



Alison Monahan: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today, we're talking with ex-BigLaw recruiter, Sadie Jones, about how to make people hate you at any job so that, basically, you can avoid doing these things. Your Law School Toolbox host today is Alison Monahan and typically I'm here with Lee Burgess. 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.

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](#). 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.

Alison Monahan: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today, we're talking with ex-BigLaw recruiter, Sadie Jones, about the things you can do to make people hate you at any job.

Alison Monahan: Welcome, Sadie.

Sadie Jones: Thanks for having me back.

Alison Monahan: Our pleasure. This should be a fun episode. What are some common pet peeves that you have heard from bosses about employees over the course of your career?

Sadie Jones: There are lots of them.

Alison Monahan: It's amazing the things people do where you're like, "Wow, did you really just do that at a professional setting?"

Sadie Jones: Yeah, and there's always new ones every single year.

Alison Monahan: True, absolutely.

Sadie Jones: Definitely not showing up on time for meetings, for events, for anything like that. You should be on time.

Alison Monahan: I know, I remember I was actually late to my very first day of summer associateship-ness which I was a 1L at the time. I was like 'well, I guess they know I don't really actually care that much since I'm now late.' I felt bad.

Sadie Jones: Did you have a good excuse?



Alison Monahan: I just didn't really realize how long I was going to ... I think it was raining. I didn't have an umbrella and I had to go back for one, and then I also just didn't realize how long I was going to take to get there on the subway. I was changing trains four times or something.

Sadie Jones: It happens, but I would say plan ahead.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I mean it's not something I'd recommend. Although, apparently Barack Obama was late on his first day too. I'm in good company.

Sadie Jones: That's good. Another thing would be saying you're going to something and not showing up.

Alison Monahan: That makes people mad.

Sadie Jones: Yeah, it doesn't mean that you can't have something else come up and not be able to do something. But you should definitely prioritize what's the most important thing that you're picking and why. Then make sure that you let people know. That could be like a social event, a meeting, anything.

Alison Monahan: No, I remember sometimes when I was working in a firm, we would get invited to like pretty fancy dinners that I feel like were fairly expensive. I think it was like the Inns of Court or something. I knew the firm would have a table, it was pretty pricey and people would say they're going and then just not show up. You want to talk about some angry partners? Those people were angry.

Sadie Jones: Yeah, because I think the thing with summer associates that they may not realize is that partners get a list of everyone who's coming ahead of time. You get it right before, so it should be the latest list. They actually a lot of times notice that someone was supposed to come and wasn't there. Or there's name tags a lot, too. So, they can see who didn't take one.

Alison Monahan: I always feel like lunches and things, too, people would not show up because they didn't think it was important. Like the kind of lunch and learn type things. The point is, somebody actually spent time and energy putting this program together, and they probably are going to take offense if you just blow it off and decide you don't feel like going.

Sadie Jones: Mm-hmm (affirmative). I would also say, something to clarify that I think comes up in this area a lot is if someone sends you a calendar invite, that you accepting it is you saying you're going to go. So, there are different things. Sometimes you might accept something just to get it on your calendar, but sometimes there's not a separate RSVP. So, if you're not sure, I would clarify, because I did find that some people just didn't understand that that meant they were saying they could go.



Alison Monahan: Right, yeah. That's a good point. Yeah, I think your point. I mean, obviously things come up, but you want to be sure that you've notified someone as far in advance as possible. That might be the last minute, but at least say something to the person who would want to know this information. Be like, "Hey, I'm really sorry. Something's come up at the last minute. I'm working on a client matter or whatever. I have to go to court. A meeting is running long. I'm really sorry, but I'm not going to be able to make it." I feel like that's just basic politeness, but I guess people don't do that these days.

Sadie Jones: Yeah. I mean, I think that there's rarely an excuse where you did not have a minute to do that. Unless there's an actual emergency.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, and even then, you're still probably in route to the emergency with your phone or whatever. You can send a text message for two seconds being like, "Hey, emergency situation. Tell you more later."

Sadie Jones: Yeah, I think there's never a reason not to let someone know. Then when you're at the event or the meeting, another big pet peeve of mine and other people's would be not paying attention, using your phone. People can see you. Even in a video conference, people can see you.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I feel like anytime you're in a professional setting, in any type of meeting or event or something, you want to at least try to appear engaged. Particularly for the lowest person on the totem pole, your job should probably be making notes or at least paying attention, not obviously playing solitaire on your phone. That's not going to make people happy.

Sadie Jones: I've seen people fall asleep. There's management there and a summer associate fell asleep. I had to kind of knock into them.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I mean, okay. You're tired, but you can pinch yourself. You can go get some water or you could take a bathroom break. There are things you can do.

Sadie Jones: Yeah, that just should not happen. I just think sometimes people don't realize that other people can see you.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I guess that's true. If you're in the room or you're on a call, other people are paying attention. Another one that's fun, too, is when sometimes you'll be taking a conference call from your office and people think that they're on mute and they're not on mute and you can hear them doing all kinds of crazy stuff. These are things you just want to pay attention to. I mean, A, probably don't do crazy stuff on a conference call, but B, if you are going to do it, double check that you're on mute.

Sadie Jones: Yeah, there's definitely some stories about that.



Alison Monahan: Yeah, these are the things people remember. Like, "Oh, my gosh. Remember that person who did this crazy thing?" I mean, conference calls are boring. People are going to remember if you're like the one who screws everything up.

Sadie Jones: Or a video conference like you don't realize that they can see you for some reason. Like it seems like it's the pre-conference. I've seen people kind of walk in front of the camera and do weird things.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. Or be taking other phone calls on the phone. Just think before you act basically.

Sadie Jones: Absolutely. Another thing would be not treating everyone with respect. So that means you're going out for a lunch and being nice to the waitstaff or secretaries or paralegals or really anyone you meet. There shouldn't be a situation where you feel like you don't need to be respectful to them, they don't matter.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I mean, I think that goes with being a decent human being, but definitely goes with being in a professional setting because the reality is, if you are say working for the summer in an organization, you're only going to be there a few months. Maybe you come back later, but maybe not, but a good paralegal is actually very hard to find, and if you're rude to that person or you're entitled towards them or you say something that implies that you think you're superior to this person based on the fact that you're sort of an attorney and they're a paralegal, that is not going to be well regarded because that person is actually extremely valuable to the organization.

Sadie Jones: Definitely. If they've been there a long time, they know people.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, and they know how things work.

Sadie Jones: They have an impression of you. Yeah. And you're going to need their help.

Alison Monahan: Exactly. It does not behoove you to be rude to people that you think are beneath you in some sort of organizational hierarchy because those are the people who actually are going to help you get your work done, and if they're on your team, they're the ones who can really save you in a situation where you realize you screwed something up, like you didn't file something correctly, you don't know how to file something, somebody asks you to do something and you have no idea where to start. These are the people who will help you. So treating them badly is definitely a terrible, terrible idea and really will make them hate you because they're very ... people tend to be very sensitive toward that sort of thing, particularly from people who are just there for the summer.

Sadie Jones: Definitely. I think people develop reputations really quickly.



- Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. And this is kind of in your early days of your legal job, this is the start of your legal reputation.
- Sadie Jones: Mm-hmm (affirmative) definitely.
- Alison Monahan: What else?
- Sadie Jones: Another thing would be saying some joke that's off color, inappropriate, offensive.
- Alison Monahan: That's always fun.
- Sadie Jones: I think if you have any question that anyone might be offended by what you're saying, just do not say it.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, I mean, I completely agree, particularly in the current environment, with #MeToo and all these things. Why would you risk that? Just don't be an idiot. Maybe you feel in your heart of hearts this is preventing you from saying things that you feel like you otherwise might want to say. Well, you know what? That's life.
- Sadie Jones: Definitely. I just think that maybe you didn't mean it in a certain way, but if you think there's any chance that someone will take it wrong, you know. Everyone I think has a gut instinct about things that are maybe on the line.
- Alison Monahan: There's just no reason to be discussing those things in a professional setting.
- Sadie Jones: Absolutely.
- Alison Monahan: You know, if you find yourself feeling like you want to tell a slightly sexist joke, or the memes, like people spread around memes where you're like, "That's not okay. This is a professional workplace. Do not send around the stuff that you would send to some locker room friend of yours if you're a dude. Probably don't even send it to them, but certainly don't send it to your coworkers."
- Sadie Jones: Yeah, I just don't think that there's any need to do that. This is a professional setting. I think along the same lines, I'd be careful about gossip or anything like that. Things you're kind of spreading around, I would just stay away from it.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, and I think in that category too is hitting on people inappropriately, which frankly, it's usually inappropriate in a work place setting if you're only there particularly for a few months. Certainly, I know of at least one person who was not given a summer offer because several different women went to the HR person and said, "You know what? This is what he's been doing and I feel like it's



really inappropriate." Not only did he not get an offer, I believe he was actually fired in the last week.

- Sadie Jones: Wow. That's pretty drastic.
- Alison Monahan: I mean, well, it was pretty consistent, you know? It was one of those things where you're like, "Yeah, this is really inappropriate and you've done it several times. We don't want you here. You're a risk that we cannot take."
- Sadie Jones: I'm guessing the person was probably talked to before they kept doing it? I think that's the other thing. If you make a mistake and then just continue to make it.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, I mean, I think obviously if anyone comes to you over the course of a workplace and says, "You know what? We've had some complaints about this and we want to bring it to your attention." Do not do anything like that again.
- Sadie Jones: Yeah, and don't be defensive. Just don't do it because someone has a problem with it if it's taken it that far. Another thing that I think is a huge pet peeve for people is not saving things on the system, saving them locally to your desktop or sending them to yourself or whatever it is. So that may mean that after you +leave, they don't have access to it or they're looking for it and you have to send it to them and they can see that it's not from the system. I think partners particularly get very mad about it.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think this is one of the situations where you need to understand what your organization does in terms of document management because they almost certainly have some type of system and you might not realize what those numbers printed at the bottom mean, but it means that that's the unique identifier for this document and anyone who needs to find it can find it. If yours can't be found, I agree that's a huge problem. It just makes you look lazy, like you don't care, like you don't understand how this works. It's not a great look.
- Sadie Jones: And how what you do affects other people. Along the same lines, making sure that it's saved with whatever security it's supposed to be saved with. So, don't leave things open that people need access to, but give the right people access. You should know all that. You've definitely received training in it if you're working there. If you have questions, you ask somebody.
- Alison Monahan: Well, and another thing, too, is if you're ever asked to submit something with redactions or something like that, you have to be absolutely certain you know how to do that because there are tons and tons of cases with documents being filed electronically and then it turns out they're not really redacted and obviously you're redacting information that should not be public and now that information is public and it might end up on the Washington Post or whatever depending on what your case is. You don't want to be that person who's on



Above the Law, and it's like, "Oh, this person didn't know how to redact a document, and now all this nonpublic information is out in public." You can't put it back.

Sadie Jones: And the things with these documents is there's always a way to figure out who was doing what to it.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. You know who edited that. You know who submitted it.

Sadie Jones: You're not going to be able to hide behind it. Along the same note actually, don't look at things you're not supposed to look at. So, don't open things in the system because that is a big problem.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, you have to understand all of this is being tracked. I mean, most likely no one's ever going to look at this, but if they ever need to look at it, it's going to be really obvious who opened something, that you edited something, that you saw something. Just don't go poking around in things that you have no business being in, you know? You're working in a legal setting. Have some discretion.

Sadie Jones: Absolutely, because people are trusting you with things, whatever your position is. Another big thing is taking credit for things that you didn't really do, or not giving other people credit for things they do. I think always err on the side of being generous.

Alison Monahan: Oh, I agree. I think it just makes you look petty if you take responsibility, basically take credit for things you didn't do or you refuse to take responsibility for things you did do. Yeah, I mean, this is a team setting. So, if somebody says, "Oh, you know that was an amazing brief that you filed." "Oh, yeah. Thank you. We had a lot of help from the team. Everyone did a great job on it. Really appreciate it." That just makes you look like a better person basically.

Sadie Jones: Yeah, I think you should always err on that side of things.

Alison Monahan: On the same thing, if somebody really has helped you out, say that your paralegal or secretary really saved you on something, make some nice gesture to them. Offer to buy them coffee or even just a thank you card saying, "Hey, I really appreciated what you did for me the other day. I realize it was last minute and you really helped me out. I just wanted to say thank you." Put in a ten-dollar Starbucks card. It's not going to bankrupt you.

Sadie Jones: But I think it will make the other person feel really good, and that's worth a lot.

Alison Monahan: No, because almost no one does that.

Sadie Jones: Absolutely.



- Alison Monahan: So small gestures, or even if your ... even if they haven't done anything and if you have a secretary and you're going to get a coffee, occasionally offer to get them something. Probably they'll say no, but at least they appreciate the offer and maybe they say yes and you spend a couple of dollars and this person is now more on your team.
- Sadie Jones: Mm-hmm (affirmative), I think that can go a long way.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, huge, because almost no one does that.
- Sadie Jones: Yep.
- Alison Monahan: Alright. Anything else?
- Sadie Jones: Messing up anything that is going directly to clients, and even communicating with them when you're not supposed to. You really need to understand what the protocol is and not make mistakes there, because they're the ones paying the bills.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think sometimes people really overreach in that area and they think like, "Oh, I'll just shoot an email off to the general counsel that's our client," which might be fine and maybe nobody has a problem with that. But you need to clarify first. You want to basically have in writing like, "Hey, do you want me to send this directly to Bob or would you prefer to send it yourself?" Then if the person says, "Oh, you can send it," and then they complain, you're like, "Hey, you told me to send it."
- Sadie Jones: Absolutely. I think you just kind of need to figure out where your place is in things and how the person in charge of the case wants you to handle it.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, and sometimes it can get tricky if you're getting calls directly from someone or emails directly from someone with a question. There again, I think you just always want to defer to, "Oh, you know, thanks so much for sending me this. I'm just going to check in with whoever."
- Sadie Jones: Because you don't want to say the wrong thing.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, or you can just check in with them directly and be like, "How would you like me to handle this?" That's always going to be appreciated, but you don't want to go off roading and be like, "Hey, yeah. I was doing some research and kind of thinking this." Not a good idea.
- Sadie Jones: Mess up the whole case. Yeah.



- Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. Just, I mean, partly is you've got to train people to talk to the right people as well. So, if you are getting a bunch of these emails, it might be the case that someone higher up needs to say, "Hey, can you send this to me instead? We don't want Alison directly giving you answers on this," basically.
- Sadie Jones: Yeah, absolutely.
- Alison Monahan: That's not really your problem. No, I think all of those are absolutely on point. My personal pet peeve, which really makes me hate working with someone, is when they just don't take responsibility for their work product. They may be the nicest, most entertaining person in the world. I might like them. I might enjoy hanging out with them. But if they are not taking responsibility for the work that they are doing for me, I will get very, very upset. So, things like turning stuff in late or just sending me things that are sloppy or my absolute most pet peeve, coming back at the very last minute after I've given them an assignment to find some piece of law and telling me they can't find it.
- Alison Monahan: I'm like, "Well, A, that's not my problem. You've made it my problem but this should not be my problem. B, why am I hearing about this now? The time to tell me this would have been part of the way through your research when you're hitting some dead ends and you come back to me and you say, 'Hey, this is the research I've done. Here's what I've uncovered. I haven't been able to find exactly what you're looking for. What would you like me to do?'" But just to come back at the last minute when we're expecting an answer and say, "Oh, well, I did a lot of work, but I didn't find anything," makes me want to kill that person.
- Sadie Jones: Yeah, that seems like very poor communication.
- Alison Monahan: It is. I think a lot of this is really about communicating, you know, and really understanding your role in hierarchy. If you're coming in for the summer or you've just started a job, whatever that organization is, you are being relied upon and your job is basically to make your boss's job easier. You want to be thinking, "How can I make their life easier?" Not, "How can I make their life harder by dropping things on them at the last second that I've dropped the ball?" Because they will hate you.
- Sadie Jones: Well, and I think especially kind of as a summer associate or someone really junior, sometimes people sort of think they're not that important to it, you know?
- Alison Monahan: They think it's kind of like play. It's like, "Oh, this isn't ..."



Sadie Jones: Something when they say like they're submitting a draft and there are typos or it's like, "Oh, well, I would never expect this to go further." That's not acceptable.

Alison Monahan: No, every single thing you do you need to assume is going to be sent out without further edits. So, I think that a draft does not mean like a sloppy first draft. A draft means it is as ready to send out as you could possibly make it, within limits, obviously. There may be questions. You may clarify like, "Do you want me to do the citations now or not?" But ask those questions.

Sadie Jones: Yeah, and I think you can look at it sort of as an empowering situation where you're important and they actually are relying on you.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think that for me was one of the biggest adjustments of being a summer was realizing, "Oh, they actually need me to be doing this work. This is not just pretend. They're not just giving me this assignment for practice." They actually need an answer and that's a responsibility that is kind of fun to take on like, "Oh, I need to find that answer because someone needs this."

Sadie Jones: Yeah, I think a lot of summers do sort of have that idea that these are kind of made up. There are some summer assignments that are like that, but they try not to do that. Try to have real work.

Alison Monahan: Right. I mean, if you need something done and you have another person who can do it, why not give them something real to do?

Sadie Jones: Yep, absolutely.

Alison Monahan: I mean, it's better for everyone. Then you can bill it to the client and actually make some money off of them. So, I think as a partner once said to me, which I thought was obnoxious at the time but I do think is actually accurate. He said, "Your job is to make me look good." What he meant by that was, if you screw something up, it makes me look like an idiot and I don't like that. So, your job is to figure out what I need and then make that happen. Sometimes that might be menial things like making the right number of copies, which I think is what this particular discussion was about. I'm like, "Well, you never told me." He's like, "You should have figured it out. That was your job."

Sadie Jones: Mm-hmm (affirmative). No, I think that's absolutely true that you have to kind of see where you are in the chain and what you're doing and how it's contributing to everybody. So that's how this works. Then at some point, you'll be higher up and someone will be helping you.

Alison Monahan: And you'll be the one yelling about the number of copies.



- Sadie Jones: Exactly. And you'll probably say the exact same thing.
- Alison Monahan: Right and then you might think to yourself, "I really should have told them I need six of everything." But you'll still tell them they should have figured it out.
- Sadie Jones: That's true. I mean, the truth is, there's other people probably not communicating well in these situations, too, but they're not really going to admit that.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly.
- Sadie Jones: So, you just have to figure out how to ask for things, too. Yeah.
- Alison Monahan: I mean, if something went publicly wrong, you're probably not the only person who made a mistake, but it's probably going to come downhill to you because you basically were the person at the bottom who really should have been asking these questions.
- Sadie Jones: Absolutely.
- Alison Monahan: So, I think this is the key takeaway here. Basically, don't make your boss's jobs harder, and then as we talked about earlier, try not to create new problems by just doing things that are stupid. You know? So, saying stupid things, hitting on someone, getting super drunk. Those are just not really acceptable.
- Sadie Jones: I think a lot of this is common sense, but ...
- Alison Monahan: Well, as they say, less common than you might think.
- Sadie Jones: Yeah, well, I also think you're in a new environment a lot of times. So maybe you're not sure how it works, but I would always err on the side of caution.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, absolutely. I think you always want to be thinking, "Do I really need to say this? If it's anything remotely questionable, how might this be perceived? Who's listening? Who might the people who are here go talk to?" I think that's a key point. You can't just assume because you look around the room like, "Oh, everybody looks like me," that you can say whatever racist thing you want. That's not acceptable.
- Sadie Jones: Definitely. I think you have no idea what people really think or what their political beliefs are. All of that stuff, I would just keep that out of it.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, and also, I think stuff about how people look, dangerous territory, just don't go there. Even something you think might be innocuous like, "Oh, you look



great today." If somebody said that to me, I may be like, "What business is it of yours?"

Sadie Jones: Or I think it could make you think like, "Oh, are you saying I normally don't look good?"

Alison Monahan: Are you hitting on me? Like what is this about? Why? Just don't.

Sadie Jones: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: Similar stuff, asking anybody, for example, if they're pregnant, if they're getting married or getting divorced. Unless somebody brings this up to you, just don't go there. Stay away from these topics.

Sadie Jones: Yeah, or even like you see pictures. You're asking who people are. Let somebody share things with you. I wouldn't pry.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. I mean, I feel like even if people have pictures on their desk, there's just no reason really to comment. It maybe something innocent like, "Oh, are those your kids?" Even that can be a loaded question. I mean presumably if someone has it on their desk, they're happy to talk about it, but I don't know. I feel like you just don't know. Wait until you know the person to delve into anything remotely personal.

Sadie Jones: I completely agree. It's even, you know, sometimes you feel comfortable with them but I just think you don't know what the answer is going to be, so again, I would be cautious.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. Another thing, this is another massive pet peeve for me, never ask people to make or get your coffee unless they are specifically employed for that task.

Sadie Jones: Yes.

Alison Monahan: I mean, the number of times that people asked me as a young, female attorney to get them coffee, and I was like, "Are you joking? No."

Sadie Jones: I think the other side of that is why don't you go get coffee and ask other people if they want anything? They're going to appreciate that.

Alison Monahan: Are you thinking here? Think about the optics on this one. Who do you turn to in a room of attorneys to ask to get you coffee? The youngest female, only female person in the room. Just don't go there. Go get your own freaking coffee.

Sadie Jones: Absolutely.



- Alison Monahan: I think, too, you've got to understand, you can't just assume support people are going to do things for you. So, if there's a system, say you need to get reimbursed for something or whatever, you want to understand how that system works and to do your part. It may be that your secretary is supposed to compile all of your receipts or whatever. At a minimum, you're going to need to check that that's accurate. You're going to probably sign off on it. You can't later blame somebody if your receipts didn't match up with your expenses and you get fired over that.
- Sadie Jones: And I would say you should ask how all of these things work. Usually there's kind of a form at the beginning that tells you how to do certain things, but there may be things you don't know so, ask what's the limit for how much you can spend on different things, because the last thing you want to be doing is be the person who went over and expects the firm to cover it. Like you said, I remember I would just sometimes get receipts from people in the mail as the recruiter.
- Alison Monahan: You're like, "What am I supposed to do with this?"
- Sadie Jones: Yeah, that's not how it works. There's a form that your secretary fills out. I don't do this for everybody. It's offensive because it feels like you're asking people to do things for you that aren't their job and you haven't even taken the time to figure out who does what. So that's a really easy way to make people upset with you.
- Alison Monahan: Right, and anytime you're dealing with someone who this is their job, say for example an IT person or like a law librarian and you come in and you've clearly given no thought to how this actually works, you haven't read anything that they carefully prepared to prep you on this. Of course, people are going to feel offended because it's like, "Okay, you can't even bother looking at the handbook that we carefully wrote for you? Why are you wasting my time on this, basically? Go read the book that I put all this information into."
- Sadie Jones: Absolutely. I think there's rarely things that aren't in that category that haven't been given to you that you're really going to need to know. So, I think it's just good to do your homework and be responsible.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, and again, take responsibility. If somebody is presented a program to you about how to do legal research and then you go and blow through \$30,000 in a day and don't even find an answer, that's not going to be well received. People are going to remember that.
- Sadie Jones: Yeah, and you should know, especially with money, what you're spending, what the limits are, what they expect of you because that's going to definitely get you a reputation early.



- Alison Monahan: Yeah, I mean, I think a lot of this like you said is common sense. You want to clarify expectations. Always make sure you know when a deadline is. Are there preliminary deadlines? If not, should you create preliminary deadlines to get feedback on something? What are your deliverables? What you specifically begin asked to do? Who are you working with? What other information is there? All of these things, you need to ask the question so that you have a clear idea, "Okay, this is what I'm being asked to do, this is the time frame." If it's not realistic, ideally you want to say that in the beginning, but you definitely want to say that as soon as it becomes apparent. Like, "Hey, this is seeming like a bigger project. Here's what I've got so far. Here's the time that we've allocated for the rest of the project. I'm not sure that we're going to be able to do that in this time frame. What do you want me to do?" Someone's going to be way happier about that than if you just show up at the end. You're like, "Well, I spent twice as long and didn't really find an answer."
- Sadie Jones: And it really is all about communication. I think sometimes people are afraid to say something to someone where they think they're not going to be happy to hear it, but it's so much better to do that than to put it off. That's what I find that people get the most upset about. They'll talk to me after and I'll say, "Why were you hiding this? What were you doing?"
- Alison Monahan: Right. If you know there's a problem, you basically need to make that clear to other people as soon as you have figured out the parameters of that problem and what you might possibly do to fix that problem. But that problem needs to be surfaced as soon as possible.
- Sadie Jones: Because I think ultimately, it's on you. Sometimes the idea is, "Well, someone else told me to do it," you know, but you're the one managing all of this. It's your work or whatever it is.
- Alison Monahan: Right, and this is also the CYA question. I mean, if someone did tell you something verbally, it's probably a good idea to send something in writing summarizing that conversation. It doesn't have to be anything big. It's just like, "Hey, as we discussed, I'm going to get you the stuff by the end of day Thursday. This is exactly what I'm planning to send you. If this is not what you were expecting, please let me know as soon as possible," you know to kind of document everything that could come back to haunt you if you think someone above you is giving you bad advice, but they're insisting on it, put that in an email like, "Hey, as we've discussed, you asked me to do X, Y, and Z, so I'm going to do that."
- Alison Monahan: Another thing sometimes people don't really get is voicemail is not really something people necessarily listen to. Obviously, you should listen to your own, but if somebody doesn't answer and you're expecting to call them, leave a voicemail but also give them something in writing. Whether it's a text or



whatever your organization uses or email, something so that when they come back and say, "Why didn't you call me?" You say, "Well, actually, here's the voicemail and here's the email." At some point they're going to be like, "Oh, okay."

- Sadie Jones: Absolutely. I think that just helps you keep track of everything and make sure that they know that you've done your best to do it.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly.
- Sadie Jones: Things happen. I mean ...
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. Stuff happens, but you want to have that trail where you're like, "Actually, I did call you at the time we talked about, and I left a voicemail, and I sent you an email. So, what else is there to say about this? You screwed this up. Not me."
- Sadie Jones: But don't say that probably.
- Alison Monahan: No, but that's the unsaid part where you're just like, "Actually."
- Sadie Jones: Yeah.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, I mean, they get the message, you know? Literally, they'll get the message that's like, "Oh, I was the one who did this." I think, too, you know if you are in that scenario, you can't take it personally if somebody is not there for a call because they got stuck in court. I mean, things happen.
- Sadie Jones: Yeah, absolutely.
- Alison Monahan: Alright. We're almost out of time. One final question. What should people do if they screw things up? How can they repair any damage?
- Sadie Jones: Well, I think like we just said, as soon as possible let the person know so that they're not procrastinating talking about it. That could be whatever. They missed a deadline. They missed a meeting. Do your best to apologize, not be defensive. I wouldn't make a ton of excuses. I would make it really clear that you're not going to do it again, and don't do it again. So, a lot of times, if a summer is having trouble with someone on an assignment, maybe it didn't go great, we usually say, "Work with them again. Give them a chance to see that you're better." Then be better, is the big thing.
- Sadie Jones: I think that most people will give you a chance even if you do screw up, if you kind of acknowledge it and try to make it right.



- Alison Monahan: Yeah, and I think some of these conversations to the extent possible should happen in person.
- Sadie Jones: Definitely. I think that things can be really misinterpreted other ways.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think ideally you do it in person. You basically show up and you grovel in person, which is pretty rare these days. So, I think people actually do respect that you came by and you sat there and you said, "You know what? I recognize that I screwed up. Here's why it happened. Here's what I'm doing to prevent it from happening again. This is the solution to the problem." Second, call them. Then third, which I think is a distant third, is you do it in writing. I think if you can, you need to have an actual conversation because most people, too, in person are going to be more accommodating. They might be angry and type out an angry email, but they're probably not going to completely go off on you if you come in a spirit of apologizing in person.
- Sadie Jones: Yeah, and I think what's interesting about that is people tend to sort of be afraid to do it in person. It's going to be better. So you've got to kind of get over that. I also think it's a good experience because that's better.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. It's good practice. I mean, worst case somebody yells at you in person. That's not pleasant, but oh well. It happens. I'll probably yell at you less than I would in an email.
- Sadie Jones: And it's some story you tell later. I mean ...
- Alison Monahan: Exactly. Yeah, exactly. It's a learning experience. You're like, "Wow. That was crazy." Yeah. Alright. Well, any final thoughts on this?
- Sadie Jones: Common sense is really my top thought. Don't do things at work that aren't supposed to be ... do things at work that are meant for a professional environment. Don't act like work is camp, college, whatever. I think some people especially summer associates, are sort of too casual. You have to remember that these are your colleagues. They're professionals. They're lawyers.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, you're a grown up. You're a lawyer.
- Sadie Jones: Yeah, you can have friends outside of work that you talk to about all of these things.
- Alison Monahan: True. There are lots of topics you just probably don't want to go into. People sometimes will try to goad the younger people on the team into talking about things about outside of work stuff like who you're dating, if you're on Tinder or whatever. Just don't go there.



- Sadie Jones: Absolutely. I just think that you can wait for some other opportunity to talk about personal things.
- Alison Monahan: Exactly. Alright. Well, unfortunately, with that we are out of time. Thanks so much for joining us.
- Sadie Jones: Thanks for having me.
- Alison Monahan: My pleasure.
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