Alison Monahan: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today, we're excited to have college and law school admissions consultant Sydney Montgomery here with us to talk all about law school admissions. Your Law School Toolbox host today is Alison Monahan, and typically, I'm with Lee Burgess. We're here to demystify the law school and early legal career experience, so that you'll be the best law student and lawyer you can be. Together we're the co-creators of the Law School Toolbox, the Bar Exam Toolbox, and the career-related website CareerDicta. I also run The Girl's Guide to Law School. If you enjoy the show, please leave a review or rating on your favorite listening app. And if you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to us. You can always reach us via the contact form on LawSchoolToolBox.com, and we would love to hear from you. With that, let's get started.

Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today we're excited to have college and law school admissions consultant Sydney Montgomery here with us to talk all about law school admissions. Welcome, Sydney.

Sydney Montgomery: Thank you, I'm so excited.

Alison Monahan: Well, we're so excited to have you. To get us started off, can you just give our listeners a little bit of your background, so they have some context for where you're coming from?

Sydney Montgomery: Absolutely. I'm from Montgomery County, Maryland, I talk about Maryland a lot on my podcast, Break Into Law School, because it's one of the greatest states, I think, in the country. I was born to two military parents, my mom's a Jamaican immigrant, my parents both got their degrees after the military. Growing up, I didn't always know exactly how I was going to navigate the higher education space. I knew that education was really important to my family, but my parents didn't go through the process traditionally. It was all pretty confusing, but thankfully, I had help from my high school teachers. I became the first student from my high school to go to Princeton. I had a lot of guidance from my pre-law advisor at Princeton – shout out Lyon Zabsky – and she helped me go to Harvard Law School. In that process though, even when I had just gotten into Princeton, I reflected on the things that people told me. They told me, "Oh, girls like you don't go to the Ivy league, they only take white students" or, "They only take rich students" or, "They only take 4.0 students." And I was none of those things, but I didn't let that stop me from applying. But I kind of realized as I was at Harvard that there are so many students for whom those messages do stop them from applying and from reaching their full academic potential. So, even though I was at law school, of course, to be a lawyer and I wanted to be a child advocate, which is what I was – I was a family law attorney for a little bit, I clerked for a judge, and then I practiced law – I, at the same time, started learning as much as I could about admissions. I got my certificate in Independent Educational Consulting from the University of California Irvine, I

joined the Independent Educational Consultants Association, the National Association for College Admission Counseling. I became a counselor of the year, I joined the ethics committee, I became the graduate school chair, and I tried to do as much as I could to make sure that I was giving quality and ethical advice, because it was so important to me that I help other students break down barriers in their own education, in their own journey. Ultimately I ended up leaving the law fully, to pivot into educational consulting full-time, so this is my full-time job. And we have a great team behind us here as well, but I basically dedicated my career to not just helping students through the college and law school admissions process, but also speaking up on equity issues as it relates to higher education in general, and especially of course in the law school process, and then the legal field.

Alison Monahan: Awesome. And if people want to find out more about you and about what you do, how can they do that?

Sydney Montgomery: Absolutely. You can always visit us on our website, smontgomeryconsulting.com. You can follow us @smontgomeryconsulting on Instagram or @breakintolawschool on Instagram. We have the Break Into Law School podcast, new episodes come out every week. We have a YouTube channel, and we offer a myriad of things. We offer a lot of free guides, we have some smaller digital courses, some subscription plans, some small group bootcamps, private consulting. But basically, no matter where you are in your journey or your financial journey, we want to be able to give you content that's going to help you be the best lawyer you can, and ultimately create generational wealth for you and your family.

Alison Monahan: Nice. And I will say your website and your podcast were useful – I checked those out preparing for this podcast. So, if you're into podcasts, go listen to this one – it looked like it was great.

Sydney Montgomery: Thank you.

Alison Monahan: And yeah, I'm curious. You kind of alluded to this. We got this a lot, not so much now, but particularly when we were starting out, like, "Oh, do you do this full-time?" Do you get that a lot?

Sydney Montgomery: I do. I do get that a lot.

Alison Monahan: It's really great. You're like, "Yes, actually."

Sydney Montgomery: It's a whole job, it's not a side gig. I try to be good at what I do.

Alison Monahan: No, but it would just be like, "Yes, we do do this full-time. In fact, we have a whole team of people working for us, and they rely on us for their income. So yes, we do."

Sydney Montgomery: Yes. Some of them also do it full-time.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, no, it's one of those where you're like, "Could you stop right now? Just stop talking." Anyway.

Sydney Montgomery: Yes.

Alison Monahan: Alright. So, I know you work with a lot of first-generation college and law students, and I think there're some unique challenges these students tend to face. What do you think these challenges are and how can people overcome those?

Sydney Montgomery: Yeah. So, I think that there's not enough attention paid to this population, and there's not enough understanding of what even defines this population. I had an interesting conversation with a perspective student and her mom the other day, and they're middle income, probably. The student though, she would be the first in her family go to law school. And I was like, "Oh, I work with a lot of students who are first-gen to law school." And she just looked at me like she'd never heard that phrase applied to her life. I think there's this misconception that all first-gen students are low income, or that all first-gen students are black or brown. But first-gen, especially when you talk about law school, that's a lot of people. It's a broad category.

Alison Monahan: I think technically I would have qualified for that, but until this sort of became more of a thing, I never really thought about it. I actually just read a really interesting New Yorker article about this exact topic, so I think this is something that people have mixed views on, and maybe stereotypical views of what that means, but it seems like it's very wide range.

Sydney Montgomery: It is a wide range, and depending on the definition that you use, I wouldn't have qualified as first-gen to college, and I didn't. In college, I did not go to any of the first-gen resources because I didn't think that I was first-gen, because my parents did get their degree, albeit through the military afterwards. But basically, it's the concept that you are navigating a process that you don't have someone, your parents mostly, to guide you through. You are the first person to try to go through this process, you are the first person to embark on law school or college. So, all of the things also associated with being a college student and being a law school student – from dorms to juggling classes, to juggling working and classes, to studying for exams, to knowing how to get a mentor, how to reach out to alumni – there's a whole host of things that if you are the first person to do that, you don't have that guidance. And so oftentimes, it's not just

the lack of knowledge that first-gen students have, but it's almost the lack of how much knowledge they don't have. You don't know what you don't know. And there were so many things I didn't even think to ask, because I didn't know that I was supposed to be asking that question. And even that knowledge of what questions to ask or who to ask can be such a challenge for those who are the first in their family to go to college and law school. And then I think there's also this general feeling of, "I don't belong here" or, "I can't do it." There's something that happens with goal setting, and I've personally experienced this recently. I'm in the ed tech space now, and it's very new for me. But you don't create big goals or as big of goals as you could, if you are sometimes the first trailblazer in your family, or to do something. And so, students that might have come from a long line of lawyers, they might confidently say that they want to clerk for the Supreme Court. And it seems like a reality, because they've seen someone who's done that.

Alison Monahan: And of course, you just do that.

Sydney Montgomery: Of course, right. Well, okay, Uncle Bobby didn't clerk for the Supreme Court, but he clerked on the Seventh Circuit, so I could go one step above.

Alison Monahan: Right, he knows somebody. He went to school with someone who did clerk for the Supreme Court. I went to – I'm sure you did too – I went to school now with people who clerked for the Supreme Court; it was totally normal.

Sydney Montgomery: Exactly, exactly. So then that's a goal that you can reasonably think through. However, if you don't have anyone in your family who's a lawyer, even saying, "I want to work at a big law firm", it seems like, "Oh I don't know, I'm just out here throwing smoke. Maybe I need to just have more attainable goals." And that kind of dampening of your goals, that undermatching of your potential, I see it a lot with first-gen students, because even just going to college or going to law school is already their stretch dream for most of them, that anything more than that is just inconceivable.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. Lee, my business partner, grew up with two parents who were lawyers, in the Central Valley and Fresno. They were lawyers, she spent time in court. And she tells a story about her first semester of law school at Thanksgiving, she was home and her mother says, "How are you? How's your studying going?" And she said, "Oh, I think it's going pretty well." And she's like, "Alright, let me quiz you on some tort stuff," and Lee was like, "What? Oh yeah, negligence is sort of like this..." She's like, "No, you need to know these rules cold." And Lee had this moment where she said, "Oh my gosh, this is different than what I thought it was." But obviously, if your parent is not a lawyer, they're not telling you these things.

Sydney Montgomery: No. No, I stopped asking my parents for homework help in seventh grade. That was it.

Alison Monahan: My parents were literally like, "You're going to law school? When did you apply to do that?"

Sydney Montgomery: Exactly.

Alison Monahan: So, I think a lot of it is just about getting the support, like what you're doing, you're really giving people the support they need, and saying, "Look, you can do this, but you need some information." And that was really a large portion of why I started my first website too, is what I wish I had known, or I wish someone had told me going into this.

Sydney Montgomery: And I love The Girl's Guide to Law School. Just going to say I was very excited when we connected, because it was very helpful to me.

Alison Monahan: I'm not sure I'd have named it that at this point, but it was of its era.

Sydney Montgomery: Listen, I was trying to figure out what to wear to things, and it was very helpful. But I think mentorship is really important. We have a student and alumni platform, so of course, the counselors act as mentors, but we try to match all of our students – our incoming 1L students and our high school students – up with a mentor near peer buddy, if you will, so that they also have someone that they can ask questions to, outside of us.

Alison Monahan: No, that's awesome. I know you work with students throughout the entire law school admissions process. Where do you see people running into the biggest problems consistently?

Sydney Montgomery: Consistently, we see students running into issues, of course, with two big camps, which are, of course, the big camps in admissions – it's the LSAT and the essays. But from my standpoint, I would say that I see a lot of students discounting the importance of their essays. And I say that, of course, the LSAT exam is a really big part of law school admissions, but I also know that it is not the only part of law school admissions. And I think it can be a process that really breaks people unintentionally. It can be very demoralizing, it's very expensive to study for the LSAT, and sometimes I do see students not really investing in the right LSAT resources. It's expensive, but I think it's one of those things that you have to invest in good prep, because otherwise it will just be more expensive later. But I always tell students, you have to control what you can control in the process. And so, the LSAT exam, you try as much as you can, but you have 100% control over your essays and you have 100% control over when you apply to law school, hopefully in the fall, or December/January, but hopefully in that time frame, and maybe not as March/April. But students spend all their time on the

LSAT exam, and then they're so burned out and so tired and so overwhelmed by the time they get to their essays that they just sort of put everything there. And sometimes, especially first-gen minority students feel like they have to tell the most traumatic thing that's ever happened to them as an example of how they've overcome something. And I say trauma can be part of your story, but you are more than your trauma. Let's also talk about your strengths, let's also talk about what your goals are, the places that you've made impact. And so really putting that narrative together, controlling the story that you tell admissions is so important, and when I see students rushing through that, or honestly, just too tired and exhausted and beat down by the process to start really doing that deep introspective work – it's a shame, because then sometimes you end up with not a great LSAT score, and also not great essays. And you should try to have one.

Alison Monahan: Right, you're going to need one of these to be strong if you're going to have a chance of getting in places. Well, actually that was one of the things I was going to ask you about. So let's just kind of jump into that to follow up a little bit. Pretend scenario: I'm applying to law school soon and I'm not sure what to write my personal statement about. How can I decide and how personal is too personal?

Sydney Montgomery: I love that question. I say there's nothing that you can't write about, but it's all about how you write about it. So the topic of your personal statement – and I use that kind of lightly – should not be one that you agonize over. I think that at least here, how we do it is we have students do a large universal brainstorm of just all the things that are important to them, all of the things that are meaningful, all of the moments in their life that have really shaped them and made them the person that they are. And then also thinking about why they want to go to law school and what their goals are, and choosing stories in a way that links multiple points together, that it moves in time and space; and also has a narrative element to it, because there's power in storytelling. It just evokes a different emotion from the admissions reader, it activates a different part of their brain. And so, I don't think that there's a thing you need to write your personal statement about, but it really should showcase – in two pages ideally, double spaced – a couple of different touch points and critical moments in your life that are leading you to this next juncture. Now, how personal is too personal? That, in some respects, depends on why you want to go to law school. I don't think that there's anything that's completely off limits. I have read and have had students that have successful essays about domestic violence or sexual assault or child abuse – really heavy things, but those are also not moments that you're going to describe in all of the detail. There was a podcast, I think it was Navigating Admissions with Miriam and Kristi, I think it was in their first season, where they kind of said the more sensitive the topic, the more delicate you write about it. There's this balance of tone, and I think that's really true. I think with strong writing, you can kind of write about anything, but it's

going to be like, "Please don't give me two pages describing that night." That would be really hard to read.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, no, and I definitely remember once, not for law school, but reading a friend's personal statement for something else and kind of going, "Wow, okay. I never knew that you... You've never talked about this to me, and I think this is... It's too much. You've got to back out of this. I'm not saying you can't have this essay, but this level of detail is a distraction." It's a hard balance, I think, to get right, but I think that's great advice.

Sydney Montgomery: Yeah. You want to be thinking, "What is the emotion I'm leaving them with?" And if they feel really sad, that's not the goal, because they still need to be thinking, "Oh, this person is going to make a great addition to our class and a great lawyer." So, hopefully you can kind of weave some strengths in there as well.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, or that at least you've processed this and it's something that you can move on from. Alright, well, let's completely shift gears off of the heavy topic, to the money topic. So, I really want to go to law school, but it is so expensive. How can I get schools to give me money? And if they won't, how do I know when it's worth it to pay full price?

Sydney Montgomery: The first thing I will say is that we're going to divorce ourselves from the dichotomy that either I get schools to give me money or I pay full price. I am going to posit you a third option – apply for outside scholarships. It's not talked about often, but there are fundings for students who are going to law school that do not come from the school itself. This is very important. This can be from a pipeline program, sometimes there's just general grad school scholarships that you can use towards law school. It's kind of like a pro tip, but that will take some of the pressure off a little bit because on some level, if your scores are below the median, you're not going to get that scholarship from the school, but that doesn't mean that you then have to pay full price for it. But how do you get schools to give you money? Let's say you are someone that is well within the medians. You want to make sure that you're applying early. There are some schools, not all schools, but there are definitely some schools that give scholarship money out on a rolling basis. And so, for those schools, applying early really does help you. You want to make sure that you are really carefully looking at all of the different types of scholarships – the name scholarships, some schools have scholarships for first-gen students or for diverse candidates, or for students that come from other underrepresented backgrounds, or for students that want to go into certain kinds of law. And look broadly also at the university itself. There are some university-wide fellowships that maybe you won't find on the law school sites, but again, that you can use for the graduate study at the law school. When is it worth it to pay full price? I mean, almost never. Almost never, really.

Alison Monahan: Please, take that to heart – almost never is it really worth it.

Sydney Montgomery: Like, zero dollars and zero cents. Most schools might give you 10, which is basically nothing. But just nothing? It's really just not worth it, unless – here's the caveat – let's say you get into Harvard, Yale, Stanford, Columbia, UChicago, whatever, you don't get any merit aid, and your parents already have $250,000 sitting in a 529 for you. Sure.

Alison Monahan: That would be nice.

Sydney Montgomery: Right. Alright, well, that's what the money is there for. But if you're not in that situation, if it's going to be loans... It's worth it to pay full price, I suppose, if you have the cash, not in loans. But if it's going to be loans, it's never worth it to pay full price.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, the only exception I can see maybe, or an argument for, is if you're absolutely 100% certain you're going to do public interest work and you're going to a school that has a really solid loan repayment system. Maybe consider it, but you've got to be really sure at that point.

Sydney Montgomery: Yeah, I would also agree with that, definitely. And loan repayment assistance, I would say is not the same as loan forgiveness.

Alison Monahan: And it's not as guaranteed as they make it sound going in, either. Definitely, you want to investigate that option pretty thoroughly, if you're going to consider it.

Sydney Montgomery: Definitely, definitely.

Alison Monahan: Alright, well, let's move on: I think I'm actually a pretty competitive applicant, but I'm not sure where I want to end up long-term. How can I decide where to apply, and does it really matter that much where my school is located?

Sydney Montgomery: So, I think that there are two different kinds of schools. There're really national law schools, which I usually call it T25, T30 and above, and more regional schools. And the regional schools can be absolutely fantastic. I'm not one of those people that get caught up in rankings and the elitism like that, despite the schools that I have gone to. But those more national schools, basically what I mean is that they're going to have employers from all over the country coming to the job fairs, and it's going to be just easier if you go to school at a top 14 or top 30 school and you want to go back home to Iowa, it's fine. If you go to Drake – and I love Drake, and I got to visit, and it was fantastic – and you're like, "Well, I really want to end up in New Mexico" – that's harder. You can do it, but...

Alison Monahan: It'll be more of a challenge, definitely.

Sydney Montgomery: New Mexico is not coming to you.

Alison Monahan: And they might be kind of like, "Okay, so why do you want to be in New Mexico?" And maybe you have a really great answer to that question, but you're going to need a pretty good answer to that question.

Sydney Montgomery: You are going to need a really good answer to that question. And so, I think that if you're a pretty competitive applicant, I always say you want to make a balance list, whether it's college or law school admissions, balance list. So maybe you do have those top tier national schools, and that gives you the flexibility if you're not sure where you want to go. But I would say pick two or three cities or states. I don't like cities actually, I'm a suburb girl. But pick two or three locations – maybe it's where your family is, if you have a partner or your best friend lives there, that you're like, "Yeah, I wouldn't be mad if I had to spend three years there figuring out my next move." And then put a couple of regional schools from those three areas or whatever, maybe it's just one area. For me, I knew I was moving back home to Maryland. My baby sister is 17, and I wanted to be here for high school. So it really didn't matter where I was going to law school, I was moving back to Maryland, and that's where my regional school list came from. I think that would give you some balance.

Alison Monahan: I think that's good advice – you don't want to put all of your eggs in one basket. I think that breakdown is absolutely right. Some schools, you can go anywhere from them, and the other ones, you probably want to be in the local market. And they can produce great lawyers, they have great alumni network, but it's just going to make everything easier if you can kind of figure this out. Alright, next question: It's been a while since I graduated from undergrad and I'm applying to law school, and I'm not sure my professors are going to remember me well enough to write letters of recommendation that are really strong. What should I do?

Sydney Montgomery: "I love this question, because I love letters of recommendation", says no one ever, but here we are. I actually have my students prepare what's kind of like a rag sheet, sort of like a recommender ask. It's actually very common in the college admission space, a lot of high schools require students to do this for their teachers, but for some reason hasn't trickled down to common parlance in the law school admission space. But your letters of recommendation should really speak to your writing, your research, your critical thinking, analytical thinking abilities. And so, I have my students prepare, I don't know, it's like a one-pager roughly, maybe two-pagers, but usually one-pager that just kind of says, "Hey professor so-and-so, these are the schools I'm applying to, this is when I need this letter. For background, I was a student here, here, and here. These are some moments." Give them some anecdotes, because the best letters have anecdotes. But tell them what law schools are looking for letters of

recommendation, and then give them some examples: "I remember when I was in your office hours and we were debating this, this, and this" or, "I led that class discussion on this" or, "You really helped me through my thesis with this", and they will mostly remember you from that. And even if they don't, you have now given them great anecdotes so they can pretend to remember you. But hopefully, the first step is to try to ask people that you really know. And also, if it's early enough... Right now, it's April, it could be May. And if it's early enough, I would say have a virtual coffee, reconnect. In your reconnection, you may mention that you were thinking applying to law school this fall. And if they're worth their salt and they actually like you, they will probably say, "Oh my goodness, law school's so great. Well, you know, if you need a letter of recommendation, don't hesitate to ask me."

Alison Monahan: Like, "Oh, I hadn't thought of that."

Sydney Montgomery: "Just didn't cross my mind, but now that you mentioned it, now that you mentioned..."

Alison Monahan: "I would definitely put you on that potential list. Thank you."

Sydney Montgomery: Look at that. And then you hit them with the, "Thanks so much for the coffee the other day. I really do think a letter from you would be great. And again, I'm going to provide some information just to see if this would be helpful for you. I'm going to give you some background and context for the ask, and what law schools are looking for." I always love that good one-two punch of a reconnection and then an ask. I understand that some students, it's like October and they're like, "Shoot, I haven't asked." So, you might not have that kind of time, but I still think that you should really try to give that information to them. They may use it, they may not. They may have their own memories, and that's great actually. But at least you're giving them something to start with, so they're not staring at a piece of paper. Because even teachers that love you – and I've had my friends who are professors ask me, "Sydney, I don't know, what are law schools looking for, what am I supposed to say?" Or just your mind goes blank. And so, help your teachers help you get you into the schools you want.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. And I recall some of them even asked me, "What are you going to be writing your essay about, or do you have a copy of that essay?" So they could tailor what they were saying, so again, it fits this narrative of, what is my story telling? If they're saying one thing and I'm saying something totally different, this is probably not what we're looking for, really.

Sydney Montgomery: Absolutely.

Alison Monahan: Professors generally love hearing from old students, this is what they live for. If you're like, "Oh, I really enjoyed that class and it was such an influence on me,

and now years later, I've decided to take this next step", they're like, "Oh wow, I influenced someone. Amazing."

Sydney Montgomery: In fact, they're just going to be happy. Probably someone's listening and they're like, "Okay, but it was 10 years ago." Listen, they think that you have forgotten them, okay? So if you are like, "Hey professor so-and-so, just want to give you a life update. Had a baby, moved to Texas, got married." They'll be like, "My God, my student, she cares, she remembers." That's what they're going to be like. They're going to be very happy.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. If you say nice things and you remember them, that's pretty much why you go into education, I feel like. I have students that I tutored like 10 years ago, and one of them emailed me the other day and I'm like, "Oh my gosh, it was so great to hear from you. You should be on the podcast." I'm always happy to hear from them. Alright, well, we're getting low on time, so I have a couple more questions for you: I'm at the end of the application process. I have just accepted an offer at a law school, and I'm generally happy with it, but the more I think about it, I am just not sure this is a good idea. When is too late to back out, and is there anything you think I should do to kind of figure this out over the summer? What if I'm making a huge mistake?

Sydney Montgomery: This is definitely a tougher one. The quick answer, is it too late to back out? It's never too late to back out. You should never say "Yes" and put down a seat deposit and go to a school if you are not really sure that you want to do that. But I would actually say, I think you need to spend some time maybe talking with yourself, talking with a significant other, talking with a therapist, talking with your parents – whoever is in your support network, pastor, whoever – to suss out if it's whether law school you're not sure about or whether the particular school you're not sure about. And have as many data points as you want. You can sometimes ask schools to extend your deposit deadlines. So if you have a deposit deadline coming up but you're not really sure, sometimes they can do that and you can try to get at more informational interviews. But if it's really like you've gone through the whole process and you got accepted and you like the school, but now you're not sure if law school's for you, I would highly recommend, even though it kind of sounds scary, you can see if you can defer, but that's not always guaranteed. But I would highly recommend taking that time and listen to your gut, because that's usually a sign that maybe you weren't fully ready to go to law school, and that's okay. There're other kinds of graduate schools, and there're lots of ways to make impact. Sometimes students go to law school because they want to make change, and being a lawyer seems like the way to make change. But you can make change with public policy, you can make change with education, you can make change with so many different careers. And so, I would suggest look at the motivations and reasons, maybe read your personal statement. Why did you want to go to law school? And then maybe take some time to look at some other careers around

that. If you want to do child advocacy, look at other ways you can affect children, explore those careers and then see if at the end of it you still come back to the law. It's always worth it to take that time for yourself.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think you definitely should not show up to orientation unless you are pretty certain this is the right time and the right thing, because once that ball starts rolling, it does get a lot harder to stop it. And if you decide to leave after you've started, it's a lot messier than if you just decide to defer for a year and try to figure this out.

Sydney Montgomery: Yeah, a re-applicant… People re-apply to law school, but starting and then withdrawing and then trying to apply later, if you really do decide you want to go to law school, is a much harder story to tell.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, it makes sense. Definitely a lot messier, so try to figure this out before you show up and actually commit. Alright, last question: I am currently on a waitlist and I would love to go to this particular school. What can I do to try to get them to take me?

Sydney Montgomery: So, it is waitlist season, because it's deposit deadline season. These kind of go hand-in hand. Definitely, if you haven't already, writing a letter of continued interest to the school. And don't just make it generic with whatever is on their website, but actually getting some good insight – talk to students, talk to people there, find out what communities you would want to join. Follow the school's instructions. Every school has different waitlist instructions, and not following the instructions is the quickest way to not get off the waitlist. And see if there are some things in your application that you can increase, like, "Maybe it does look like taking the LSAT again", says no one that wants to do that ever, I know, but that might be the thing standing between you and a "Yes". I always say you want to have relationships with admissions, you want to start that as early as you can in the process, but if you haven't and now you're on the waitlist, it's no time like the present. So, try to get to know admissions, if they have a forum for doing so, if they have info sessions or open Zoom hours. And sometimes they will be quite frank with you about what it is in your file that they are lacking; sometimes they can't. Not every school has that ability or that bandwidth, so you want to be respectful of that. But definitely try to do what you can to show that you are interested, because a waitlist is really about yield and they don't have time to accept students off the waitlist that aren't going to come.

Alison Monahan: Right. They definitely want to be sure that you're probably going to say "Yes" if they give you a call, and you're probably going to be excited about it and say "Yes" quickly.

Sydney Montgomery: Yes.

Alison Monahan: Alright. Well, we are pretty much out of time here. Any final thoughts you'd like to share with people in anything related to the admissions process?

Sydney Montgomery: Just to really trust yourself, and to take some time for mindfulness. I think that there's a lot of stress and anxiety in this process, and it is a stressful process. But I think that there're ways that you can practice self-care throughout the process, and I really try to encourage that with our students – if it's the Headspace app, if it's prayer, if it's InsightTimer, or cooking, or watching a fun TV show after your LSAT studying. But just really try to take care of yourself, because what you want to do is you want to go to law school as a whole, happy person, and you don't want to have been so burned out by this process that you're not really in the best place to start law school.

Alison Monahan: No, that's great advice, because this can be such a stressful process and it feels really judgy. It feels really personal, and I think maintaining that kind of core sense of self and happiness regardless of what your outcome is, is really so critical.

Sydney Montgomery: Absolutely.

Alison Monahan: Well, Sydney, thank you so much for joining us. And remind us if people want to find out more about you and your work, how can they do that?

Sydney Montgomery: Absolutely, yes. As I said, we're at smontgomeryconsulting. We offer a wide range of options, from just free guides to mini-courses. We just launched our Quick Start essay plans, and they start as low as $35 a month. But then we also have our law school application boot camps, which are fantastic communities in cohorts of five students. And then of course, we have private consulting. So there're lots of different ways for you to get guidance and get help on your essays, but also on the entire process as a whole, and to feel like you have a champion and a mentor in your corner, so you don't feel alone on the journey.

Alison Monahan: Well, that sounds great! Thank you so much for joining us. This has been really informative.

Sydney Montgomery: Yes, thank you so much, and I can't wait. I can't wait to continue to stay in touch with you guys and see how we can partner together.

Alison Monahan: Definitely, that sounds great. Well, with that, we are unfortunately 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 would really appreciate it. And make 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!

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InsightTimer
Podcast Episode 119: Navigating the Law School Application Process (with Admission Logic)
Podcast Episode 210: Using Mindfulness Practices as a Law Student
Podcast Episode 246: Influence of the LSAT on the Law School Admission Process (with Shirag Shemmassian)
Podcast Episode 256: Tips for Applying to Law School (w/Anna Ivey)
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