



Lee Burgess: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today we're talking about what to do and what not to do the summer before law school. Your Law School Toolbox hosts are Alison Monahan and Lee Burgess, that's me. We're here to demystify the law school and early legal career experience, so you'll be the best law student and lawyer you can be. We're the co-creators of the [Law School Toolbox](#), the [Bar Exam Toolbox](#), and the career-related website [CareerDicta](#). Alison also runs [The Girl's Guide to Law School](#). If you enjoy the show, please leave a review or rating on your favorite listening app. And if you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to us. You can reach us via the [contact form](#) on LawSchoolToolBox.com, and we'd love to hear from you. And with that, let's get started.

Alison Monahan: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today we're talking about what to do and what not to do the summer before law school. Well, what were we doing the summer before law school? I'm trying to remember. I know I was planning to leave my software job; I was a programmer at the time and moved across the country. I think I read a book or two about the law school experience. I think I bought some books about the law that I'm pretty sure I never actually read. And I found my law school roommate on a message board. So that was kind of what I spent my summer doing. How about you, Lee?

Lee Burgess: Yeah, let's see. I was still working for much of the summer. I took a nice long vacation to Costa Rica with my best friends, which was very fun. And then I read 1L and watched a lot of movies on law school. I don't even know that I thought that did anything; I just felt like it was a fun thing to do over the summer. But I finished working just a week or two before school started, because I was trying to make money, and I just tried to enjoy that professional life as long as I had it, before I said "Bye bye" to my nice salary and went back to school. But I just tried to have fun. I think that's what I focused on, was trying to have as much fun as I could over that summer.

Alison Monahan: That was smart of you. Yeah, I definitely think I should have quit my job sooner because I was pretty much... I was just moving across the country, and I remember the panicked moment of trying to get my boxes shipped out in time and all that kind of stuff. So, that was probably not my best call ever, but I had kind of a history of doing that over and over, so it wasn't really that surprising. Unrealistic expectations around how long things would take was kind of a running theme.

Lee Burgess: Well, I feel like with moving and any sort of big thing, I don't think anyone has realistic expectations. It always takes much longer than you think, and it's more complicated than you think.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, no, it was definitely... I should have allocated more time and I definitely was not having fun most of that period.



Lee Burgess: I didn't have to move, I stayed in the same city. So that was a big shift as I wasn't relocating, so I just could work and enjoy my life. I had moved in the spring before law school once I decided I was going to stay. So I did all of that stuff, the responsible stuff in the spring, and then travelled and had fun over the summer. I think there were weddings and things happening that I went to. And then it was like, "Oh, now I just switch and go to school."

Alison Monahan: Yeah, that was smart of you. Yeah, for most people, I think this pre-law school summer is kind of this mix of [practical logistics](#), and we're going to talk about those in more detail and in upcoming episodes. We're not going to get too into that. And then concern/excitement about what they're getting into. And also this time to wrap things up, whether that's a job, housing, relationships, whatever it is. It's this kind of transition. So I think it can be a little bit fraught, but also it was a good time to kind of wrap some stuff up, start some new things, and really get yourself situated to be going into law school with the right mindset and not be worrying about all this other stuff. And interestingly, I think people don't actually really need to worry that much about the school aspects of it in a funny way, because you're going to have an orientation and no one really expects you to know that much when you show up. Sometimes people ask us, "Well, how much substantive law should I try to learn in the summer? That's something I should start as soon as I get my class schedule, right?"

Lee Burgess: No. Please don't.

Alison Monahan: You don't need to do that.

Lee Burgess: Please don't do that. You're going to school to learn all this stuff. They're going to teach it to you – that's the whole point of going to school.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, and I think sometimes your school may have things they ask you to do beforehand – to read something or whatever it is, and obviously you want to do that. But nobody really expects you to know anything about the law when you show up. So, if I'm not going to be spending the summer reading my Torts outlines, what should I be doing instead?

Lee Burgess: Well, I think if you feel like you want to do some prep for school, you can work on your skills. I think it's not a good use of your time to focus on learning law, because they'll teach you that. But you can work on your study skills, and we have a course for that, there are other courses. Our course is called [Start Law School Right](#). The idea is a little almost exposure therapy of what the semester's going to be like. What does it feel like to try and read a case? What does it feel like to listen to a class lecture? What is it going to sound like to get called on? What are class notes supposed to look like? These are things that are more about the law school experience. And I think it can be nice to have a little



exposure to this before starting school, especially if you don't have lawyers in your family or in your network that will talk to you about it. It can be really overwhelming, because the class format is different, the Socratic method feels different, it's just a lot of different all at once. So, if you want to spend some time doing that, I think it's really important to take some time. It's not necessary, you don't have to do it, but it can just ease the transition and not make you feel like so much of a fish out of water when you hit orientation or go to those first few classes.

Alison Monahan: I think that's right. I don't think it's necessary to do anything, but I think if you are going to do something, focus on the skills, don't focus on the law. Also in terms of skills, if you know, for example, that your writing could be improved, you know that you don't have the best grammar, for example – you can actually work on that this summer. There's a great kind of antiquated book called [*Strunk and White, The Elements of Style*](#) – it was written in the 1930s, believe it or not. Still a totally valid resource. It is under \$10 on Amazon, I looked this up. That is a very, very, very good investment. It's a very small book and it's not even \$10. So, if you know that you need help with writing, I think that could be something that would be a really good use of your time.

Lee Burgess: I think that's true. Another thing that we have talked about as a skill that you want to perfect is reading. You're going to do a lot of reading, you're going to do a lot of difficult reading. And so often now most of our reading is on our phones, which is really skimming, not reading in the same way. I've moved back to reading paper books mostly, not reading things on my phone, because it's just such a different experience because I'm trained to skim on my phone. You glance at your phone, and I think that you need to get used to reading denser material and slowing down and kind of plodding through it, and that's just not how our life works these days. We read fast, we type fast, we move fast, and you're going to have to get yourself into the mindset of slowing down and doing something that's deliberately hard.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think any time you can spend the summer reading something that's challenging, that you have to really focus on, is great. If you don't feel quite up to that yet, one thing I've been doing more recently, because I also have been trying to read more on paper and less on my phone or Instagram or whatever – does reading Instagram captions even count? – but I've got a huge backlog of *New Yorkers* that I've been working my way through. And I feel like that could be good training wheels because those articles are not super hard, but they're not poorly written or anything. Some of them are about things you don't know anything about. Actually, a lot of them lately have been about legal things, although I haven't read all of those. But that's maybe four to six pages, and that can be good training wheels to kind of get yourself sitting down and doing some stuff before you attempt *War and Peace*.



- Lee Burgess: That's very true.
- Alison Monahan: You've got to kind of work up to it.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. I think it can be just good intellectual practice. If you want to read some [books that are somewhat connected to the law](#), I don't think that that's a bad thing. All that information, and names, and terms can go into your brain, but you shouldn't feel like you need to learn the law.
- Alison Monahan: Right. I think I picked up a Lawrence Lessig book, [Code Is the Law of Cyberspace](#) or something. So I was like, "Oh, I'm a programmer and I'm going to law school." And I honestly think I read like a chapter of it, but even that was probably still useful. I would see that book on my bookshelf for years afterwards and feel bad about not finishing it. Eventually I donated it.
- Lee Burgess: Even a good audio book. We were talking about the other day how I'm reading [Elie Mystal's new book on the Constitution](#) – which we can link to in the show notes – which isn't written for lawyers, but there is a lot of law in there. You should read about it and see if you would find it interesting.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think anything that's kind of like law for non-lawyers is good. There's one, I think I bought it in the summer and eventually was reading it for my Professional Responsibility class called, I think, [Buffalo Creek Disaster](#). And that's just a really interesting book; it's all about this case in West Virginia, I think, and it goes through the entire process. So, anything that seems interesting, I think would be good. I just don't think you should force yourself to read things that are going to be really tedious, that you're going to hate and probably not understand. Oh, I also remember I read an entire Supreme Court case that came down that summer. You realize in law school, you never read the whole case. It was a hundred plus pages, I was just like, "Wow, this is really a lot." But they edit those for you in the case book.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, they do. They help you out.
- Alison Monahan: Substantially.
- Lee Burgess: Substantially, yes.
- Alison Monahan: That case, maybe it was a pretty important case. I think maybe it would be like 10 pages that you would actually read for your class. So, I did slog through that entire case, I will say.
- Lee Burgess: So, other than reading and getting your brain into this idea of learning new material, I think checking how you approach challenging things with a [growth mindset](#) is also something to consider. Just do something that makes you



uncomfortable. Every time I set myself up to do something uncomfortable, it is such a great reminder that you want to practice your growth mindset. So, pre-pandemic, my son decided that he wanted to try rock climbing, so I took him to the rock climbing gym and I signed him up for this class. And then I didn't realize that what I'd actually signed us up for was both of us to be in this class, and then I was also going to be rock climbing, which is not something I had done before. I think that there are times when you look at the small people in your life like and they're like, "Why wouldn't you want to go climb the wall, Mom?"

Alison Monahan: I know maybe you don't want to go up to the top of this.

Lee Burgess: And I was just like, "Right." And so I did it, but it was a good practice of having to set aside all the responsible chitter-chatter or self-doubt talk that can come into our brains and just be like, "No, I am going to show my kid that I can scale the wall." And I think it can be anything – it can be practicing vocabulary in a foreign language, it can be going to a difficult yoga class, it can be taking an art class. I think just getting out of your comfort zone and reminding yourself what it feels like to take on a new challenge can also just help you... The first day in law school, when they use a lot of terms that you don't know, and you feel that same icky feeling of, "I don't belong here, I shouldn't be here."

Alison Monahan: "I don't know what's happening."

Lee Burgess: Right, "I don't know what I'm supposed to be doing." It's so much better if you can be like, "No, I'm used to this feeling. I can just plough right through this and keep going", with this idea that, "I'm on a path." It's just a much better way to approach it.

Alison Monahan: Right. I think this can also be a good summer to develop a hobby that you can then pursue while you're in law school.

Lee Burgess: True.

Alison Monahan: So, it could be something physical like yoga, or rock climbing, or running, or soccer, whatever. Or something more artistic and creative, I think pottery. I have, at various times, done wheel-thrown pottery. I think that's a great thing that you can do to get out of your head, which is critical at some points in law school. But it's something that you enjoy and that maybe you've been interested in doing, but you haven't really had a lot of time to do. Because the reality is, you actually will, in a lot of ways, have extra time in law school. You won't have tons of extra time, because you will be working and studying, but you may actually have pockets of time during the day and things like that, that a lot of people don't have. So, it could actually be a good opportunity to do something that could be fun, that you could continue.



Lee Burgess: It's true. And maybe try a hobby that doesn't involve a screen.

Alison Monahan: Right, exactly. Something physical.

Lee Burgess: Something physical.

Alison Monahan: Whether it's like arty physical, or physical physical. I did a lot of weird gym classes when I was in law school, because I just thought it was fun. I took up squash at one point, because it was New York in the winter time and you couldn't play tennis. I think you will have these opportunities to expand your horizons, and this would be a great thing to do over the summer to get started.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. I guess the one other skill that sometimes is overlooked is typing.

Alison Monahan: True.

Lee Burgess: If you struggle with typing, and typing at any speed, that is probably something you want to work on. I'm sure that it is far beyond the Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing or whatever we used back in the olden days of yore.

Alison Monahan: I took a typing class at the community college when I was in high school one summer, and I'm pretty sure I failed it, because I stopped going at some point because I figured I'd learned enough, I wasn't really going to be a typist. And yeah, I think I had to report that when I applied to college.

Lee Burgess: That's really funny.

Alison Monahan: "Sorry, I had an F in typing when I was a sophomore in high school."

Lee Burgess: It is an important skill. We talk to folks who struggle with the bar exam, and one thing that we hear over and over again is, "I'm a very slow typist. I can't write down as many words as the person sitting next to me." And that's a real thing.

Alison Monahan: That is reality. If you are on a racehorse law school exam and there is no character limit, and someone can type 50% more than you can type in the same time period, they are probably going to get more points because they're going to have more stuff on the page.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. You need to be realistic about it.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, and this is definitely a growth mindset thing, because everyone can learn to type better. It's just a physical skill.



- Lee Burgess: Yep, that's so true. So, like you mentioned, we're going to talk a lot about logistics in an upcoming podcast, but it is important to figure out what you need to do to get your life in order.
- Alison Monahan: That's for sure.
- Lee Burgess: So, I would go to all your doctor's appointments and check-ups, especially if you're going to move. I would do all that stuff before you move.
- Alison Monahan: Oh yeah.
- Lee Burgess: So you don't have to find new people everywhere.
- Alison Monahan: Even just getting a haircut. I was talking to someone today, it was like, "Oh, I've got to get that done."
- Lee Burgess: I know. Get a haircut, get new eye glasses. Make sure that if you're on meds, that you have as many of your meds refills set up, so you can easily get stuff maybe even auto-sent to you, if possible. Think about food, where you're going to exercise and move your body. All of that stuff is important. And the more you figure out before school starts, the less stressful the beginning of school is. A lot of this organization before you go to school over the summer is like an insurance policy almost. It's just keeping everything rolling and if things get rocky, then all this stuff doesn't fall to the wayside.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, and I think along with seeing your regular doctors and things, if you need anything to get accommodations, or you think that you might need to get [accommodations in law school](#), this would be a great time to get all of that set up, so that you can just submit it and get rolling, and know that you're going to have the support that you need when you get started, not a semester or two down the road.
- Lee Burgess: And you should be able to even reach out to the disability services over the summer, I would assume, once you get accepted.
- Alison Monahan: Right, exactly, what are you going to need for this? Because they're pretty overwhelmed, I think, at a lot of schools at this point. So, anything you can do to facilitate that process, I think, doing earlier is great. Particularly if you need to see a private physician or something to get an assessment, you want to make sure that you've handled all that if you can before classes start.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. I think when what I spent some time doing over that summer, and what I do think is important too, is just spending time with friends and family that you may not be able to see, maybe because you're moving, maybe because you're going to be busy, maybe because they're a distraction, whatever it might be. But



you should invest in your relationships, because while the semester is happening, you're not going to be as flexible and available. So, fill up everybody's love tank before starting school.

Alison Monahan: Right, and set those expectations, as well, of, "This is what it might look like when I'm in school. This is how often I might be able to see you, Mom, Dad", or whoever.

Lee Burgess: Right.

Alison Monahan: I honestly don't think it's even too early to start thinking about things like Thanksgiving, because becomes such an issue.

Lee Burgess: Oh yeah. Well, it comes up really quickly, because once school starts rolling, the fall just flies by.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, and Thanksgiving is right at that time where you really need to be buckling down. It's just pre-exams, you're probably freaking out. And if your family expects you to fly across the country and do the four to five days that they've always done, that might just be a conversation to have this summer.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. Also, there're weather concerns, you can get stuck. When are your exams? It is a good idea to just look at that academic calendar a bit.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. I think people just need to understand that you're going to be committed to school, and they may just not have as much accessibility towards you for a little while.

Lee Burgess: Yep.

Alison Monahan: If you're leaving a job, I think you really want to make sure that you're doing that in the most professional manner possible.

Lee Burgess: True.

Alison Monahan: There's a trend now of, "Burn it all down, videotape it, put it on TikTok." Probably not the best choice here. You are almost certainly going to have to report this job when you apply for the bar, because they're just going to ask you for everything. You may need a reference, you definitely don't want to have a situation where you burn the whole thing down, and then years later, that comes back to haunt you.

Lee Burgess: Yep. You can still skip from the building in glee, which is one thing I did at one of my jobs, without really hurting your reputation in the wake. I mean, I did turn in



my laptop and I basically skipped out of the building, but my bosses didn't see that.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, there's a picture my sister took of me late night moving out of my office where I have literally the most gleeful look on my face, but I didn't publish that on the Internet.

Lee Burgess: No, I didn't publish that.

Alison Monahan: So I think, you're going into professional school, don't do anything crazy, just give your notice, work whatever they want you to during the notice period, and then go away knowing that you're moving on to bigger and better things.

Lee Burgess: Yep, exactly. Well, what about relationships? This is always something that I think people think about. Some people even talk about them in orientation. I think a professor told people how many of them were going to break up with their significant others during law school, which was maybe not 100% appropriate. But I think a lot of times you do hear about a lot of breakups, especially long-distance relationships, once someone starts law school.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I was in that scenario. I had been with someone in San Francisco and they decided they didn't want to move to New York, which was totally fine. However, in retrospect, we probably should have broken up at that point, rather than letting it kind of go for the entire first semester, because it ended up in a situation where I was feeling resentful that I had to talk to this person every night when I had all these other things that I needed to do and I just wanted to go to sleep. And they're feeling alone because I've abandoned them and moved to the East Coast. It just wasn't a great situation for anyone, and so we basically broke up over the winter break. So, I think this is a hard question. I think if the relationship is kind of on a sinking ship pattern and you're going to be moving, maybe that's a great time to split up, or at least get a trial separation.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, or at least set some really clear expectations, I think.

Alison Monahan: Exactly.

Lee Burgess: Because the extra drama doesn't serve you while you're trying to negotiate school.

Alison Monahan: No, it really doesn't. I think relationships can be great, and having someone who's supportive is fantastic, even if they happen to be far away and you're both willing to work with that. But I do think you have to be realistic here. You're not going to have a lot of time, particularly if you're going to be in different places. This is going to be really tough. How committed are you really to this relationship? That's just something that people kind of have to sit with.



And it doesn't have to be like a nasty breakup, but I do think you have to be realistic here.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, I think that's true.

Alison Monahan: You met your husband while you were in law school, right?

Lee Burgess: I did, the summer between my second and third year, which is a really nice time to meet somebody, because you're not in the beginning where you're just treading water, and you see the end in sight. So that was actually a much easier time, I think, to meet someone.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. I think the first semester is just so intense for so many people that it's really hard to maintain an ongoing connection with someone who's not there and not doing that. I definitely knew a lot of people who broke up with significant others, either during the first semester or over the winter break. And like you said, it honestly just ends up being a lot of drama that you probably don't really need. And maybe it's better to be sad for a little while over the summer and then jump into something in the fall and just commit to school, versus just letting these things drag on that aren't really going to work out.

Lee Burgess: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: I don't know. That's my take on it, having done the drag-it-out approach.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, I did my drag-it-out before law school. Law school was one of the ways I got out of dragging it out.

Alison Monahan: It's an opportunity for a clean break...

Lee Burgess: It is.

Alison Monahan: ...if you think this is going nowhere. That doesn't have to be personal.

Lee Burgess: No. So fresh and so clean.

Alison Monahan: It's like, "You know what? We are great, but I just feel like it's going to be so hard for us. Why don't we just take this break, and then we'll figure it out or whatever?"

Lee Burgess: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: It's definitely an opportunity that you can take.



- Lee Burgess: Well, what about any opportunities that come up to try and meet classmates? I know you said you met your roommate on a message board.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly.
- Lee Burgess: Or a posting or something.
- Alison Monahan: I think sometimes people get very worked up about this idea that they need to be meeting people before classes start or before orientation starts, or when the "friend" wheel spins, they're going to be left on the outside. I don't think that's true. If there are ways that you can connect with people and you do connect with them, that's great; you'll have some people that when you go to orientation and see their name tag, you can be like, "Oh my gosh, we talked on the Internet." But there'll also be all those people around you can just talk to anyway.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. I think one thing though that folks should consider is not like you need to be really thoughtful about picking your friends; you should connect with people you connect with. But I will say that I met and connected with a few friends at the beginning of law school who didn't live locally, they were commuting in. And I wish I had initially met more people who were living near the school, because they were great friends, but they didn't go to as many of the social events and they weren't around for as much of the stuff. And so, I kind of felt like I needed to meet more new people, because I wanted to have a social circle at school. And then some of these friends became much more kind of like academic friends – we would study together or we would collaborate on projects together. So, it is just finding your people in your community is a key. So I think if you have opportunities to kind of meet anyone that you think you might connect with – great. You never know when you're going to meet the people that are going to be important in your life. But I don't think you need to put weight on it. I think you just need to kind of be open to meeting people, and if an opportunity arises and you're already in town and you have the ability to get together with people and it's not going to be stressful – why not? You might meet somebody or you might see a friendly face. I think it really just depends, but I do think you want to keep an eye out for folks that you want to spend time with, because this is going to be your kind of key social circle for a while.
- Alison Monahan: Right. And the other thing is, you may meet someone that you like and you think is great at orientation, but then you're in totally separate sections and you never see each other for the entire semester – those things happen. So I think you're going to have plenty of opportunities to be around the same people over and over, so you will have people you're at least exposed to. I think exposure therapy can lead to friendship, but I agree, you want to be kind of looking for these opportunities to find people who are simpatico, but you don't necessarily



have to force it. I think you will have plenty of opportunities in school to meet plenty of people.

Lee Burgess: But that one commuter friend, we are still friends, and she is one of the lawyers I constantly refer people to. She always takes my texts. And so, you never know who's going to be important in your life, so you have to just go into it kind of with an open heart, and see. You will also meet people that you don't gel with, and you should not try and be friends with those people.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, one of my best law school friends literally showed up on my doorstep one day because she had been assigned to an empty room in our house.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, you just never know.

Alison Monahan: And so we became really, really close friends, because we happened to live together. We literally would never have met otherwise, because she was a class below me. So, these things happen.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, exactly. One other thing that I think that people don't sometimes think about is, do you need any clothes, do you need to dress a certain way, do you need to clean out your closet?

Alison Monahan: This is another angsty one that I think fundamentally doesn't really matter that much, but...

Lee Burgess: Yeah, I kind of think what you wear to school doesn't really matter all that much, but you should have some sort of suit in your closet that you could put on to go to a professional event, if you get invited to something.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, you need your interview suit, your going to a bar association event outfit, that kind of thing. So if you don't own anything like that, or it doesn't fit or whatever, this would be a good time to go out and do some research, figure out what's going to look good on you, what's affordable. It doesn't have to be something crazy expensive; there're plenty of places that you can get relatively inexpensive professional outfits. But you do want to have at least something, complete with the shoes, the belt or the handbag or whatever, that you can just put on if you need to put on that professional outfit.

Lee Burgess: Yep. And I think that really under-utilized resources for some of this clothing too, are things like Poshmark or The RealReal or thredUP. A lot of times, you can get access to a high quality piece of clothing at just a fraction of the price, and then it will stay nicer longer. And one nice black or dark navy blue suit, you could turn that into so many different outfits. We've got some episodes on [what to wear](#). But you could make one black suit look like so many different outfits



with what you wear underneath it and the jewelry and your accessories. And [for men](#), same thing.

- Alison Monahan: If you have the skirt version and the pant version, you're good. That's like a whole week, basically, of outfits.
- Lee Burgess: Right. And even for men, it's like different colored shirts, a few different ties. No one's going to notice you're wearing the same black suit to every event.
- Alison Monahan: Right, and no one cares.
- Lee Burgess: Nobody cares. But I think that shopping around and trying to find something that you feel good in – that is a good use of your time over the summer, because you just need to have it hanging in your closet so you can grab it and go.
- Alison Monahan: Right. You don't want it to be a stressful situation, when you do have an invite to do something that requires that type of outfit to be like, "Oh my gosh, what am I going to do? What am I going to wear?" Just go ahead and solve that problem right now, so that you know that you're going to be able to put that on, walk out the door, and feel confident.
- Lee Burgess: Yep. Well, I know that we're getting to the point where we need to somewhat wrap things up. Any other thoughts of what folks should be doing at the summer?
- Alison Monahan: No, again, I think you don't need to panic about anything. If you do want to do something that's kind of getting you in the mindset, read some hard books, look at Start Law School Right. Another thing we've had people do that has been successful is kind of write yourself a letter about why you're doing this, because there will be times in the first semester where you probably will have some self-doubt and you'll think, "Oh my gosh, either I'm not smart enough to do this or, I don't want to be doing this" or, "This is horrible, I've ruined my life." And it's kind of nice to be able to go back to something that was when you were hopeful and optimistic and you actually thought this was a good idea, and kind of remind yourself of that. And maybe glom onto a little bit of that feeling when you're in a situation that is not feeling like that at all.
- Lee Burgess: It's so true. I think so often, we just lose why we choose to do things; we just get on the hamster wheel. And it's nice to capture why you're optimistic, why you have excitement. And we actually encourage people to do this exercise throughout law school too. When you get ready for the bar, sometimes we ask people to write themselves a letter about why they want to be licensed, just so they can remind themselves why they're setting these goals for themselves.



- Alison Monahan: Yeah, and the reality is, if you can't come up with any reason that you're doing this, that might also be something to reflect upon during the summer.
- Lee Burgess: So true, so true.
- Alison Monahan: Because if you're not really actually that motivated, you're going to hit some rough spots, because it might be a challenge.
- Lee Burgess: Better to figure that out now, before you're \$200,000 in debt.
- Alison Monahan: Exactly. We do not want you to waste all this time and money, so if you literally sit down to write a letter and you cannot think of a single reason that you're actually going to law school, maybe pull back and reflect on that.
- Lee Burgess: Well, I guess my only other thing is to keep listening to the podcast. I think that this podcast does have a lot of helpful information, and on our website, we do have archives where you can search by topic area. So, if you're a new law student, you can listen to content that is specifically flagged for you. I think you might find that helpful, so just kind of getting into the right mindset that way can be kind of fun and easy. Again, no pressure; it's just little bits of nuggets and this idea of kind of exposing you to what you need to think about as you get started.
- Alison Monahan: Right. And if someone really wants to do substantive work, they can listen to the ["Listen and Learn" podcast](#), because Lee basically breaks down specific legal topics for you in a very easy to understand way, and applies them to the law. So, I will say that might not be the worst idea for someone who wants to sort of start seeing how the law relates to facts and how we put it all together. That could actually be a useful exercise.
- Lee Burgess: It's true. I hear that people love "Listen and Learn" in the car, while they're cooking. I get lots of feedback.
- Alison Monahan: While exercising.
- Lee Burgess: While exercising. It's like, "I listen to you." It's things you never think about when you do a podcast.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, so those are all out there, free for the taking.
- Lee Burgess: Exactly. Well, I think with that, we're probably out of time.
- Alison Monahan: 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 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 Allison at lee@lawschooltoolbox.com or allison@lawschooltoolbox.com. Or you can always contact us via our website, [contact form](#) at LawSchoolToolBox.com. Thanks for listening, and we'll talk soon!

RESOURCES:

[Start Law School Right](#)

["Listen and Learn" series](#)

[The Elements of Style, by William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White](#)

[Code: And Other Laws of Cyberspace, by Lawrence Lessig](#)

[Allow Me to Retort: A Black Guy's Guide to the Constitution, by Elie Mystal](#)

[The Buffalo Creek Disaster, by Gerald M. Stern](#)

[Podcast Episode 43: Getting Mentally Prepared to Start Law School](#)

[Podcast Episode 110: Revisiting Mindset](#)

[Podcast Episode 158: What to Wear \(And What Not to Wear\)](#)

[Podcast Episode 193: Books to Read Before Law School](#)

[Podcast Episode 195: What to Do the Summer Before Law School](#)

[Podcast Episode 198: Pre-1L Life Logistics](#)

[Podcast Episode 201: Fashion Law & Men's Fashion \(w/Douglas Hand\)](#)

[Podcast Episode 220: More on Accommodations in Law School \(w/Elizabeth Knox\)](#)