



Alison Monahan: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today, we're talking about 3L year. 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. Together, we're the co-creators of the [Law School Toolbox](#), the [Bar Exam Toolbox](#), and the career-related website [CareerDicta](#). I also run [The Girl's Guide to Law School](#). If you enjoy the show, please leave a review or rating on your favorite listening app. And if you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to us. You can always reach us via the [contact form](#) on LawSchoolToolBox.com, and we would love to hear from you. With that, let's get started.

Lee Burgess: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today, we're talking about 3L year. So, people don't talk so much about this one. It's the old adage: First year they scare you to death, second year they work you to death, and third year they bore you to death. But 3L can be a tricky one for people, including one of our listeners, who wrote in suggesting we talk about it. Thanks for the suggestion! So Alison, what are some of the challenges and opportunities that kind of show up for 3L students?

Alison Monahan: Well, I do think 3L can be really tricky. I remember mine was a little weird. I just wasn't quite sure what I should be spending my time on after being so busy as a 2L. I decided not to be on the Law Review board, so that opened up a ton of free time. And I think people also have a variety of experiences, because some people are super busy. If you're the editor-in-chief of your Law Review, and other people are like, "I'm the social chair. It's cool." So I think this is more like a choose-your-own-adventure year, but I think that can be frustrating, particularly if you're kind of used to being told, "Okay, this is what you need to do". There are some kind of basic things I think people have to sort of consider. One is just how to be sure you're on track to graduate, and we'll talk about all these in more detail. You can pick your classes, but frankly, you might find most of them uninteresting at this point.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, or you might just be filling your grad requirements; you're not really invested in them.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, you're just kind of like dialing it in. Probably, you're going to have extra free time, although maybe not. I think one issue people see is that your loans are growing all of the time. Earning money over the summer might have reminded you of that. And also, a lot of schools give less financial aid your 3L year, because they assume that you're going to have worked your second summer at a firm, and so you might be facing private loans and things you're not familiar with. You've got the bar exam looming on the horizon, you've got to deal with the MPRE, all of this is stressful. People may still be looking for jobs, or at least worrying about how they're going to transition. You might have clerkships you're dealing with, you're trying to get those. And you might be



facing life stuff, like a move, leaving where you are for school and going somewhere else. All this can be logistically complicated, it can be emotionally complicated. It's just a lot.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, it is a lot. I mean, it's kind of exhausting now that you've put it all in a list.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I'm like, "Wow, there's a lot going on, no wonder people are burned out."

Lee Burgess: I know, right? Yeah, so, I think one of the challenges is just keeping the motivation going to kind of finish strong and not let your law school experience end with a whimper. I think we should start by talking about the graduation requirements, because I think sometimes folks really don't dive into what those are, and I actually knew people who didn't graduate because they didn't check all of their boxes.

Alison Monahan: Oh my gosh, what a nightmare.

Lee Burgess: I know, right? So, most schools have some sort of paper-writing requirement, and so you want to make sure that you have taken care of that, either through a class or through an independent study, or through a write on a Law Review. Whatever you need to do, you need to make sure that that requirement is met and that you have time to do it, because usually, that requirement is 35-40 pages. I mean, it's a significant paper.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, it's long. I mean, you're not going to turn around and write 40 pages in a weekend.

Lee Burgess: No, no, exactly. And some schools also will have some sort of requirement for clinics or externships or pro bono, and that can not only take time, but you also need to make sure that you are kind of slotted to do that if there's high demand for certain of these opportunities, so you want to make sure that you're able to get the opportunity that you want.

Alison Monahan: Right, exactly. The good news is, at least at a lot of schools, 3Ls do get priority in some of these things. So if there was a clinic that maybe you weren't able to get into as a 2L that you were really interested in, 3L is the time you do it, because you're probably going to have priority in that clinic. Whatever it is, you want to basically make sure that you have checked those boxes: Did you have to do X, Y, and Z? I remember at a different grad school, I almost didn't graduate because I was about to fail my ballet class that I'd signed up for. I just thought it would be this fun activity, and then it got to like, I actually needed the credits, and I was like, "Oh my God, I've got to go to ballet class for the next three weeks to graduate? Okay." So, even if you've signed up for something silly like that, just make sure you don't ding those credits.



- Lee Burgess: Yeah, absolutely.
- Alison Monahan: And you probably don't want to have a failing grade for ballet on your law school transcript either.
- Lee Burgess: No, that's probably wise. Yeah, I think you want to really make sure you understand these requirements, and this is what the school is for. You can just go to the registrar and ask them questions. Send them an email, just to make sure that you've got everything you need. I think that's just a wise thing to do. Just do a quick little audit. Make sure you're going to meet all of those requirements, because they can sneak up on you, and you don't want 3L year to end with your second semester, and you're trying to cram all of these graduation requirements in, because a 40-page paper is never fun; a 40-page paper while you have kind of senioritis when you're getting ready to graduate is even worse.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, and a lot of the papers you're required to get outside feedback and stuff. And so, if you're trying to turn drafts around at the end of 3L year with professors and things like that, it's just not going to go smoothly.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, no. It's linked to graduation requirements, but the other thing you really want to think about is what classes you're going to take at this point. So, you might know that you're going to be working in some very specific area of the law, and you may decide that you want to take classes to help with that kind of work. So, if you're going to do civil litigation, maybe you're going to take a class on Discovery, or maybe you want to take a class on Alternative Dispute Resolution. Whatever it might be that is linked to the work that you're doing, that may even help your job or that your job may want you to have experience with, you want to make sure that you can get those in. Again, not all of these classes are offered both semesters. So you want to think about, when are you going to be able to take them?
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, and I think this is something worth checking in if you have a summer offer that you've accepted. They may tell you, but you can also just check in: "Hey, I'm planning my schedule for my second semester 3L year. Are there any things that you guys think I should be taking?" I recall the judge I worked for said, absolutely, I had to take Evidence, which I would have taken anyway for the bar. So he was basically like, "Take Evidence. Anything else, it's up to you, but you have to take Evidence, basically, because I need that on a daily basis from you."
- Lee Burgess: Right, yeah. I also think it's thoughtful to take some classes from some really great professors. This was actually advice given to me by a professor in law school when I was talking about selecting classes, and he said that there were a few professors who had these amazing reputations that taught these classes, that just people raved about, and that you could learn so much from taking



amazing professors. So, my class that I took that I still remember a ton from was called Bioethics and the Law. It was basically advanced constitutional law, but around issues of medical protection, right to die, abortion, personal liberties and medical rights, and the ethics of that. It was a fascinating class. I actually remember a ton from that class because, one, it was fascinating, and two, it was taught by a really phenomenal professor. And I'm just so glad I took that class. I've never practiced that kind of law at all, but I really learned a lot from him and it was totally worth it, so I'm glad I did that. And I think that if you have time your 3L year, you can use it to just take some of these classes that are going to enrich your law school experience.

Alison Monahan: I agree. I took one that was team-taught by someone who was really well-known in the law school, who was an amazing professor, and someone from a different department at Columbia who was also incredibly smart and totally on it, about multiculturalism. And that is actually the class that, when I'm thinking about the world and looking at what's going on, and what are people fighting about all over the place politically, that is a class I return to more than anyone. And I think if you had looked at that from the outside, people would have thought, "This is ridiculous. This is a totally silly class to take", but it actually fundamentally frames the way that I look at the world now. So I think anything that seems interesting is worth doing at this point. You could also take classes outside of the law school often. I took an Architecture class with an incredibly well-known architectural theorist, whose books I had read in architecture school. I just took it for fun, and it was fantastic.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. It's also important to think about those bar classes, going back to what you were talking about with Evidence.

Alison Monahan: You should take Evidence.

Lee Burgess: You should take Evidence. I just think you should take Evidence. But you do want to look at what bar classes you've taken. And then, I think some of the bar classes, it's just core knowledge that you need to have. I really do. Everybody needs to take Evidence. I actually think everybody needs to take Criminal Procedure. And I know you didn't like Criminal Procedure, but I think it's just one of those life skill classes.

Alison Monahan: I mean, I wish I knew more about it. I didn't really take a Criminal Procedure class. I took this class called the War on Terror, which was like a seminar where, obviously, some of what we talked about was criminal procedure. But it was taught by a really crazy person who had some very idiosyncratic ideas about what the law was here, and they were not right. I learned this when I studied for the bar. I'm like, "Oh, that's not what they told us." No, that is definitely not what I was told was the law. Like, nope, police can't do that.



- Lee Burgess: Yeah. I had another professor who said that all law students should just take some core, what you're going to get asked at a cocktail party, classes.
- Alison Monahan: Community Property.
- Lee Burgess: Community Property or Family Law, Employment Law, Criminal Procedure – the basics that you want to have knowledge of as a lawyer. I think what's interesting is, when I think back, now that you and I have become entrepreneurs and that we have our own businesses, I wish I had taken Federal Tax. I wish I had taken maybe some more advanced Business Associations classes or paid more attention in my Business Associations class. But I think there are some also core classes that, in hindsight, would have been helpful. We've taught ourselves so much of this stuff, but it would have been easier if we'd actually taken a class.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. I remember debating for a long time if I should take Wills and Trusts, because I think that is core knowledge and it's a bar class, so I was like, "I probably should know something about this." And it came down to being at the same time as this other very small seminar called Federalism and the Family. Guess which one I took?
- Lee Burgess: I can imagine.
- Alison Monahan: I took the Federalism and the Family class, which I loved. It was a great class. Ironically, when, I think it was Eliot Spitzer who got arrested for trafficking prostitutes across state lines, everyone in that class knew exactly what he was going to be indicted under. That was the Mann Act. Moving women across state lines for immoral purposes. We were like, "Mann Act. Yep, that's going to get him. He should have known about that one."
- Lee Burgess: That was funny. Another thing that can be interesting is that sometimes people get scared away from "hard" classes because they are worried about their GPA, if you have a school that does typical grading. I know on my campus, Federal Courts was one of the hardest classes.
- Alison Monahan: Right. That's a big one.
- Lee Burgess: The big one, I think it is for a lot of schools. And some people didn't want to take it, because they didn't want to fight for a grade in that class. But that is also one of those classes that I took a lot away from. I think it was a really productive class. It was a great professor, I learned a lot from him. I think being in a class full of all people who wanted to take that class was also an interesting experience, because everybody was really invested in it. But I think it's also important not to shy away from something hard just because you're worried about your grades.



- Alison Monahan: Yeah, because I think, hopefully, for a lot of people, by the time 3L rolls around, you've already kind of secured some type of position. Obviously, your grades matter, but they matter less than your 1L year. I kind of wish I'd taken Admin. It seemed really boring at the time, but now I realize it would have been really useful.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, that's true. That's true. I didn't really appreciate what it was, but now I'm like, "Oh, that would have been..." Yeah. I think it just wasn't really talked about.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, it just seemed kind of boring, but now I realize it's actually pretty fundamental to the whole functioning of the political system.
- Lee Burgess: That's true. So basically, the moral of that story is, you should really sit down and kind of look at what your options are and just be thoughtful about it. So, you can mix in some practical stuff, some stuff you're going to enjoy, and some stuff you may talk about after law school.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, and I think your advice on picking professors is also really good. There was a class I took that was supposed to have been taught by this person who was sort of my mentor and was really well-regarded. In the end, it was taught by a visiting professor, and I probably should have dropped it at that point, but I didn't. It was EU law. Did I learn? I mean, I feel like I should have known more about EU law than I did after getting an A in that class. But when Brexit happened, I was like, "Oh, did we talk about that?" Probably, but I probably didn't pay attention that day. I had a really good outline for that class, and it was like a 48-hour take-home.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. I took ADR with an adjunct who would just miss a bunch of classes. It was actually interesting stuff. ADR is really interesting if you have a good professor. But it was kind of disappointing, because I think that that's actually another thing that you interact with a lot in real-life practice, because so few things actually go to trial. But I also didn't understand, at the time, how poorly paid most adjuncts are, and that's why he probably ended up missing classes for his own job, until I was an adjunct professor and saw what adjuncts get paid. So that's another thing to think about. If it is an adjunct, do they have a reputation of being a great adjunct? There are some great adjuncts, but sometimes, it's not always the case. So you've got to do a little investigating, a little asking around.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. And I think it's also worth considering what your exams are going to look like. Is it a paper class? Is it an exam class? Can you suss out quickly in the beginning? Is it a 48-hour take-home? That's going to look really different in terms of your stress levels, versus a four-hour in-class exam.



- Lee Burgess: Right. No, that's very true. Alright, what about the bar, which is coming up for all the 3Ls, hopefully, in July, after graduation? I think this is the time when people start thinking about it, or getting nervous about it. So, what do you think are some of the considerations that 3Ls need to start focusing on about the bar?
- Alison Monahan: Well, I think first and foremost, you need to make sure that you're actually going to be able to sign up or that you've already signed up. This kind of goes back to what we were saying about the graduation requirements – there are just things you're going to have to do, and you need to know what those things are.
- Lee Burgess: And there are more than you think. More than you think.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, it's kind of a lot. I mean, the character and fitness application is a big deal.
- Lee Burgess: Fingerprinting?
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, there're all kinds of stuff. So basically, you're not going to be able to turn this around in a few days. Probably, you may have to get letters from people. When I was admitted at Massachusetts, I had to get a letter from a practicing attorney there vouching for me. I mean, there's all kinds of crazy stuff. So you just want to make sure you know in the place you're going to be taking the exam, what do you need to do? What are the deadlines? If you're applying for accommodations, what are the deadlines on that? Do not wait until the last minute on that.
- Lee Burgess: No, I know. I can't say that enough. And we have some great episodes on [accommodations](#) that we can link to, especially on our Bar Exam Toolbox podcast. But if you are thinking about getting accommodations at all, you need to apply early, because if you do not, you will not have a chance to appeal their decision. And they can also tell you days before the test, which is not helpful. Whether you get them or not, either one of those outcomes is not helpful if you can't prepare for the conditions in which you're going to sit for the exam.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. And you might not even think it matters if you're a couple of days late. It matters.
- Lee Burgess: It matters.
- Alison Monahan: They're not going to give you accommodations if you're late, basically.
- Lee Burgess: No. I think the other thing that sneaks up on people is the MPRE.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, that snuck up on me.



- Lee Burgess: It does! And I think people don't really talk about it, and now, you're in your 3L year, and it's like, "Oh, you need to study for the MPRE." Everyone's like, "What? What is that?" Because it's only given a few times a year. You have to pass it to become licensed in, I think, every jurisdiction or almost every jurisdiction. And you have to get over a certain score, and you can take it multiple times, which a lot of people do. But you want to give yourself the options. So for instance, there's always a November-ish test. A lot of people take that test, so then, if they don't pass, they can take the spring test and then they have an opportunity to get that out of the way before the bar. But if you wait until the spring test and then you don't pass for some reason, the next test, I believe, is in August, which is a few weeks after the bar exam. We have known students who have to sit for the full bar, and then, while they're recovering from that experience, have to study for the MPRE to take it again. Brutal.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, I definitely didn't realize I should have done that in November and waited until the spring. And then it was this much more pressure situation where it's like, "Oh my gosh, if I don't pass right now, then I'm going to have to do this later, and this is going to screw up my bar admissions, and everyone's going to be mad at me, and my judges will be yelling at me. Oh my gosh, why didn't I do this a few months ago?" Because I knew people in law school who failed, and that was at a top law school. It happens.
- Lee Burgess: It happens, and I think it's one of those things that's not a big deal. It's like your driver's test. I mean, everybody should, of course, study hard for it, but if you don't pass it, you just sit for it again. It's not the same thing as failing the bar, unless you pass the bar exam and cannot get your license because you still haven't sat for the MPRE. That's wild.
- Alison Monahan: And we know people in that situation who have been in it.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, it's just not a good situation. So, you want to make sure that that is taken care of. I would just go ahead, if you can, study for the earliest possible test.
- Alison Monahan: I agree. Having been a person who did not do that, I will say it will reduce your stress levels if you just do it early.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. Now, we kind of talk about the prep options, you're going to get a lot of pressure to sign up for some of these bar review providers early. We'll link to some helpful podcasts we have about [selecting your bar provider](#), but it is important to make sure that you are educated on your options, and you're not just willy-nilly feeling like you have to sign up for one program because that's what everybody is doing. You also, if you do have a job, want to make sure you understand what money you might be getting as a bar stipend, because that can also educate you on how you're going to make your choices. Regardless, you want to slow down and be thoughtful about your options. Also, find out if your



school has any bar programming that they're going to give you access to. Just make sure you understand the whole picture before you pick your options.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I agree. And I think a lot of times in the spring, your school may be having you do a course or something. You've taught these courses, Lee. You know people don't necessarily take them seriously. Do you think that's a good idea?

Lee Burgess: I think that's a terrible idea! Not just because all of my classes were incredibly entertaining, as I'm sure everybody would agree. But that's the practical stuff. The work that you put in during the semester lightens your load and increases your chances of passing. If you don't believe that, I think you can look at the statistics for the October 2020 exam, where people had extra time to study. It was this crazy time because of COVID, but they kept pushing out the exams, and a lot of folks attributed being able to pass to having, let's say, an extra 10 weeks to study. I think the reality is, if you're studying or doing some of these classes during the semester, you're basically getting that benefit. You're putting deposits in the bank towards your bar passage. And if you're going to sit in a classroom, and if you're going to do the assignments, put in the time and learn something from it. You're really going to thank yourself during the prep period.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, absolutely. I think there's just no reason not to take advantage of those free resources and take them seriously, even if you can just feel more comfortable on something like the performance test, because you've had a class where you did a few of them and you did it seriously. You don't have to worry about that when June comes around, and suddenly you're trying to memorize 14 million different subjects.

Lee Burgess: Yep. Alright, what about money? What about loans and finances? What are you supposed to start thinking about when you are a 3L?

Alison Monahan: Oh my gosh. I remember we had to do the exit counseling for student loans. And it was this classroom, I don't know, 100 people, and they told us what the collective debt load would look like. I mean, it was some unbelievable number, I can't even remember it. It's like, "Oh, the people in this room have borrowed \$50 million." It was like, "What?"

Lee Burgess: Oh my gosh.

Alison Monahan: Maybe it wasn't that high, I don't know. It was a very big number.

Lee Burgess: It felt like \$50 million, even if it wasn't.

Alison Monahan: I mean, it was a shockingly big number, to look around and be like, "There aren't that many people in this room." So I think that is going to rear its ugly head and just become a reality. The main thing people need to do at this point is just sort



of figure out what your repayment options look like, how is this going to work? Sometimes, it makes sense to look into things like consolidation. Sometimes, people have had to take private loans, and then you're going to need to understand the payment on those, and all of these things, and how it all works together. Typically, people are going to have some sort of grace period – I think it's, I don't remember, six months or something. Look into that, don't rely on that. But before you have to start repaying, you need to understand what the date is that you're going to have to start paying, how much you're going to pay, do you want to sign up for some special repayment option? All these things just need to be things you think about.

Lee Burgess:

Yeah. And please, please, please look at your interest rates. Because I'll be honest, I had some government loans and then some private loans, and then Congress changed the rules while I was in law school. And so, I had some loans that were at 2.5% or something like that, that are still at this incredibly low rate. I mean, I'm just paying them forever, because it's such a low interest rate. But then, I got stuck with some loans that were much higher: 7%, 8%, and you're like, "Whoa, what does that really mean?", when you start to do the numbers. And that's pretty crazy. You at least want to be very clear about what your loan picture looks like. So if you do start to pay off, what do you want to pay off first, or what do you want to try to consolidate to get out of those high-interest loans? But I think that you've got to really sit down and look at them so you can make thoughtful decisions. Because the only person who makes a lot of money off of those high-interest loans is the bank. And so, unless you just want to pay the bank, you want to try and figure out a way to have lower interest rates.

Alison Monahan:

Yeah, and it's a painful process. I have some very low-interest rate loans, because I graduated a couple of years earlier than you did – you got lucky on that – that I'm still paying, and I'll pay forever, because that's a very low interest rate, I'll take that. But yeah, now, that's just not really the case. It's pretty shocking when you sit down and see these numbers and it's just like, "Oh my gosh! How am I going to pay this off?"

Lee Burgess:

Another thing that folks can kind of think about is, if you've been bad with money in the past – no judgement – but if you've struggled with budgeting and things like that, it may also be a good opportunity to try and talk to somebody, especially if you know what kind of job you're going to get, and about how to plan for the future, about what to do with those loans and to be strategic about it. I know we have an [episode on the podcast with a financial counselor](#), or a financial coach who works with individuals on setting up their budgeting and getting all of their money in order. So, if you've got some free time as a 3L, and that's a concern for you going into post-graduation life, it might be a good time to invest in that too.



Alison Monahan: I think that's true. And you can do a lot of research online. There're apps like [You Need A Budget](#), all these things that people like. But you do need something. Even if you have a large law firm job when you graduate, I think it's shocking to people to realize that oftentimes if you're in a big city and your housing is expensive, you're almost living paycheck to paycheck between housing and loans at that point. And I think, given the amount of money you're making, that can be really shocking for people.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. If you're trying to put money in a 401(k), if you're trying to pay off your loans, if you're living in an expensive metropolitan area, you're also typically trying to buy clothes that are appropriate for your job. That was one of the things when I graduated, I hadn't really invested in a wardrobe in three years, other than one or two interview suits. And then you're all of a sudden supposed to dress professionally for work – which I guess didn't happen during the COVID years, but at some point, they're going to ask people to come back to the office and show up professionally. So you do end up spending money in kind of quick succession, I think, kind of getting your life set up as well. And so, you want to be thoughtful about that investment, because those big checks start to disappear.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, they definitely do. On that note, let's talk a little bit about this career transition, or even the job hunt. I think people are still looking for a job, which is very normal. You just want to make sure you're getting help looking around. Is there something career services could be doing for you? Are there friends you could be calling into this? Do you need to work with someone? And you want to really want to make sure your grades are not tanking, because people are going to look at this later too. And if you have accepted an offer, you just want to make sure you're communicating with them, you're staying in touch, make sure you know the start dates, all these things. Because they may also have a checklist of things that they expect you to do, and you want to make sure you know what those are.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. No, that's very true. Let's say that you worked for the summer, but you haven't updated all of your job materials. I think that any time you have time to invest in that is a great thing to do, because you always want your resume and your basic cover letter ready, proofread, perfect to go, especially if you're job hunting, because you never know when you're going to meet somebody to speak to about employment opportunities.

Alison Monahan: Definitely. One piece of advice I got and did not take that I should have taken was that anytime you're in any type of job, whether it's the summer or a regular job, to actually keep a running tally of what you were really doing, cases that you worked on. Did you write a brief? Did you do a deposition? Because you might think that you're going to remember all those things, but you're not going to remember them all. And so, when it comes time to reshape your job



application for a different opportunity, you want to be able to go back to that list and be like, "Oh, you know, I did defend a deposition on this date, and this is what it was about." So, I think starting that habit now would be really beneficial.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, that also will help you during your annual reviews at your job, because oftentimes, you are required to create a document talking about what you did. That can be really hard to recreate.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, so I think a lot of this is really about establishing good habits – good habits around finances, good habits around your work life, all of these things. This is a great year to kind of have a little bit more space to think about, "What do I want the rest of my life to look like?"

Lee Burgess: Yeah. Oh, and plan a bar trip if you want one and can afford one.

Alison Monahan: Oh, right, yes.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. Don't forget about doing that, that's an amazing opportunity. Sometimes, that's the last opportunity you have to take a long vacation for a while.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, let's talk about fun stuff. I mean, the other thing I think 3L year is good for is, you can really lean into being a student at this point, hopefully, unless you're editor-in-chief of your Law Review or something. But most people can kind of lean into doing stuff that's fun. I was living in New York City, there are probably things I hadn't done for the past couple of years. I started taking squash lessons and things. So I think just anything that seems fun to you that you can fit in, this is a great time to do it.

Lee Burgess: Yep, I think that that's true. Well, what if you're finding that 3L year isn't going so well – that you're struggling maybe academically, or you don't have a job yet and you're really kind of getting anxious about that, you're worried about graduating? Is it too late to kind of solve some of these issues?

Alison Monahan: No, because you can probably still get a free therapist.

Lee Burgess: True, true!

Alison Monahan: I definitely went back into therapy my third year, because I had some time, and I was like, "Well, I've got 10 more sessions this year, may as well use them. Clean up some stuff before I get out of here."

Lee Burgess: That's true.



- Alison Monahan: I think that's also a really good thing to do. I mean, you're about to launch into this sort of high pressure career situation; you probably want to have some of your stuff sorted out first.
- Lee Burgess: That's true, yeah. I also think that if you're struggling academically, it's important to remember that those academic issues are probably going to follow you into the bar.
- Alison Monahan: True, true.
- Lee Burgess: So, also, utilizing all the resources your school has, like if you have a good academic support program, or if you have professors that will sit and work with you on exams. If you just kind of sweep the exam problems under the rug, they're going to come back. I can't tell you how many bar students we've worked with, who the feedback we've gotten is, "If only I had been this good at tests when I was in law school, I would have had this different GPA." And it's like, "Well, you could have been this good at tests in law school, it's just you didn't get the support that you needed to get there." So if you need help, go ahead and do it now, so you can get the benefit of that for your GPA for your third year, but then also hopefully give yourself a better launching point when you study for the bar.
- Alison Monahan: I agree completely. There's no reason to just kind of coast through this last year, and then slide into bar prep, and then fail the bar, and then have the wake-up call like, "Huh, I guess this was the problem all along." It's just not doing anyone any favors.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. Well, we're almost out of time. What are your final thoughts? I'm trying to remember my 3L year. I'm trying to remember any lessons from my 3L year to share.
- Alison Monahan: I do remember that I did a lot more traveling to friends, like I had a friend in Boston. I remember I spent a lot of time on the train that year.
- Lee Burgess: Ah, yes.
- Alison Monahan: And yeah, I feel like it's an opportunity to kind of shape your experience a little bit more and do what you want with a little bit less pressure than you maybe had the previous two years.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. I definitely remember once I had my work job offer, I felt a reduction in stress. I did have a lot to do, because I was an editor of the Law Review, but I did have the flexibility to do it on my own time. So I have lots of memories of me editing Law Review articles in very random places.



- Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. I remember reading Fed Courts on the train.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, but I also had a lot of fun, because I think I did know that reality was going to come kind of crashing down on me once I started my big firm job. And I met my now husband right before my 3L year, and I spent a lot of Sundays watching football and not studying. That's kind of what I remember; drinking beer and watching football. So, you know.
- Alison Monahan: One of my roommates did a study abroad the last semester, which was kind of fun too, so that's another thing maybe to look into.
- Lee Burgess: Oh, that's an interesting one, yeah. This is probably your last school experience, so embrace it.
- Alison Monahan: True.
- Lee Burgess: Go all in.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah.
- Alison Monahan: Exactly.
- Lee Burgess: Well, with that, I think we're 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 or alison@lawschooltoolbox.com. Or you can always reach out to us via our [contact form](#) at LawSchoolToolbox.com. Thanks for listening, and we'll talk soon!

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