Alison Monahan: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today we're excited to have style expert Jenny Eversole here with us to talk about what to wear as a law student and lawyer. 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 I'm excited to have style expert Jenny Eversole here with us to talk about what to wear as a law student and lawyer. Welcome, Jenny.

Jenny Eversole: Alison, it's so great to be here. Thank you so much for having me on your podcast. I love everything that you do at the Law School Toolbox podcast, and thank you so much for having me.

Alison Monahan: Well, it's definitely my pleasure. And I'm super excited about this conversation, because I am not a style expert. Well, to start us off, can you just give our listeners a little bit of background, so they have some context here?

Jenny Eversole: Yeah, absolutely. So, I am the founder of Style Space. We are a virtual personal styling platform. So, if you need help with clothing, hair, makeup, or skincare, that is something that we do one-on-one virtually, with expert stylists on the platform. And I started this company because, of course, it is a passion of mine, but I ultimately want people to become the best versions of themselves with personal style. And I am a former fashion designer, also of 10 years, and it came from a specific personal story where I had a pain point with my own personal style, the idea for Style Space. So, about three months after I had twin girls, I was very lost with my personal style. I had just given all of my time, everything had been just devoted to pregnancy and the twins, and I felt very lost. And I was called out of the blue to come on a TV interview with my local broadcast station and I was like, "Absolutely, I'll come tomorrow. No problem." And I've been on TV before. I perform well, except for, I was freaking out about what I was going to wear on air. And as a fashion designer, I thought it would have been simpler, but it wasn't. And so, I called my stylist sister and in a 30-minute interview with her, she took exactly what was out of my closet, she constructed a perfect outfit

that looked amazing on camera. Also, she guided me through a makeup and a hair routine. And in 30 minutes, I felt like the empowered version of myself that I had lost over the last nine months of pregnancy and twins. And I marched into that TV studio and I gave the best performance of my life. And I attributed that catalyst moment to my personal style, feeling like my ultimate best version of myself. And that is ultimately the power of personal style – it's like a hero cape that you can throw on and it helps you perform better in any life situation.

Alison Monahan: Oh, I love that. I will say when I first started The Girl's Guide to Law School, and people reached out to me and they're like, "Oh, we want to put you on a Bloomberg video series", I'm like, "Cool, I'll just pop down to the studio." And they were like, "Oh my gosh, come hair/makeup ready." And I'm like, "I don't know how to do that." I literally had to hire somebody to do my makeup. And then at some point I was like, "Alright, I probably need to learn how to do this myself if I'm going to keep doing this." So I think it can be mysterious when you're not super steeped in it. And if people want to learn more about you and reach out, how can they do that?

Jenny Eversole: Yeah, so you can go to StyleSpace.com, and you can book whether you want makeup, clothing, or hair tutorials. You can book with any of the stylists on our platform.

Alison Monahan: Awesome. Well, let's start off with some basics here. What are we even talking about? People, I think get confused; I'm probably confused about what is fashion? What is a trend? What is personal style? What are you talking about?

Jenny Eversole: Yeah, so people use "fashion" and "style" interchangeably, but they are not the same.

Alison Monahan: Okay.

Jenny Eversole: I'll just give a couple comparisons. Fashion, it comes with the clothing, and style comes with the wearer. And fashion, it's trendy and it's adopted by the masses, but style is unique and it's personal and individual. Fashion, it emerges quickly and it's short-lived, but style, it evolves over time and it's long-lasting and timeless. And fashion is socially relevant, but style is individually curated.

Alison Monahan: Okay. So style is, I don't want to say my "personal brand" because I hate that word, but kind of how I'm going through the world, what I'm presenting, what I'm looking at. Why do you think this stuff is important?

Jenny Eversole: Well, I think personal style is the first thing that you see, and it's one of the most powerful expression tools non-verbally that you can have in your toolbox, as we talk about toolboxes on your podcast.

Alison Monahan: Hey, we're all about the toolboxes.

Jenny Eversole: So, before you're able to even say, "Hi, I'm Alison Monahan", people are already making judgements about who you are and if they can trust you, if you are professional, if they want to go into business with you or have a relationship with you. And it's entirely based off of how you're presenting yourself. And some people feel daunted by these judgements that people are making. And it's unfortunately true, but I see it as an empowering thing, because you have full control on how you choose to present yourself to people.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think I definitely feel the judgy component of it. I grew up in the South and I was definitely never the person who had the cute dresses. And I remember going to Easter services or whatever. I would have this new dress, and then I'd wear it and I'm like, "Oh, I really don't like it." It was always like a thing for me as a kid. Maybe I should talk to my therapist about this, but style for me is very weighted. Do you find that a lot of people struggle with that? What if people aren't even sure what their style is? How do you figure that out?

Jenny Eversole: Well, that is a deep question, and it's very personal and it's something we help people with at Style Space do it quicker. But ultimately you have to know who you are as an individual and how you want to present yourself. So, you were not a frilly girl in an Easter dress.

Alison Monahan: I wanted to be.

Jenny Eversole: That may have been the fashion, but it wasn't your style. It was adopted by the masses in your community, but it wasn't who you were personally. And so, if you could think of just three adjectives that could describe you and how you want people to think of you when you walk into the room, what would they be? It could be rhetorical, but for example, mine – I am bold, I'm chic, and I'm original. And if I don't have those three things represented in my personal style, whether it's an accessory... For example, I'm wearing this gold necklace. It's not your traditional sleek gold chain – it has a little bit of chunk and it's a bit of a statement, but it's subtle at the same time. And also, because this is a law podcast, I chose to wear a black blazer today. And it's not your traditional blazer – it has a little bit of a pop to the collar and it has an interesting pattern to it. So

that's my way of being original. So you can dress for any environment or context, but lean into your style words as well.

Alison Monahan: Okay. So it sounds like as a practical matter, one of the things you would suggest people do is think about these three words. I mean, as I'm sitting here, I can't really come up with three words to define my personal style.

Jenny Eversole: Would you say minimalist?

Alison Monahan: I would say minimalist, but maybe a little edgy would be ideal. If I had unlimited money, I would probably wear Prada, that kind of thing.

Jenny Eversole: Okay. I hear minimalist, edgy, and chic.

Alison Monahan: I'm not sure chic. I feel like chic is probably not for me, but... Yeah, I don't know what the third one would be.

Jenny Eversole: Ponder on it.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, no, I will. I'll think about it. Yeah, because I do think it's an interesting exercise of, what do you want to present? And then within that, how do you navigate making that practical?

Jenny Eversole: And I was going to say, Alison, as well – once you know what those three style words are, you can then go to Pinterest, for example, and you can type in "minimalist, edgy, chic". We'll just say chic is yours for the day. And you can type in "woman style, minimalist, edgy, and chic. And then it comes up with all these inspirational images that you can start pinning. And you can say "Alison's mood board", "Alison's aspirational style". And then you can just start pinning hundreds of images that represent something that you like. It could be maybe the color, maybe the silhouette, maybe the sheen or the texture on the material, but you can compare the images and you can start seeing things that replicate. And then, narrow those things down, and that is the things that you want to keep on repeating in your style. And then you narrow it down to 20 images out of those hundreds, and that is your aspirational mood board. It's something that you can print out and put on your closet, anytime you go shopping. Or if you need to edit your closet, which everybody almost needs to edit their closet, because we're wearing very few of the items in our closets. Only 20% of the items in your closet are worn 80% of the time. So, using the

aspirational style mood board will help guide that editing process, and also the procurement process.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I love that. I've done that before for design. Believe it or not, I actually did go to architecture school, so I'm not completely design unaware; I just have always had weird issues with wearing it. But no, I think that's a great idea because definitely, I was doing a house renovation recently and the Pinterest of just like, "Oh, I kind of like this, I kind of like this, I kind of like this." And then, "Oh, how are these clumping together? What are the commonalities?" Because I feel like that's going to make it a lot easier to actualize this, so that you can actually go into a store, into your closet and be like, "Okay, this is what I should wear." Let's shift gears into kind of more practical stuff. Talk to me about dressing different body types, because I know that is such an issue for people.

Jenny Eversole: Absolutely. So, dressing your body type. There're five different classifications of body types – there's the pear, the apple, we've heard all of those different fruits being described. But basically, it's about creating harmony and balance in your body proportions. For example, I am a pear body type, so that means that I am smaller on the top and larger on the bottom, just like a pear. And so, to create balance between the top half and the bottom half, I want to create more of a focal point on the top half of my body. So I'm going to use tricks to bring the eye up to the top part of my body. Color is one of the strongest ways to draw your eye in. I love bright colors – I like reds and blues and greens and yellows. And I will wear those colors – not all at once, but I will wear brighter colors on the top to draw the eye in to the top. Also, I have smaller shoulders and a smaller chest, smaller waist, compared to the bottom half of my body, so I'll create more volume. So, in this blazer, you see structure in the shoulders, but you might see a little bit of padding right here. And that just creates more structure and balance between the top half and the bottom half of my body. So, your body type has everything to do with how your body proportions relate to one another – so, how your chest, your waist, your buttocks, and your hips, how they relate to one another. And it has nothing to do with your actual clothing size. You can be a size 0 or a size 22 and you can be the same body type. So for example, if you have measurements that are almost exactly the same between all three of those or all four of those, then you're a column and you want to create more of an illusion of curves. So for example, just like I create more of an illusion of curves on my shoulders, you can create it on your shoulders, and also on your buttocks area and your hips, and then define more of your waistline. And if you are an hourglass body type, where you have a larger bust, larger shoulders and larger hips, but you have a smaller defined waistline, you're going to want to

follow the natural curves of your body and bring in the waistline, and also just follow the natural curves.

Alison Monahan: Interesting. Do you have any good resources that you know of if people want to be like, "I don't even know what I am?"

Jenny Eversole: Absolutely, yeah. So if you go to our website, we actually have a "Define Your Dream Style" in five steps, and we give a guide on how to find your body type and how to measure the different body proportions. And also, on our blog, we have each one of the body types.

Alison Monahan: Oh, that's great. I'm absolutely going to go do that.

Jenny Eversole: How to dress them. It's like different silhouettes that you can wear different tricks and...

Alison Monahan: That's awesome. Let's talk a little bit about navigating this inside of these conservative legal workplaces. You mentioned you like to wear bright colors, and some people might say, "Oh, I don't know. Is that okay?" I remember when I was interviewing for law firm positions, they do this thing called "on-campus interviewing", you go and you do 10 or 15 screening interviews in a day, so what you wear is that first impression. You walk in, they're making judgements. So, I had gone with kind of this very conservative, I think Brooks Brothers suit, but underneath that I had these really loud Thomas Pink bright striped colored shirts. And somebody said to me, "Oh that's really brave, that outfit." And I was like, "Really? I don't know." I feel like that kind of balance of, "I don't want to just go in a really boring outfit, because that's not me" but, "Am I taking it too far if I have a pink and purple striped shirt on?" I don't know, how do people start to navigate that?

Jenny Eversole: Yeah, well, never ask me if something's too loud, because I won't...

Alison Monahan: I loved those shirts, I'll be honest.

Jenny Eversole: It sounds fabulous, and I want to know where you got it. So, post-COVID, the environments for our workplaces have drastically changed, including legal environments. And so, whether it's a tech place that you're interviewing for or more of a traditional place, you are going to have to read the room and decide how you're going to lean into that. So, one of the tricks you can do, you can look

on LinkedIn pages of the companies and look at their event pages and see, "Oh wow, what are they wearing to their events? What are they wearing in their corporate setting?" And try to follow suit if you really want to be safe. Or if you do want to stand out and be memorable, wear that pink shirt underneath the corporate attire. You are definitely showing them that you understand that element of professionalism, but that you do want to make some kind of a statement and be remembered. But if you don't want to do it through color, you can do it through accessories. For example, you can do cufflinks, you can do a statement necklace or just a subtle necklace. But the accessories really make a polished touch, whether it's an earring, a bracelet. And also think, is this going to be a virtual interview or is it going to in-person? Of course, if it's virtual, you're going to focus just on the waist up. Drawing the attention to the face is really important. Wearing colors that are very complementary to your face, having good lighting – those are key elements of a virtual impression. But of course, in-person, you have to think of a full ensemble.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, that's interesting. I'm just thinking out loud here, but do you think with a virtual environment, people should maybe plan to have a little bit more of some type of statement item or something, not just totally boring in a way that might be a little, I don't know, louder or something than in-person?

Jenny Eversole: Absolutely. So, I think if you want to get ready in less time, accessories are the quickest way to look like you spent a lot of time and effort on your look. Also, if it's the waist up, you have a lot to work with – you can do eyewear, you can do earrings, you can do necklaces, you can do a pop of color on the lip, you can do different things with your hair, or if you want to keep it more conservative, pull it back, of course. But as I mentioned, with this post-COVID environment where people are in flux about what to wear, I think it gives us a lot more freedom for self-expression. So, we follow suit with the traditional suits that are expected, but add something interesting to it, whether it's a pattern or a pattern on the actual jacket, or something that maybe is the same tone of the outfit or of the blazer and an interesting pattern. If you have the same tone, it doesn't stand out as much, but if you have contrasting, then you're going to stand out more.

Alison Monahan: No, that makes sense.

Jenny Eversole: That's the cool thing, that we have that area of self-expression and companies are leaning more into "bring your whole self to work", because you actually show up better as your whole self, and your personal style is a huge part of you.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. And it's interesting, I think about presenting at work as a lawyer. And it's funny, even after I stopped being an actual lawyer but I was still going to lawyer events, and a friend of mine lived downstairs and if she sometimes saw me leaving the house, she's, "Oh, you must be going to a lawyer thing." I'm like, "Why?" She's like, "You have your lawyer shoes on." But they were these, I think, patent leather loafers or something that again, they were fun, but they also were appropriate. And she's like, "Every time you go to an event with lawyers, you always wear those shoes." Before we wrap up, let's talk a little bit along those lines, actually. What can people do to make getting dressed more manageable? Because I think for a lot of people, this is a daily struggle.

Jenny Eversole: So, there's something that we teach at Style Space called a "capsule wardrobe". We're not the only ones that teach this; this is a very known concept where you make your outfits interchangeable and cohesive. So, one pair of pants should be able to go with five of your shirts or blouses or blazers, vice versa. So, if you're looking at more of a business casual look, then you want to make sure all of those interchanging parts relate together. And the more they have in common, the quicker it is going to be to select an outfit. This is also another 80/20 thing, where most people in their closets, they have 80% statement pieces and only 20% of those basics. Basics are your workhorse wardrobe items. Everybody has a different basic. My basics are going to be brighter than a lot of people, but other people's basics are maybe in more neutral tones. The basic pieces, though, are the things that you're going to pair. And then you have layering pieces to go on top, whether it's an accessory. But your statement pieces are the things that are going to bring more of your personality into the wardrobe. But if you have too many statements, then they're going to be clashing and not going together. So if you have stripes and polka dots and rainbows all over your closet, they're not entirely cohesive. So, make sure that there's cohesion and that anything that you bring into your closet, look at your mood board before, like the minimalist, edgy, and chic. Make sure that you're checking the boxes on every single one of those. Is this fully representative of me and my lifestyle, who I am? If it's not, either get rid of it, take it out of your closet. Everything in your closet has to earn its space. So, unless you're loving it and wearing it often, do not put it in your closet. It's going to cause a lot more decision fatigue in the morning, getting dressed. And you're going to open your closet thinking, "I have so many clothes and nothing to wear."

Alison Monahan: I totally get that. And do you think this is something people need to do seasonally? I'm guessing it probably depends where you live, but if you have seasons, I would assume you do this throughout the year.

Jenny Eversole: Yeah, I usually change my wardrobe two times a year. But we have four seasons that are quite erratic here. We can go from summer to winter to fall in one day, so I feel like I have to transition. I can't just one day take all my summer and throw in my winter. I basically have to taper it out until like, wow, we are fully committing to summer and I cannot wear these blazers, so they're going in another closet space. If it's not something in season, then store it away, either in Tupperware bins under your bed or in a different closet space. But basically, if it's not something that you're currently wearing, make it out of sight and either donate it, store it, give it away, repair it. Also, invest in a really good tailor, someone that you trust. They are almost like a fashion designer themselves. They can alter your clothes and completely change the look of them. So, if you want to bring in more of a focal point to your waistline, for example, they can nip that garment more in at the waistline. Or they can even take off parts of your arms and add more length on the bottom. I once wanted more of a sleeve on my dress, and he took off part of the hemline and put it on my shoulders. And a lot of people don't know that they have this power, but they're incredible. And also, if you're in between sizes, you can size up and then tailor down and it looks like a designer-made dress, because it was designed by you and the tailor.

Alison Monahan: Oh, that's awesome. I think that's definitely an underutilized resource. It seems very quaint, "Oh, take it to your tailor", but I have had some stuff tailored and you're like, "Wow, that is really life-changing. This actually fits me now."

Jenny Eversole: Absolutely.

Alison Monahan: What advice do you have for people who might want to edit or curate their own closets if they're looking at it going, "Yeah, you know what? I don't wear most of this"? How do you get started with that process?

Jenny Eversole: So, back to the three style words and finding your mood board and your aspirational style. That is your first step before you even start throwing things away, because if you don't know what your style is, you don't know what to get rid of. You don't know if you bought that piece because it was an impulse or because it's actually something that looks great on you and that you love. So, do the aspirational mood board, pin it up to your closet, put on some great music and just start taking out things. I like the Marie Kondo method of like, "Does this bring me joy?" But beyond that, there are things that bring me joy that are not my style and I don't wear.

Alison Monahan: You're like, "I love this. However, it is not practical for my current lifestyle."

Jenny Eversole: Exactly, yeah. As a mom of three kids, absolutely. I want to love the sequined dress, but I can probably wear it once a year and it's something that I store. But basically everything has to reflect that personal style, and your current personal style and the season. Sort everything by color as well. Color, as I mentioned, is the first thing that you see. If you organize your colors, your neutrals, your patterns, it will be a lot easier to visualize what you actually have and what you don't. And you have to determine, "Is this worth keeping? Is it a fit issue? Is there a stain? Is there a tear?" If there're stains or tears on it and it's not repairable, then obviously donate it. You can resell. Also, I didn't mention this before, but it's really great to buy secondhand things too, to give it a second life. You can either give your item away or go to a clothing swap, even. There're so many creative ways to reuse things and make sure that it has more life extended, because that is, ultimately, the best way to have a sustainable wardrobe, is to wear what you have longer and to curate it and to get things in your closet that you will actually wear.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think for me, one of the things I've realized too is really the fabric matters. I'm happy to buy a more expensive cashmere sweater and wear it literally until it falls apart, versus having five other things where I'm like, "Oh, this is itchy. I don't really like it. It's too heavy."

Jenny Eversole: Cashmere is so awesome, yeah. Investing in luxury, or not just luxury, but there're so many brands that have really great materials that they're not crazy expensive, but it's not a luxury price. You can buy the same thing instead of 10 items that you're going to throw away in two years, but you'll have for 10 years. It's more economic.

Alison Monahan: It is definitely one of the things I've learned over time, even with suits and things like that for interviews and stuff. If you spend a little more, you're going to get a better fabric, it's going to hold up better. Well, on that note, before we wrap up, what are some of your kind of go-to sources for professional clothing, particularly for people who are starting out, maybe don't have a ton of financial resources?

Jenny Eversole: So, I had mentioned the best secondhand resources. ThredUp and Poshmark are really great if you want to do it on a budget. Those places are better for accessories, shoes, things like that. If you are looking for a good fit, I really like Abercrombie and Fitch. It's done a huge rebrand and it's not the same company that we grew up with.

Alison Monahan: I'm like, "Really? That's not where I would think you had to look." Interesting.

Jenny Eversole: I know. They're not the same company and they have some really great basics, like button downs. We recommend a lot to our clients from Abercrombie and Fitch. Also, Banana Republic – that's a classic. The best luxury would be M.M.Lafleur and Net-a-Porter So, if you want to have more of those investment pieces, they have amazing basics at M.M.Lafleur, especially for this profession. The best classic pieces – I would go to J.Crew, Veronica Beard, or Vince. Also, another one of my favorites is Massimo Dutti. They don't have actual physical stores in the U. S. It's actually a company owned by Zara, but it's the more elevated version, I find, of Zara where you have the cashmeres and silks and linens, all the natural fibers used. I'm a huge fiber buff, being a former fashion designer. You can buy online through Massimo Dutti though. And then if you want edgy or trendy – that might be you – Zara, The Frankie Shop, Jill Sander, and Mango. Those are some of the recommendations. Also, plus size – Dia & Co; petite – Ann Taylor; and tall – American Tall. And for men's clothing – Bonobos, Everlane, Banana Republic, and Nordstrom's are some great resources. And for shoes – Clarks, Nisolo, Madewell, Vanelli, Vionic, Paul Green, and Tory Birch.

Alison Monahan: Awesome. Thank you.

Jenny Eversole: For professional.

Alison Monahan: That's great. Well, Jenny, I really appreciate you joining us. This has been amazing. Anything else you would like to add here?

Jenny Eversole: Absolutely. So, I just want everyone on this podcast to remember that style is for everyone and every body. It's not for a specific person or celebrities. It's beyond just helping you feel confident for your profession and be successful. It's for you every day to show up as your most authentic self.

Alison Monahan: Awesome. Well, thank you so much for joining us. I really appreciate it. And remind us again how people can find out more about you.

Jenny Eversole: Yeah. So if you go to StyleSpace.com, that is where you will find us. And if you want more one-on-one personalized help, that is where you will find us.

Alison Monahan: Awesome. Yeah, I checked out the website. It looks super cool, and the price points really seem very reasonable. So, I do encourage people to go check that out. Well, Jenny, thank you so much.

Jenny Eversole: Thanks, Alison.

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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