



Alison Monahan: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today we're excited to be talking with Bryan Nese – a partner at Mayer Brown – about career tips for law students. 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 be talking with Bryan Nese – a partner at Mayer Brown – about career tips for law students. Welcome, Bryan.

Bryan Nese: Hi, Alison. Thanks for having me.

Alison Monahan: Oh, my pleasure. Well, to kick things off, can you give our listeners a little bit of info about your background, just so they have some context here?

Bryan Nese: Sure. As you mentioned, I am a partner at the Washington, D.C. office of Mayer Brown, LLP. My practice focuses on patent litigation, particularly lately in the patent monetization space. I am an aspiring rock star; this whole lawyer thing is just kind of a backup career for me. I'm still waiting for that album to drop. Very excited about that. My background before law school was mechanical engineering. I studied engineering for six years; I have a bachelor's and a master's. After that I went on to the George Washington University Law School, where I earned my JD. I live in Washington, D.C. I play here, I love it here.

Alison Monahan: Nice. I don't think I realized you were a patent litigator. That's what I used to do way back in the day when I was at a law firm, although you have a much better background. I just happen to have been a programmer for a few years and they're like, "Oh great, you can totally do this." Well, in an earlier conversation we had, you mentioned that you initially struggled in law school. Tell me a little bit about that, and how did you turn things around?

Bryan Nese: Sure. I did not get law school right away. It was really challenging for me. I think six years of engineering do not a good writer make, and writing is so essential to law school and I just didn't get it. There were two things that really held me back. The first was really not understanding how to relate to the material that I



was learning. It was just mind boggling to me. How do I learn anything without an equation? When you come into Civ Pro, you come into Torts, where are the equations? How am I supposed to figure stuff out?

Alison Monahan: Oh, come on, we had to learn the Hand formula. Doesn't that count?

Bryan Nese: It does not. And you would not believe, Alison, the number of folks that whined and hemmed and hawed over, "Oh my gosh, we have to learn math. I came to law school because I don't want to learn math."

Alison Monahan: I know. I think that was arithmetic or something. I don't really remember, but definitely not higher math.

Bryan Nese: It did not tickle the part of my brain that was looking to be stimulated in school in the way that I normally was. So, it was really challenging for me to relate to that material. I had never tried to study in that way before. It really held me back. And the second thing – and I alluded to this – was, I was not a great writer. When I was 8 years old, 10 years old, I wanted to be a writer. That's what I told my parents. And I didn't realize how bad I was at it until I got to law school. And what turned things around for me was working for a judge. I interned with a judge in Superior Court here in D.C., my first summer – my 1L summer. And she was so passionate about good, clear, concise legal writing, and her clerk was so passionate about good, clear, concise legal writing that they really put this interest in me, implanted it, if you will. And after that summer, I just became obsessed about what makes good writing good, what makes bad writing bad, and how do we tell the difference? And more importantly, how do we morph the one into the other, that is ideally the bad into the good? And I consumed as many articles as I could about legal writing. I really tried to put into practice a lot of the tips and the tricks and the hacks that I was learning. It was a lot of fun and it was a long journey, but I'm so proud that the journey kind of culminated for me with actually being able to teach Legal Writing at GW. The same law school where I struggled, I was an adjunct professor teaching Legal Writing, and I did it for six or seven years. I really, really loved it, and it really honed my skills even more so. So, those were the two things that were holding me back, I would say – just not really understanding how to relate to this very new material, and not being as strong of a writer as I think a lot of my peers were coming into law school. I was very slow on the uptake, I think, is the more concise way to put it.

Alison Monahan: Well, it seems to have worked out okay for you at this point, so we'll give you credit for learning how to write. Just out of curiosity, before we move on, what



do you think is kind of the one-sentence or one-paragraph version of what good legal writing is?

Bryan Nese: Oh my gosh. I think it should be the three Cs – it should be clear, it should be concise, and it should be comprehensible by everyone. I hope that's a word. I think it's a word.

Alison Monahan: I think that's a word, yeah.

Bryan Nese: But clarity above all else. Then, make it brief if you can. And also, it should be something that you don't need to be this lofty academic or a certain type of person to appreciate. A lot of legal writing affects your life, my life, in such a profound way, and I think that's never been more true than it has in the past few years. And everyone should be able to read these opinions, these legal pieces of writing, and understand it, at least at a surface level. That's what our society is owed, I think. So, clear, concise, and comprehensible by everyone.

Alison Monahan: I think that's great. We have some posts – I remember one about [writing as if you're talking to a five-year-old](#), and then [writing if you're talking to your grandmother](#), and I think both of those are kind of good touch points of, could I explain this in a way that a reasonably intelligent child could understand? If so, you're probably on the right track.

Bryan Nese: Absolutely. You remember in programming, the rubber ducky exercise, right? You need to explain your algorithm to the small rubber ducky.

Alison Monahan: We literally just had a blog post on this on the bar exam, about using your rubber ducky to study for the bar.

Bryan Nese: It's fantastic. I love that.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. Alright, let's shift gears a little bit. You are a law firm partner, so I'm sure that at this point, you have helped hire and vet a lot of different law students for these jobs. What do you think students need to be thinking about before they start the job search?

Bryan Nese: I think students need to have answers to two incredibly important questions, and that is, "What skills do I have that set me apart from my peers?" and, "Which employers are going to find those unique skills valuable?" I think that as 1Ls, it's really challenging to do that, because you're just starting your career.



Maybe you're not sure exactly what you want to be when you grow up. That's okay by the way, I still don't.

Alison Monahan: How's the rock star dream working out?

Bryan Nese: It turns out that the day job is working out slightly better, but who knows?

Alison Monahan: There's still time.

Bryan Nese: I'm never going to give up hope. There's still time, absolutely. And so, I think students need to answer these questions, and it's difficult to do that when you're a 1L. It's really challenging when you're trying to figure out what you want to do when you grow up. As I said, I'm still trying to figure that out. It's really difficult when you're first starting your legal career to even know what practice area maybe you're interested in, or that you might want to pursue. I think there are certain types of jobs where you can send those mass mailers to and have the kind of standard form letter and resume for everything. But the more effective way to do it is to have a really, really targeted approach, to really think critically about, "Why should this employer give me this job over someone who's sitting next to me in Torts?" And I've told that to students so many times – you have to answer the question, "Why would I hire you over someone else in your class?" And if you don't have a really good answer to that, I think that you're not preparing yourself as well as perhaps you could when you're going into the [networking](#) and the job search process.

Alison Monahan: I think that's a really great way of thinking about it. I guess I just want to push back a little bit because if I'm sitting here saying, "Okay, I've come straight out of undergrad, I was a Poli Sci major. I haven't really had any legal work jobs." How can somebody start answering that question? What other characteristics might they be thinking about?

Bryan Nese: I think that we're all wonderfully unique and wonderfully diverse in a way that we don't realize. I have talked to folks who had such varied careers and really colorful careers before coming to law school. And so, even that Poli Sci major example that you gave, maybe she has community service that she's really passionate about, and she's become a leader and she's become someone who is a disruptor, an innovator, in a small way even. Those kinds of things – to be able to step into an interview and say, "I built this community service program and we raised enough money to repair a defunct school, and I'm so proud to say that now it's actually housing students again, where it was just sitting derelict for so many years." Those kinds of things you can turn into a wonderful [story](#)



and turn into something that says, "Here is real life proof of what I can do. And if I can add value in that way, I can absolutely add value to you in this organization." I think it sounds challenging, Alison, and it is. I don't mean to say that it's not. This is simple, but not easy. But I think that all of us, if we're really being honest, if we're really being introspective, if we're really taking a good, hard look, we can find something about ourselves that really helps us stand out to be unique, and to be able to package that and present it in a way to employers that will make us sound like the best candidate possible for this particular role.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I like what you said about the story, because I think that's really critical, and I think it's often overlooked. We often say it's up to you to tell your story. And you had a pre-law background that made sense to a certain extent, but it's also a little weird, mechanical engineering to law. I have a really weird background. I did sociology, then architecture, then I was a programmer, then I went to law school. So, anyone who looks at that resume is going to say, "Huh, that's an interesting progression. Tell me about that." So, I had to have my story: "Well, designing a database is not that different from designing a house, which is not that different from designing a legal brief." I had to tie that together. I'm sure you probably had similar things, but I think everybody's got to think about their story and why does it make sense? Why are you applying for this particular job? If you can't answer that, I think you've got a problem.

Bryan Nese: I agree.

Alison Monahan: Alright, well, let's talk a little bit from the inside. What are firms, do you think, really looking for when they're hiring law students? I think there's a lot of mystique around this. Like, is it all grades? Do you have to be like an engineer? What are they looking for?

Bryan Nese: I think you will get 70 different answers if you ask 70 different law firm attorneys that question. I'll try to do my best and tell you what I've seen in my experience. I've worked at a few different law firms; I did not start my career at Mayer Brown. And in that perspective for me personally, I believe that what makes a good attorney and what makes a good candidate for my group and my team is not necessarily what law school you went to, it's not necessarily what your grades were, it's really not even how smart you are. I'm almost embarrassed to admit that, but I think that if I'm being honest with myself, it's true. What I care about is that you care. I can teach you how to write a brief, I can teach you how to take a deposition, I can teach you how to make an expert witness cry in front of a jury on the witness stand. What I can't teach you is how to care. And the candidates that I see that come in that are motivated, and



hungry, and energetic, and enthusiastic, and want to do good work for the sake of doing good work – those are the people that I want to talk to. And I almost don't care what the transcript says at that point. I have to, because I work for a large firm and I don't make the decisions myself for anything. But when I'm sitting down for an interview and I'm trying to find a person to bring into the team, that matters to me so much. And I think that a lot of folks will give a somewhat similar answer to that question. The second thing that I really look for is personality. And as silly as that sounds, I think culture is so important to any employer, and frankly, every employee. The culture that we have in our office, and particularly in the IP practice group that I'm a part of here, is just nice. And that sounds so juvenile and perhaps diminutive, but I'm really proud of that. And the folks that I want to bring into the team, I want them to also fit in with that. We're not just colleagues; we're pretty close friends. Our kids know each other, our dogs play together. And when I'm looking for a new candidate, whether it's a summer associate or a lateral hire, I think personality is so important. And that works both ways too, Alison, obviously. If you're coming into an employer and you're not feeling like you're jiving with the people there, it's okay to turn down that job for something where you fit in better, where you're going to be happy. It's a lot like choosing law school – you want to visit the campus, you want to talk to current students, you want to get to know some of the professors. You're going to be spending three years in law school; you want to make sure it's a place where you'll be comfortable and happy, and feel like you fit in and belong. It's even more important when you're doing that for an employer, because probably you're going to be there for more than three years. I've been with Mayer Brown for almost a decade, and the thing that brought me here and the thing that keeps me here is the culture. I felt like I fit in, and I'm looking for candidates also who embrace that and who will add to and enhance the culture that we're trying to build. So, really caring about the work that you do and caring about doing good work – I think that is absolutely vital. And letting your personality and your authentic self shine through a little bit, because I think people like that. I don't want to hire a robot; AI is going to do that for me. What I want is a compassionate, interesting human being that I can work with, because at some point, Alison, I'm going to be at trial. It's 4:00 in the morning, I'm tired and stressed out and sober and hungry, and "Am I going to murder this person or not?" is something that comes through my mind sometimes in an interview. And if I can't in a 20-minute conversation feel like I've enjoyed the interaction, how am I going to feel in that really high stress, high pressure situation? So, personality, culture – all of that is really, really important.

Alison Monahan: No, I absolutely agree with that. And people say, "I'm interviewing to see if I could stand you at 2:00 in the morning", and then you end up in that room. I've been at trial at 2:00 in the morning with people and I'm like, "Wow, thank God



we hired this person, not somebody else", because they're deciding that we should all do yoga and try a handstand to flip the energy or something. And I'm like, "That sounds great; we should absolutely do that." Well, from the flip side, how can students sort of identify and target an ideal type of employer? Because let's be honest, so many of these places seem really similar from the outside. You're talking about culture – I've worked at a variety of firms, I know they have different cultures. I summered a place that in retrospect was a bad fit for me on one occasion. It was a disaster. But how do people kind of suss this out before they're in a disaster situation, realizing they've made the wrong call?

Bryan Nese:

I'll tell you what not to do. It should not be just looking at the websites or the [Above the Law](#) articles or the [NALP](#) reviews – that doesn't paint a complete picture. What you have to do – and it's a lot of work – is actually try to meet people there, try to get to know folks. Ask for a tour of the office. I love giving office tours. It's really the only way to get a true sense of what the place is like, is to actually set foot there, or at the very least meet people, talk to people over the phone. I recommend to students all the time, just go on the website, find someone that's a recent alum of your school, or maybe even just that grew up in the same area that you did – some kind of superficial connection that's enough to say, "Hey, respond to my email, please, and talk to me for 10 minutes on the phone." I call it the "initial indicator of interest" – something to give me the initial excuse for me to want to engage with you, as opposed to an unsolicited vendor email that you get 20 of a day. And so, these informational interviews, while they sound cheesy and they can be a little bit awkward – they absolutely can be – they can also be really, really vital to getting to know a person at the firm, a culture of the organization. It's just really vital. It's really the best way, and in some ways the only reliable way to figure out what a place is like, is to actually dip your toes in and talk to the people there.

Alison Monahan:

I think that's great advice. Let's shift a little bit on that note and talk about everyone's favorite topic – ha! not really – networking. So, what you're telling me sounds a little bit like networking. Do you have any additional tips for successfully networking as a law student? And do you think people even need to be worrying about this?

Bryan Nese:

I think people need to be worrying about networking, for sure. I think that it's never too soon to start. I think that you can never really do enough of it, assuming it's not interfering with your other priorities. And I think that it's something that no one tells you how to do. Every law school understands that networking is important, but I don't know very many that fully prepare students to do it in an effective way. They just kind of say, "Go network. Go talk to people."



Alison Monahan: Right. Well, let me back up. What do you even mean by "networking"? What does that mean to you?

Bryan Nese: To me, it means making connections, actually forming meaningful connections with someone. It's not just exchanging business cards, it's not reaching out on LinkedIn. It's getting to know someone. It's a lot like making new friends. I see a lot of analogies to dating as well. It's like trying to find someone that you're interested in to spend time with. And oh, by the way, this person maybe just so happens to be able to do you a favor, were to help you out in some small way throughout your career. But forming that connection first is absolutely essential. I'm unlikely – and I don't mean me personally, but the royal kind of us as a species – people are unlikely, or less likely to do a favor for someone that they just met, without that connection there. But a very smart person once told me if you really want to ask a favor of someone, especially if it's a big ask, like "Can I have a job interview?" – you want to give, give, give first. So give, give, give, then ask. It's so critical. If you've already done me a bunch of favors, even small ones, and then you make that ask, I almost feel psychologically obligated to help you. It's not manipulative, it's not dark psychology, it's not anything nefarious. It's just human nature. And if you can tap into that in a thoughtful, deliberate, and intentional way – my gosh, you are setting yourself up for success, for sure.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, there's a great book on that topic called [Give and Take](#). I think Adam Grant wrote that book. I don't know if you've seen it, but he talks a little bit – well, actually the whole book's about this – about people think that if they are givers, they're going to be taken advantage of. And he's like, yeah, that might sometimes happen. But in the end, as long as you're reasonably careful about who you're giving things to, and they're not time sucking narcissists or something, you're going to end up ahead of the pack, because people basically owe you a favor. And that's kind of how this works – you do me a little favor here. It kind of all comes around. So, I think that's great advice. And sometimes people, I think, have a really linear view of networking, like "I'm going to go to a bar association event and I'm going to meet Bryan. And by the end of the event, Bryan is going to offer me a job because he thinks I'm so great." That's not really how this works. But maybe somebody meets you and they follow up with an email saying, "Oh, I really enjoyed our conversation", and that's it. And then a month later they might send you something that's like, "Oh, here's an article on what we talked about. Would you be willing to meet for coffee sometime?" You're a nice guy. You might do that.

Bryan Nese: Absolutely, and I've done that. I really enjoy engaging with students. I look forward to the small trickle of emails that maybe I'll get after this, but I think it's so essential for folks that have gotten to a point in their careers where they're



stable and comfortable, to push that elevator button down and send it down and help people who are getting started. No one taught me this stuff. No one gave me the cheat sheet. And I've really, really tried in a lot of different ways with networking advice, legal writing advice, how to succeed as a new attorney advice, to help people make or not make some of the mistakes that I have made. And I've made plenty, believe me. So, networking is such a critical piece, and it's scary and it's awkward and it's uncomfortable, and it cannot be seeing everyone for what they can do for you. There's the jobhunters at all of these networking events that you go to. They're kind of looking around, "Okay, who's got the bag of jobs? I want to talk to them."

Alison Monahan: Right. The beeline right there: "Where can I drop my resume?" It's like, that might not be the point, unless you're actually at a job event.

Bryan Nese: Don't do that, folks. Please do not do that. Go into those events looking to make a friend, looking to make a connection with someone that independent of who they are or what they do for a living, that you would just enjoy spending a little bit of time with. If you do it that way, and you make a true, meaningful connection in that way, that is how networking can best serve you and your goals, for sure.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. I think of the network as basically my friends or friendly acquaintances. Those are the people that maybe somebody asked me for something and I think, "Oh, I do have somebody I know who has a loose connection to something like that. Maybe you want to talk to them." They're probably not going to give you the exact thing you're looking for, but maybe they get you a little closer to the goal. I mean, that's just kind of how it works.

Bryan Nese: Absolutely, and if I could just tell a really quick anecdote about that. I, years ago, was putting together a panel of experts to talk about the call among the Biden administration and the World Health Organization to waive IP rights in the COVID vaccines. This was, I think, 2021, maybe. Problem was, I didn't know anyone who was an expert in that particular area. But I did have a friend who wasn't a lawyer; he was a fraternity brother of mine in college who worked for a rather large pharmaceutical company. And I reached out to him and just said, "Hey, do you know anybody who can put me in, maybe would be interested in doing something like this?" Three degrees of Kevin Bacon later, I'm talking to who was at the time the General Counsel of Genentech and some other companies. And it's just me, right? It's just Bryan and these really important people are answering the phone because a friend of a friend of a friend said, "Hey, you should talk to this guy." And that really opened my eyes to the power of networking and the fact that your interconnected network of connections is



so much broader than you think. And if you just make that ask, I think you'll be really shocked at what can come from that. I'm not special. Let me demystify this for sure – I'm not special. I don't think I'm that lucky either. I just think I was trying things that felt weird, maybe, or uncommon at least, and to get fantastic results from a simple ask – gosh, that was amazing. It was really cool.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. And I think that's a great point, actually – that if someone is a law student listening to this and you are, say, on the board of an organization at your law school – asking people to speak to your group is such a great way to make connections because, frankly, most lawyers are pretty flattered if somebody reaches out and says, "Oh, I'm the chair of the Entertainment Law Society at this law school. We would really love to have you present on this topic. It can be virtual, you can come in-person. We would really value, whatever, 45 minutes of your time. Is this something you might consider?" And a lot of people will say "Yes". A surprising number of people will say "Yes" and show up to things.

Bryan Nese: Alison, I could not agree more. Lawyers love to hear themselves talk.

Alison Monahan: True.

Bryan Nese: Exhibit A. I'm pointing to myself, for the podcast listeners – Exhibit A. And that invitation from a student group – that is a give, right? That is a little, "Here's something I'm doing for you." That is a favor, right? If Kirkland and Ellis is the law firm for you and you've identified an attorney there, and invite her to speak and have coffee with her and send her articles about snowboarding because she's learning and she's really interested in that – small things like that... It doesn't have to be a major thing. Small things like that can really set up this give, give, ask routine or rhythm that can be so, so effective. So, joining student organizations, becoming leaders there, and identifying attorneys that either you want in your network or you want to deepen the relationship with to come for speaking engagements – that is such a simple, really effective way to do a favor for someone that stands out. It'll make you stand out in a really positive way.

Alison Monahan: I know. I think it makes you look like you're really important, even though you're just like, "Oh, I'm the co-chair of this organization." It's like, "Okay, great, you're a 2L, but whatever." Alright, well, we're running a little short on time, but before we wrap up, do you have any advice for law students who maybe are frustrated that they have not gotten that perfect first job?

Bryan Nese: Yes. Don't give up.



Alison Monahan: Good advice. Always good advice.

Bryan Nese: I did not have a perfect first job. The first law firm job I worked at, my 2L year, had four attorneys on it. Mayer Brown now has almost 1900 as I'm sitting here speaking. I did not go from one to the other. It was a progression. It was a stepping stone. As I said, I struggled with law school and I struggled with the job search as well. And so, I think that the advice I would give to someone who's frustrated they're not getting the job that they want is to first understand if you really know what kind of job you want. If you don't know where you're going, then you have no idea how to get there. It sounds really simple and obvious, but I think so many people, if you really ask them, "Okay, what's your ideal job?" – they're not able to be specific enough. So, if you're able to have that level of specificity where you can identify the market you want, the type of employer that you want, government, private practice, big firm, small firm, a nonprofit agency, identify what kind of practice you want to have – if you can get more specific about those things, you start whittling down the list of potential employers. If you can have a short list of maybe 10 or 12 employers that are your reach, your dream school, so to speak, then start doing everything you can to build connections at those organizations. Do the informational interviews, invite these folks to come speak at your law school, or a bar association organization if you're a practicing attorney. Get a person on the inside who's kind of like a mole, who can be a double agent, who can be your secret supporter. And that way when an opportunity opens up there – one, you know at least one person (ideally a few), you can get the scoop on the interviews, how to really shine at the interview and get the dirt on the people that you're going to be interviewing with, and maybe even ideally when a new job opens up, that organization's going to call you, instead of you having to pursue them. And oh my God, isn't that just the jackpot? If your contact at one of your dream employers calls you and says, "Hey, are you still looking? We've got this opportunity here. I'd like to bring you in for an interview if you're willing."

Alison Monahan: That sounds great.

Bryan Nese: It happens.

Alison Monahan: Who's going to say "No"?

Bryan Nese: Who's going to say "No" to that? And it happened to a former student of mine. She, during OCI, didn't get an interview with Mayer Brown, but she was so interested in the firm – despite having me as a professor and talking about it – she was so interested in the firm that when she went to OCI, didn't get an



interview, she identified the person there who was interviewing for Mayer Brown. She came up to this individual during lunch, sat down, had a conversation with her, exchanged the resume. And she ended up getting a summer associate position that following summer, without having the OCI interview. She's still an associate now in our New York office, and she's so happy and she is doing so well. And so, you don't have to follow the traditional path either. You can be a little creative, you can deviate from the norm. That's all okay. You're different than everyone else. Your path to success is going to be different than everyone else. So, take inspiration from what others are doing, but don't be discouraged if you have to deviate from that. You will. It's okay.

Alison Monahan: I agree. And I think something like your example is such a good example of sometimes people get really down on themselves, like, "Oh, I didn't get that interview at OCI. They must think that I'm a total loser." Honestly, sometimes a lot of this is pretty random. And if there is another way in and you think it's a good fit, try to take that. But the fact that she didn't get the initial interview had nothing to do with her ability to succeed, obviously, because she's succeeding at that firm. So, I think sometimes trying to depersonalize some of this a little bit too can help of like, "Well, maybe it was a random thing, maybe not." Maybe your grades are terrible, but who knows? I think trying to take it sort of less out of like, "I'm a loser who has terrible grades and everyone hates me" into like, "Well, maybe that just was a lottery and I didn't get picked and I can try some other way." Because there's always another way.

Bryan Nese: There's always another way.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. So, before we wrap up, tell me, what is it like being a law firm partner? Is this something you enjoy? I mean, you've been doing it, it sounds like, for a while.

Bryan Nese: Well, I will start off answering that question by saying I still drive a 2014 Mazda 3, so you too can live the lifestyle of a [BigLaw](#) partner. Honestly, I love it. I feel so blessed and so fortunate to have this job. I get to interact with such incredibly talented, smart people. I'm a relatively new partner. I was promoted in 2020, and so I'm still figuring things out. But having the support from individuals here has been so good for my career, and being able to work with people who trust me, allow me to grow, allow me to make mistakes and then learn from them and – oh my gosh, I can't believe it, but not hold them against me – is awesome.

Alison Monahan: Sounds like such a psychologically healthy work environment. Shocking.



- Bryan Nese: It's bizarre, Alison. It's really crazy. You talk to most lawyers and I think they'll tell you that they're miserable in some way or another. But most days I really like this job, and that's so weird, but I'm so, so thankful for that. I really am.
- Alison Monahan: Well, I find that the people who tend to be happiest being partners and whatnot in law firms often have taken a different route. It's not just, "I went to a top law school, I got good grades, I got the summer associate position, I did this." I mean, some people do that, but a lot of people, it's more kind of a winding path. And I think that means you might have found a better fit in the end.
- Bryan Nese: I think you have to be unhappy for a little while to appreciate what you have and your happiness. Just like you need to experience some rainy days to appreciate the sun. People in San Diego don't understand this. It's just terrible. I feel so bad for them.
- Alison Monahan: I know. Out in California, we're so spoiled. Well, any final thoughts you'd like to share before we wrap up? And also let people know how they can reach you if they're interested in possibly reaching out to you.
- Bryan Nese: Absolutely. Final thoughts would be, I think, advice for succeeding at your first legal job, no matter what kind of attorney you are, what kind of job you have, what kind of employer you have. The number one piece of advice that I would say – and if you forget everything else about this episode, including my name, and that's okay – don't forget this. Your job is fundamentally about making someone else's life easier. Just like my job is fundamentally about making my clients' lives easier. And if you approach every task, every assignment, every work opportunity with the mentality of, "I am here to make someone else's life easier" – you will stand out in such a positive way. You will shine, you will succeed in a way that really sets you apart from your peers. So, remember, your job is to make someone else's life easier. That's what we do as lawyers. If folks want to reach out to me, I'm easy enough to find on LinkedIn – [Bryan Nese](#). You can also reach out to me at my email address. There's no point in hiding it because it's all over the Internet – bnese@mayerbrown.com.
- Alison Monahan: Alright, Bryan. Well, thank you so much for joining us. I really appreciate your time.
- Bryan Nese: Thank you for having me. This was a lot of fun, thank you so much.
- Alison Monahan: My pleasure. 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 be sure to subscribe so you don't miss anything. If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to reach out to Lee or Alison at lee@lawschooltoolbox.com or alison@lawschooltoolbox.com. Or you can always contact us via our website [contact form](#) at LawSchoolToolBox.com. Thanks for listening, and we'll talk soon!

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[Adam Grant – Give and Take](#)

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