Lee Burgess: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today we are welcoming Lindsay Scola to talk about sleep and why it is important. This is Part 1 of a two-part interview with Lindsay, so please check back next time for more. 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.

Today we're very excited to have Lindsay Scola here to talk about something we all do, which is sleep. And not only do we all do it, it turns out it's super important, even though most of us don't do it enough. So Lindsay, I'm so excited to talk about sleep – something I've spent a lot of time thinking about not getting enough of.

Lindsay Scola: I am super excited to be here and talk about sleep – this thing that all of us spend a third of our life doing and most of us never thought anything about it, other than this time that we spend in bed. So, very excited.

Lee Burgess: Yay. Okay, well, to start off, what got you interested in sleep?

Lindsay Scola: I was somebody who thought that I would sleep when I was dead. I thought that sleep was the antithesis to my productivity. It was this thing that got in the way of me being productive. I've always struggled with being sleepy. The first time I talked to my doctor about this, I was 16. I was having these episodes where I was in class and felt otherwise engaged and then all of a sudden, out of nowhere, sleep would just hit me like a hammer, and I would feel like if I didn't go to sleep right now, I was going to die. And I would sneak into the bathroom and I would take a 15-minute nap and I'd feel better, but this kept happening to me. And so, when I went to our family doctor, she said, "You're busy and busy people are tired." And this mantra just stuck with me. And I was busy, I wanted to do all the things. And I went to college and I did all the things. And then I started working on Capitol Hill for a congressman with a bunch of people who were busy, I did all the things. And I never saw them sneaking into the bathroom for naps. And this sort of continued on for me for a lot of my career. And then when I was 35, I hit a brick wall and I just basically became a lunatic zombie. And if I didn't have to get out of bed, I wouldn't. I was having these moments where I'd be driving down the freeway, and all of a sudden, I would realize that I hadn't

noticed anything that happened in the last 10 minutes. I was long past the exit that I was supposed to get off of. When I was doing something like washing dishes, I felt like I was taking micro-naps. And when I was doing work that was not super engaging to my brain, it was like I would sleep in between things. So I would have these memos that were like perfectly constructed sentences with gibberish in between. And I went to my doctor and I was like, "Something is seriously wrong." And she gave me a home sleep test, which came back negative, for sleep apnea. And when I got these results, it said, "Think more about your sleep hygiene." I was like, "That's great, but bad sleep hygiene shouldn't make a human this tired." And I was apoplectic. I went home and I drank an entire bottle of red wine and an entire container of Ben & Jerry's Cherry Garcia, and I found the end of the Internet. And so, I go back to my doctor with armloads of evidence that I still have sleep apnea, the only sleep disorder I'd ever heard of. And I was like Annalise Keating, ready to make my defense. And she stopped me and said, "We are now beyond both of our education on sleep." And it took a literal temper tantrum on the floor of my doctor's office to find out that sleep specialists were a thing. So, at 35, after experiencing symptoms for 19 years, I went to see a sleep specialist and found out I had narcolepsy. Now, the only thing I had ever seen about narcolepsy was the clip from Deuce Bigalow: Male Gigolo, which came out in 1999, so I'm guessing most people listening to this were not even born yet. However, a woman falls asleep into her soup. And I had never done that. So, I sort of tilt my head to the side and I look at my doctor and I was like, "I'm sorry, I don't think you're right. I've never fallen asleep into a bowl of soup." And found out that that's not what narcolepsy is. Narcolepsy actually looked a lot more like me. But on that day, I didn't just learn about narcolepsy, I learned that I had no idea what sleep was. And the more I dug in on this, I found out that most of us don't know what sleep was, including most of our general practitioners as well, who have under two hours of sleep education.

Lee Burgess: When it's now being discussed as one of the most important things to long-term health.

Lindsay Scola: Absolutely. And that still is the case though. So yes, we know it's important.

Lee Burgess: We know it's important, we just still don't talk about it.

Lindsay Scola: We don't talk about it. Or the information that we get about it is not helpful. We get told to sleep eight hours, we get told to sleep in a dark room, and not to use blue light. There's some truth in some of that, but it doesn't actually teach us how to sleep. At least when we were in elementary school, we got the food pyramid. And some of the nutrition information on there might be outdated;

however, somebody taught us to think about food. We have an idea about the food that we put in our body, how that relates to our overall health. If I eat cheeseburgers three meals a day, every day for the rest of my life, I'm going to have an issue with this. As a regular person walking down the street, I don't know how the sleep that I do or do not get affects me physically, emotionally, or otherwise.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. I was never a great sleeper. I had a roommate after college who was on the crew team – he was a competitive rower – and he could sleep anywhere at any time, because he would train himself basically, because they would practice at 5:00 in the morning or something in college. He was one of those people who would be like, "Oh, time to go to bed", and I was like, "That is not how I roll." But I said, "Oh, it's fine. I'm just someone who doesn't sleep very much." And then I had small children. I'm about 10 years into my small children decade of my life. And I didn't really appreciate sleep deprivation until my children stopped me from sleeping, and then you start to see kind of long-term consequences of cognitive retention, the ability to move through life. And that was around the time that I feel like a lot of people in the media and in books were starting to talk about sleep, and I get super aggressive and angry about it. I'm like, "Don't talk to me about how much I'm supposed to be sleeping. What am I supposed to do? This is the chapter of my life where I don't sleep." But now that I'm on the other side of a lot of that, I am much more protective of my sleep. I think it is so critical. It has a huge influence on how I function as a human. And I wear an aura ring to track how I'm sleeping. It's something I'm much more aware of, along with, did I get my steps in, or did I exercise? It's just starting to become part of something I talk about. But I think we often wait until we're closer to middle age, maybe, to really focus on talking about it, because in school, not being exhausted and burning the candle at both ends is still championed, I think.

Lindsay Scola: Yeah, and especially when we grew up. Everybody who was highly successful in the '90s slept four hours a night, and that's what you aspired to. We've hit a flip side of this, where everybody tells us to sleep eight hours. And eight hours is only the top of a bell curve. So, for most adults, you need to sleep between seven and nine hours. But how much you sleep is actually what feels good for your body. And so, because of the bell curve, there are people who need six hours or under, which is a very, very, very, very, very small fraction of the population. And then there are people who need 10 hours or more, which is also a small fraction of the population. It's not about the amount of sleep that you're getting; it's about the quality of sleep that you're getting and how you feel during the day. Our measure of good sleep actually has nothing to do with what's happening between the time we close our eyes and open them. Actually

the measure is how we feel once we're awake and functioning during the day. And so, when we start to actually look at what sleep is and how we can practically apply it to our own bodies, we actually have a much better chance of feeling better during the day than if it becomes this mythical thing that you have to get eight hours, because all it's done is move this mark for us for failure. I needed more than four hours to be successful. I can't get eight hours because of what's going on in my life, so therefore, I'm just destined to be a s*itty sleeper for the rest of my life. Fortunately, once we start to dig in about what feels good in our lives, we can find a place for ourselves where we're making decisions about how we sleep and when we sleep and what we're doing to get good sleep that anybody can be successful at sleeping. And the thing is that if you are doing these things and you're prioritizing your sleep and you don't feel good, one in five of us has a sleep disorder, and there's something we can do about that too.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. Okay, so for everyone listening to this that's saying, "No, I'm good. I get four to five hours of sleep. I am the tiny bit on the bottom of the bell curve" – what really happens when we don't sleep? Why is this so important? When we are moving around the world exhausted, what happens to us? Why is it something that we should all be looking at?

Lindsay Scola: So, for starters, sleep is where our memory retention happens. It's where short-term memory becomes long-term memory. So if you're not getting enough full cycles of sleep, especially REM sleep, your memory is going to struggle. This is really important if you're somebody who is listening to this, who's taking exams in law school or getting ready for the bar exam. If you want to retain information, you are much more successful if you sleep on something new that you learned than trying to cram it and force memorization of it. It's where our body heals and repairs itself. So, your immune system does better, your long-term health does better. Lack of sleep has an increased risk of cardiovascular issues, whether that's high blood pressure or stroke or heart attack. It's also where our brain takes out the trash. You get chemicals that build up in your brain throughout the day, and your brain needs to cycle through those. Without enough deep sleep, you're actually missing that opportunity to do that, and those continue to build up, and that's where we see things like Alzheimer's. You might feel okay for a certain period of time, not getting enough sleep, and some people will tell you that they've learned to live on it. They've just learned to adapt to not enough sleep. They've not learned to be a more efficient sleeper, because after two weeks we see that you don't get better. You actually start compounding the problem of not getting enough sleep. So, by thinking that you have to be in this category of being able to function on little to no sleep, you're actually depriving yourself of all of these good things that sleep does. And you might actually find that you are smarter, more able, more capable, especially on

the memory side, if you're giving yourself the amount of sleep that your body really needs to thrive on.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. I've also read and personally experienced, I think, any issues with anxiety or all of these other mental health things that we talk about. All of that is harder when you're exhausted. It is just harder to have your rational mind own everything when you're exhausted.

Lindsay Scola: Absolutely. There is definitely a strong mental health connection between lack of sleep and anxiety and depression. And it's sort of a chicken and the egg thing. The anxiety and depression can cause lack of sleep, but we have to focus on getting enough quality good sleep to support your mental health as well. So, if you're not somebody who's naturally prone to anxiety but you're finding that you're getting a lot of it, sleep could be a first place to check in.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. I also think that I've had other students especially report to me who have ADHD, any kind of attention deficit issue, that exhaustion makes all of that worse. It is just harder to manage when you're completely exhausted.

Lindsay Scola: Absolutely. And as somebody with ADHD, we start seeing this narrative, that people with ADHD are bad sleepers. And we would never tell somebody with asthma it's okay to just be a bad breather. We would never tell someone with a heart condition it's okay to have a bad heartbeat. But with ADHD specifically, we've just created this narrative that it's okay to not get good sleep, and this is something that just comes with the condition. When in truth, we see that as many as probably 80% of people with ADHD have some other sleep condition, a sleep disorder which actually needs medical attention. And so this could be chronic insomnia, this could be sleep apnea, this could be restless leg syndrome, or something like narcolepsy. And so it's really important, especially if you have ADHD, that you're tapping into seeing if prioritizing your sleep isn't working, that sleep specialists are a thing and that we can get you medical help and you will live a much happier, healthier life.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. Okay, so hopefully everyone's bought in that this is super important, and basically all of us have something in our lives that will be better if we get some rest. So, how do we get better rest? What do we do? What do we do? We're busy people. What do we do?

Lindsay Scola: So, first it's going to be tuning into your own wake cycle. So, if you are a morning person, that's going to be the best time for you to do really critical thinking and organizing things. If you're somebody who needs to sleep a little bit

more in the morning, you might find your productivity push is more important at the end of the day or even the evening. And so, when we start tapping into when we feel our best, we actually can find these places where we can get the most out of our day, which gives us enough time to make sure that we're sleeping. And so, trying to be productive every second of every day is going to make your productivity worse, it's going to make your sleep worse. So, first tapping into your own rhythm, figuring out what your good amount of sleep is for you. And so, pick a time to wake up every day and stick with it. And start seeing how you feel during the day, giving yourself enough sleep. So, sleep happens in cycles of 90 minutes. That gives you enough light sleep, deep sleep, and REM sleep. And you do this about five or six times during the night. And so, if you're waking up at 7:00 AM and you want to figure out playing with how much sleep to get, you go back in 90-minutecycles back from there to figure out where you want to start getting those five or six cycles, and see how you feel during the day. Do you feel well rested throughout the day? Do you feel like your energy is really low from the time you wake up, or that you're hitting big blocks throughout the day? A lot of people play with napping. I like to think of naps as sleep snacks. So, if we live on this sort of 24-hour circadian rhythm cycle and we have this thing called "sleep pressure" that builds up throughout the day, and the longer we have it the more tired we get, it's like hunger, right? The longer we go without food, the more hungry we are. Some people absolutely have to have a snack, or they're never going to make it to dinner. Other people, they have a snack and they're not hungry for dinner. So, if you think that dinner is the goal with sleep, what are you doing for yourself to get there? I'm somebody who definitely needs my 15, 20-minute nap sometime around 1:00 o'clock every day. So, I don't schedule important meetings at that time, so that I know that I have that time and that's going to get me through the rest of my day to have a productive afternoon. And you don't have to have a sleep disorder to appreciate napping as part of your day. That can work for anybody. Now, if naps are feeling uncontrollable, we're sitting and we're having this conversation or otherwise our brains are stimulated by it. If you feel like all of a sudden, "I have to go to sleep or I'm going to die, and I absolutely can't keep my eyes open" – that's a sign that something else might be at play. That's something called excessive daytime sleepiness.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, I'm not a napper. I always wish I had been a napper, but I'm really not a napper, and I'm so jealous of people who can nap. I'm just not a very good napper.

Lindsay Scola: Well, if it's not something that you need...

Lee Burgess: I don't know.

Lindsay Scola: We all have our different things.

Lee Burgess: I know. Maybe in my ideal being, I need it, but I don't know. I'm always like, "Wouldn't that be nice?" And then I've never been good at it. So, I just give that one up.

Lindsay Scola: I'm just going to own that. I wear a necklace that says "Good at naps".

Lee Burgess: Oh my gosh, I love that. But I definitely have a rhythm. And if I don't go to bed in my usual pocket of time, I get another wind, I have trouble falling asleep. My body wants to wake up around the same time every day. And I think this idea of your day having these pockets of productivity and these pockets where you're more refreshed is really important to think about. I was listening to a Huberman Lab episode, which I don't even listen to very many of them, but he was talking about his daily rhythm, which I found very interesting, and that he really breaks it down to like, "These are the 90 minutes I do creative tasks. This is the hour that I do administrative tasks." And he was being very honest about how cognitively he can think about what he's best at, based on the rhythm of the day. And I think that your idea of looking at your day as this 24-hour window is very different. You're like, "When am I going to be productive? When am I resting? And how does all of that come together?"

Lindsay Scola: Yeah. If you look at sleep chronotypes, there're four sleep chronotypes, where we have this sort of genetic rhythm. And this is not an exact science at all, but it gets us to sort of tap into what feels good for us. So we have lions, who wake up before the sun, feel their most productive first time in the day, definitely have an energy slump earlier in the afternoon. We have bears, who are the people that the "nine to five" system was built for – you sort of wake up with the sun, set with the sun, and you feel most productive during the main hours of the day. We have our wolves, who are late night folks who feel super creative as the night goes on, tend to want to fall asleep after midnight, 8:00 AM meetings can feel excruciating for them. And then we have dolphins, who are sort of unpredictable in their sleep. These are sort of our light sleepers, or have inconsistent sleep rhythms. I'm one of these folks, so I don't know when my creative moments are going to hit for me. So, it's uber important for me that I keep as much flexibility in my schedule as possible and really try not to overload myself in the afternoon and evening, because this is usually when I'm going to hit an energy slump. And so, once you start thinking through that, you give yourself a lot more permission to work with what feels good for yourself. And you also realize that none of us are going to be a machine. Nobody is going to wake up…

Lee Burgess: Oh wait, I'm not a machine? Wait, what?

Lindsay Scola: And sometimes it takes into our forties to figure this out.

Lee Burgess: It's true.

Lindsay Scola: But if you are not somebody who naturally wants to wake up at 5:00 AM and go to the gym and feel your best, you're never going to force yourself to be that person. And so, it's super important to tune into that. And then, I think that as we're learning about sleep and playing with sleep, those of us that have been accustomed to this thing called "sleep hygiene" is that it's a checklist, and if I don't check off everything on it that I have failed, I am now destined to be a bad sleeper forever, and this is my fault. And the thing is that it can be very small, manageable changes that help us get the type of sleep that we need. You might be more light sensitive than you realize. You might not have an issue falling asleep because lights were on earlier, but you might actually find that lights in your room are actually waking you up or making your sleep lighter. In our room we have stickers on things that are indicator lights that are keeping me awake. The curtain behind me is a blackout curtain, so any light that's coming into the room doesn't hit first thing in the morning, when my husband and I sleep a little later than when the sun comes up. And those micro-changes are really good. As someone with ADHD, I have a constant narrator running through my head. And sometimes at night, the narrator does not want to settle down, and the narrator would like to go through a conversation I had in third grade, and whether or not I said the right thing in that moment, or if the teacher who punished me for talking too much in class that day was in the wrong. And so, I have found that TV helps quiet that narrator. So for years I thought I needed to sleep with the TV on, and then the light from the TV would wake me up and then I would be up in the night. And so, it's just the dialogue from TV. So now I sleep with a sound sleep mask that has a flat panel so I can sleep on my side. I set a 30-minute timer on my phone to turn off when it's done. I put on a show I'm not emotionally invested in, so it's something I've seen before. Lighthearted comedies like Girls5eva is one my jams to fall asleep to. And then in 30 minutes it's off. There's no light that's on. And then the mask is a blackout mask, so any other light that's coming into the room isn't keeping me up or waking me up. And so, once you start thinking about, "Okay, what feels good for me? Do I like sound when I go to sleep? Do I want it to be pitch quiet when I go to sleep? Does white noise help me fall asleep?" People play with different frequencies. You've got white noise that can help you fall asleep when there's other noise happening. Pink noise, brown noise that can give you different types of grounding or different kinds of dreams. Enjoy it and think of it as a puzzle that you're putting together. I had a doctor who told me that I was going to feel

really good on a vegan diet that didn't have oil in it. And when I started doing that, I was like, "Oh, the food tastes amazing", but my body stopped moving. Everything in my body just stopped moving and I was just a pile of sludge, because it turns out that was not a good diet for me. And I do much better on a Mediterranean diet with light protein and olive oil in it. And so, all of us are going to do different things at different times and feel better doing it. And that's okay.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, I think it's true. We have to be on this journey to figure things out for ourselves. So, some of the kind of checklist of things that you have mentioned is that if you're not sleeping enough or you're feeling very tired, you want to start looking at this traditional sleep hygiene that we've all read blog posts about. It's like what's happening inside your room. And then you want to play with it and experiment. Have you ever worn a mask at night? Have you ever had white noise or different noise? When we travel with my kids, I have an app that runs off of their iPads that has all these different noises on it. I mean, it's like the airplane, the fan, and they like airplane plus fan. You can get really creative, but I think there are so many options that didn't used to be out there, that can help you feel more at home, and also can help you sleep when you travel, which is another issue. But what are some of the other things you think, other than sound and darkness, that folks should play about? I mean, you mentioned diet. I think that's another thing that can have an influence. Eating too late. I know for me personally, if I eat too late at night, I don't sleep particularly well, and that's because I'm now compulsive and do all this data tracking on myself, which is its own Type A personality thing to do.

Lindsay Scola: If you're struggling with sleep, please be careful about the data tracking.

Lee Burgess: Yes. Okay, tell me about it.

Lindsay Scola: So something's going to happen for us, especially when we're struggling with sleep, that we try really hard to sleep. Especially if you're a Type A person who has thought that, "I have muscled through everything else in my life, I'm now going to muscle through sleep." And effort is actually the opposite of sleep. The more we try to say "I need to sleep, I need to sleep now", the more our body is going to resist this, because we're turning our brain on. We're actually using our brain for something and doing the opposite of what it needs to do. So, if you're someone who sleeps well and having this data is helpful and fun for you – great. If you're someone who's struggling with your sleep, it can actually have the opposite effect. And so, first try to take as much pressure off yourself as possible for when you're struggling to sleep. You might not be at a time where your brain wants to go to sleep, so get out of bed. If you've been in bed and

wanting to fall asleep and it's been more than 20 minutes and you're not asleep, get up and do something else. That can be doing something relaxing, going and reading a book under some low light, listening to some music outside of bed. You feel sleepy, you come back. Some people get up and do some more work. You're using your brain for what it wants to be doing. I just heard a great analogy, that our brains are like a snow globe. And so, sometimes when we want to be falling asleep and our brain has all of this going on, allow your brain to do what it needs to do, and then come back and try again. One night of low sleep is not going to be the end of you. So we want to retrain our brains from thinking, "Oh my God, tomorrow is wrecked. I didn't get enough sleep, I'm going to fail at everything I do tomorrow, and then I'm going to fail every night beyond that." And more, it's like, "I've had rough nights before and I've been okay." And that's going to help you sort of reframe everything that's going on. And giving yourself grace will actually help you sleep a lot better. If you are someone who struggles with more negative thoughts at night, try gratitude journaling. I thought it was like the corniest thing ever when I first read about it. And there's something about getting your brain into a more positive place before you're trying to go to bed that's going to help those racing thoughts die down and get ready for a softer, calmer place. And that doesn't have to be, "I am so grateful for this major, massive achievement." "I'm grateful for having a warm bed. I'm grateful for a good conversation that I had today. I'm grateful for the really extraordinary dinner that I had tonight." And so, that just helps us reframe things to be in a softer, calmer place. If you are someone that really enjoys being on your phone before you go to bed, and you're having a hard time falling asleep, it could be the content that you're consuming. So if you're watching a really dramatic TV show that's asking your brain to do a lot of work, that might not be the thing. I do like being on my phone before I go to bed. I can't watch political content right now, because it fires up every nerve in my body. So, I love watching people cleaning cast iron skillets on Instagram. I'm never going to restore cast iron skillets. I don't have a desire to do this at all, but there's something so extraordinarily calming for me about watching other people do it. And that sets me off to dreamland. And I love doing it at night and it makes me super happy. So, whatever your jam is, train your algorithm, this is the content that you want to see. And figure out what you're telling your brain is nighttime. I'm really sensitive to smell, in a good way. Certain smells will remind me of things, certain smells will calm me down. So, I found that I really like that. L.A. has been so extraordinarily dry this winter, so I have a humidifier on my nightstand now, and I put a little essential oil in there of a smell that calms me down, and it tells my body like, "Okay, it's time to calm down. It's time to get ready for bed." So, there's a whole long list of things we can play with.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. So, let's say that you are joining the workforce. Maybe you are a young lawyer, you're joining a big firm or a high stress job, and the narrative is,

everybody's exhausted because everyone's working all the time. So, how do you hold that narrative, and also the fact that you want to work a productive amount of time and still find that balance?

Lindsay Scola: We are never going to all be in control of our schedules 100% of the time, every day. And sometimes you are going to go through a period where you're going to need to potentially do more work than your brain is wired to do to have the most restful time, protect as much piece of your day as you can. If you're staying up later for work, maybe you're pushing some personal stuff to a later time. I know that when I was working on Capitol Hill, when I was right out of school, and we had things that were going late into the night, I still felt like I had to meet all of these other things in my life, and so I was adding a social life on top of that, and then going out later than that, and then you still have to be at work the next day. And I am not naturally a morning person. So, I was pushing my body to do things that it didn't want to do. I think wake up as consistently at the same time as you can every day, so that when you get past that crazy time that you've been in, your body naturally wants to go to sleep at this time because you've sort of trained it for a cycle. And again, lean into your productivity moments. And this can be as simple as knowing that every day at 2:00 o'clock I have a slump. And it's not necessarily that you need to take a nap at that time, but maybe you go for a walk. Maybe that's a time that you turn off all your devices for 15 minutes and you listen to something that is calming or funny, or just stops your brain from working for a moment, because that way you're actually going to get your brain to pump back in. And by giving yourself that 15 minutes of downtime, you've actually probably given yourself three or four more hours of productivity after that. And we can have diminishing returns if we try to push, push, push, because we think that we're in this culture that everybody's working at every moment of every day. And you might actually find that you can get more work done if you're giving yourself time to refresh. Take these lessons in now, because you're going to be the one that's setting the tone 10, 15, 20 years from now, to make sure that we've got happier, healthier workplaces where we can probably get just as much done, but we're getting it done in a way that's much healthier for us in the long term.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. I really like this idea of giving yourself those resets throughout the day. We talk about that even for the bar exam, which is an all-day test, a multi-day test that said that if you're losing focus, if you are crashing, you've got to just close your eyes and take deep breaths. Because I think we often forget that if we just flood our body with oxygen, it also helps kind of reset ourselves. And so, I think so often we feel that we have to meet these lofty goals to be these high-functioning people. Before my third year of law school, I was working at a law firm, I had just met my now husband, and so I was doing social things with him. I

had a summer associate job, so I was doing social things with the firm. And it was very important to me that I also try to work out before work. One day, I was so tired and burnt out that I ended up sleeping in my car in the parking lot of the gym, because I was so tired that I could not make myself go inside to go to the gym. And it was just one of those moments where I'm like, "What am I doing? This is just not normal or good for anyone." What does it mean when I have gotten myself to the gym and it was like 6:00 AM by the time I pulled in and then my body was just like, "You must go back to sleep until 7:00 o'clock. That is what we need more than anything else." And it was really just an "aha" moment. There are consequences to pushing yourself too hard. It will catch up with you. You may not know when it's going to catch up with you, but it will.

Lindsay Scola: Absolutely. And sleep is up there with breathing and eating and drinking water. If you hold your breath for a certain period of time, you will pass out and start breathing again, because your brain is going to do what it needs to do to take care of itself. And so, if you are willingly depriving yourself of this thing that your body needs to function, it's going to find a way to happen whether you want it to or not. And you don't want that to be behind the wheel of a car, which our focus and our reaction time are a direct result of getting good, functioning sleep. If you're not sleeping, your reaction time is dropping way down. And sleep deprived driving is just as dangerous as drunk driving.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. Yeah, okay, so we've given a lot of suggestions, but if you had to kind of bundle them all together and give the top things you want folks to think about when they talk about bettering their sleep, what would be your top handful of things?

Lindsay Scola: Think about how much sleep you feel good at, and get to a place where you know around what number you want to hit. Lean into your natural rhythms during the day and give yourself grace to try new things when things are failing. And I'm going to give four. If you are trying all these things and it's not working and you're still not feeling good, know that sleep disorders are real, they affect a lot of people, and that there is actual medical help that will help you live a much happier, more productive, healthier life. I am a testament to that.

Lee Burgess: Amazing. And that is great because we are out of time for today, but we're going to come back with another episode on sleep where we're going to talk more about sleep disorders and also how to advocate for yourself, so once you know that you're struggling, you can get the help that you need. So, thank you so much for your time today. If folks want to learn more about your sleep research and what you're talking about with sleep, how can they do that?

Lindsay Scola: LindsayScola.com. I've got everything you need there. Follow me on Instagram and LinkedIn, and can't wait to talk to you more.

Lee Burgess: Do you post the cleaning of the cast iron skillets on your Instagram? Do you link to that?

Lindsay Scola: No, because I'm not cleaning cast iron skillets.

Lee Burgess: Well, I didn't know if you just share the content. You're like, "Everyone should be watching this."

Lindsay Scola: Maybe I need to put a reel together of this. I need a reel of the cast iron skillets restorers that I watch, because I am not restoring cast iron skillets.

Lee Burgess: Okay, I love it. So, sleepy time. It should be like a sleepy time cast iron skillet reel. I'm going to look for it on your Instagram.

Lindsay Scola: Coming to Spotify soon.

Lee Burgess: Okay. Alright. Alright, thanks so much for your time today, Lindsay.

Lindsay Scola: Thank you.

Lee Burgess: If you enjoyed this episode of the Law School Toolbox podcast, please take a second to leave a review and rating on your favorite listening app. We'd really appreciate it. And be sure to subscribe so you don't miss anything. If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to reach out to myself or Alison at lee@lawschooltoolbox.com or alison@lawschooltoolbox.com. Or you can always contact us via our website contact form at LawSchoolToolBox.com. Thanks for listening, and we'll talk soon!

RESOURCES:

LindsayScola.com
LinkedIn: Lindsay Scola
Instagram: Lindsay Scola
Let's Talk About Sleep

The Importance of Sleep in Law School
How to Maximize Your Sleep