



Lee Burgess: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today, we're talking with Molly Bowen, lawyer and author of the children's book [Mommy Lawyer](#). 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 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 reach us via the [contact form](#) on LawSchoolToolBox.com, and we'd love to hear from you. And with that, let's get started.

Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today we're talking with Molly Bowen – lawyer and author of the children's book *Mommy Lawyer* – about how to balance parenthood and a career, and how to explain a demanding job to your kids. Now that's a lot! Let's see how much of that we can cover. Welcome, Molly! Thanks for joining us on the podcast.

Molly Bowen: Hi! Thank you for having me. Excited to be here!

Lee Burgess: So, before we dive in, can you give us a bit of your background so our listeners can understand where you're coming from and what your legal career has been like?

Molly Bowen: Sure! Well, I started off at UT in Austin in undergrad. And I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do. I was in the communications school doing public relations. I think I'm just a lifelong learner and I really love to be in school. So, I knew I wanted to go on and do something after undergraduate, and law school really appealed to me. Writing's always been a strength of mine. And it just seemed like a good fit and next step for me. So, yeah, that's what led me to law school. I'm the first lawyer in my family.

Lee Burgess: Oh nice!

Molly Bowen: Yeah! I really honestly thought I wanted to go on and be a professor after that, but life never turns out how you think it's going to.

Lee Burgess: That's true.

Molly Bowen: And, especially for me, because in law school I became pregnant. My third year of law school I became pregnant with my first son.

Lee Burgess: So, you have been a mommy lawyer the whole time!



- Molly Bowen: That's right. I've never been a lawyer and not a mom. I knew I always wanted to have kids, but I thought I would start in my 30s and get this career established, and pay my dues as a young attorney, and really have time to do that, and then have a family later. And it just did not work out according to my plan. But I can't say I have any regrets. I took the bar exam nine months pregnant.
- Lee Burgess: Oh my gosh! So, how long after the bar exam was your son born?
- Molly Bowen: Three weeks, three and a half weeks.
- Lee Burgess: Oh my goodness! That's crazy!
- Molly Bowen: Yeah! I was the girl that the people sitting next to me were like, "Oh great! This is going to happen during my test." But no, actually, studying for the bar pregnant was really not as bad as you would think it would be. There were less distractions. I just was not really part of the social scene. A lot of the people in law school are still in the college mode, and I just posted up and studied and took naps, and studied and took naps!
- Lee Burgess: That's true. You can at least nap while you're studying for the bar, pregnant or not. There is nap time that you can build in.
- Molly Bowen: Exactly, exactly! So yeah, I got through that. It also took the pressure off of me once I was like, "Okay, this is happening. I'm going to be a mom this year." I was working for a firm my third year. It wasn't a right fit for me anyway at that firm, but just told them, "Look, I'm going to take a step back and I'm just going to focus on having a baby this year and passing the bar exam." And I wasn't super stressed out about what I was going to do and what associate position I was going to get right after law school. And so, I just focused on that and got through it. I had my son shortly after taking the bar, found out I passed the exam in November, and then I landed my first job in January. So, it really just gave me a nice four-month maternity leave, actually.
- Lee Burgess: That's true. That is the benefit of that timing.
- Molly Bowen: Yeah. So, it worked out.
- Lee Burgess: Well, I am the daughter of a mommy lawyer. I was born right between my mom's second and third year of law school. But then she went back part-time because I was born a week before classes started.
- Molly Bowen: Wow!
- Lee Burgess: So, she was determined...



- Molly Bowen: So she gets it.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. She was determined that she could not go back to law school still pregnant, because she was like, "I was really pregnant during finals. They were going to be like, 'Are you just going to be pregnant forever?'" But there are lots of funny stories about me in a swing in the law review office and stuff like that.
- Molly Bowen: Oh my gosh!
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. So, my mom took the bar with a young kid at home. Now having had two kids of my own, I think that might even be more challenging than having one inside you. At least they're quiet most of the time when they're inside you.
- Molly Bowen: Yeah. No, that is definitely true. I had that choice in front of me – just take a break and maybe try to take the bar the following year, and made the decision that it was probably going to be a lot easier to study with the baby inside of me than being a new first-time mom of an infant. So, I commend her, because that seems challenging.
- Lee Burgess: Took a village. There was my dad, there were grandparents involved. Took a village, as most things do, right?
- Molly Bowen: Right, right. Yeah.
- Lee Burgess: So, we actually have a number of students that we work with who end up studying for the bar while pregnant. And I think it can be stressful for folks because they really worry that they're not able to either be their best selves or they're worried about the baby. I think that that's something that sometimes women... Well, you're always worried about the baby, let's be honest. I think the moment you find out you're pregnant, you start worrying about the baby. So, what advice would you have to people who maybe are listening and think they may be pregnant during this experience, about trying to keep that perspective in balance?
- Molly Bowen: I've been pregnant three times. And I was always the pregnant person that... I'm just too much of a busybody to sit around and just be pregnant. So, for me, it gave me something to focus on and something to do instead of, I don't know, running around town or traveling. Law school is a black hole. I mean, you're in it. So, I really just studied; that's all I did. I would go stay at my parents' house on the weekends and they would cook for me and I would study. I rarely even got out of my pajamas during that time. But it just worked for me. And, like we said, it was a lot easier to, once I was in that position and knew the timing of my pregnancy and when the bar was, I was able to decide, "I'm going to just go ahead and try and do it." I really tried to not overthink it or stress myself out about it too much. I knew if I needed to take it again that I had a good excuse.



- Lee Burgess: That's true. That's true.
- Molly Bowen: Yeah. The hardest part for me was, I had to limit my caffeine intake during pregnancy.
- Lee Burgess: Oh, that's true. I know! That's true. I did that too. And that can be rough in a lot of ways.
- Molly Bowen: But I think going forward into my career when I was pregnant two more times as a young attorney, I always worked up until the day before I went into labor. I just think having something to do takes your anxiety away from the pregnancy and it gets your mind off of it to a certain extent and just helps the time go by a little bit faster, for me at least.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. I think that's a good point. I think the other thing I've talked to students about... And I was not pregnant when I was studying for the bar. I've been working since having both of my kids. But it's kind of the first thing you do with your kid that's like a team effort. I felt like birth was a team effort, your growing baby was a team effort. But I'd spent a lot of time talking to the baby about that was going to be our first gig together, was getting the baby out. It had to be a team sport. And I think that if you're doing something hard or challenging, or even if you have something difficult come up in your life that creates a lot of emotions or is kind of stressful, the baby's along for the ride. And that's the first thing you guys go through together. So, your oldest has passed the bar exam. Yay for him!
- Molly Bowen: Yeah. That's what I always tell him. I always tell Sam he's already passed the bar exam. He can do anything!
- Lee Burgess: Exactly, exactly. So, you sent me a copy of your book, which I think is really lovely, called *Mommy Lawyer*. How did you decide to write this book and why did you feel like it was an important message to put out there?
- Molly Bowen: Well, the idea came to me when I had three boys under the age of three at the same time. And I was really just drowning as an associate at a fast-paced litigation firm that was really a sink-or-swim environment. And I was determined to swim. I had three little boys at home, and as any working mom knows, that is a challenge. And I was looking for something that would help me explain to my kids what I was up to while I was at work. There are other careers out there – doctors and teachers are a little more obvious to a child, because they have interaction with those professions. But for a lawyer, it's kind of an abstract concept. And my kids did not understand when I said, "I have a hearing today" or, "I can't pick you up because I'm in a deposition." Or what does court mean? What does a judge do? All of these concepts were difficult for me to explain to my kids at the preschool-age and pre-K age. So, I wrote it as a poem at first, and



it was really just for my boys. I wanted to tell a story that was the basic concepts of being a lawyer, to help them understand what I was doing at work. But as I got into it, the message became clear. I really wanted it to address some of the challenges I was having as a working mom. And that part of the story, I think, is universal across all careers – trying to explain to them why you can't be there for every special moment throughout their day. Even though you want to be, you have this other important job. You have two jobs. The first one is taking care of them, and that's your most important job. But you have this other job that's important to you too. And so, that was a big part of the book for me that I really wanted to convey, for my kids and for other working moms, that Mom has two jobs. And it's not a bad thing. You should be understanding and supportive of this other job that she has, because she's helping people. So, that was really the inspiration behind it. And I kind of just sat on my laptop for a long time, and I kicked it around, and went to a couple of children's book conferences, and talked to some editors and agents. And then about a year and a half ago, just got serious and said, "This is on my mind, on my heart. I want to put it out there." I just wanted to do it. It was a passion project. I hired an illustrator and went ahead and got it published this year.

Lee Burgess:

That's really cool. I think what you said that you tried to include in the book was... When I was reading it, first, alone in my office, I really thought that including that element to it of touching on these feelings of disappointment and frustration that I think all kids of working parents do have, and that really ignites the mommy guilt, which most of us have at various times, no matter how much you work – that was really touching to me, because I think it is hard to explain. I have watched my son, who is preschool age, explaining to him over the years, my job is a little bit weird because I'm a lawyer, but I own this business. So, he really gets confused about what I do. But my parents are both lawyers. And my dad has been a criminal defense lawyer. So, it's been interesting to try and listen to him understand what Granddad does, which is different than what I do or what I did when I worked and practiced law. And so, I think it is hard to give them those anchors. My dad was a trial lawyer when I was growing up. And I remember that "trial" just meant that he wouldn't sing Puff, the Magic Dragon with me before bed, because he was working. And I remember getting dragged to early morning court hearings. I grew up in an area where we had something called Foggy Day Schedule, which was a lot like snow days, except for frog, where I'm from in California.

Molly Bowen:

Oh, gosh!

Lee Burgess:

Yeah. But school would just start late. And so there was always this gamble. It's funny, I have these moments, these snapshots, of being a little kid. And one of them is my mom, my dad, and my grandmother, who were all working, standing in the kitchen, deciding who was going to have to take me for a couple of hours.



Who could miss work, basically. And so, many times, I would be sitting in the back of a courtroom when my dad was doing calendar hearings.

Molly Bowen: That's awesome.

Lee Burgess: Because they didn't take very long, right? And then he would take me to school. And I remember one of the first times I went, we were walking out with some of the other attorneys, and my dad asked what I thought about the hearing. And I said, "It seemed like you didn't get anything done." And he was like, "From the mouths of babes!"

Molly Bowen: "Isn't that the truth? Isn't that accurate?"

Lee Burgess: Yeah. But we know, as parents, and from all the reading we do, about how to work with our kids – that giving kids language to talk about some of these feelings is one of the ways to help them move through it. And I think that's one thing that's powerful about this book, is you help the kids get the language about, yeah, they're feeling frustrated that Mommy can't be everywhere that maybe she wants to be, but that's part of life and that's okay. The disappointment's okay.

Molly Bowen: Yeah. I think I tried to address your first point, that lawyers do a lot of different things. So, I tried to convey that, that there's lots of different types of things that lawyers can work on. So, that was my first goal. And then the second was really addressing the mommy guilt of not being there all the time, and the child's frustrations. I think, in this generation, we're dealing with it on a heightened level. This is my first go-around as a mom, so I can't really compare. But growing up for me, I don't remember my parents being at the school all the time. I remember them coming up there for maybe a special Christmas performance or something. Once or twice a year, they would be up at school. Whereas now, I have three school-aged kids, and I cannot tell you how many activities I am expected to be at, or a parent is expected to be at, every single week. Times three, because I have three. I just think it's unrealistic. It may not be like this at every school, but at least the district that I'm in. I love the stay-at-home moms, and all of the things they do for our teachers and our students, and all the activities they plan. But there are a lot of activities and it really sets me up for failure as a working mom. And so, I've just had to have a come-to-Jesus with my kids and say, "Today you have a ..." For example, the week of Thanksgiving, they each had their own individual feast in the classroom. Then there was this school-wide feast on another day. And then there was a turkey trot that we were all supposed to be at. I was supposed to be at the schools four days that week.

Lee Burgess: Wow!



Molly Bowen: Well, I had already had a trip for... I work in Puerto Rico a lot with my firm, and I was out of town the whole week, because the following week, my kids were going to be out of school for Thanksgiving break. And so, I had planned it that way, not thinking about all these little parties I was going to miss. But I had to sit them down and say, "Look, there's going to be parents at school every day this week, and Mom is not going to be there. Dad's going to try to make it to what he can. But we're going to celebrate Thanksgiving as a family next week while we're out of school, and that's our time to celebrate. This week you get to celebrate with your friends and your teachers." And after I've really broken it down for them like that, I feel like they get it more. Especially my middle one, he's pretty sensitive. I can't tell you how many times I've been called by another parent during Field Day, "Sawyer's having a meltdown because he's the only one here without a parent here." There are just times that there's nothing ... I try to make it to a lot of stuff, but I can't be... And then I have three kids, so I can't be everywhere. And I know that's a challenge that a lot of people are dealing with – a lot of working parents are dealing with, moms and dads. I don't know if it's part of our over-scheduling society, but it seems like it's something we deal with more than... My parents both worked and I just don't remember feeling like, "Oh, man! My parents are never up at school for a Valentine's Day party." I just don't remember feeling that way.

Lee Burgess: That's such a good point. I'm trying to remember my school at elementary school age. I remember having little parties, but I don't remember parents being there. And I do remember giving my mom a hard time because she would often times be the last person to pick me up from aftercare. And I would give her the look of death.

Molly Bowen: "Really?"

Lee Burgess: "Every other mom and dad has come, but you." And then the other thing I did to torture her was, when she was practicing law, I went... That was back in the days where you had the paper calendars, where every day you flipped them. It had almost like a little binder on your desk, right? And every day had lots of lines on it. And I went through and just started writing my name on the calendar days.

Molly Bowen: Oh, gosh! Like, pick up, leave, at this time.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. But I think that's a really interesting point. I do think that right now, as parents, we are expected to be at a lot of stuff. I'm the class mom for my son's class. Most of it's actually emails and I distribute information. I volunteered for that gig because I was like, "Well, at least I can do that from my desk." I don't have to physically be at school.

Molly Bowen: Oh, good for you!



Lee Burgess: I try.

Molly Bowen: I did that one time, and never again.

Lee Burgess: It might be my one and only. Hopefully nobody from my son's school is listening to this podcast. But it is still a lot of time. I'm happy to be involved, and I like being involved with the teachers and things like that, but when you are running on empty... And I do have two little kids at home. I'm carrying a lot of people's lives at once, and it is challenging. Let alone your professional life as well. And I think that it's hard to explain the nuances of this before you're living through it. I think that it is hard, and I think that it does feel like we have to be lots of places at once. And there's no conversation with your kid, I feel like, that ends with, "I'm going to have to leave early" or, "I will be late" or something similar that ends with, "No problem, Mommy!"

I'm going to go visit my son's class in the next couple of weeks. And some moms are staying half the day, and I'm going to stay for two hours, and I told him that. And he's like, "But other moms are staying longer." And I was like, "Well, your mom has got stuff I have to go do, buddy. It doesn't mean that I don't love you. And, if I'm going to come, this is how it's going to have to work." You can just feel the weight. And I'm still going. I feel very lucky that I own my own business, so I can do that. I don't have clients. Because I think when you have clients, or you have court dates, or you have partners asking you to be places, it's a much different ballgame. I have a lot of autonomy and I still feel that pressure.

Molly Bowen: Right. It's probably never going to go away, but I do feel like having a conversation with them on the front-end helps.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. I don't hold it against my parents, I don't feel neglected. My parents both worked while I was growing up. You were mentioning your parents worked. I think it is important to remember that the statistics show that just being a working parent doesn't mean that your kids are going to not come out to be great adults.

Molly Bowen: Right. I think they're going to be great adults. And I think also having a working mom, in particular... Having children, boys and girls, see moms in leadership roles as a child, I think helps them as adults be more accepting of women in leadership roles.

Lee Burgess: Oh, for sure!

Molly Bowen: So, I just think our kids are going to be okay. And it'll be good for them as adults to have gone through this experience of having a working parent. But it's still a challenge to get through it, on both sides.



Lee Burgess: It is. So, a lot of our listeners are in law school or are thinking about going to law school. And for those, many of whom probably don't have kids yet, but are thinking their five-year plan, their ten-year plan... As we said, you can only plan so much, and then life will take the reins and take you where you need to go. But what do you think people should consider when they're trying to make these plans about the realities of balancing a career and parenthood? Do you think there are any words of wisdom, given your experience so far, that you'd like to have told your younger self?

Molly Bowen: I think that we put a lot of pressure on ourselves, and we think we have to make choices and that we can't have it all, we can't do it all. And I think that that's not true. You have to find the right fit for you, career-wise. I've been lucky enough to work for a law firm that is female-oriented and has always given me a lot of flexibility as a mom, as long as I get my work done. I think if you bring value to whatever job you have, and you bring value to the firm or to the company you're working for, and your employees know they can count on you and they rely on you... And it doesn't matter where you are, whether you're sitting at your desk, or you're finishing up some briefing or whatever it is, after you put your kids to bed that night. I know that I'm a reliable person and I get my work done. I think not every law firm is going to be as flexible, and that just might not be the right fit for you. But I think it's definitely possible to have both. You may just have to figure out where the best spot for you to land is, in order to have that. I also think you don't ever get anything out of life, especially at a law firm, unless you ask for it.

Lee Burgess: That's really good advice.

Molly Bowen: So, I worked in law firm in Houston after law school for seven years. And I was sitting in traffic for an hour to an hour and a half each way. I was getting home after my small children were already almost in bed. I would see them for just a few minutes before bedtime usually. And it was very draining. And not just because of the job, but for a lot of reasons, my husband and I wanted to move back to the Austin area, to the Hill Country. We bought some land and it was our dream to have this mini-ranch, farm-studding thing with our boys. And I thought, for sure, there is no way that my firm was going to allow me to do this. So, I went around and I found contract work, and I had lined all this stuff up for myself. But the truth is, I had benefits with my firm; I was on salary, and it was very hard to walk away from. And I didn't want to leave my job; I just wanted to have a different lifestyle. I didn't want to live in Houston, I wanted to be a more present mom, I wanted to be able to work remotely. None of my clients were in Houston anyway; they were all over the country. So, if I needed to be somewhere, I had to take a trip anyway. And so, I approached them and basically told them, "I'm moving to the Hill Country. I have lined up contract work for myself. I don't really want to do that. I would love to keep working for



you, but I have to be able to work from home. And I'm moving in a couple of months." And I was very much expecting to be told, "Well, best of luck!"

Lee Burgess: Right. "Enjoy your life!"

Molly Bowen: Yeah. "It's been real." But they said that I could work from home for them. That was three and a half years ago, and on my end, it's worked out great! And I think they're happy too. It's just possible. You just have to stand in your own, and know what value you bring, and ask for it, and demand more. Sheryl Sandberg wrote [Lean In](#), and she talks about demanding more from your employer and demanding more from your spouse, domestically, at home, if you need help there. Or hiring help domestically in order to stay in the workforce as a young working mother. Lean into it and ask for the promotion, or ask for what you want. Ask for the raise, instead of saying, "Oh, well, I'm not going to ask for a raise because I'm leaving on time every day instead of staying until 8:00 or 9:00 o'clock." Just know what value you bring and be confident enough in yourself and your work product to ask for that flexibility.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. And I think often times women sell themselves short and don't go ask for those things. Like you said, you were so sure that they were just going to wave you goodbye. But I think you were really wise to go give it a shot, because you don't know what they're going to say. I think you were also smart planning for plan B. So, you didn't have a situation where you had no income or nothing to do. But you also knew what your ideal scenario was. And then you obviously had built a relationship with this firm, you were clearly making them money, you had client relationships, and they didn't want to lose that. And I think technology is making the ways that we, as parents, work much more flexible. And if you're creative, really, can allow you to work in a lot of different ways. I think as folks who are in law school now continue to enter the workforce, things are only going to get easier in that realm. And so, looking for a type of law firm work that might have some more flexibility, if that's what you need... Just really thinking about what you want your life to be like.

Molly Bowen: Exactly, exactly.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. Because I think that law firms are really slow to change, especially the big ones. So, if you want something atypical, BigLaw firm life might not be your solution. But there are maybe some more forward-thinking or female-run law firms, or very family-focused law firms, that are going to be more flexible. Remote law firms. I have a few friends who own remote firms, so everybody's working remotely. Our whole company is remote, so everybody is working all over the country. We have a couple of people over the world. And that works great for us, because a lot of us are juggling a lot of things at once.



Molly Bowen: Right, right. I think that it is possible to find it, especially in the last few years, and it's only becoming more prevalent. And I think that it's just a matter of really evaluating, like you said, what do you want your life to look like? And you've got to do what's best for you and your family. If I had stayed in that job in Houston and I was still barely seeing my kids and having to sit at a desk, expected to be there at 8:30 and not leave until everybody else leaves, I would have burnt out, and I wouldn't have been able to maintain it. And I wasn't happy there. So, you've just got to sit down and figure out what you want your life to look like and then go create something around that. It's out there, it's possible, and it's only becoming more possible. So, I think that you're right. I think that, as moms and dads, if that's what you want, that you can achieve that.

Lee Burgess: And I think if you're not sure what those models look like, then you need to reach out to your community of mommy lawyers. There are a lot of us out there. I believe, Molly, you and I are on this Facebook group together, the Mommy Lawyer Facebook group – the [Law Mamas](#) ...

Molly Bowen: Yes, Law Moms.

Lee Burgess: Law Moms. I think that even that kind of an online community can be a very powerful thing too. People are often asking what different models of work/life balance look like, and women are sharing their experiences. And I think that stuff's very powerful. If you're not sure what even the options are – reaching out, talking to different lawyers in your area or in your practice area, or looking for mentors, or looking to people with older kids to see how they did it when they had younger kids. Community is such an important part of parenthood and it can be a little hard to find, I think, for working parents, especially. So, finding your people and maybe learning from other people's experiences can help you decide what would be some good possible solutions if you're not happy with your current situation.

Molly Bowen: Yes. I 100% agree with that. I think that if you don't know exactly how to make it work for you, look at the other people around you that are doing it and model after them until you figure it out for yourself. And yeah, I think that the communities that you can find through social media these days, at least for me... Because I work from home now, I don't interact with that many other lawyer moms, or lawyers in general, in person. And so it's really, really great to connect with those other lawyer moms online. And they are all over it. I mean, any time anybody has any life advice, it doesn't even have to be law-related necessarily. They're all just so supportive of each other and always willing to refer cases to each other, or connect people with people in other cities. They are just so willing to empower each other and help each other. So, I think that's a huge resource.



Lee Burgess: Yeah. It's a beautiful part of the Internet. There's a lot of places on the Internet that aren't so beautiful, but I will say that the community that you and I are a part of, these lawyer moms, there's really beautiful stuff that can happen on there. There's some stuff that's not so beautiful too, but the majority of it is really lovely. And I think that it does show that we have to find that support, because I think lawyers are typically a certain personality type and doing all this juggle. We are usually efficient, Type A people, and we can get a lot done. But it can be a lot. And so, you want to reach out for that support and find out how people are dealing with childcare and balancing things with their spouses, and finding the right work situation. But it can be done, and there are tons of happy lawyers. And you can meet lots of people, even through friends. We share a mutual friend, which is how we met each other.

Molly Bowen: Yes.

Lee Burgess: Which is how a Texas lawyer and a California lawyer are having a random conversation on a podcast. And then that's really special too.

Molly Bowen: Yeah. And I think you're right about lawyers typically being Type A, thinking they can get it all done, very productive and efficient. And I think that was one thing, as a young lawyer mom, that I struggled with the most, is just because you can do it all doesn't mean you should. I think that one piece of advice, or nugget, I've learned is that you really just need to look at everything and make a decision about what the best use of your time is. And there are things that you can do to make it easier on yourself. For example, I know you just said you're the room mom, but I just made the decision... I am Type A in that I want things to be done a certain way. And if we're going to have a class party, then it's going to be over-the-top class party, with all of these crafts and extras. Things that I don't need to be staying up until 2:00 o'clock in the morning, cutting out construction paper and things like that. It's awesome and I love to do stuff like that with my kids. But it adds stress. So now, what I've learned from that is, I don't volunteer for things unless I really feel like I have the time to do it. And also things like, there's always a list for a sign-up for a party, or snacks, or something that you're supposed to bring. And I always make it a point to choose the easiest thing. Instead of a homemade cupcake or a baked good, I will choose to bring the water bottles.

Lee Burgess: No, that's a good point.

Molly Bowen: Or the napkins, or something like that. Just little things that are time-sucks. I mean, curb-side or deliverable groceries is life changing, right? Because that was a huge time-suck for me. But going back to just demanding the support from your employer and the flexibility, and knowing your worth, and then the domestic support at home from your kids and your spouse. My kids have to make their own beds every morning. They look terrible, but they are made. Just



starting with small stuff with them at a young age, but just making sure everybody in the household is responsible for picking up after themselves. Now, I still do get help behind that, because I have three boys and they are like a hurricane.

Lee Burgess: I'm sure!

Molly Bowen: Tuesdays are my favorite day of the week. The maid comes on Tuesdays. And by Tuesday evening, around 6:00 p.m., it looks like she never came.

Lee Burgess: I know, right? It's like there's that blissful hour or two where the house is so clean.

Molly Bowen: Right, right. Yeah. The employer support, the domestic support at home, however that works for your family. And then the third part of it is, the mommy guilt is not going to go away just from those two factors. You've got to have a conversation with your kids and you have to help them learn why Mom's not there for every moment throughout the day. For me, it was just really showing them what I do and showing them pictures, and helping them understand that I help people. So, we represent homeowners and businesses around the country who have suffered storm-related damages. So, last year our firm opened up an office in Puerto Rico because Hurricanes Maria and Irma almost wiped out the entire island of Puerto Rico. And I was in Puerto Rico in the fall and my oldest son knocked his front tooth out at school – a permanent tooth – and had to go get emergency dental procedure done. And I was out of town and obviously upset that I wasn't there for that. But the dentist, the next time I went in, or I think it was the technician, was telling me, "Oh yeah! He told me all about how his mom's not here because she's in Puerto Rico and she's helping people. And there are people that don't have roofs. And there are people whose house is flooded and they need her help. So, that's why she's there." It just reassured me that that does work, and that they understand and they can get it. And it's okay if you're not there for everything, even though it still breaks your heart on stuff like that.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. Well, and I think the other piece of that too is that when you are with your kids, just try and be as present as possible. Because kids are craving that connection, right? And they're absorbing everything you're telling them, like you were mentioning about what you do and where you've been. My son always asks me what I've done during the day and who I've met with. He likes to know the names. Even though he hasn't met everybody I work with, he wants to know who I've been talking to and what I've been doing. And I think being able, as much as possible, to put our phones away and just be with them for that time that we are with them is where the magic happens. I think that that's the connection they're looking for. I was told once that children just need 20 minutes a day of undivided attention from an adult to really have that



connection. And that can be bedtime reading, maybe reading your book. It can be doing lots of things, having a conversation. But when I heard that, I was like, "Oh, that is a doable goal most days."

Molly Bowen: That's doable, right?

Lee Burgess: And then if that makes my kid feel heard and feel present... I think most of us as working parents, dads and moms, we can try and do that. And so I think just trying to be present and really be with them when we're with them, is the best gift we can give them.

Molly Bowen: Yeah. And that's one of the things that the book touches on too. I think it says, "She might miss a class party or skip Field Day, but lawyers have deadlines and court orders to obey." And then the next page is, "But Mom always makes time for the things that matter most, like bedtime stories, bike rides, and homemade French toast." So, just driving that point home to your kids, "Hey, I'm going to miss this thing at your school on Thursday, but this weekend, we're going to go on a bike ride." I'm big about making a big breakfast on the weekends. I don't do it during the week, but on the weekends, we'll do pancakes or French toast or something like that. And just making sure they know, "Hey, I might not be there for your practice, but this is what we're going to do this weekend." We spend quality time together in other ways. And even just the bedtime story and putting your phone away for an hour in the evenings and being present with them – you're right, is so important.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. Well, I want to come to your house for brunch some weekend. That sounds delicious!

Molly Bowen: You're invited!

Lee Burgess: Thank you! Well, with that, unfortunately, we're out of time. Molly, thanks so much for taking time out of your busy schedule to chat with us. I think there are a lot of great nuggets in here for new moms and current mommy lawyers. And we will link to your book. So, if people want to learn more and get a copy of it, they can do so in the show notes.

Molly Bowen: Yeah, thanks! They can get it at MollyBowen.com.

Lee Burgess: Wonderful.

Molly Bowen: And thank you so much for having me!

Lee Burgess: Yeah, absolutely.



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RESOURCES:

[Mommy Lawyer, by Molly Bowen](#)

[Lean In, by Sheryl Sandberg](#)

[MollyBowen.com](#)

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[Podcast Episode 182: Navigating Motherhood in the Legal Profession \(w/ Jennifer Warren\)](#)