I do to get started?

Casey Berman: Of course plug [leavelawbehind.com](http://leavelawbehind.com), come read it, check it out.

Alison Monahan: Great site.

Casey Berman: Download information.

Alison Monahan: Your emailed newsletter is really good, too.

Casey Berman: Thank you. Yeah, I blog twice a week. Really inspiring stuff. Stuff that's top of mind. It's about me. It's about case studies, all type of stuff. Come to [leavelawbehind.com](http://leavelawbehind.com), we'd love to have you join the community. But really what I would say is, don't focus on the J word, job. Look inward. Focus on yourself first. Now this is very hard for attorneys to get their mind around. Hold on Casey, no, no, no. I want to know what job it is, I want to know where I'm going. I'm not transitioning until I know where it is. I'm trying to convince people to let go of control a bit and let's not focus on the job right away. There's an E.L. Doctorow quote who a novelist. He said, "Life is like driving your car at night with the headlights on. You can only see so far as the headlights but you know you're going to get home."

What I'm saying is, let's have a little trust in our headlights we can only see a week ahead, a month ahead, whatever it is. But what we have done is we've gone to law school, we've gone to the firm, we've done whatever we've done and what has driven that is not ourselves but it's security, stability, belief systems, our parents, whatever it is. And I'm saying let's flip this and what I really want you to drive your job search, what I want it to really inform your inform your job is what you're really good at. Your skills. What I call your unique genius. Your skills. Your strengths. Your inner personality or your attention to detail or even introverts. Introverts have so much strengths that they're in the wrong job if they're a litigator and they've got to go argue. So flip it on its head. Even though we're finding a job, we don't focus on the job first. We look inward. We go to the source. What you're really good at.

It's like a personality test but we do it just in a real organic way. Very actionable. Does not take long. You get this what I call unique genius narrative. It's a story about yourself. It's like a scouting report if you were an athlete. Really focuses on what you're good at. You feel good about that. Once that dust settles then we find which jobs call for your skills and strengths. Which job description out there matches what value you bring? That's the formula.

Alison Monahan: Interesting. Unfortunately we are now out of time. But tell us a little bit more about if people want to learn more about Leave More Behind or they want to work with you, how can they do that?

Casey Berman: Yes. Thank you. Come to [leavelawbehind.com](http://leavelawbehind.com), again [leavelawbehind.com](http://leavelawbehind.com). You can email me anytime at [casey, C-A-S-E-Y@leavelawbehind.com](mailto:casey,C-A-S-E-Y@leavelawbehind.com). Last year I took six months and took all of my coaching, all my knowledge and put it into an [online course](#) that continuing updating every day. More information, live trainings. That's all I'll do, I won't plug anymore but if you are really serious about exploring how to change your life, how to really transition from law into an alternative career, that's what I've been working on for the past eight years. We've got a great community, great course, hand holding all the way. We'd love to have you join the community. There's a ton of free resources for you to check out as well and then have a course if you're interested.

Alison Monahan: Awesome. Well Casey thank you so much for taking your time. This has been really interesting. Thanks so much for joining us.

Casey Berman: Thank you for having me. I'm honored to be part of it and just thank you again for letting me have some time with your audience.

Alison Monahan: Oh my pleasure. If you enjoyed this episode of the Law School Toolbox podcast, please take a second to leave a review or rating on your favorite listening app because we would really appreciate it. And be sure to subscribe so you don't miss anything. Typically, our new episodes are out on Monday. If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to reach out to me or Lee at [lee@lawschooltoolbox.com](mailto:lee@lawschooltoolbox.com) or [alison@lawschooltoolbox.com](mailto:alison@lawschooltoolbox.com) or you can always contact us via our [website contact form at lawschooltoolbox.com](#). Thanks for listening and we'll talk soon.

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