



Alison Monahan: Welcome to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today, we're talking about how to bounce back from a major mistake. Your Law School Toolbox hosts are Alison Monahan, that's me, and 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.

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.

Lee Burgess: Welcome back. Today we're talking about how to bounce back from a major mistake – one of those school, career or personal screw-ups that seems like it might cause major problems for you. It happens to everyone.

Alison Monahan: It definitely happens, and these screw-ups do not end with law school graduation. I remember a story when I was working at a law firm. We were involved in a litigation and the judge emailed the whole group, co-counsel, everyone, a decision of some type, and the managing partner wasn't happy with that decision. He wasn't happy with some of the logic in that decision.

Lee Burgess: Uh-oh.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, so he went off without thinking very much. He probably should have listened to our ["Mindfulness" episode](#) before responding to the email.

Lee Burgess: Right, deep breaths.

Alison Monahan: Deep breaths. Because what ended up happening was he actually accidentally copied the judge.

Lee Burgess: Ouch! That is not going to go well.

Alison Monahan: It did not go well. It's one of those emails you get, and you have that moment of, "Did he actually just send this to the judge? Wow, okay. What is he going to do now?"

Lee Burgess: Yikes.

Alison Monahan: So this happens. But it doesn't have to be the end of the world. I think even in that case, he followed the basic procedure we're going to talk about below. I'm not sure the judge ever really liked him very much again, but he did manage to



basically sort of repair the damage that had been done. It was definitely something you really should try to avoid, if possible. It was pretty embarrassing.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, that's pretty embarrassing. I think embarrassing things are just going to happen, and the more complicated life gets, the more likely it is that it's going to happen.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, things happen. They do.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. So if you have made some major faux pas, there are some things that you can do.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think number one is you just kind of have to own up to it, and take responsibility. And I know this isn't a necessarily popular viewpoint among certain aspects of our society at this point, but if you actually are trying to repair this damage, I think number one, acknowledge what happened, take responsibility. So in that case, I think the partner had to get on the phone immediately with the judge and basically grovel.

Lee Burgess: Grovel.

Alison Monahan: Say, "Your honor, I'm very sorry this happened. Obviously this was not intended for you. I have been a complete asshole", whatever it was. "I'm so, so, so sorry. This was completely inappropriate, and I understand that you'd probably continue to be upset, but I just wanted to call you and personally apologize for that." And then I think you've got to either try to repair that damage, or make it clear why this is not going to happen again, particularly in this case, if it's somebody, say, at work, or the professor – somebody above you in the hierarchy that you need to continue working with.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. I think it's an interesting time to be talking about this stuff because we are in a... Well, politics is everywhere, right? If you look, let's say, at all the people who are running for president, all like 200 of them... Or how many people are running for president right now?

Alison Monahan: It's a lot.

Lee Burgess: It's a lot. They're all making mistakes, right?

Alison Monahan: Or they have made mistakes in the past.

Lee Burgess: Or they have made mistakes, and the mistakes are being thrown in their face. And I think it is interesting to watch fairly sophisticated people who consider themselves qualified to run the country, and how they manage these mistakes. Do they take responsibility and own up for it, and then try and come up with



solutions, or do they pretend like those aren't mistakes and do they get defensive? I think you can learn some lessons by how some of these situations play out that you may want to incorporate in your own life when it's inevitable, but mistakes will get made.

Alison Monahan: Mistakes are made.

Lee Burgess: Mistakes are just made.

Alison Monahan: It's one of those things, the difference between saying, "What happened was mistakes were made" versus, "I did this" or "I failed to do this."

Lee Burgess: Right. "I would do it differently."

Alison Monahan: Like Mayor Pete. People are like, "Why don't you have more minorities in your police force?" And he's like, "Because I couldn't make it happen."

Lee Burgess: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: Like, "I take responsibility for that."

Lee Burgess: Yep. And I have to say, I was like, "Wow, that's refreshing."

Alison Monahan: Yeah. I mean, assuming that he was actually trying to make it happen, which we don't know.

Lee Burgess: I'm sure that there will be an in depth article about that. But I think there is something that is a little refreshing about somebody just saying, "I tried, I failed. I've got to keep trying."

Alison Monahan: "Here's what I did and here's what we need to do better. Thank you for pointing out this really needs to be a priority."

Lee Burgess: Right. And I think that is very different from some of the ways that other people are applying out things in their past, or when people are getting their fingers pointed at them. So, one of the things we can do when we're trying to be better people is, we can always look at who you want to emulate. I think it's an interesting time to watch...

Alison Monahan: It is. There are so many examples.

Lee Burgess: There are so many examples.

Alison Monahan: And speaking from the position of someone who's been obviously on both sides of this equation, but I think for the person who has more power or whatever, I



think that step of making it clear with specific reasons that this particular incident is unlikely to occur again, is so critical, because things go wrong all over the place. The real question often times is, "What are you going to do about it? How do we ensure that this horrible thing you've done does not continue happening?"

Lee Burgess: Right. And I think that there is something very powerful in thoughtful vulnerability. I know that we've talked with [Brené Brown](#)... About Brené Brown. I wished we'd talked with Brené Brown.

Alison Monahan: I talked with Brené Brown at a conference, but yeah.

Lee Burgess: If you want to come on the podcast, I'd love to have you. But if we were talking about shame and vulnerability and things like that, her whole thing is, if you make a mistake, it's not to be like, "I made a huge mistake", and then dump all this stuff on other people. But it's more like, if there is a part of your explanation that is an authentic part of you and that maybe creates a vulnerability, that that is okay to share, as long as it's really about repairing the situation and being authentic. And so, I think you can also want to be thoughtful about what you share and what you don't share. Because sometimes mistakes are made just because you're angry and irate and you just reply to all without thinking. Sometimes mistakes are made because you're dealing with a death in the family or you're dealing with something personal that has happened, and people might not know that. And I think sometimes, some thoughtful honesty – not defensiveness, but honestly of like, "I own this, this is the mistake. This is why this happened."

Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. Like, "Yes, I did do this. However, just FYI, there are some extenuating circumstances. And these are the steps I'm taking to make sure it doesn't happen again."

Lee Burgess: And you never know, there can be a bright side to those conversations too. And so, I think that being thoughtful about that and in thinking about vulnerability versus defensiveness, that can be very important. Coming to someone humbly and just being like, "This is what's going on and this is why this happened", I think will go over a lot better than, "This isn't really my fault, because I've got this thing happening." It's still your fault.

Alison Monahan: Right. There is a difference between an excuse and an explanation.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. So, why don't we talk through some scenarios that listeners might end up running into?

Alison Monahan: Okay. So, one of my favorites. Huge, huge faux pas: "Oh my gosh, I'm so embarrassed. I said something stupid in class."



- Lee Burgess: Oh my gosh. Everybody's going to say something stupid in class.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, first of all, this is really not something that should probably even be on this list.
- Lee Burgess: You should not worry about this. I know. But people get really upset about it.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. I think there's a distinction here though, between you saying something that you feel like was not, or actually probably was not accurate, and maybe getting chastised in class – or not so much chastised, but just having your professor kind of look at you blankly and move on, or it was very awkward. That type of thing should not be on this list. It happens, it's part of the learning process. Everyone who gets through law school has a story about the time they screwed up in class. However, there are situations that you may need to try to repair. So, if you were clearly unprepared and had not done the reading and you got caught on, I think that's a different scenario.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. And then I think that maybe you even need to follow up with the professor, and this could be an interesting example, if there's a reason why. So let's use my, there had just been a death in the family. It's like, if you were unprepared in class because you've been dealing with a personal crisis and your professor calls you out on it and it's a total disaster, going back to the professor afterwards and being like, "Professors so and so, I just wanted to let you know that I realize I was unprepared for class. That is unacceptable. This is what's going on in my life. I'm trying to get my act together. Things should be better by next week, but I just wanted to let you know what was happening." I think they might say, "You should have told me before class and told me that you didn't want to be called on, but thank you for telling me now. I look forward to you being prepared next time you get called on."
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. I think if you're literally never prepared for class, that does not work. But if you are someone who typically is prepared, and there is a pretty good reason that you weren't, I think going to your professor and just dealing with that in a straightforward way is probably going to increase their respect for you, not decrease it.
- Lee Burgess: Yep. And I think that this idea of just owning up to what's happening is some of the way that you avoid some of these mistakes. So when I was teaching a class, I basically told people – I was working with 3Ls and I said, "I do not accept late work. Basically, this is like a job. You can tell me you need an extension, but if you just don't turn in your work, I'm not going to accept it, because that's how real life is." And I had a lot of people who still didn't ask for extensions, which was very fascinating. But it was this idea of, you have to just own up to the fact that you're not going to be able to get your work done. That's part of being a grownup. I think if you could start to shift your thinking in law school of, "If



something's going on and I'm not going to be able to be prepared, I'm not going to be able to deliver what somebody is expecting of me, I have to come up with a way to handle that" – it'll serve you better when you start working.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. I remember a case my first year where I was doing a pro bono project, and I basically had to be in court in the Bronx during one of my classes. And so, I went and told my professor in advance and, to be honest, she wasn't all that sympathetic. She wasn't upset about it, but she was basically like, "Well, you're making the choice to do this and I respect that choice, but I'm also not going to teach you all this in office hours. You're going to have to figure out another way to get this information. So don't expect me to do that." Which I thought was totally fair.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. But I'm sure she at least respected the fact that you owned why you weren't going to be there.

Alison Monahan: Well, versus just not showing up. And I think it was like the second to last week of classes or something like that. It was pretty close to exams; I didn't want to just not be there. I wanted to make sure she knew why, but she wasn't also going to give me a whole lot of brownie points, even though I was theoretically doing something nice for the world. She was like, "Well, that's a choice."

Lee Burgess: Yeah. And I think that when you're a people pleaser – and I think some law students are people pleasers – it can be hard to own up to, "I might disappoint you."

Alison Monahan: Right. Yeah. People can have the reaction they have, and you can't expect them to be like, "Oh, that's so great that you're doing this. Oh, you are a nice person and you're doing this pro bono project. I'll have a second class for you." She was just like, "Okay, I understand that, and good luck with the case. But if you're not in class, you're not in class."

Lee Burgess: Yeah. I think the scenario that's probably going to come up more is that you do something really dumb at work.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, because that happens does.

Lee Burgess: It does, yeah. The first time I did something really dumb at work was my first summer. I was working at the US Attorney's office and I was taking a plea agreement. They had given me a template and they told me to update the template. And they maybe weren't as direct with the directions, but I definitely did not go over everything with a fine tooth comb. And I submitted a plea agreement to the court that had errors in it.

Alison Monahan: Oh no.



Lee Burgess: Oh yes. And I – and my supervisor was sitting behind me – got reamed in open court by the judge, who was super mad.

Alison Monahan: Wow.

Lee Burgess: And the judge had a right to be super mad, because that was a huge mistake on my part. I mean, I didn't know what I was doing, but it was my job to figure out what I was doing. And that was a rookie mistake on my half. And then my supervisor didn't proofread everything I did. So, it was a rookie mistake on her part because she should've caught the mistake before it went to the judge. But I was shaking, my knees were shaking. I'm standing up there on the podium, in my suit, getting yelled at, and I'm between a 1L and a 2L. So, I called my dad after this happened, who's a lifetime litigator, and he had been assistant US attorney. And I was like, "I just got reamed in open court, because I made this mistake." And he was like, "Well, welcome to the club. That will not be the last time if you do this sort of work, that you will get yelled at in open court." And I was like, "What do you mean?" He was like, "Because things happen. You shouldn't have screwed up. You have to own that, but this isn't the last time this is going to happen." I thought that was kind of a funny response, but I think that's true. You have to figure out how you're going to handle mistakes that are inevitably going to be made.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think that's right. It's almost like giving the bad answer in class. If you are a career litigator, of course you're going to screw things up. We all screw things up. And it might be something totally minor. I remember getting whisper yelled at in court by, I think actually the same partner who'd sent the email to the judge, who was basically giving me a really hard time because I hadn't made the right number of copies. He was like, "I need to hand these out to the judge and the jury. We don't have the right copies." And I was like, "Why is this my problem?" So your first reaction, I think is to get defensive, like, "This wasn't my job, whatever. Nobody told me how many copies to make." But his point, which he said later was like, "Your job is to make me look good, and if I look bad, whatever it is, you failed in your job, basically."

Lee Burgess: Yeah. So, I think that often times, one, you have to own that you made this mistake, but I think that as you are fixing it, the end result of this is, what lessons can you learn so this doesn't happen again? I will tell you, I did more plea agreements for misdemeanors during that summer, and I was copiously, line-by-line proofreading every single plea agreement to make sure there wasn't a period that was misplaced, because I did not want to get yelled at again in open court. And I'm sure that my supervisor went line-by-line and proofed everything. And I think that was a valuable lesson for me. I think I was much more careful, especially around documents and things that I wasn't that familiar with, because I think it can be easy to get overly confident, especially when



you're new and you don't really understand everything that you're doing, that you have to double and triple check things.

Alison Monahan: I think sometimes people think it doesn't matter, that somebody else is going to check their work. And maybe that's true, maybe that's not, but you cannot assume someone else is going to check your work.

Lee Burgess: No. They don't always have time.

Alison Monahan: No, they don't have time. Or they just assume that you've done it competently because you're getting paid a lot of money; well, probably not as an intern.

Lee Burgess: No, I wasn't.

Alison Monahan: But at a firm, you're getting paid a lot of money. As someone who would sometimes have to supervise people, it was maddening when people sent me stuff that they clearly had not bothered to go through because I'm like, "Why is this my problem? This is your assignment. You're getting paid a lot of money. I don't care if it's boring. Sit down and do the actual work." I remember as a second year summer associate, I wrote a letter to, I think a client or something, and I was feeling pretty good about that letter. I did lot of good research in it and whatever. And the next day the supervisor – he was probably like fifth or sixth year attorney – calls me into his office and he says, "Well, the letter's pretty good. There's only one problem." I said, "What's the problem?" He's like, "You misspelled the client's name. And he's like, "Yeah, that's a real problem."

Lee Burgess: But there are situations where they would have had something to go out fast and somebody might not have caught that.

Alison Monahan: No, he really reamed me for it. I mean, immediately I was just like, "Oh wow, that is really bad." He was just like, "You cannot do that."

Lee Burgess: And you have a high attention to detail.

Alison Monahan: Relatively.

Lee Burgess: I mean, I think you do.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. Relatively.

Lee Burgess: You can spot an error.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, true. It's harder to spot in your own work, but yeah, ever since that... It was the same thing. It was a good learning experience, because ever since then I





have always triple checked names and spelling, because of course people notice.

Lee Burgess: Of course.

Alison Monahan: I mean, people misspell my name all the time, and of course I notice.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. Or they call me a man. We were just talking about that.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. They may think Lee is a man, even though her picture is all over the Internet. They think my name has two Ls even though it's spelled with one L everywhere else. Yeah. So, if you feel like you've done something really stupid, looking at it as a learning experience is probably the best way to go about it.

Lee Burgess: And I like the point that you made about, you can't always be sure that somebody has time to proofread. I was on a trial team, and my job was to basically sit at the office and research questions that were getting emailed to us from the room. And they sat us all down and they're like, "You are the back end trial team. We're not going to have time to check your work. So, the race is going to be..." They had like three of us researching questions at basically the same time and they're like, "Who can get us an answer first? And it better be right." And I kind of was like, "Oh, okay."

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I remember the first week of my very first summer job after my first year, similar situation. They were drafting a brief, they were on a deadline, it was a really tight timeframe. And someone came into my office and they said, "Okay, we need you to research this contracts question. Are you familiar with Corbin on Contracts?" I said, "It's what, is that a website?" And they were like, "That's a book. Let me take you to the library and show you this book. Look in this book and find the answer to this question that I need." And so, I did that. I had like an hour, and I turned it around and I found what seemed like a pretty reasonable answer and I sent it back to him. And he picked up the phone and called me. He said, "How sure are you that this is right?" I said, "Well, considering that I've had one year of law school and had never seen this book before, I'm pretty convinced it's right." He's like, "I need it to be right, because I don't have time to look it up and it's going into the brief." And it was very eye opening. I was like, "Oh wow. So there's this real life. This is real work." In the end, he did tell me later that he actually had checked it over just to be sure.

Lee Burgess: Probably wise on his part.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. He was like, "I realize I didn't want to be committing malpractice." And it was right. But yeah, I think this idea that you might be that last line of defense is something people have to start really taking seriously.



- Lee Burgess: Yeah. Okay, so you make a mistake at work. I think the first question is, is it as bad as you think it is?
- Alison Monahan: Right. Is this like, you said something a little bit not quite right in a class, or is this like you just emailed the judge something really offensive?
- Lee Burgess: Then I think you have to ask, was it something you should have known? Like, I should have known to proof the whole plea agreement.
- Alison Monahan: Right. I should have known how to spell the client's name.
- Lee Burgess: Right, exactly. So it's like, should we have been able to research this and double check? This comes up too. Recruiters will always tell us about cover letters who have the firm name misspelled, or are at the wrong firm. That does come up with resumes and cover letters where people will misspell the name of the firm, or...
- Alison Monahan: The managing partner's name.
- Lee Burgess: The managing partner's name. All of that kind of stuff just makes you... You should not make those mistakes. I had a fifth grade teacher, Mrs. Pearson, who once told us that we had the option to take a math test with a calculator or without the calculator. But if we had got to use the calculator, if we got one wrong, we failed. And if we didn't use the calculator, we were allowed to get some wrong. And she said, "If you have a calculator, you shouldn't be able to fail."
- Alison Monahan: You should never get the arithmetic wrong with a calculator. That's just lazy.
- Lee Burgess: Right. That's just lazy, and you're not checking your work, basically. You could make a mistake but you've got to check your work. And so, I think with a lot of this stuff, just setting these safeguards up for yourself of, how are you going to proofread and check that the client's name is spelled right? How are you going to make sure that you've got the right managing partner in the letter? How are you going to double check that you're not BCCing someone you're not supposed to be BCCing? Because not only can it just be a mistake, like it goes to the judge. You can easily break privilege.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. That can be a really serious problem.
- Lee Burgess: And that's a really serious problem.
- Alison Monahan: I think too, particularly if you're sending it from a phone or something like that, it's often times not exactly clear what you're responding to. That is something you have to be incredibly careful about. I've even known attorneys who, when



they were sending a reply, they would take everyone out of the reply, and then add them back in one by one, so that they're starting from scratch and then obviously you're never going to add the judge.

Lee Burgess: Exactly.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. I think this question of like, is this something you could or should have known, is really important. If it's not something that you should know, then you need to ask. And I think, understanding that distinction of, "Okay, I've reached a point where I don't know something." You don't just guess. You ask someone.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, exactly. So, what about if you do or say something that is slightly offensive? Or in some cases very offensive.

Alison Monahan: I know summer associates who have gotten fired for things. I think in that case you basically just have to immediately acknowledge as soon as possible when this comes up, that something has happened. Maybe you didn't realize it at the time, and somebody comes to you and they say, "Look, we heard about this incident." That is not a place to be making excuses and getting defensive.

Lee Burgess: No.

Alison Monahan: That is a place to just say, "Look, I don't know what I was thinking. This was something I shouldn't have said. I am so apologetic." You grovel, basically. And even then, it quite possibly won't work.

Lee Burgess: No, but you can try. And again, I think this goes back to what we were talking about earlier, was own it. Excuses are not your friend here. I think it's really just saying, "I made a mistake and here's what I'm going to learn from it." You don't want to just be defensive. That's not going to get you where you need to be.

Alison Monahan: No. And I think too, you can't make it someone else's problem, like, "Oh, I realize I made a mistake but now I want to have everybody give me sensitivity training." No, you need to go out and like, "Okay, I'm going to find this book on this topic and educate myself and learn something from this." Not like, "Oh yeah, everybody should tell me why this was offensive." It's like, you need to get on board.

Lee Burgess: What about overstepping boundaries?

Alison Monahan: This happens. I mean, sometimes people don't understand, as a summer associate or a first year intern, you probably should not be directly contacting a client, for example. I think that can go badly wrong.

Lee Burgess: And you're not a licensed lawyer.



Alison Monahan: You're not a lawyer. Anyway, as law student, even as a young attorney, often times your boss does not want you to be contacting the client directly. I think that's something just to really clarify. I think you should default to thinking you should never do that, unless you have explicit, preferably written permission in an email or whatever, saying, "Hey, we need to send this to Bob, the general counsel. Do you want me to send it to Bob, or would you prefer to send it directly?" And if you get the answer back that's like, "You can go ahead and shoot Bob that email" – great. Otherwise do not send that email.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. I think the other thing is once you're in practice, an underutilized way of trying to remedy some situations, is – I think almost every state bar, but I know the California bar does – has a hotline. If you're worried that you made a mistake and it could be a bad mistake, like a malpractice type mistake, or a violation of the rules of professional conduct, you can call and ask what you're supposed to do to fix it. And it's anonymous. They're not going to secretly take down your name and then have something filed for you. But if you get into trouble with the bar, what they are really upset about is when you are trying to cover up something, or you're trying not to fix it. When you do your moral character, it's not like, "Oh, I made this bad choice." It's like, "I made this bad choice and then I lied about it. And then you found it, and now you're wondering what else I lied about."

Alison Monahan: Yeah. Or, I think a lot of times if you ever read the stories in the back of the bar magazine about who's been disbarred or otherwise censored or whatever it is, they really often start with, "Attorney X made a pretty minor mistake. They missed a deadline, they didn't file something."

Lee Burgess: They put money in the wrong account, or whatever.

Alison Monahan: That's bad, it's not a good thing. But you can come back from that. But then, "Attorney X decided not to tell the client, and lie to them, and take money out of a different client account to cover the settlement that never actually came in." And then you're like, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. Now you're really pretty clearly on the road to being disbarred." So, I think dealing with that initially. [Lee Rosen](#) actually writes some great stuff. I read one of his years ago – we can try to find it, about getting a call from his malpractice insurer when he had screwed something up, and that moment when you're just like, "Oh God. Oh yeah, this happened. Okay." You know, that feeling that you just want to hide under the table, but you have to deal with it.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. So, I think that's an underutilized resource.

Alison Monahan: I think that's a great point. Call the state bar if you're really concerned.



- Lee Burgess: Call the state bar if you're really concerned. Even, I think, if you're in a firm situation, and maybe you've made a mistake – before you go talk to your supervisor, you want to have more information. Again, it's anonymous. They're not going to be able to know.
- Alison Monahan: And this should not be like, "I misspelled something in a discovery request". This should be like, "I accidentally CC'd someone and I think I might've destroyed attorney-client privilege."
- Lee Burgess: Right. "I think I might have lost privilege. I think I might have missed a filing deadline. I think that I might've done something."
- Alison Monahan: Well, you should not be filing, but...
- Lee Burgess: No, but depending on... If you're a solo practitioner, it may be up to you.
- Alison Monahan: What I'm saying is, as a student.
- Lee Burgess: As a student, no. But there are many points, especially in early practice where you may make mistakes.
- Alison Monahan: Oh, for sure.
- Lee Burgess: And so you want to utilize those resources. But the reality is, pretending like it didn't happen is never the right solution.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think you want to think immediately about, "Who do I need to talk to about this? How are we going to fix it, and how can we ensure this doesn't happen again?" And that might be processes that you put in place that you didn't realize you needed, for yourself, or some sort of technology thing. Maybe you take off the ability to BCC people, whatever. But you've got to figure out how to prevent this from happening.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. So, the other thing we wanted to touch on is that you're going to screw up in your personal life too, but that's beyond the scope of this podcast. Sorry! But it is important that these skills of practicing owning up to your mistakes, they're going to have ramifications in your personal life too, because you're going to make mistakes in your personal life.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. I think this is important, and sometimes people in school, or young lawyers think it's not very important, maybe less important than a work screw-up to try to repair, if you've done something with your significant other or your kids, your family, whatever, even friends. But these are the people you go through life with, and they're your support in what can be an often frustrating profession. So, I think trying to keep those relationships as solid as possible is



going to benefit you personally, but also in your career. And so, having somebody that you can talk to, whether it's a therapist, friends, maybe a religious counselor, some sort of coach – it can be really helpful in preserving all different types of relationships. You can also check out different books and websites, but making these relationships a priority and figuring out how to repair your screw-ups is really not wasted time.

Lee Burgess: No. And often times, I think the patterns we get in our home life are often repeated in our professional life, and vice versa.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. Your relationships in one context, and/or your relationship skills, are likely to overlap. So, if you are somebody who is totally out of control at the office, and yelling at people, and getting really frustrated – you're probably not going to be an angel when you walk through the door. And vice versa – if you're fighting a lot with your significant other, having issues with your kids, it's probably going to impact your work.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, and we all only have so much patience.

Alison Monahan: Yes, it's a limited resources.

Lee Burgess: It is a limited resource. But I think that overall, just learning how to repair any mistakes that you make is going to make you feel like a better lawyer, a better professional, a better law student, and a better human as a whole.

Alison Monahan: Right. I think it can give you that self-respect to at least be able to say, "Okay, I did screw something up, but I took responsibility for it. I apologized. I'm taking steps to do better." And then years later, you can laugh about it.

Lee Burgess: That's right. Exactly. Alright, 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 and rating on your favorite listening app. We'd really appreciate it. And be sure to subscribe so you don't miss anything. If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to reach out to myself or Alison at [lee@lawschooltoolbox.com](mailto:lee@lawschooltoolbox.com) or [alison@lawschooltoolbox.com](mailto:alison@lawschooltoolbox.com). Or you can always contact us via our website [contact form](#) at LawSchoolToolbox.com. Thanks for listening, and we'll talk soon!

## **RESOURCES:**

[Podcast Episode 25: How to Behave Like a Professional in the Legal Workplace](#)

[Podcast Episode 147: Top Summer Associate Mistakes and How to Fix Them \(w/Sadie Jones\)](#)

[Podcast Episode 210: Using Mindfulness Practices as a Law Student](#)

[Brené Brown](#)

[Lee Rosen: My Most Embarrassing Moment](#)