



Alison Monahan: Welcome to The Law School Toolbox Podcast. Today, we're talking about elevator pitches and whether you need one as a law student. Your Law School Toolbox host is Alison Monahan, that's me, and Lee Burgess. We're gonna demystify the law school and early legal career experience so that you'll be the best law student and lawyer you can be. Together we're the co-creators of the [Law School Toolbox](#), the [Bar Exam Toolbox](#), and the career related website, [CareerDicta](#). I also run [The Girl's Guide to Law School](#).

Alison Monahan: 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](#) at [lawschooltoolbox.com](#) and we'd love to hear from you. With that, let's get started.

Lee Burgess: Welcome back to The Law School Toolbox Podcast. Today we are talking about elevator pitches and whether you need one as a law student. And spoiler alert, the short answer is yes you do. So ...

Alison Monahan: Yes, you do.

Lee Burgess: Yes you do. So Alison, [what is an elevator pitch](#)? Is this some sort of like only MBA students know what an elevator pitch is?

Alison Monahan: Well, maybe they're the only ones who know, but they are not the only ones who need one. So I think about mostly in a professional context, which law school certainly is, as really just a simple, direct way to explain to someone who maybe is interested in talking with you what it is that you're looking for. So that's pretty open-ended, but that's kind of the point. You might even need different elevator pitches for different scenarios. What are some scenarios that people might need to have something ready to talk about?

Lee Burgess: Well, I think the one that always comes up for law students is ... and this can even start [as early as law school orientation](#), someone's gonna ask you what type of law you're interested in.

Alison Monahan: You think?

Lee Burgess: Yeah. Like, every single time you meet someone who finds out you're in law school.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, anyone who finds out you're a law student is like, "Oh! First question, what type of law are you interested in practicing?"

Lee Burgess: Yep. Or, you're at a [networking event with lawyers](#). They're gonna ask you why you went to law school or what type of law you wanna practice. So, it's like a theme. You might be looking specifically for a summer job, and you're going to



talk to a professor or do an informational interview, and part of that is usually including talking about what you're looking for, so that's important.

Alison Monahan: Right. You're not just looking for any job. Hopefully, you have some idea of what type of job that you would be looking for.

Lee Burgess: Yep. Or, you're looking for an internship or an externship, and you're meeting with one of the coordinators at your school to try and make sure that you are doing everything you can to get your foot in the door. You need to have a very clear message about what you're looking for there, as well.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. I think if you think about these different scenarios, what they have in common is it's what you want. There are tons and tons of jobs you might be interested in or you could get. There are lots of different areas of law you could practice. But, no one else is going to be able to guess what it is that you are looking for.

Lee Burgess: Right.

Alison Monahan: So, if you are going to talk about getting an internship or an externship, obviously the first question they're probably gonna ask you is, "What are you interested in doing?" And, you need an answer.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, exactly. It's totally true.

Alison Monahan: The conversation's not gonna get very far if you're like, "Well, what do you think I should do?" They're like, "It's not my job. It's not my internship. I'm not you. You need to tell me what you want, and I can tell you how we might be able to help you get that." So, sometimes I think people get really uptight about this, or obsessed about this, because they think that whatever elevator pitch they're giving has to be their forever answer. This isn't really true. You're allowed to change your mind. Most law students will, frankly. I think of all the things that people said at orientation, and it's like, "Oh! What type of law are you interested?" "Oh, I'm gonna be a Supreme Court Litigator." It's like, "Really? Because, odds are that's not gonna happen." So by the time they got an actual job, maybe they were more realistic. Lot's of people were talking about they were gonna be law professors or do first amendment work or environmental law-

Lee Burgess: Or be judges.

Alison Monahan: Judges, yeah. I wanna be a judge. You're like, "Oh, okay." So anyway, you don't have to have your answer for the rest of your life. If you do, that's great. Probably people will find it easier to help you, but it's totally fine to have an answer, but you need something.



Lee Burgess: Yeah, and that's part of it, is nobody expects you to have it all figured out. They just wanna be able to engage with you in the moment. If your situation changes or what you're interested in changes, even if you have given the same elevator pitch to the same people and things have changed, you can come back and use a new elevator pitch to explain why things changed. It's not like final.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. Like, "Oh yeah, I was interested in this, but then I took a summer job doing this and now I'm really interested in that." It's like, "Oh, okay. That makes sense." You're not locked in to your answer, but you need something. So let's play out a scenario.

Alison Monahan: You're a law student. You're at some sort of Bar Association function. A lawyer you meet asks you, not surprisingly, "What type of law are you interested in?" You say, "I don't know." What happens next, Lee?

Lee Burgess: They probably walk away and go talk to somebody else.

Alison Monahan: Exactly. That's not really gonna keep the conversation moving. They're probably gonna think, "Why am I wasting my time with this person, who is for some reason going to law school, and has absolutely no idea what they're interested in?"

Lee Burgess: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: All right, don't think we can really progress here.

Lee Burgess: No.

Alison Monahan: But, what if instead, you said something like, "Well, I'm in my first year, so I know I might change my mind with more experience, but at the moment I am most interested in doing intellectual property work. I have a background in the music industry, so I think that could be a good fit." So that, we could actually have a conversation about, right?

Lee Burgess: Right, because you are now giving them some information about you. They could either ask questions about your background in the music industry. They might have a friend who does work in the music industry, and they might know a little bit about their job or their practice. Who knows? They may even offer to connect you with someone that they know. But, if you don't share any of that information, none of those outcomes are possible.

Alison Monahan: Right. I think the goal should be to suggest something that you're interested in that they possibly could help you with, or know people who might be able to help you with, and also ideally to give a little bit more information about you, because that's gonna make you more interesting. It's gonna make them more



interested in probably finding out more about you, and also it's gonna help them think about ways. "Oh, I know someone you might wanna talk to." "Oh, I read a book about this." "Oh, have you seen this case that just came down?" The more information you give somebody, the more they're gonna be able to actually help you.

**Lee Burgess:** In conversations, especially at things like networking events, people are looking for ways to connect, right? They're looking for something common to talk about, and so by presenting information about yourself, you're giving the other person an opportunity to be able to reciprocate the conversation and find some common ground that you can discuss. Or, then it might be very clear that you don't have a lot to discuss, and then maybe you move on. So, it can also work in the other way, too. If that person's like, "Oh, yeah. I do First Amendment law. I don't really have anything to offer, there." You know? "But maybe I can introduce you to my colleague over here." There might even be freedom in knowing that that's what you really want to talk about, and that you're not gonna waste your time chatting with this person at a networking event who's not gonna help get you where you need to be.

**Alison Monahan:** Yeah, and I think sometimes if there's something interesting in your background, you could just bring that up as a point of conversation. Most people if you tell them, particularly at a pretty boring lawyer networking event frankly, if you tell them, "Oh, I have a background in the music industry." They're probably gonna follow up on that and wanna learn more. Like, "Oh, what did you do? Were you a promoter, or are you an artist? What kind of bands did you work with?" And that can just be generally a conversation; maybe become friends. Maybe they don't actually help you with networking. Maybe you get them free tickets to something, or whatever.

**Alison Monahan:** Some of this, I think your point being, your point's absolutely right that if it's totally pointless to be talking to this person, and they don't wanna be talking to you either, it's definitely fine to say, "Oh, I think I'm gonna refill my drink or get a snack." But at the same time, I think you don't wanna be too instrumentalist about it, which business school students are famous for doing, which is, "Oh, you have nothing to offer me at this exact second? Okay, I'm gonna go talk to someone else. You're useless to me." There's nothing wrong with having a pleasant conversation for a few minutes, and then you never know. Maybe weeks later, months later, this person encounters someone and is like, "Oh, that'd be perfect for that nice girl, Lee, that I chatted with about her background in the music industry. Let me give her an email." So yeah, I think the point is, and some of it doesn't matter so much what you say, you just need to have something ready to talk about.

**Alison Monahan:** Hopefully, let's be honest, you've given this some thought.



- Lee Burgess: Yeah, because you probably wrote like, an entrance essay which had some of these thoughts in it.
- Alison Monahan: You did decide to go to law school after all. There was probably some reason for that, I would hope.
- Lee Burgess: Yes. I don't think you should feel like you have to hide that reasoning. But, what are some of the common issues that come up when students ... when they're trying to create their elevator pitch. What if you really have no clue what you wanna do after law school?
- Alison Monahan: Well, that's a common one. People say, "Oh, I can't commit to anything right now." Okay, A, [why are you in law school?](#) That's a question you really need to consider at this point. Or, why are you in this meeting? So if you're doing a meeting with someone who may be able to help you find a summer job, or help you find an externship or an internship, or whatever, and you have no idea what you wanna do, why are you taking this meeting? It's a waste of everyone's time.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. That's really true. I think if you are 1L it's totally okay to say something like, "I'm still exploring, but I really feel like litigation is where I want to end up, so I'm learning about different types of litigation. Right now I think my top areas of interest would be these three things." Let's be honest; you have some clue of what you wanna do.
- Alison Monahan: You probably, hopefully, at least know if you wanna be more on the litigation side or more on the corporate side, if you're in a large firm, more on the public interest side. You probably know something. I mean, I would hope so.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, and you can try things out. Nobody's gonna come back and be like, "Well I met you at this networking event two years ago, and you said you wanted to be a corporate litigator, and now you wanna do non-profit work. What happened?" You know?
- Alison Monahan: It's probably more likely to go the other way. Yeah, people are not gonna hold you to this. It's just in the moment. How can they possibly ... 'Cause people wanna be helpful, I think. How can they possibly help you out? So if you really, truly, have absolutely no clue what you wanna do, I think this is something that you need to deal with. You've gotta figure this out; sooner rather than later. Talking to a career counselor, maybe trying to get some work experience if you have any clue what you wanna work on, or really just pick something. It's not gonna hurt you to try out something if you have absolutely no idea what you want. Maybe try some pro bono cases. See what feels good to you, see what seems interesting; but [you've gotta figure this out.](#)



- Lee Burgess: Yeah. I think you can also use networking or maybe professors, or various other things where you might be trying out these elevator pitches to even solicit some advice. "One of the things I'm considering is X-Y-Z. Do you have any thoughts on which of these areas of interest might be most viable if I wanna work in Houston? Or if I wanna ... " Where ever it might be, because people might be able to say, "Oh, there's a great need for immigration lawyers in Texas. I think that there's quite a market there. That might be a really great place to do that sort of work." There are lots of different ways that you can get opinions on things, and it still makes you sound very thoughtful, even though you're kind of fessing up that you don't know what you wanna do.
- Alison Monahan: I think that works great if you're kind of torn between a couple of options, because then, you really can solicit advice from people who may actually know something. Exactly like you said. "These are the two areas I'm considering. I wanna work in this location. Is there anything I should be thinking about, or do you have any sense of which of these is more viable?" If you tell them like, "Oh, I wanna do patent litigation. Do you think it would better for me to do that in San Francisco, or in New York?" It's gonna be like, "Go to San Francisco. Next question." I mean like, can you do this other places? Yes. However, it probably would make more sense for you to do this in the heartland of where this is done. I wanna do corporate M&A work. Should I do that in X or New York? New York. Done. If you wanna do immigration, obviously it would probably be helpful to be near a border, right?
- Lee Burgess: Right, or at least a place, an area of the country that has a lot of immigration situations coming up.
- Alison Monahan: The reality is, there are different ... if you wanna do oil and gas work, for example, Texas would be amazing; probably not Seattle. These things. So it's totally, again, you don't have to commit to this for life and you can really use these scenarios to get help on your decision making. But again, you wanna have an elevator pitch designed for that, so you're not like, "Well, I'm thinking about this, or maybe that, or I don't know. Thought this seemed interesting, took a class one time that was about this. I mean, maybe I wanna live here, or maybe I wanna live there, but then my parents are here, my friend's here." And they're like, "Okay, I have no idea what you're talking about."
- Lee Burgess: Right.
- Alison Monahan: That's when you're like, "I need to go over here, without you."
- Lee Burgess: One of the things that I think is another way that you can bring up a topic of interest, is you can say, "I'm still trying to weigh my options, but I'm taking an employment law class this semester that I'm finding incredibly riveting. Have you had any experience in employment law?" And then, that's kind of an



opportunity for somebody to be like, "Oh, I took employment law in law school as well, and I have a good friend who practices employment law, and they've really liked it because of X-Y-Z." So, it is about kind of creating an answer for your situation that at least sounds thoughtful, so it can be a jumping off point with the person you're talking to.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, and I think worse case, honestly you can just kind of pick something and say it, and see how it feels when you say it. You repeat as necessary. Because you're not really committing to anything, and frankly if you have no idea what you wanna do anyway, what difference does it make what job you get? Anything's better than nothing, right? It'll give you some information. So you say, "Oh, you know, I'm just a first year, so I'm not really sure. But I'm thinking maybe I would be better at litigation. What type of work do you do?" And basically turn it around on them.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, and then you can ask thoughtful questions about what they're telling you about.

Alison Monahan: Right. You could say that getting other people to talk about the work that they do, could be really helpful, and that's one of the ways that having a well-crafted elevator pitch can help you is if you get other people talking about what they do; Particularly if for whatever reason you know that they're someone who might have good information. Say it's an [informational interview](#). Well, you probably asked this person to have coffee with you for some reason.

Lee Burgess: Right.

Alison Monahan: Right, so what is that reason? Like, "Oh, I reached out to you because I'm really interested in doing family law, and a friend of mine said that you helped them with their adoption and that you were really fantastic. I'm just wondering if you could tell me about what you do and how you work?"

Lee Burgess: Yeah. I think that's a really good point. I think all of this might sound intimidating for some folks, especially introverts who don't necessarily like to be in these situations where they're having to make small talk with people that they don't know. Most of us don't. I'm an extrovert and I don't really always like making small talk.

Alison Monahan: No one really likes that. I can guarantee the person you're talking to, probably is about as uncomfortable as you are.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, but one of the benefits of the elevator pitch is that you can kind of memorize what you're gonna say, so you always have something to say to kind of engage these conversations. I think for most of us, getting these conversations started is the hardest part. Then once the conversation gets



rolling, then it can be much easier to sustain. So, spending some time thinking about the things we've been talking about; what are these different scenarios of who I might meet, what might I say to some of these lawyers, can be very helpful. Then, you never know where the connection might go from there. You might have things in common that you didn't realize you had in common, but you kind of have to have a place to start. Pre-thinking, we always talk about the pre-writing approach before you write, but pre-planning or pre-thinking about an event you're going to, and thinking about the things that you wanna say or practicing how you're gonna talk about them, I think can relieve some of that stress.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, and I think you can find out a lot oftentimes about the people who are likely to be at this event or what they're interested in. Most networking events are not just like, "Oh, everyone come and network." It's the young lawyers of this area, or a certain affinity group, or maybe it's a certain interest group. Is it the IP people, or is it the family lawyers, or is it the corporate counsel? Whatever it is, you've probably signed up for something that's more specific than just go and talk to random people.

Lee Burgess: Right.

Alison Monahan: So in this scenario, the goals of your elevator pitch really are to make you look like a person who is capable of holding up their end of the conversation. That's kind of one of the basic aspects of being a professional and being, frankly, a grownup, is are you able to carry on small talk, basically; a random conversation with a stranger for five minutes. Because, making the other person guess about what you want, isn't really likely to think very highly of you. Sometimes we get these emails where it's like, "Oh, I listen to your podcast." And we're like, "That's fantastic. Thanks. We're inclined to like you now." And then they say, "Well, I just don't know what I should do with my life. Can you tell me?" And it's like, "No. No, I can't tell you what you should do with your life." But if somebody writes to us, and they say, "Oh, I am really interested in doing animal rights work, and I am looking for a job this summer, and this is a little bit about my background, and is there anyone you think that I should talk to?" We're gonna be like, "Oh, you know what? We did the animal rights podcast. It was amazing. You should totally talk to Pamela; here's her email. I'll reach out to her." You've gotta give people something to work with.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. That's very true. This doesn't go away after law school. This is a ... the elevator pitch is something that you kind of need to have for what you do professionally, what your outside interests are, whatever it might be. It's important to have the short, succinct explanation. I remember, Alison, in the earlier days of our business, you and I being on ... we used to, well we still kinda do, but we'd do these little retreats which is just Alison and I. So it sounds very impressive, but it's like-



- Alison Monahan: Team bonding.
- Lee Burgess: Team bonding. But, we had to figure out what our elevator pitch was. We realized that if somebody asked us, "What do you do?", or "What is the Law School Toolbox?".
- Alison Monahan: Let's be frank. We were giving really terrible answers.
- Lee Burgess: We were, but we acknowledged it, we worked on it.
- Alison Monahan: I remember for a while when people would ask, "Oh, what do you do?" And I was like, "Well, I used to be ...", which is already a terrible start. No one cares what you used to do. "I used to be at a big law firm, but now I just kind of do this stuff on the Internet." And they're like, "Okay, so you have like an Instagram account? I don't understand."
- Lee Burgess: "Like, what? Do you even make money? What are you even doing?"
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, "Okay, like a blog? About what?". Yeah, so we had to get a lot better at it. I think for a while we told people we were running a media empire, which that got their attention.
- Lee Burgess: It did, and now I think what's also interesting is I find ... I feel like I've got my elevator pitch for what we do down pretty well, but then it's really easy for people to ask follow-up questions, and they'll be like, "Oh, well that's interesting. So how many people do you ... are on your team?" And then we can tell them that we have an actual team now; it's not just you and I and one other person. People then are like, "Oh, so it's like a real thing?" And we're like, "Yeah. We have this podcast. People love it." But, I do think that it is so much easier now, just because I basically have something memorized that I say the exact same every time someone asks me what I do for a living. It's kind of comforting. You press play in your brain, and then it just like-
- Alison Monahan: No, it's true. I had to fill in a form for a conference we were going to, and they wanted to know, "What's your deal?" And I basically just typed up the same thing we always tell people, and I was like, "Well that was easy." It's just like having a good headshot. It's a total hassle when you don't have a good headshot. When you have a good headshot, and someone asks you for a headshot, you just send them the headshot. It's really simple.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. It's true. It's just like one of those things you want. You want a clean resume, you want a good headshot, you want a nice elevator pitch. It's just a few things that you need in your arsenal so that you can present yourself well, pretty effortlessly, once the work is done for any of these things.



Alison Monahan: I think it's worth really sitting down with this and maybe coming up with a couple of different versions and running them by someone, and saying, "Hey, which of these seems more compelling to you? Imagine that you're this type of person, or that you're a lawyer, you're whatever; a judge. What would you respond to?" The second goal really here, is to make it look like you're a person who has some clue what you want out of your life. It is your life. So, if you're listening to this and you're like, "Gosh, I wouldn't have any idea where to start." Again, this is something that you really need to sit down with, because you need to figure it out.

Lee Burgess: Yep. I think that's really true. You never know; even by using your elevator pitch to talk to non-lawyers, connections can still be made.

Alison Monahan: Oh, for sure. Another goal is really just to lead to some sort of interesting conversation, where the person you're talking with has a clear idea of how they might be able to help you. So, it doesn't have to be lawyers. I know, Lee, you were on the board of a non-profit, so you met all kinds of different people. Another friend of mine, her uncle was the connection that found her the job. [She did a series on The Girl's Guide to Law School](#) about deciding she didn't wanna be a litigator, and she didn't want to work in a large law firm. So, those are two big career shifts. In the end, it was really her uncle who randomly sat next to someone who worked at a startup. I don't even think that person was a lawyer, but they knew the people in the startup that were lawyers, and they knew they were interested in hiring someone. Through this very remote set of connections, she ended up getting a job that she really liked.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. In college, I was a media studies and a psychology major. I was in the research institute that I did psychology research for, talking to one of the administrators about my job hunt to try and find a summer internship in media. I gave my pitch of what I was looking for. Then she was like, "Oh, well have you called Michael Douglas's office?" And I was like, "No." One, how would I do that? Two, I don't know what that means. And she's like, "Oh, did you know he was on our board, our advisory board?" And I'm like, "No, I did not." She's like, "Well, I can give you the email and the phone number for the person who does hiring at his production company." And I was like, "That would be amazing." Then I ended up working there for a summer. What was interesting was, it was only because I was running my mouth about what I was looking for to people. It turned out they had the connections that I needed to get the summer internship.

Alison Monahan: People love to make connections. Lawyers especially are totally used to making referrals. So even if the person you're speaking with maybe can't help you, they're gonna be wracking their brain, thinking like, "Oh, who should you talk with?" I think there's just something about, particularly the lawyer personality, that makes people wanna make these connections, whether it's professional or



personal. Just today, two of my friends, it was like, "Oh my gosh. You guys are in exactly the same scenario. One of you is six months ahead of the other one. You have to talk to each other immediately." Now they're chatting and being like, "Oh, yes. This is my advice in this scenario of having six months more experience than you do."

Lee Burgess: Mm-hmm (affirmative), yeah. Lawyers meet a lot of people, and we also like to send business, and send referrals, and make connections with other lawyers that we really like and think are impressive. So, almost every lawyer has their own little mini docket of who we refer people to. If you are based in the Bay Area, and you know someone who needs a criminal defense lawyer, you're basically gonna get the same referral from me every single time, because my friend John is amazing and does great work. That's who ... And then it's like if you have an employment problem, this is my person plaintiff side. On employment side, you get a different person. And then it's like, "Oh, you're getting divorced? I got one of those, too."

Alison Monahan: Oh, for sure. It's the same with everything. People write to us and they're like, "Oh, we want help on the admissions essay." I'm like, "We don't do law school admissions consulting, but here are a couple of other people that I recommend you talk to."

Lee Burgess: Right. Check! I think that the beginning of your law school career and working with these elevator pitches, and working through these networking events, it's laying the foundation for that professional network that you're gonna have after you graduate. If you are going to be someone who wants referrals for business, which almost every single lawyer does want that depending on what you do, but if you are in any sort of practice, people love to get referrals. As you get higher up the food chain, when you get to partnership level, you absolutely have to give those referrals. I think what's interesting about it is, these connections that you're making at this initial level are creating the beginnings of that web. Later on, you might be referring out to other law school friends. You might be referring out to other lawyers that you met that are connected with your law school, people that you used to work with at your internships or summer associate positions. There are a lot of ways that you can kind of make these connections, and so getting as good as you can about talking to people early on, is laying the foundation for career advancement or rainmaking, or money, down the line, that is really important.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, because it's not like you're not gonna have to describe what type of work you do once you're a lawyer, so the better and sooner you can get comfortable with this I think, is just a skill that pays off big time. Really, it's the same sort of thing that you're doing when you are approaching a brief or anything else in your law school work and exam questions, is like what is the point? You've gotta get to the point, provide the relevant information, and then stop talking. That's



basically what you're going for, here. It can be really helpful to let other people in your life, once you have this amazing elevator pitch that you've crafted about what you want, let other people know. Your parents, your family, professors, and then sometimes oftentimes, if you do meet someone, they may even ask you, "Oh, could you shoot me an email and just remind me what it is you're looking for and I'll circulate that?" You need to have that ready to go, because you just never know who you're gonna meet, you never know who they know; you never know when the stars are gonna align and someone's basically just gonna offer you a job.

Lee Burgess: And, I've even seen some decent elevator pitches and requests for information via social media. Haven't you?

Alison Monahan: Oh, for sure.

Lee Burgess: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: Oh yeah, definitely.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, I think, especially if you're someone who feels uncomfortable doing a lot of this face to face work, reaching out and trying to get those initial introductions or initial connections through social media networks, can be very helpful as well. But, you still want to be thoughtful and kind of make your ask. You still wanna craft it. You just don't wanna be like, "Anybody know an IP lawyer?"

Alison Monahan: Right. "I need a summer job. Does anyone have a lead?"

Lee Burgess: Right. You wanna be a bit more specific than that, and kind of write down what your elevator pitch might be. Then, you can circulate that through social media channels, especially if you are part of any groups. I think that's one place, where although I might be heavily critical about Facebook in a lot of ways, I do think that some of the groups that they can create can allow for opportunities for presenting your elevator pitch, and people connecting you through those groups that increase your reach that couldn't be done before.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. Or, if you reach out to someone. There's some reason you've reached out to them, and you can start simple. Then, maybe as the conversation progresses back and forth in emails or whatever it is, they're gonna become increasingly invested in you. So, they might start coming up with new ideas for you. Somebody emailed me the other day, and by the third email I'm like, "Oh, if I were you, this is what I would probably consider doing." You know, to be fair, it was a pretty creative idea. But if he'd asked me the initial, first email, I probably wouldn't have said that. But I felt like we were getting to know each other. I



kind of knew a bit of his background, some of the ideas he had. It was like, "Oh, that's interesting, but you could also do this." It was good stuff.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. What about LinkedIn? Is there a way that you think that people can use LinkedIn to kind of reach out to people and present their elevator pitches, or do you think trying to find direct contact through email is probably best?

Alison Monahan: Well, I guess some people use LinkedIn. To be honest, I just say yes to everyone and then never know any people that I'm connected to. I think you can use it if you can find someone you know who knows someone that you wanna know. That's what totally ... I think people kind of expect that on LinkedIn. It's not a weird thing to be like, "Oh, Lee, I notice that you are connected with this person, Bob. Bob is at this organization that I'm really interested in interviewing with." You could say either, "Would you mind making an introduction?", or "Can I chat with you about him?" Lee might come back and say, "Well, I don't actually know Bob." That's usually my response anyway. It could be a useful tool.

Lee Burgess: I think it's one of those things where you can always try it, but if ... I think so many people don't heavily engage in social media or on ... I guess not social media. I don't know what ... do you call LinkedIn social media? What do you even call LinkedIn?

Alison Monahan: I don't know. It kind of is.

Lee Burgess: It sort of is, but it doesn't have the engagement of like, other social media channels. So, I don't know.

Alison Monahan: I think, believe it or not, I think some people actually do engage with it that way and look at their feed and whatnot. I can't say I've ever done that, but apparently there are people who do.

Lee Burgess: Well, it's probably a lot better for your blood pressure than sticking to your Facebook or Twitter feed.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, it's probably not the worst. There are groups. I used to be in some LinkedIn groups that I would occasionally comment in. I think it's worth exploring. It's definitely an option, and particularly if a lot of a law students are not using it, it could be a good way for people to get connected. I think you just have to be ... you've gotta use it wisely, and I think if you can find that way to go through someone that you know who's willing to do you a favor, it's probably gonna be more successful than just randomly spamming a bunch of people who have the word "lawyer" in their title.

Lee Burgess: Right. No, I think that is true. The-



- Alison Monahan: But again, being clear about what you want.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. I think maybe don't get offended if people don't write back, because I think LinkedIn is one of those platforms that people use it a lot of different ways, and oftentimes they don't ... I will be honest. I don't check it regularly, either, and so if-
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. I have no idea if they actually send me messages when I get them. I would assume so, but I don't know.
- Lee Burgess: Basically, as we mention this in every single podcast that we've been doing, if you wanna talk to us, you should email us. That is the way to find us.
- Alison Monahan: Yes, exactly. You can use our [contact form](#). We're pretty easy to find. Yeah. I don't think you can take any of this personally. People are busy, they may be going on a social media hiatus. So if they're not responding to your messages, it may not be anything personal. But, the more you are clear about what you're looking for and why you're contacting this person, I think the more likely they are to take some pity on you and at least respond.
- Lee Burgess: Yep. I think that that's very true. Well, no matter what, before we wrap up, I think this is something that everybody needs to grapple with, unfortunately, and try it out. Just practice. Like everything else; practice, practice. It's going to get easier and it's gonna get better. From personal experience, we have had our own bad elevator pitches as we discussed. It took practice and thought, and now years later, we're pretty good at it. So, you've just gotta keep trying and see what sounds authentic to you, and then you can make a great impression when you meet people.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. Two things to keep in mind. Keep it short, and make it specific. If you do that, you're gonna be ahead of 90% of the people out there.
- Lee Burgess: I think that's true.
- Alison Monahan: Well, unfortunately with that, we are out of time. 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'd really appreciate it. And, be sure to subscribe so you don't miss anything. If you have any questions or comments, don't hesitate to reach out to Lee or Alison 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](http://lawschooltoolbox.com). Thanks for listening, and we'll talk soon.



**RESOURCES:**

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- [Podcast Episode 57: Tips for Surviving Law School Orientation](#)
- [Legal Networking 101: How Do You Know What to Talk While Networking?](#)
- [Podcast Episode 74: Should You Go to Law School?](#)
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