



- Lee Burgess: Welcome to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today, we are talking about getting ready to start law school in these strange COVID times. Your Law School Toolbox hosts are Alison Monahan and Lee Burgess, that's me. We are here to demystify the law school and early legal career experience, so you'll be 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, and let's get started.
- Alison Monahan: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today we're talking about starting law school, specifically, how to frame it for yourself. Law school can be intimidating and scary as you take this next step in your career, but really learning how to be a law student is just like learning any other skill. Right, Lee?
- Lee Burgess: Oh yes. I think this is something that I guess we learn over and over again, like everything else when we talk to students making this transition. And the longer I do this work, I think I just get more committed to this idea that law school is just something new, just like anything else, and it's all about keeping perspective and approaching it in the right way. And I wish I could go back and tell my 25-year-old self some of these lessons.
- Alison Monahan: Right. Well, in some ways, I think it's just like learning or re-learning anything else. And I know you have kids, so you're watching them learn things all the time. In a weird way, I think during these COVID times, we've all had to learn something or re-learn things, right? Have you created any new habits? Have you learned anything in the last, I guess year we're looking at at this point?
- Lee Burgess: I know, a whole year, which is a little spooky. I think so. Any time that your life gets kind of uprooted, which I think that's an understatement for what COVID life has been, it always makes you kind of question your routines and see if you need to stretch or learn new things. I think a lot of us learned new things to maybe fill some space in our life that was taken up by, I don't know, being social.
- Alison Monahan: Right. Leaving the house, talking to people.
- Lee Burgess: Leaving the house. I know you have a solid bread habit, but a lot of people really took on cooking projects. I definitely make a mean banana bread now.
- Alison Monahan: Nice.



Lee Burgess: Much better than I had in the past. And doing other projects. I did a vertical vegetable garden using this vegetable garden planter, and I have probably a black thumb, I think I have two black thumbs. So, learning to grow something was a challenge. And I also tried to develop new habits. I used to go to exercise classes and yoga classes and go places to exercise, and now I ride my Peloton bike in the corner by myself. I had to create new habits around that, which has ended up being a good thing for me overall, but it's taken a really long time to create some of those new habits. And even before lockdown, I was working on trying to learn a new language, but I did abandon that. I've been trying to read more books. There's a lot of stuff I've been trying to do. I think one of the things that I have learned though is new habits, they take a long time to really develop. It's no joke.

Alison Monahan: Right, and even after you've developed them, you can drop them pretty quickly. I got an Apple watch at some point in the pandemic because I realized I was just not getting any exercise ever, and I thought that was probably not, as this dragged on, probably the best thing. And for a while, I was walking, I was going up steep hills every day, I was making sure I really hit my goals. And then I think it was when we had the fires and so I couldn't go outside, and then suddenly... I don't remember the last time I walked up a hill in San Francisco now. It's been a while. And sometimes I do want to walk, but now my walk is more like I just walked around the block. I created that habit pretty well, and then I just dropped it completely, I'll admit it. But I did take up tennis, so that's been fun. And again, I'd played tennis before, in high school, but I hadn't played for forever, basically. And actually took up squash in law school so that had messed up my tennis stroke. So I hired a coach, I had friends who I have played with. It was actually quite fun. Yeah, I got into even expanding my sourdough repertoire. Now I can make sweet breads with sourdough, so things like Babka, Cinnamon rolls. That's been fun.

Lee Burgess: Your jamming game was pretty big too this year. I was just eating some of your jam.

Alison Monahan: I've always done that. That's just like a thing I do now. I did buy myself a really nice jam pot for my birthday last year, I recall. It made it great. I've kind of kept up my Spanish, I talk to my tutor sometimes. I've gotten better at skiing. So, I think there are definitely things that I've learned. But for me, I feel like it's really important that I do be learning something, because otherwise I get really bored. So, anyone who's starting law school doesn't have to worry about that problem at least.

Lee Burgess: That's true. I think though, one of the things that we can take from these COVID times that I think a lot of people, including myself, didn't really apply to law school, is this idea that when your world kind of shifts... And I think going back to school is a big life shift, especially if you were working. I did that, I went from



a job straight into law school, and it's such a different culture, social life, amount of work. All of that kind of stuff is very different. And I think that one of the things that we tend to do is we just say, "Oh, I can only do law school" or, "I can't pivot, I have to give up all of these things. I can't see my friends, I can't do this, I can't do that." And I think one thing COVID has taught me, somewhat painfully, is that we are creatures who can change, we can adapt, and you don't have to see life as all or nothing. I still have a lot of grief around parts of my life that have changed during COVID and I can't wait to get them back. But I also have been interested at the things that I can invest in and still get some sort of satisfaction or escapism from. I think that's an important life lesson to have – we can adapt to these new situations. And I think that as a new law student, you want to go into your law school experience as, what do you need in your life, and then how can you adapt it to this new environment. It's not an "all or nothing" deal.

Alison Monahan: I think that's so true, and I think it's a great point. I remember this really poignant story that a friend of mine told about their daughter who was starting kindergarten. It's still now kindergarten on Zoom for basically the entire year, and she said, "Well, this wasn't what I expected my kindergarten experience to be like, but I'm just going to try to make the best of it." And that was simultaneously so heartbreaking, but also so kind of uplifting that this 5-year-old is like, "Well, I'm disappointed, it wasn't what I was planning, but I'm going to try to make a best of it." And I think a lot of people going to law school may have some of those feelings of like, "This just isn't what I was hoping it might be at this exact moment." Hopefully things continue improving, but I think people are going to have some things to work through. And then I think to your point about this doesn't have to be the most all-consuming experience of your entire life where you drop everyone and everything else, is absolutely valid because this is your life. It's three years and you need people and you need outside things and all of this stuff, or otherwise you're probably actually not going to be as successful as you might otherwise be.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, and mental health issues are pretty common in law school. We talk about that a lot.

Alison Monahan: Very. There's a lot of data on this. Something like a third of law students end up being clinically depressed by the end of the first year.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. If you're starting on this journey, you also want to think about how you're entering it from a mental health perspective. I would say if I was starting my law school journey, I don't feel at my most resilient right now. I realize that I've got a couple of kids and lockdown has been challenging, my family has had losses. It's been a bit of a roller coaster of a time. We've survived a lot better than a lot of other folks, but everybody's got their own pile of stuff they're weeding through. But when I think about starting law school, it was fun, it was exciting, everything



was good. And I think starting law school when the world is a hard place, it would be a different... I don't know, it'd be a unique challenge to try and go into it, because I think all of us are fatigued, all of us are kind of suffering in some way, all of us have suffered some sort of loss of life or support. And so you've got to figure out how to remain resilient while taking on a new challenge, and I think that that is something that you want to be really aware of.

Alison Monahan: Right. Hopefully, in terms of classes and things being in-person – that will continue to improve. But we've definitely heard from a lot of students this year that it's been really challenging having virtual classes and things like that. So, hopefully people still are starting to go into law school with that hopeful "the world is my oyster" type of feeling, but I do think it's definitely got to be different.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, and it is hard. The other day, I don't remember what I was doing – I think I was driving – and I was like, "Man, this is just not what I would choose for my life right now. This is not what I would need. " And I think for a lot of people who are in law school, a lot of us are Type A people, a lot of us like to create the realities that we want. Usually if I'm not happy, I make changes to fix that. That's kind of my jam. And so, I think it's hard for a lot of people who are used to be in control, being in this world where we realize we have very little control over our wellbeing, our safety, and then to take on a new challenge on top of that. It's not insurmountable, but I just think it's important to be a little aware and then to maybe have those conversations, like set up a support network, make sure that if you start to feel pulled into some of these mental health challenges that are very prevalent in law school that you've got a plan, a safety net, a support network to pull you through. Because I think for some people, the journey to anxiety, depression, things like that, may not be as long of a journey, given the state of the world.

Alison Monahan: Right. I think most people who end up in law school are probably pretty Type A, often perfectionist tendencies, and so that runs up against the reality of the curve. People are definitely getting grades they've never experienced before – that can be really shocking, particularly if someone has based their entire self-esteem around being a smart person, and suddenly they're starting to feel not like the smartest person in the room. This is something we've talked about I think in our [very first podcast](#), about the growth mindset and how that's so critical. We can tell you all these things, but... There're some funny studies about 90% of law students think that they're going to be in the top half and 50% think they're going to be in the top 10%. And I get it, you've always been there before, and so I think that's why the fall can seem really hard because people just aren't going in with a mindset that's necessarily totally realistic about what you're getting into. And maybe people would never start if they were totally realistic. Maybe no one would ever have a kid if they really knew what child birth was like.



- Lee Burgess: Yeah. And then you forget so you do it again.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, so I think the more tools that people can kind of come in with... And this is a great time before you've started to maybe do some reading around this. If you're not familiar with what we're talking about with the growth mindset, you can go listen to probably one of our worst podcasts ever recorded – the very first one. Or you could just read the book.
- Lee Burgess: But we were so passionate.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, I'm not sure I would vouch for the quality of that. But again, you can see where we've improved, hopefully.
- Lee Burgess: That's right, that's right. We're talking about Carol Dweck's book, [Mindset](#). I was thinking of [Mindsight](#), which is another great book by Dan Siegel that you could also read.
- Alison Monahan: Also worth a read.
- Lee Burgess: Also worth a read.
- Alison Monahan: I have a podcast on it.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. But I think that looking at law school as learning anything new, anything that you've ever done that you aren't immediately good at, I think that that's really important to do. So if you're thinking about getting ready for school, we're going to talk about some specific things that you can do, but I think overall, it's just good to start reflecting on what you've done that's hard, how you've overcome obstacles in the past and how you can create a positive mindset for moving forward. That can be reading some of these books, it can be learning from your own lessons of how you've overcome failures in the past and how you want to overcome failures that are 100% coming down the pipe. Everybody's going to hit some speed bumps in law school. You want to think about kind of meeting yourself where you are, making sure that whatever the world looks like, whatever your life looks like, whatever challenges are on your plate, how are you going to meet yourself where you are and make the best of the situation in a time that is challenging, I think, for most of us. There's something that they always say in yoga, which is this idea of you just acknowledge where you are on a given day and go from there.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, you showed up and you're here in the way that you're here. And maybe it's not the way you were yesterday, or the way that the person beside you on the mat is, but it is what it is.



- Lee Burgess: Yeah. And I even hear my kids' teachers talk about this too, this idea that you've got to meet a child where they are. They can be going through a growth spurt, or kids are changing so quickly. And I think we oftentimes don't do that as adults – we don't say, "Hey, I'm having a hard day." So if I'm having a hard day, what are the things that I can do to have less of a hard day, or still show up to get my work done, or fight against my procrastination or whatever it might be. You've got to just figure out how to be a bit more self-aware. So if you have kind of this understanding of where your own little pitfalls or triggers are, then you can start to lay the foundation for how to get around them. Let's say that you're really crummy at paying bills on time and staying organized.
- Alison Monahan: Who would that be?
- Lee Burgess: I don't know, it just popped into my head.
- Alison Monahan: Maybe because you took the check book away from me in the early days of our business, but hey.
- Lee Burgess: It's cool though. It's cool. But yet, we've still become successful, and that's partly because we created systems and processes to work around that.
- Alison Monahan: That is very true. No, actually I am not the best person about remembering things like that, it just doesn't really frankly occur to me. So I have calendar reminders that are set up every month that say, "Remember to pay your bill", and I set that up 10 days in advance or something so there's plenty of time if I forget, I can move it to the next day. But yeah, I think those type of processes... I've seen studies that suggest that people who are successful, particularly in challenging academic circumstances – and this is definitely going to be a challenge – are often people who in advance have decided how they're going to deal with certain issues. So, they've kind of identified, "Okay, these are some things that I know will probably be a struggle at some point", and they've gone ahead in advance and figured out, "Well, what will I do in that situation?" So that then when the situation happens, they're not just flailing; they're thinking, "Oh, okay, I had that list of three or four things I was going to do if my reading really wasn't making sense to me." So, I think looking in advance for those resources can be really helpful. and then to the extent you can automate anything in law school, definitely do that.
- Lee Burgess: It's so true. I have learned this lesson over and over again with taxes, because it's also tax time, and I was just doing my taxes.
- Alison Monahan: I realized last night I haven't done that.
- Lee Burgess: I've been married for over 10 years now, so I've been doing taxes with my husband for 10 years. And honestly, it's only been in the last year or two that I



have any sort of process. For year after year, I would say, "I need to develop a process", and then I wouldn't do it because by the end you're like, "I can't do it anymore, I just don't want to think about it anymore." But now that I do have a record-keeping process that is a little bit cleaner than it used to be, I still do not like compiling my taxes, but it is just not what it used to be. I have folders and scanning plans and when stuff comes in, I know exactly where it's going to go. And it's not what it used to be, which is combing through my bank account, looking for things, which I is what I used to do.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, maybe you can come set mine up.

Lee Burgess: I know, I should just come over.

Alison Monahan: Literally, that's what I'm going to be doing this afternoon later on, is going through my credit card statements to try to figure out what I can deduct from various things. And I'm not happy to admit that, but here it is.

Lee Burgess: It is definitely all about having a process. But it's funny how long has taken me to develop this process, and every year I would just be pulling my hair out trying to do this. But it's just another example of once you can develop some of these processes, then you also don't have to think about it. And the other thing that I think is important to recognize when you're getting into law school is we only have so much willpower and decision-making capabilities. We can run out of that, and so by automating things, by not trying to remember to pay your rent or remembering to do this or not setting reminders – all of that stuff is very exhausting and it's going to make it harder for your mental capacity to focus on these other things. So, set up your life as much as you can before law school and release yourself from all of that additional stuff, because then you can kind of open your mind and spend time thinking about more interesting things, like what cases you're reading.

Alison Monahan: Right. The cognitive overhead of trying to remember things and stuff like that is actually very high. Those are the things that pop into your brain at really random times too, and so then you've got this switching problem where you're thinking about reading your cases and suddenly you remember, "Did I remember to pay my credit card bill this month? Oh, I've got to do that right now." And then you've lost time switching back. These things sound kind of boring, but the more you can plan ahead and just automate everything and get your life actually set up, I think most people are going to end up being way better off when they actually try to start trying to learn things.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, I think that's a 100% true. And when you are spending so much time at home – and I do believe that as things open up, it's not going to be a switch gets flipped – it's going to be a steady process. And I think that one of the things that can happen during these times when we're home so much is you feel like you



have all of this time, yet plenty of us aren't getting everything done, because we don't do a lot of other stuff. But it still creates freedom when you just reduce your to-do list and just take things off. It is a way to support yourself, and it also just saves you from making mistakes. And those mistakes can be super annoying, so it's just better not to make mistakes. So just automate it.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, it's like if you have the money that you have to pay your rent and you forget to pay it, then you have to pay a late fee, that's just silly. There's no reason for that to really happen.

Lee Burgess: So, another thing that you really want to do... I really liked how you mentioned earlier, Alison, that highly effective people already know what they're going to do when bad things happen or when they hit those challenges. I do think that the other thing you want to think about is what sort of support you're going to be able to pull in, both from whatever school that you're going to attend, but then it's also great to research other options. If your school is going to be still online, or they haven't told you yet, or it's going to be hybrid, or even if it's going to be in person, what resources does your school offer? Do they have any summer get ready programs that you can participate in? Is there any way to start building community, especially if it's online, going in. We have people talking to us about tutoring in the fall because they're like, "I just don't want it to go this alone, especially if it's going to be some sort of hybrid." What does that look like? That's okay to have those conversations. What's that going to cost? How are you going to budget extra resources in? All of those are really great things to think about right now because they are setting yourself up for success.

Alison Monahan: Right. I think having your team in place, just having your experts... Maybe I'm just a person who likes to have coaching, but I hire people for all kinds of things, I'm like, "Oh, I'm not working out enough, maybe I can hire a trainer. Oh, my Spanish isn't so great, maybe I can hire a tutor. Oh, I want to learn how to ski better. Okay, great, I'll sign up for these ski lessons." But I just think you accelerate so much faster when you have somebody there, and so I think here looking at all the resources available to you is so important. Are you committing to go to office hours? I think that's a really, really big one that people should just commit to right now, as you're listening to this. If you're thinking about what's going to set you up to do well in law school, talk to your professors; you've paid for these people. Look at whatever is available, look at mental health stuff. I am a huge advocate of therapy in law school, I think everyone should be in therapy. It's a challenging experience, it's a growth experience, and having somebody to talk to about it is going to help you do better and be happier, and I think that's really the point here.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. I just think we all just really want to be happy. We've got to look for the joy. I think that's one of the things that often gets lost in the law school



experience, is this idea that it is a privilege and that going back to school is a privilege, even if it's very hard. And it's not to say that you're going to be happy in every moment, but I do think you want to try and figure out how to frame this for yourself so that you can create some happiness, because it has been a really hard time for a lot of people, and I want us all to find a bit more joy as we crawl out of this. And if you're taking on a new challenge, make sure that you can find the joy in that, whether that's in creating community, finding the affinity groups that you want to join, figuring out how to volunteer for efforts that you care about, how you are going to engage with the legal community, because this is something that you clearly want. You're going to invest time and money and engage in it. Try and find it exciting and if you've lost all the joy... And this doesn't mean final exams should be fun, because final exams are brutal, but I'm saying if you have lost the joy, if you don't know why you want to be there, if you had to sit down and write a letter about why you went to law school and you can't figure out what to write, then you need to sit and reflect and figure out how to find some joy.

Alison Monahan: Right, that's what I was going to say. I think one thing in this pre-summer that can be really useful is really to get clear on why you're doing this. And sometimes we do have students, particularly for the bar exam, write to themselves about why they're doing this, but I think you can do the same thing in law school. Write a letter to yourself about all your hopes and your excitement and what your motivation is, and then midway through the semester when maybe you get the bad midterm grade and you're feeling demoralized and you're wondering if you should be there, you can pull that letter out, and hopefully it gives you that motivation to say, "Oh, I remember now why I'm doing this and I'm going to figure out what happened on this test and do better so that I can achieve these goals that I've set for myself."

Lee Burgess: Yeah. You're basically almost writing yourself a mission statement about why you want to be there, how you're going to approach this. I think making those commitments to yourself is really important, and there's something to fall back on when things get rocky.

Alison Monahan: Well, and also the whole reason businesses and people do mission statements and things like that is because it gives you a framework for making decisions about how to spend your time. So, if you have committed to a certain path and then a few months in, you realize you're kind of off that path, that can give you the ability to say, "Okay, I'm going to take one of these opportunities, but not the other." Because part of what happens in law school is people start getting pressure from all different directions to make decisions that maybe do not align with their personal goals and values.

Lee Burgess: True.



Alison Monahan: And I think you just need to be aware of that. Depending particularly on the type of school, there will be pressure to do certain things. And maybe you want to do them and maybe you don't, but getting clear in advance can help you make those decisions.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. All of this type of goal-setting work – goal setting, mission statements, value statements, whatever speaks to you, there's so different ways to approach this idea of whatever framework you want to go into law school with – can just help you in these moments of challenge, which are coming, they're just... It is what it is. It's hard.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. Basically, anyone who's high-achieving and goes to law school is probably going to find that they see results that they have never seen before. It is what it is. It's going to happen. No one gets through with a straight A pluses. The person who graduates at the very top of your class, I'm sure had a disappointing grade at some point.

Lee Burgess: Right. Okay, well, just to kind of set up our framework. So if you're starting school in the fall and you're trying to think about what to do, we've talked about set up your life, try and set up processes, make things as easy as you can make them in other parts of your life. I think we've talked a lot about focusing on your mental health, focusing on your mental framework for this, your growth mindset, I think it's also important to think as the world continues to change, hopefully for the better, about where your boundaries are around personal health, what do you feel comfortable doing? What do you not feel comfortable doing? I think this next period of time is going to be a little tricky. There was that one benefit of everything being really locked down where it was all very bright line rules, at least in California. It was like, "Don't do anything."

Alison Monahan: Yeah, "Don't leave the house", basically.

Lee Burgess: "Don't leave the house." And it was like, "Cool, I'll not leave the house." And then it starts to get a little trickier, and it's a little more emotionally exhausting because you get decision fatigue: "Is this okay?" Or a friend asks you to do this and you're like, "I don't feel comfortable with this, but what do I do feel comfortable?" So, creating maybe time to be evaluating that for yourself, depending on how the vaccine rollouts go, whether or not you can be vaccinated. What if you're in the population that doesn't feel like for your own health reasons... I have a friend who's in a situation, she can't get vaccinated right now because they aren't sure if it could be a bad thing for her through allergic reactions to things like that. She wants to be, they told her to wait. So how does she move through the world? It's tricky. So, whatever situation you're in, make sure that you do spend some time to kind of, again, focus on that. What do you need to feel safe, as safe as you can, and be healthy? Because I think if we've learned anything from 2020 and 2021, the things that we have to



focus on is that we only get a certain amount of time, so we need to use it well. And then we only get one body and one health, and we've got to use it well.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think there's just going to be all this stuff floating around, and by the fall, I think it's still probably going to be kind of in flux. Hopefully, it's a lot better, but we don't really know exactly how... If we've learned nothing from the last year, is that we don't really know how this is going to play out.

Lee Burgess: We have no idea. No idea.

Alison Monahan: We can hope for the best.

Lee Burgess: They're talking about maybe a fourth wave. They have no idea.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think these are all things just to be aware of. Before we wrap up, I think we should talk about at least one of the big questions people often have, which is, "Should I be reading cases? Do I need to be preparing? What should I be doing in a substantive way this summer to put me at the top of the class?"

Lee Burgess: Well, we are big fans of working on skills over substantive law, because you're going to school to learn substantive law, and you also want to learn it the way your school teaches it. But we do think that you can work on not only some of these life skills that we've talked about, but also your study skills. So, one of the things that we offer is something called our [Start Law School Right course](#), which is an on-demand kind of study skills-based program, where we walk you through a sampling, a buffet almost, of how it feels like to walk through the law school semester. "Buffet" is a new one. I don't think I've ever described it as a buffet.

Alison Monahan: I think it's a good way to do it.

Lee Burgess: It is kind of a good way to do it, very off the cuff. But we want you to experience a little bit of what it's like to brief a case, experience what it's going to be like to listen to a lecture and take class notes, experience what it's going to be like to outline, and then experience what it's going to be like to write some sort of an answer. And I think there is a benefit to not having the first time you do all of these things be in the classroom environment. So, I think that doing some sort of skill-based work is a good idea, and one of the things that you can do. But I wouldn't worry about reading manifestos on Torts or becoming an expert in Civil Procedure. You have plenty of time to do that in law school. I think getting your life together, working on some of your skills, and then being honest with yourself about what some of your pitfalls might be, so you can have tools in place. If you're a procrastinator, time to get some tools to move past procrastination.



- Alison Monahan: Right, exactly. So you can look at things like [Trello](#) or [Asana](#), or I'm sure there are other options. I think this summer is also a great time to start doing some more serious reading, because I think what shocks a lot of people when they start school is just the reading load. So, if you've been skimming stuff on the Internet for a few years now and you haven't sat down with a really difficult text, I think any type of reading you can do that's serious – and it can be serious fiction, it doesn't have to be non-fiction – but something that really is challenging to your brain. The more of that you can do over the summer, I think the less shocking it will be when suddenly you're sitting down and doing multiple hours per day of very dense reading.
- Lee Burgess: It's true, and I think slowing down. I noticed this the other day, I was reading, we call them "chapter books". I was reading a chapter book to my son before bed, and I've become such a skimmer. Even the books I read are not necessarily always dense and I'm trying to get through them to get the information that I want out of them. When you read aloud, you have to read every word, not skim. I was finding it difficult to really slow myself down in a book that wasn't a picture book, which I'm more used to reading, and read every word. And then you realize how much slower you go when you have to read every single word than the typical type of reading that we do. And so, yeah, anything you can do to make yourself really slow down and read and retain. I think the other piece is don't just read some challenging stuff; try and talk about it, even if it's to your cat. What did you learn? What do you remember?
- Alison Monahan: Create a book club with some friends or maybe even people who are coming into law school, because I think that engaging with material too is really useful.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. One other thing I wanted to touch on before we wrap up, because I know we're almost out of time, is what if your law school is going to be still online or in some sort of hybrid form, or ends up having to transition back to online? I think it's important for some people to think about what that might be like so it's not a complete shock to their system. I think the reality is that it's still a similar experience, and a lot of students find that the online environment does create challenges, but they can still learn. I think that one of the things that's important to remember is you still need to do all the things that you were going to do in an in-person class to prepare, and then you want to try and do all of the things outside of class too. So still trying to interact with professors, although I think that feels more challenging when you can't physically go to office hours. Trying to interact with students when possible, trying to create community, trying to not feel so alone. So, it can take a little more effort because you may have to set up those appointments, you may have to do it over Zoom, but just don't feel like, "Well, I can't do any of these things anymore, because it's in an online environment." You can, you just need to be flexible.



Alison Monahan: Right, for sure. And I think this also plays into a lot of life decisions, so hopefully schools are deciding sooner rather than later, do you actually need to be on campus or not? That kind of thing. I can see that being problematic if they're not deciding fairly quickly, because where do you live? But talk to your school about that; hopefully they're on it.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. Well, we're about out of time. So any final thoughts, Alison, for those who are getting ready to start law school?

Alison Monahan: Well, congratulations, you're starting law school. That's exciting. I think just try to stay positive and try to also be realistic, and part of being realistic is figuring out what support you are likely to need and getting those ducks in a row, because you do have the ability still to be successful regardless of what type of scenario you end up encountering. And I think this hopefully is an exciting time for people. What do you think?

Lee Burgess: Yeah, I think the same. I think that even if it is not as you wish it was – which I think most stuff isn't right now – try and still get excited about it. So, if you are disappointed because maybe the experience isn't going to be exactly as you want it to be, figure out how you can make it as good as possible. And again, try and find the joy, try and find the thing that still is exciting for you because this is still the beginning of a new career. And let's hope three years from now, when you are getting ready to graduate, the world may look completely different. And aren't you going to be excited that you're going to be on the other side of this time and the other side of this kind of investment in yourself? So it's still an exciting thing, even if it's not all happening exactly as you would want it to be.

Alison Monahan: I think that is a great point. Well, with that, unfortunately, we are out of time. If you enjoyed this episode of the Law School Toolbox podcast, please take a second to leave a review or rating on your favorite listening app. We would 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 Lee or Alison at lee@lawschooltoolbox.com or 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! Best of luck in law school!

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