



Lee Burgess: Welcome to the Law School Toolbox Podcast. Today we are talking about our top 10 favorite podcast episodes for surviving law school. Your Law School Toolbox hosts are Alison Monahan and Lee Burgess, that's me. We're here to demystify the law school and early legal career experience so 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 [CareerDicta](#). Alison also runs [The Girls Guide to Law School](#).

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

Alison Monahan: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox Podcast. Today we're doing a recap of our top 10 law school survival episodes. Not necessarily the most popular ones on these topics, but the ones we think are the most useful. And if you ever want a full list you can go to [LawSchoolToolbox.com/podcast](#) and you'll find a link to two different types of archives, [by topic](#) or [by date](#). So, let's get started.

First up, I think one of the keys to law school survival is really time and life management. What do you think, Lee?

Lee Burgess: Yeah, I mean we talk about this a lot because it's such a big issue.

Alison Monahan: We do.

Lee Burgess: It's one of the questions I think that students really bring up to us when they send us their questions, is about how to balance, find a balance and get everything done and stay sane while you're balancing these new school responsibilities.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think that's right. So in one of our early episodes, which is episode 7, we talk about [time and life management basics](#). These are really how to kind of think about managing your life and managing your time. And we cover a lot of topics actually in this episode, so if you're kind of just looking for an intro I think is probably a good place to start.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, because we talk generally about the legal profession as a whole and this idea of work-life balance. But then we also kind of grapple with the issues of is technology making things better, how can you focus and get work done, and some of the pitfalls of multitasking, which many of us claim we're really good at but most of us are not.

Alison Monahan: No one's good at it.



- Lee Burgess: No one's good at it.
- Alison Monahan: Literally last night I was at the movies with a friend of mine who was on a conference call and trying to buy tickets, and then literally almost walked into a glass wall, she thought it was gonna open.
- Lee Burgess: Oh my goodness.
- Alison Monahan: And I was just look at this I'm like, what are you doing? The entry door is over there. That's an example of what happens, you're listening to a conference call and walking and not paying attention, and you walk into a glass door.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, you don't want to do that, that's not good. We also discuss things like using a calendar to manage your time. These things sound simple, but there are some hacks to make it easier to manage your time and your life with just a little thoughtful planning. And we also-
- Alison Monahan: Well, and it's also astonishing how many people that we talk to have literally no idea how to calendar their life.
- Lee Burgess: It's true, yeah. Or where their time goes, I think that's part of it too.
- Alison Monahan: Where their time goes, or people who put the appointment on the calendar but then don't ever follow through. Most of us are not amazing at managing our time, but then a lot of people, particularly a lot of law students, are pretty awful at it.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, and it's something you want to try and implement early in your law school career because developing these good habits of time management will serve you through law school and when you enter practice. So you really want to figure out how you need to balance getting stuff done but also taking care of your life.
- Alison Monahan: Right. In this episode we dive into a lot of details about what you should be spending your time on, when do you want to start outlining, how much time should you be reading cases, that kind of thing. So if you're wondering, am I taking too long to do this, or am I waiting too long to start X, this would probably be a good episode for you to listen in on.
- Lee Burgess: And then we have another episode, which I have to be honest is kind of one of my favorites, [episode 134, Strategies for Maximum Personal Productivity](#), because you and I are kind of nerds when it comes to this. We get really excited about different ways to manage people and tasks and be productive. And so we did a whole episode on how excited we are about our favorite productivity management tool, which is Trello. We talk about why we're so obsessed and



even give you some recommendations on how you can use it to manage your life. There's no one in my life who hasn't heard about Trello and I was just at a dinner with a friend-

Alison Monahan: Oh, everybody I know.

Lee Burgess: I know. And I was just at a dinner with a friend who was telling me how she has built Trello into her life and how it's been ever changed. And I was just so proud.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I have a friend I introduced it to and now she comes back and gives me high level tips. And I'm like, you are such an acolyte, I love it.

Lee Burgess: I know.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, so this episode 134 is much later in time after we've gotten better at managing our own personal productivity. This is kind of a next level episode, so I probably wouldn't start with this one if you're like, yeah I kind of feel like I should have a calendar but I don't.

Lee Burgess: Right, a to do list.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, so how do I check stuff off? This is when you're like, okay I'm pretty well set, but now I want to next level it. I think actually I just read a book about this, about what we can learn about productivity, believe it or not from professional chefs, which for me has actually been life changing. And a lot of this is really how to create and commit to processes for dealing with your life instead of just kind of winging it as things come up. So part of what we've learned is everybody has limited willpower. So if you're expecting your willpower, oh well I'm just gonna focus and get things done, to get you through law school, it's probably not really gonna work. Or not work as effectively as it could.

So the good news is, there are tons and tons and tons of tools, and apps, and strategies, and things like that that you can employ to make it actually easier to get things done. I think one of my favorite parts about this episode was when our editor, who was listening to our podcast, actually emailed us to ask a question about how he can access some of the tools in this episode because he thought they sounded it amazing. We're like, here you go, here's the link, we'll put it on the show notes.

Lee Burgess: Definitely.

Alison Monahan: So if you're looking to sort of level up your productivity, I think episode 134 is a great place to start.



- Lee Burgess: Yep. We also have another early episode that I think is very important, which is [podcast episode number 14, Avoiding Disasters in Law School](#). I believe that we recorded this after you and I were in a car accident actually, together.
- Alison Monahan: I think it might well have been.
- Lee Burgess: We were fine, we were fine. The car wasn't as fine.
- Alison Monahan: The car was sort of fine.
- Lee Burgess: We were sitting, it wasn't our fault. We were just sitting in my car and somebody spun into us, so we weren't even doing anything wrong, no texting and driving or anything like that.
- Alison Monahan: We were literally stopped.
- Lee Burgess: But it was interesting, after that happened, to kind of highlight all these things that can happen in law school and in life, and how you can, with a little preparation, make sure that they don't completely derail you.
- Alison Monahan: Right, I think the point of this episode largely is, things are going to happen. And so if you can build your capacity and plan in advance for things that might happen, for example you had car insurance, so that made it less in the pain in the ass.
- Lee Burgess: It was a still a pain in the ass, but less of a pain in the ass.
- Alison Monahan: Right, it would have been more of a financial hit had you not paid for car insurance. So things like that. Things are gonna happen. This is why we have insurance, this is why we back up our computers. Everyone is backing up their computer, right? Because I know you're not, not all of you listening. We heard stories.
- Lee Burgess: Yep.
- Alison Monahan: We know people who for example were not able to apply to Law Review, who would have had a very good shot at being on the Law Review, because they did not back up their submission and their computer crashed an hour before it was due. That is not a good idea. So the point of this one really is to help you think through what you can do in advance to prevent the things that probably will inevitably happen at some point, from being an absolute, complete meltdown.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. And that's really, sometimes that's all you can ask for is just managing a disaster enough so there's no meltdown.



- Alison Monahan: Right, I mean you know, I'm just thinking in the last year I've been through a major earthquake, and I was happy that I had my solar charger that people made fun of me for buying because I'm like look, I can charge my cellphone and you can't. So I was happy to have a backup supply of water that people made fun of me for having. But you've got to think about, if you're going to school in a place where you might have tornadoes or earthquakes or major storms, blizzards, you might be without power, it's amazing the things that don't work if you don't have power.
- Lee Burgess: True.
- Alison Monahan: Like I didn't really think about my water wouldn't work if you don't have power because they're pumping it.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, that's a very good point.
- Alison Monahan: Like, oh that's really inconvenient, all right. So you know, you've got to think about ways to get around these things. And let's face it, a lot of what we term disasters are not that unpredictable.
- Lee Burgess: Right, I mean sometimes it can be things that are gonna come up in law school that are not that unlikely, like having computer problems at some point, even during exams. I think a good chunk of people have had that experience at some point.
- Alison Monahan: Who has gotten through law school without having an exam self-meltdown. It just is something that's going to happen. You don't know when, you don't know how bad it's gonna be, but I almost guarantee you something will happen.
- Lee Burgess: Something will happen. We talk about testing anxiety and how that can really become a disaster in law school if you don't have a plan to handle it. And then we just talk about rebounding from a difficult time, and refocusing, and the importance of your community to help you through it. Because life doesn't stop for the Bar exam ... not for the Bar exam, I was just having that conversation with somebody else. Life does not stop for law school, but what you do have control over is what you do with recovering, and asking for help, and moving forward. That you do have control over.
- Alison Monahan: Right, and sometimes those things that go wrong can really be those things that do build your community. I remember when I was starting law school the power went out in New York City for something like three days, which if you can imagine, was crazy.
- Lee Burgess: Oh yeah, that strange blackout, yeah.



- Alison Monahan: Yeah, a huge blackout. And I had just met my roommates, one of them I think a few days before, but it really was this bonding experience where we're like, okay we're now in this unexpected situation, we barely know each other, we don't really have a lot of resources because we just moved in, how are we gonna eat? Does anyone have a candle? Does anyone have a flashlight? It's 100 degrees outside, does anyone have a fan? But we made it through and it became this kind of fun experience. And you gotta look on the bright side sometimes.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. So asking for help is very important, and we gave you some tips to do that. If you need help from your community, you want to make sure that you do because suffering in silence is not a good idea. And I think the greater scope of the universe has been talking about this a lot, especially with celebrity suicides that have happened, which is super tragic right now, but this idea of when do you ask for help, how do you know if somebody needs help. But I think it's a great rule of thumb to get comfortable with the idea that you're gonna need to ask for help at some point, and to have the trusted people you can rely on to reach out to who will be there for you when you need them.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, absolutely. And that's a great segue into our next set of recommended episodes, which wow, going way back.
- Lee Burgess: Way way way back.
- Alison Monahan: Way back to actually podcast episode numero uno, [our very first podcast](#), which was about Mindset. And then we actually did a Revisiting Mindset follow up on [episode 110](#), so you can kind of pair these. But yeah, I guess when we started the podcast we were kind of obsessed with this book Mindset by Carol Dweck, who's a Stanford professor, because we realized really a lot of the stuff about surviving and thriving in law school is really about having the right mindset, right?
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, I mean everybody's gonna encounter challenges in law school and in life, and it's all about how you react to this bumps in the road. And she talks about the differences between having a fixed mindset and a growth mindset. A fixed mindset is someone who will say, I'm too stupid to be in law school because this result happened. Whereas someone with a growth mindset would see a challenge and an opportunity to learn and grow. So it's a fascinating book, if you've never read it, if you're on your summer break or something like that and you have time to read it, I think there's a lot of interesting stuff in there. I think it's a very powerful tool to realize that you have some control over how you create the narrative about challenges and that that can really change the outcomes.



So in this episode we talk about our own stories of overcoming challenges in law school and otherwise, and we also offer some tips for shifting your own mindset to a more growth oriented way of thinking. Because for many of us, that's not the first impulse of how we react to negative situations.

Alison Monahan: Right, of course. I mean, when you get that first set of grades and suddenly you're not the top of your class and you're not like, oh I'm so great at school, I'm so smart. If you think, oh I'm an idiot, what am I doing here? I don't belong here, I got a B minus, I should quit. I'll be a failure forever, my parents are never gonna love me, I've always been a failure, whatever internal monologue you have around these things. I think there are things that you can do to consciously shift that dialogue into more of okay this is a new experience, I tried my best but maybe my best wasn't quite as strong as I would like to be. Where can I go for help? Who can I talk to? Where can I get feedback? How can I break down what happened? Who might be able to look at my exams and help me understand what I need to do differently, so that you can set yourself up to do better? Because all of this is a learning process.

No one is born knowing how to write a law school exam, it's just not unfortunately the way it works, although some of your professors might claim they were they're lying. They had to learn too. So I think this basic concept can be a really useful one. That being said, I'm not sure it's the answer to all of your problems all of the time, which is really about what this podcast 110, Revisiting Mindset, is about. So the more you read about this people will start to say, well maybe over focusing on this and this concept of grit, which we also have a podcast about, maybe this is actually harmful and maybe there's other stuff going on here. And maybe we need to think about that. So if you're interested in this concept or this idea, I think both of these combined can be an interesting combo.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, and I think the other thing we talk about in the Revisiting Mindset episode is the many facets of embracing failure, which I think a lot of this is about embracing and accepting failure and how you handle that, and the little failures that are gonna come through law school, the law school experience or the life experience. We all stumble and screw things up, that's just how life works. But it's kind of the different strategies, and I think mindset is one of them, but you have to have a bit more of a complete picture for being able to walk forward from disappointments and failures.

Alison Monahan: Right and sometimes recognizing that, hey you know what, if I'm doing really poorly across the board in law school and I don't even enjoy this, maybe it's not just a question of reframing your mindset, maybe you should just drop out and do something else. And that's fine.



- Lee Burgess: No, that's a very good point. There can be situations where this isn't the path that you decided you want to be on, and that's okay as long as that decision is made in a thoughtful way and not just made out of fear or something like that.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. I think you've gotta kind of figure out what choices make sense for you. And I think it's Seth Godin who talks about the dip. In any process or project there's gonna be this point where the kind of bloom is off of the rose and you're not like, oh my gosh I'm so excited to be in law school, it's so great, I'm gonna go be on the Supreme Court and it's all amazing. And then you get your first grades and suddenly you're like, oh my gosh, maybe not. And then the question is, is this a temporary setback that you just need to push through for bigger and better things, or is this really a situation where you're like, oh my eyes are now open and this is not the right path for me. So you could go read *The Dip* too, maybe we should go do a podcast on that at some point.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, that's a good one. Stay tuned.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, stay tuned. It's a short book, so. Maybe we could have a reading club, we'll have a book club and read it.
- Lee Burgess: There we go.
- Alison Monahan: But if you Google that you can find his chart, which is pretty simple to understand.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah.
- Alison Monahan: If you didn't understand it right there, which was probably also pretty simple.
- Lee Burgess: Yep. All right, so after we move past the episodes in mindset, the other thing that we think is kind of important to think about when you're thinking of surviving law school is how to make difficult decisions. And this is something we talk about in [episode 130](#). So should you ... you would just mentioning this, this decision of should you stay in law school, deciding whether or not you should drop out or if this is not a path that you want to follow, deciding what kind of jobs you want, choosing a clinic or an externship, whether or not to join a journal, how to spend your time. So we really try and go through some of these difficult decisions that you have to make, but also different tools for helping you make these thoughtful decisions.
- Alison Monahan: Right. I think there's a lot of external pressure typically in law school, where maybe ... we actually did an episode recently just on toxic behavior, it doesn't even have to reach that point. But just, you know, other people trying to influence you to do something. And I'm sure in many cases they have your best interests in heart, what they view as your best interests, but maybe those are



not really what you want. So a lot of law school is about making these decisions, what kind of clerkship do you want to apply for when your professor is telling you you should do one thing and you really want to do something else? Or where should you work? Maybe you have a significant other who's putting pressure on you for that. What type of jobs are you interested in? Do you really want to do public interest work but you feel like you have to take a big law job to pay back your loans?

These are kind of classic law school questions. And I think sometimes it can just be convenient, not convenient, it can just be reassuring I guess to know that you're not the first person who's struggled with this choice. And there may not be ... obviously there's not a right answer, but you can learn from people who have taken different paths, and then you can start to trust your own instincts and say, okay I think this is what I want to do, or I'm gonna make this choice to take this big law job now, but here's how I'm gonna transition into something else.

Lee Burgess: Right, I think that's very true. So you're gonna have to make big decisions in law school, but we're all grownups by the time we get to law school, it's time to start making big life decisions. So practicing making big life decisions is also a good thing, because you get better at it, deciding what's important to you.

Alison Monahan: Right, and I think sometimes people are surprised at how quickly they have to make those decisions. You think, I'll go to law school, then I'll have three more years to decide what I do with my life. That's not really the way it works. By your first year, sometimes your first semester, you're being asked to decide things like what kind of job do you want, where do you want to work. And these are big, life altering decisions that if you're not prepared for them you may be pretty shocked.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, exactly. Another area that we think is important to think about in the law school experience and surviving it is relationships, which we talk about in [podcast episode number 107, How to Build Positive Relationships in Law School](#). And so we talk about why relationships matter as part of a legal profession.

Alison Monahan: And they do.

Lee Burgess: They do, yeah. And kind of how to go about building those relationships, getting to know your professors in and out of the classroom, developing relationships with your classmates, balancing school activities and social outlets at school to foster interaction with your classmates. What other things did we talk about with relationships in law school?

Alison Monahan: Well this one I think we also talk about mentors and sponsors, which are really probably work related. Those are the people who are gonna help you figure out



what you want in your career, get the skills you need, and then hopefully get to that point. Also how to meet lawyers and non-lawyers in your community through different things like Bar Association events, pro bono work, charity fundraisers, I know you were on the board of a charity and you met lots of people. So these kind of slightly out of the box ways that you might get involved in your community, which is probably gonna make you a happier person, there are studies. And also probably gonna improve your career prospects because being a lawyer, a lot of it really is about relationships.

And you don't want to burn a lot of bridges in law school, but you also don't want to be that person who sits in the back of the room that nobody remembers their name, because that's not gonna help you later on. Usually people are asking, I need a referral to this type of lawyer in this area. And oftentimes people wanna refer to their classmates, so if they don't even know who you are, you're probably not gonna be so successful.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, exactly. So relationships are important, and you want to be thoughtful because I think a lot of times people do forget that your legal career kind of starts at the beginning of law school in a way.

Alison Monahan: Right, for sure.

Lee Burgess: It's not to put a lot of pressure on you that you have to be perfect, but it does help to think of it that way because you can say, okay well these are the people that I'm gonna be in the profession with, this is the persona that I want to have in my profession. And not to be non-authentic, but it does allow you to realize that that's where those relationships are starting, and they might continue for a very, very long time.

Alison Monahan: For sure. I mean I interviewed with a judge who had pictures of her 1L study group up on the wall and she was quite old. So you never know, these relationships ... and I think like half of them in the study group had become federal judges. That's a different story.

Lee Burgess: That sounds like an underachieving study group.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I mean she went to Yale or something. But these are the people who are gonna be your formational network. Obviously you're gonna meet people in your jobs and that kind of thing, but I'm always surprised even how many people still pop up from law school in my social media feeds and things like that. And it's always like, that guy was great, what's he up to these days? That's the kind of reaction hopefully you want to foster. Not like, oh my God do you remember that time that this person did this terrible thing. Which also sometimes I remember, and it's been a while. So people will remember. But episode 107 is really about how to build positive relationships in law school so



that you will be that person that people think of when they want to refer someone, or they have a question, or they're just kind of curious about what you're up to and they think of you fondly.

Lee Burgess: Yep. And then kind of in contrast to that, we discussed something also important in episode 59, which is [Conquering Loneliness in Law School](#). Which I think is something that often people can be surprised about. So we talk about our own experiences with loneliness in law school, which can come from a lot of different places, but oftentimes moving to a new city, being around even different types of people, different types of personalities that you have been around before. It can be really hard to meet people if you're an introvert. So you've gotta try and find your community maybe outside the law school, if not inside the law school, so you can take tangible steps to feeling less alone. It's very important.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I mean there are lots of studies showing that being alone is an actual predictor of early death and things like that. Not even being alone, feeling lonely. There's actually a distinction between being alone and feeling lonely. You can be in the middle of a room at a networking event or whatever and you can still feel really lonely because you're like, wow I don't want to talk to any of these people. But you might be a person who's perfectly comfortable spending several days alone, and you're perfectly happy.

But yeah, I think this feeling of loneliness is a big part of a lot of people's law school experiences, whether it's moving, or feeling like you have to have this persona that's not authentic to you, and then because you're not being authentic you feel like you can't really connect to other people. So you're not alone, haha, you're not alone if you feel like this, and there are things that you can do to feel less isolated and to feel less lonely. And I think those things are worth doing, because you're gonna have these ups and downs. Like we said earlier, you're gonna need a community at some point.

So I think trying to stay connected inside and outside of law school, staying connected to your non-law school people can be challenging, but I think it's really important. Yeah, so if you're feeling a little down, or that maybe you don't have as many friends as you had in college in law school, this is a great episode to listen to for some practical ideas on feeling more connected to a community.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, I really like this episode.

Alison Monahan: Yeah.

Lee Burgess: And then on the theme of other challenges, it seems like there are a lot of challenges that come up in law school, but we have a great episode that I think is worthwhile to listen to for most students. Which is [podcast episode 72](#), which is



Seeking Accommodations in Law School and the Bar Exam, with guest Dr. Jared Maloff, who is out of Beverly Hills. And I think it's important for everyone to just be aware of all of the scope of things that can play into possibly getting accommodations in law school. I think that oftentimes it is an underutilized, I would say resource, but I guess it is a resource. Would you consider it a resource? I guess accommodations are a resource.

Alison Monahan: I think it is a resource.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, because a lot of law students either think there's a stigma attached to it, or they're not even sure that one of the things that they have struggled with is going to give them accommodations. And so it's something that you do really want to explore in your law school, because if you need accommodations to level the playing field that doesn't mean that you're gonna be a less successful lawyer. That just means that you're gonna be able to compete on a level playing field with other law students. And that is important, especially in a world with a curve.

Alison Monahan: Exactly.

Lee Burgess: And your school will have resources, you just need to kind of be aware of them and also be in a head space where you can reach out for that help and get the testing that you need. We touch also on getting accommodation for the bar exam, which is its own beast because it can be a little more difficult to do that. But again, the stakes on the bar exam can feel so high, but if you need accommodations you don't want to wait till the last minute. You want to think about it early and often and make sure you have your ducks in a row so you can get those accommodations for various things. It could be learning disabilities, it could be physical ailments, it could be because you're recovering from certain types of surgery, it can be health concerns, it could be pregnancy, it can be breastfeeding, it can be so many different things. And I think a lot of people don't really think that they can get accommodations for such a variety of situations.

Alison Monahan: Right, and my understanding too is if you think you're gonna be seeking accommodations for the bar exam, it makes it a lot easier if you've had them in law school. Is that correct?

Lee Burgess: Yes, it looks better if you have had them in law school, unless it's something health related.

Alison Monahan: Sure, if you're pregnant unexpectedly and you're taking the bar.

Lee Burgess: Right, if you have a new health concern that has come up. But especially for things like anxiety, learning disabilities, I think that the bars are a little less likely



to bite if you're like, I all of a sudden got diagnosed with ADHD after law school. They're kind of like, really?

Alison Monahan: Yeah, like now I need extra time. It's like, hmm.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, or now I have clinical anxiety. Oh really? But you didn't seek any counseling for that during law school? There can be ... these situations come up and they can be valid, but they're a harder sell than if you have a history of accommodations in law school.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, so I think anyone who ... and oftentimes we talk to people in these unfortunate situations, particularly after their first year or even their first semester, where I can tell just by talking to them on the phone that they probably have a diagnosed learning disability of some type. And then you ask them about that, oh yeah, in high school and college I always got accommodations, or yeah I was diagnosed with this in high school but when I got to law school I thought I would be okay. And just talking to them you can go, look I can tell that you need to deal with this, because it's not fair what you're doing to yourself, basically. You're not setting yourself up to be on that level playing field with someone who doesn't have to deal with this.

And sometimes people are reluctant to do that, which I totally understand. But any school I think is actually required by federal law to have a person who deals with this type of situation. So they're gonna have resources that you can go to. And I think Dr. Maloff is a great resources just in terms of how he thinks about it and how he talks about it. So if you do think you're gonna be seeking accommodations or maybe that you should be, I think episode 72 is a really fantastic place to start. And if you're really interested in the bar I think he just did another one for our [bar podcast](#) that's even more specific, so check that out.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, that episode is fantastic. In fact, we should link to that in the show notes because we get into more of the nitty gritty too about how to apply for bar accommodation and what are the pitfalls, how people make mistakes. And also why people delay and procrastinate, which is never a good thing when it comes to asking for resources.

Alison Monahan: Right, and it's not a good thing in law school either. You don't want to be a week before your first set of exams and not know what the conditions you're taking the test are. You want to start early on this.

Lee Burgess: And I really have to reiterate that if you're worried that it's going to reflect badly on you in some way, I don't know that anyone who's gotten through the exam gamut and been successful because they got extra time is ever ... that's not an acknowledgement that's part of your legal career. Nobody asks-



- Alison Monahan: Also it would be illegal for them to disclose that.
- Lee Burgess: Right, but it's like if you got an A it's because you deserved an A. And if you got that A because you had extended time, that's because that leveled the playing field for you so you had the opportunity to get that A. It's not like you can't compete or that that means anything else. So I think there is a lot of being okay with that. So if you need to speak to disability services, or speak to a therapist, or really become okay with asking for these accommodations, it can just really change your whole exam experience. I've seen it be really revolutionary for certain students, different types of conditions.
- Alison Monahan: It's also good to keep in mind you're not diagnosing yourself. You can't just walk in and say, I'd like to have time and a half. Somebody else who is qualified to say, yeah this is a valid thing and here's why. You have to run that gamut. They're not just gonna let you have it because you want it.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, exactly. And sometimes you might even find that professors may even raise some of their concerns to you, especially after first year exams.
- Alison Monahan: That's true.
- Lee Burgess: I know there are some professors who will gently say, hey have you ever thought about this based on what your work looks like? And so being receptive to that. They're not trying to give you negative feedback, they're really trying to highlight an area where you could get some assistance and change your law school experience.
- Alison Monahan: Right, I mean it's just like us talking to people. Sometimes you're like, I have a sense this is a problem. It just is. It's a thing that is, that's all it is.
- Lee Burgess: Yep, exactly. All right, well our last episode on our countdown for today, which is also a guest episode that is incredibly important, is [podcast episode number 123, Mental Health in Law School and the Legal Profession with a special guest, Sarah Weinstein](#), who is a lawyer turned therapist. And we really felt that it was important to do this episode because of the sobering statistics that continue to come out on depression and substance abuse among law students and lawyers. And we wanted to dive into this idea if there's something inherent to the law school and the legal profession that really leads to these mental health concerns.
- But we really wanted to explore this because it's scary, and sad, and heartbreaking when you read these stories of lawyers being so low that they take extreme ... even law students, not just lawyers, law students. They take extreme actions in their lives, they are super depressed, they make terrible decisions. And what we as a community, as a legal community, can do to help



pick people up and maybe even change certain natures of the legal profession someday to make it a less dark place for so many people.

Alison Monahan: Right and I think the reality is a lot of these issues really come up for a lot of people the first time in law school. There are tons of studies and statistics that people come in being basically about borderline, normal on about everything you can measure them on. And then within a few months some huge percentage are clinically depressed, and anxious, and all of these things. That happened to me in my first semester, well I guess after my first semester. My second semester I was clinically depressed and thank goodness at some point was like, maybe I should go talk to someone about this? So I went and got a therapist and she was amazing.

But it is something that happens. I remember my second semester of law school and into the second year, I think most people I knew were struggling with some sort of issues. If they were men it was basically like, they're drinking too much, and fighting, and getting in bar fights or things like that, or street brawls. This is Columbia. It's like, you're in an Ivy League law school, really? This is your third street fight in a month, something might be going on here. And if it was women it was like, suddenly they're losing tons of weight, or they're also drinking too much and they're depressed, all kind of things. These things come up.

So it is a really unfortunate situation. There are probably lots of things that we as a community could be doing, but I think it's something you definitely want to be very aware of, signs in yourself, signs in other people, signs in classmates. And to be fair, I had classmates who did reach out to me and say, look I'm concerned, what's going on here? And I may or may not have been receptive to that depending on who they were, but sometimes I was. And it was like, okay what can I do to help?

One of my classmates, we went to lunch every Wednesday for an entire semester because he's like, I just want to talk to you once a week and see where you're at. And that was really helpful. He's not a therapist, but it was really just like, I'm concerned about you and I want us to have this standing event where we just get together and have lunch. Is that cool? And I was like, yeah that's cool.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, I think that's a really good point. So this is not the cheeriest episode of them all, but it is critically important. And the statistics don't continue to get better right now about-

Alison Monahan: They never get better, that's the crazy thing. It's not good.

Lee Burgess: So you definitely just want to be aware of this. And I think it's good to both evaluate where you are as an individual, and also to be aware of what's going on



in your law school community so you can be one of those friends who's reaching out to somebody who may be struggling, if that's an appropriate thing to do because of that relationship. So we talk about even different ways that you can help someone that might need professional help, and even what can be done to kind of change this mental health climate. So I think it's a very important episode for everybody to listen to, even if it's not the cheeriest one. But there's cheery moments in it, it's not all doom and gloom. It was an interesting episode to record and I'm really glad we did it.

Alison Monahan: Awesome.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. Well I think that's our list, isn't it?

Alison Monahan: All right, ended on a down note.

Lee Burgess: I know, I was like, maybe we should have had the cheerleading for law school one.

Alison Monahan: I think we have a [great self-care episode](#) that you could go listen to. I don't know the number, but I almost added, so go look for self-care if you're feeling a little down at this point.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, I know. Well that unfortunately or fortunately, it depends on your mood at the moment, we are out of time. You can also find all of our episodes, including archives [by episode number](#) and [by topic](#) as [LawSchoolToolbox.com/podcast](http://LawSchoolToolbox.com/podcast), including plenty on self-care. If you enjoyed this episode of the Law School Toolbox Podcast please take a second to leave a review and rating on your favorite listening app, we'd really appreciate it. And be sure to [subscribe](#) so you don't miss anything. If you have any questions or comments please don't hesitate to reach out to myself or Alison at [Lee@LawSchoolToolbox.com](mailto:Lee@LawSchoolToolbox.com) or [Allison@LawSchoolToolbox.com](mailto:Allison@LawSchoolToolbox.com). Or you can always contact us via our website [contact form](#) at [LawSchoolToolbox.com](http://LawSchoolToolbox.com). Thanks for listening and we'll talk soon.

## **RESOURCES:**

- [Podcast Episode 7: Time and Life Management Basics](#)
- [Podcast Episode 134: Strategies for Maximum Personal Productivity](#)
- [Podcast Episode 14: Avoiding Disasters in Law School](#)
- [Podcast Episode 1: Mindset – The Key to Success in Law School?](#)
- [Podcast Episode 110: Revisiting Mindset](#)
- [Podcast Episode 130: How to Make Difficult Decisions in Law School](#)



- [Podcast Episode 107: How to Build Positive Relationships in Law School](#)
- [Podcast Episode 59: Conquering Loneliness in Law School](#)
- [Podcast Episode 72: Seeking Accommodations in Law School and on the Bar Exam \(w/Dr. Jared Maloff\)](#)
- [Bar Exam Toolbox Podcast Episode 2: Accommodations for the Bar Exam \(w/Dr. Jared Maloff\)](#)
- [Podcast Episode 123: Mental Health in Law School and the Legal Profession \(w/Sarah Weinstein\)](#)
- [Podcast Episode 88: Self-care Tips for Keeping Your Mojo in Law School!](#)