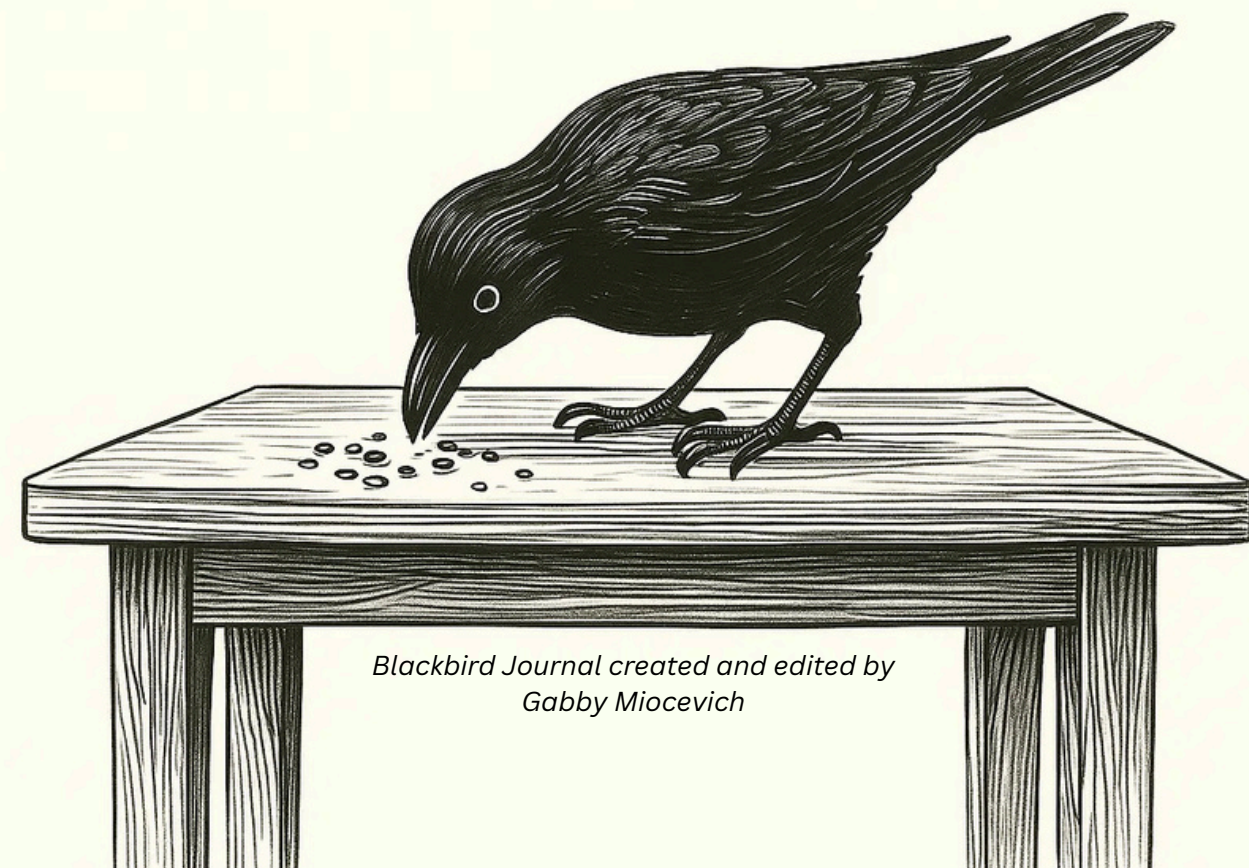


BLACKBIRD

JOURNAL



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Gabby Mioceovich*



2025
COLLEGE OF LAW

College of Law

Whether you're mid-way through your degree, preparing for exams, or thinking about your next step after university, stress and uncertainty can quickly pile up. That's why learning to manage pressure and protect your wellbeing is one of the most valuable skills you can build, at any stage of your career.

John Poulsen knows this firsthand. As the former Australian Managing Partner and CEO of Squire Patton Boggs, he reached the top of the profession, but realised he wasn't happy. This moment led him to re-evaluate his life and career, and eventually launch People Passion Performance, where he now supports others through coaching and mentoring.

Drawing on his real-world experience, John shares practical insights and tactics to help manage stress and avoid burnout, wisdom that's just as relevant for students as it is for senior professionals.

"As I have grown older, I have formed the view that we live much of our life in fear - fear of what has happened (leads to depression) and fear of what might happen (leads to anxiety), rather than living in the present and having inner peace," John says.

Below, John shares some of his research into the role stress plays in our lives, both necessary and unnecessary, and shares his top 12 stress-busting tactics.

THE REALITY OF STRESS IN OUR LIVES by John Poulsen

The ability to manage your emotions and remain calm under pressure has a direct link to your performance. Research undertaken by Yale with more than a million people, has found that 90% of top performers are skilled at managing their emotions in times of stress in order to remain calm and in control.

The Yale study, which found that prolonged stress causes degeneration in the area of the brain responsible for self-control. The tricky thing about stress (and the anxiety that comes with it) is that it's an absolutely necessary emotion. Our brains are wired such that it's difficult to take action until we feel at least some level of this emotional state. In fact, performance peaks under the heightened activation that comes with moderate levels of stress. As long as the stress isn't prolonged, it's harmless.

New research from the University of California, Berkeley, reveals an upside to experiencing moderate levels of stress.

But it also reinforces how important it is to keep stress under control. The study, led by post-doctoral fellow Elizabeth Kirby, found that the onset of stress entices the brain into growing new cells responsible for improved memory. However, this effect is only seen when stress is intermittent. As soon as the stress continues beyond a few moments into a prolonged state, it suppresses the brain's ability to develop new cells.

Besides increasing your risk of heart disease, depression, and obesity, stress decreases your cognitive performance. Fortunately, though, unless a lion is chasing you, the bulk of your stress is subjective and under your control. Top performers have well-honed coping strategies that they employ under stressful circumstances. This lowers their stress levels regardless of what's happening in their environment, ensuring that the stress they experience is intermittent and not prolonged.

12 STRESS-BUSTING TACTICS

Over time, many effective strategies have emerged that successful people use to manage stress. Below are 12 practical tactics that you can start using right now. Some may seem simple, but the real challenge lies in recognising when you need to use them and have the wherewithal to actually do it in spite of your stress.

01. Appreciate what you have

Taking time to contemplate what you're grateful for isn't merely the "right" thing to do. It also improves your mood because it reduces the stress hormone cortisol by 23%. Research conducted at the University of California, Davis found that people who worked daily to cultivate an attitude of gratitude experienced improved mood, energy, and physical well-being. It's likely that lower levels of cortisol played a major role in this.

02. Avoid asking "What if?"

"What if?" statements throw fuel on the fire of stress and worry. Things can go in a million different directions, and the more time you spend worrying about the possibilities, the less time you'll spend focusing on taking action that will calm you down and keep your stress under control. Calm people know that asking "what if?" will only take them to a place they don't want—or need—to go.

03. Stay positive

Positive thoughts help make stress intermittent by focusing your brain's attention onto something that is completely stress-free. You have to give your wandering brain a little help by consciously selecting something positive to think about. Any positive thought will do to refocus your attention. When things are going well, and your mood is good, this is relatively easy. When things are going poorly, and your mind is flooded with negative thoughts, this can be a challenge. In these moments, think about your day and identify one positive thing that happened, no matter how small.

If you can't think of something from the current day, reflect on the previous day or even the previous week. Or perhaps you're looking forward to an exciting event that you can focus your attention on. The point here is that you must have something positive that you're ready to shift your attention to when your thoughts turn negative.

04. Disconnect

Given the importance of keeping stress intermittent, it's easy to see how taking regular time off the grid can help keep your stress under control. When you make yourself available to your work 24/7, you expose yourself to a constant barrage of stressors.

Forcing yourself offline and even—gulp!—turning off your phone gives your body a break from a constant source of stress. Studies have shown that something as simple as an email break can lower stress levels.

Technology enables constant communication and the expectation that you should be available 24/7. It is extremely difficult to enjoy a stress-free moment outside of work when an email that will change your train of thought and get you thinking (read: stressing) about work can drop onto your phone at any moment.

If detaching yourself from work-related communication on weekday evenings is too big a challenge, then how about the weekend? Choose blocks of time where you cut the cord and go offline.

You'll be amazed at how refreshing these breaks are and how they reduce stress by putting a mental recharge into your weekly schedule.

If you're worried about the negative repercussions of taking this step, first try doing it at times when you're unlikely to be contacted—maybe Sunday morning. As you grow more comfortable with it, and as your co-workers begin to accept the time you spend offline, gradually expand the amount of time you spend away from technology.

05. Limit caffeine intake

Drinking caffeine triggers the release of adrenaline. Adrenaline is the source of the "fight-or-flight" response, a survival mechanism that forces you to stand up and fight or run for the hills when faced with a threat. The fight-or-flight mechanism sidesteps rational thinking in favour of a faster response. This is great when a bear is chasing you, but not so great when you're responding to a curt email. When caffeine puts your brain and body into this hyper aroused state of stress, your emotions overrun your behaviour. The stress that caffeine creates is far from intermittent, as its long half-life ensures that it takes its sweet time working its way out of your body.

06. Sleep

When you sleep, your brain literally recharges, shuffling through the day's memories and storing or discarding them (which causes dreams), so that you wake up alert and clear-headed.

Your self-control, attention, and memory are all reduced when you don't get enough—or the right kind—of sleep. Sleep deprivation raises stress hormone levels on its own, even without a stressor present. Stressful projects often make you feel as if you have no time to sleep but taking the time to get a decent night's sleep is often the one thing keeping you from getting things under control.

07. Squash negative self-talk

A big step in managing stress involves stopping negative self-talk in its tracks. The more you ruminate on negative thoughts, the more power you give them. Most of our negative thoughts are just that—thoughts, not facts.

When you find yourself believing the negative and pessimistic things, your inner voice says, "It's time to stop and write them down." Literally stop what you're doing and write down what you're thinking. Once you've taken a moment to slow down the negative momentum of your thoughts, you will be more rational and clear-headed in evaluating their veracity.

You can bet that your statements aren't true any time you use words like "never," "worst," "ever," etc. If your statements still look like facts once they're on paper, take them to a friend or colleague you trust and see if he or she agrees with you. Then the truth will surely come out. When it feels like something always or never happens, this is just your brain's natural threat tendency inflating the perceived frequency or severity of an event. Identifying and labelling your thoughts as thoughts by separating them from the facts will help you escape the cycle of negativity and move toward a positive new outlook.

08. Reframe perspective

Stress and worry are fuelled by our own skewed perception of events.

It's easy to think that unrealistic deadlines, unforgiving bosses, and out-of-control traffic are the reasons we're so stressed all the time. You can't control your circumstances, but you can control how you respond to them. So, before you spend too much time dwelling on something, take a minute to put the situation in perspective.

If you aren't sure when you need to do this, try looking for clues that your anxiety may not be proportional to the stressor. If you're thinking in broad, sweeping statements such as "Everything is going wrong" or "Nothing will work out," then you need to reframe the situation. A great way to correct this unproductive thought pattern is to list the specific things that actually are going wrong or not working out. Most likely you will come up with just some things—not everything—and the scope of these stressors will look much more limited than it initially appeared.

09. Breathe

The easiest way to make stress intermittent lies in something that you have to do every day anyway: breathing. The practice of being in the moment with your breathing will begin to train your brain to focus solely on the task at hand and get the stress monkey off your back. When you're feeling stressed, take a couple of minutes to focus on your breathing. Close the door, put away all other distractions, and just sit in a chair and breathe. The goal is to spend the entire time focused only on your breathing, which will prevent your mind from wandering.

10. Meditate

The science of meditation is now indisputable. It gives us a better grasp of how to work with situations, a heightened awareness of our emotions, and more space to respond.

Meditation is a simple technique that, if practiced for as few as 10 minutes each day, can help you control stress, decrease anxiety, improve cardiovascular health, and achieve a greater capacity for relaxation.

When our bodies are exposed to a sudden stress or threat, we respond with a characteristic "fight or flight" response. The "adrenaline rush" we experience is a result of the release of the hormones epinephrine (adrenaline) and norepinephrine. They cause an increase in blood pressure and pulse rate, faster breathing, and increased blood flow to the muscles.

The relaxation response is a technique designed to elicit the opposite bodily reaction from the "fight or flight" response -- a state of deep relaxation in which our breathing, pulse rate, blood pressure, and metabolism are decreased. Training our bodies on a daily basis to achieve this state of relaxation can lead to enhanced mood, lower blood pressure, improved digestion, and a reduction of everyday stress.

11. Use a support system

It's tempting, yet entirely ineffective, to attempt tackling everything by yourself. To be calm and productive, you need to recognise your weaknesses and ask for help when you need it.

This means tapping into your support system when a situation is challenging enough for you to feel overwhelmed. Everyone has someone at work and/ or outside work who is on their team, rooting for them, and ready to help them get the best from a difficult situation.

Identify these individuals in your life and make an effort to seek their insight and assistance when you need it. Something as simple as talking about your worries will provide an outlet for your anxiety and stress and supply you with a new perspective on the situation. Most of the time, other people can see a solution that you can't because they are not as emotionally invested in the situation. Asking for help will mitigate your stress and strengthen your relationships with those you rely upon.'

12. Exercise

Exercise reduces levels of the body's stress hormones, such as adrenaline and cortisol. It also stimulates the production of endorphins, chemicals in the brain that are the body's natural painkillers and mood elevators. Virtually any form of exercise, from aerobics to yoga, can act as a stress reliever. If you're not an athlete or even if you're out of shape, you can still make a little exercise go a long way towards stress management.



RUN YOUR OWN RACE

Law school feels like a running race, doesn't it? During the semester it feels like you are running a marathon—long, grueling, and seemingly endless. But after the first year, it feels a bit more like a 200m sprint. Blink, and the year has vanished. I love how I am using running analogies as if I run... when in fact, I haven't ran since high school and I'm highly asthmatic, with no desire to run... #TryingToFitIn #HotGirlWalks

At times, it may seem like everyone around you is competition. Even if you've downed a Hydralyte and performed all the stretches necessary (insert whatever those are), you might still feel miles behind. We've ALL been there.

It looks like you may have been running without a jacket and have caught the common law school cold, Imposter Syndrome. But trust me, even if others say they finish their assignment early or they are getting HD's across the board, don't listen to them. Just do your best!

Remember that we all have different commitments and circumstances. Everyone has their own lives outside of law school. Some work full time, others volunteer or have family commitments. We do not all start at the same point. Setbacks are part of the journey.

Throughout law school, remind yourself: you are strong, capable, and resilient. Enjoy every moment of university, get involved and find some law friends, trust me, they will get you through this degree.



Gabby Miocevic
Wellness Vice President

Now, stepping away from the running metaphors (because, honestly, my knowledge there is limited), let's talk study strategies. Attending lectures and classes doesn't guarantee mastery. You won't always keep up with every reading, and some weeks, you'll fall behind. As a visual learner, I found that handwriting notes in colours and creating diagrams before exams made studying almost fun (emphasis on almost). This approach helped me visualise information during exams, reducing the need to sift through endless pages. Others might prefer reading additional articles or absorbing lectures without note-taking. Experiment to find what works best for you, don't just mimic your friends' methods.

While navigating law school, don't forget to indulge in personal interests and hobbies, and spend time with loved ones. No grade is worth compromising your mental, emotional, or physical health. For me, I love listening to music to take my mind off the stresses of law school. Here is my curated list of songs for any law school mood/experience:

- *You're sitting in Beasley Law library trying to lock in and the yapper in your year starts walking towards you:* **Nokia** - Drake (0-0:35 seconds)
- *You're doing a July clerkship whilst your friends live it up during EuroSummer:* **Hurts Me** - **Tory Lanez & Trippie Redd**
- *Driving home from a midnight study session at the library (could never be me):* **All the Stars** - **Kendrick Lamar**
- *Walking out of a lecture:* **The Less I Know the Better** - **Tame Impala (0:53-1:08)**
- *Laughing with your friend about how you haven't started the assignment and instead of saying "same" they say "you better start" -* **How to Save a Life** - **The Fray: 0:25 seconds in.**
- *When you catch Imposter Syndrome:* **Vienna** - **Billy Joel**
- *When you're crashing out:* **What the Hell** - **Avril Lavigne**
- *The night before the exam and you're starting to talk to your computer:* **My Delirium** - **Ladyhawke**
- *You've just finished your last exam:* **#thatPower** - **will.i.am and Justin Bieber**
- *When anyone asks you why you haven't dropped out:* **In Too Deep** - **Sum 41 (0:20 seconds in)**
- *Those 6 weeks between semesters:* **Times like these** - **Foo Fighters (1:15 mins in).**
- *When you walk past any non-JD student at uni:* **Running Up That Hill** - **Kate Bush (0:52 seconds in (0:41 seconds - 1:15 mins)**

So, my advice to anyone starting law school is to RUN YOUR OWN RACE. Stop focusing on what everyone else is doing and celebrate your own little wins. Law school is challenging and comparison is definitely the thief of joy. So, although you may fall down running and scratch your knee (AKA, have a mental breakdown week 1 of law school because why am I already behind, IT'S WEEK 1) that scratch will heal. You WILL finish this degree and you will be so proud of yourself. Good luck!

Don't be so Harsh on Yourself

Matthew Cowan

I am my own harshest critic. I feel disappointment in myself when I forgo studying to watch a movie, fail to reach the interview stage for a job application and receive a lower than expected assignment mark despite spending days on it. Why am I so harsh on myself? I think the answer comes down to exhibiting high levels of conscientiousness. I am sure my feelings are relatable to a large portion of law students who are also conscientious, goal-oriented and dedicated individuals. How can we take advantage of our strong work ethics without feeling endless guilt, dissatisfaction or disappointment?

This is something I have grappled with. Especially in the second half of my penultimate year. It is very easy to get caught up vying for top-tier clerkships and a highly sought after graduate offer. It is best not to place pressure or hefty expectations on yourself. So here are a couple of tips to avoid being so hard on yourself!

Positive self-talk

The clerkship interview process and a couple of clerkships over summer has taught me the importance of positive self-talk. What does positive self-talk sound like? It's essentially a voice inside your head telling you to remain optimistic

and positive through phrases such as "I can handle this" and "everything will be ok". Why does positive self-talk matter to me? I found it reduced my anxiety during high-pressure scenarios and helped me boost my confidence in times I doubted myself.

Positive self-talk may sound silly, but I encourage all law students to practice it when they feel overwhelmed with self-doubt or stress.

Interests outside of law

During the start of 2025, my 6th consecutive year at UWA, I started to feel fatigued. I decided to prioritise my health and wellness by going to gym and running five or six times a week. It was exactly what I needed. Focusing on myself made me feel reinvigorated, motivated and excited to complete my final year of study.

I strongly encourage everyone to pursue extra-curricular activities even if they feel it may detract from precious time needed to study law. These activities can come in any form – such as volunteering at your local community legal centre, going for a daily walk, or taking a leadership role on Blackstone Society. There are so many things to enjoy in life!



Tips for Law School

Paige Donaldson

"University will be the best years of your life." We hear it constantly. As I near the end of my time as a JD student, it definitely hasn't felt that way. I know I've never been busier or more stressed than I have these last few years. It makes sense too, compile a heap of type-A personalities in a high stakes environment where we're intellectually challenged, dealing with concepts that are unsettled with no one right answer, and attempting to maintain some kind of social life.

We do so much in the pursuit of a good WAM, clerkships at our favourite firms and ultimately a job at the end of it all. But with all of that comes an unprecedented level of stress and pressure.

While going through all of that, I have developed a few habits to help manage it all. Some of these have come from advice of peers, some are just trial and error, but they all work.

#1 Sleep is my biggest priority. Do not ask me to read 1000 pages of constitutional law cases or textbook readings without a full 8 hours sleep. Our ability to process or retain anything is significantly affected by lack of sleep. You can't work to the best of your ability without a good night's sleep so try and make it a priority.

#2 Establishing relationships that aren't competitive. A good group of friends at law school will make you laugh, let you cry, and understand you on another level.

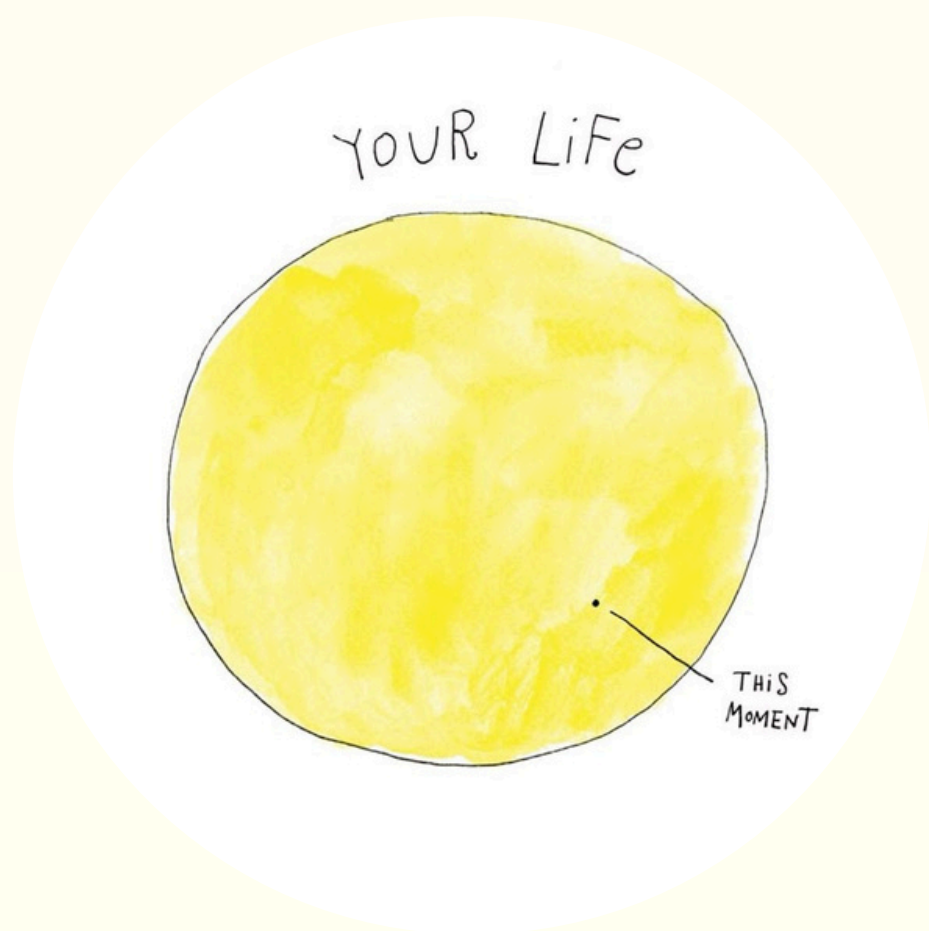
Importantly, your friends should be a group of people who are there to support you in hard times but even more so, will cheer you on in your triumphs.

#3 Don't be afraid to take time for yourself. It can be daunting to read for fun or see friends when you know you have lectures to watch, assignments to write and exams to prepare for. All of those things are important, but none are as important as your mental wellbeing. Effective time management will be your best friend and will allow you to get all your work done and give yourself time to reset and recharge.

You want to finish this degree; don't let it finish you. By using these three techniques, I've built wonderful law school friendships, balanced my university priorities and personal time and maintained good mental health.

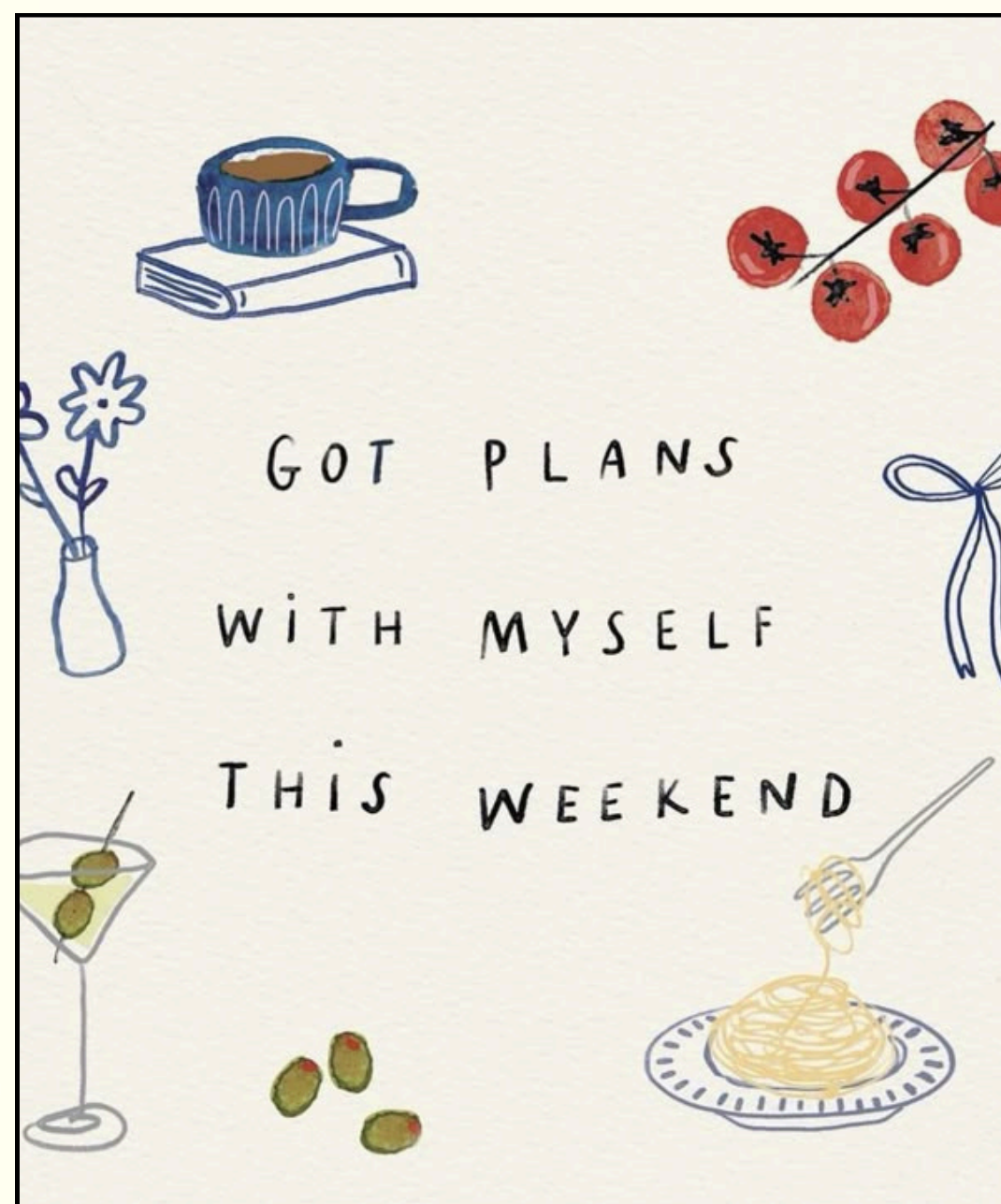


Be more concerned
with your
character than
with your
reputation. ”
—John Wooden



may the flowers remind us
why the rain was so necessary

— XAN OKU



CHANGE IS
SCARY
BUT SO IS
STAYING
THE SAME



Your normal day is someone's
dream.

Be GRATEFUL every. single. day.

xx

@TatianaJong

YOU ARE YOUR
HOME.
TAKE CARE OF
YOURSELF.

Life is about Perspective

Georgina Penglis

Lawyer, Clayton Utz

I am a regular person who happens to work as a lawyer.

In this job we face complex and high-stakes challenges for which, in reality, university cannot truly prepare us. With this comes high pressure and high expectations – from clients, colleagues and, naturally, ourselves. How you manage the pressure and expectations is something that will affect your job, your career and, ultimately, your relationship with yourself. Each person will have different techniques for improving and maintaining their mental health, and whatever you choose must be learned and practiced. For me, the key is to have perspective.

Learning to be able to consciously choose your perspective when moving through your career is a skill and, for your mental health, a blessing. This note shares with you three mantras that I have learned and practiced since starting as a Graduate that brings this profession's pressures, stresses and anxieties out of my head and into perspective.

You don't know what you don't know.



Graduates (including me, when I started) rotate into my team (Restructuring and Insolvency) and almost always start off by saying: "I have no idea what restructuring or insolvency is...". You're telling me that someone fresh out of university, who hasn't taken an insolvency unit, didn't know about a s440D stay on proceedings; couldn't prepare a DOCA ("a what?"); doesn't know what which barristers prefer receiving files electronically or which prefer hard copy?!

Of course, you don't know. In fact, you don't even know what you don't know. Remind yourself of this paradox: How could you have known what you were meant to have known; otherwise you would know it. Cut yourself a break; there is no good use in beating yourself up or stressing or ruminating over something you could not have known. Once you 'know' it, that's great (you're learning), you'll know it for next time!

You can only do the best that you can with the tools you have.

Unfortunately, many people in law are perfectionists and set themselves unreasonably high expectations. Throw in some unreasonable deadlines and your first draft coming back covered in your senior's mark-up, and add some self-comparison to colleagues, and you might start doubting yourself and the quality of your work. To mitigate this, be gentle and remind yourself that you are doing the best you can in the circumstances; whether it be time-restraints, knowledge gaps or lack of support, you are doing your best. Also, the perspective is best when it only concerns you in your circumstances. Try not to waste energy comparing yourself and your work to your colleague. Remember, comparison is the thief of joy.

Always give the benefit of the doubt

Overthinking, catastrophising and internalising (what you consider to be) negative experiences is simply not helpful for anyone. You might anxiously ruminate over an email from your partner that is five words long ("Why so short and blunt?"; "Why didn't they use my name this time?"; "Did I do the task poorly before?") when in reality, for example, the email was sent by the partner, on their phone, whilst in a pleasant meeting with clients, before they forget to send it. With practice, you can shift this 'worst case scenario' and anxious perspective by simply giving others and yourself the benefit of the doubt.



Though we are the main character in our lives, we are merely a supporting character or even an extra in the lives of others. This is where being self-deprecating helps humble my false beliefs; a partner at the firm is not going to be thinking about how you didn't say hi in the lift when they have numerous, urgent multi-million dollar matters to worry about. It is also helpful to always remember that communication – speech (or lack thereof), body, technological, etc – can be ambiguous, and we all have different communication styles, habits or quirks. Try not to jump to the conclusion that everything is personal, intentional or cynical. You know what they say about assuming...

Shifting your perspective might be challenging for some, but everything is hard before it gets easy. Find idioms or mantras that resonate with you and allow you to view experiences from multiple perspectives; trust me, it will do wonders for your mental health. If you need one more mantra to repeat to yourself in the peak of stress, remember this: We are not doctors – no one's life depends on us.



Know Thyself

Rob Dougals

It is hard to write specific advice on how to achieve the somewhat amorphous state of “wellbeing”, because I think the means of achieving such a state is different for every individual.

Every person I’ve had the pleasure of meeting is idiosyncratic in their own way – each person has different likes, dislikes, worldviews, life goals, hobbies, values, routines, family structures, quirks, interests and experiences. Because of each person’s unique life circumstances and experiences, people will often tackle the same problem in a myriad of different ways.

Take law school, for example. Every student approaches the study of law differently. Some enjoy attending lectures in person and derive enjoyment from the social aspect and connection that in-person attendance brings. Others prefer the solitude of recorded lectures, the economy of a 1.5x, and the boon of pausing and rewinding. As for exam notes, some sets of notes may reasonably be confused with a colour by numbers book, whereas others take on a distinct monochromatic hue. Actual times of study will also vary wildly – night owls may thrive burning the midnight oil while trawling

through Australian Communist Party v Commonwealth, whereas early morning sparrows may opt to prepare for a tutorial after smashing out a 5km run.

After completing the JD, the variety of fields of work available are staggering. A single cohort will likely comprise of M&A guns, transactional superstars, family law aficionados, disputes phenoms, crime diehards, and possibly even the next Bret Walker SC or High Court judge. This is without touching on the potential for graduates to enter into law adjacent fields such as policy, politics, regulatory or investigative work.

The bottom line is that the study of law, much like life, is an individual race. An approach to study, life, and work which works best for one individual may not be a great fit for another – and that is perfectly fine. In my view, wellbeing is achieved once you figure yourself out well enough to know what works for you. However, this is a lesson which cannot be imparted externally, and only comes about from constant trial and error.

While I have not provided any specific advice to achieve wellbeing, mostly out of fear that techniques which work for me may not be of any assistance to others, in my view, the following ancient Greek maxim lends the best universal advice on how to achieve the elusive state of wellbeing: “Know thyself”.

Breathe, Move, Begin Again

Vedant Datey

Law school often feels like a race against time—a blur of deadlines, readings, and pressure. As a law student, I’ve spent nights lying awake, my mind spinning with exam topics I hadn’t mastered or moot court preps where I feared I’d stumble. But over time, I learned that surviving this journey isn’t about outrunning stress; it’s about pacing yourself, finding calm, and leaning into small joys. Here’s what keeps me grounded.

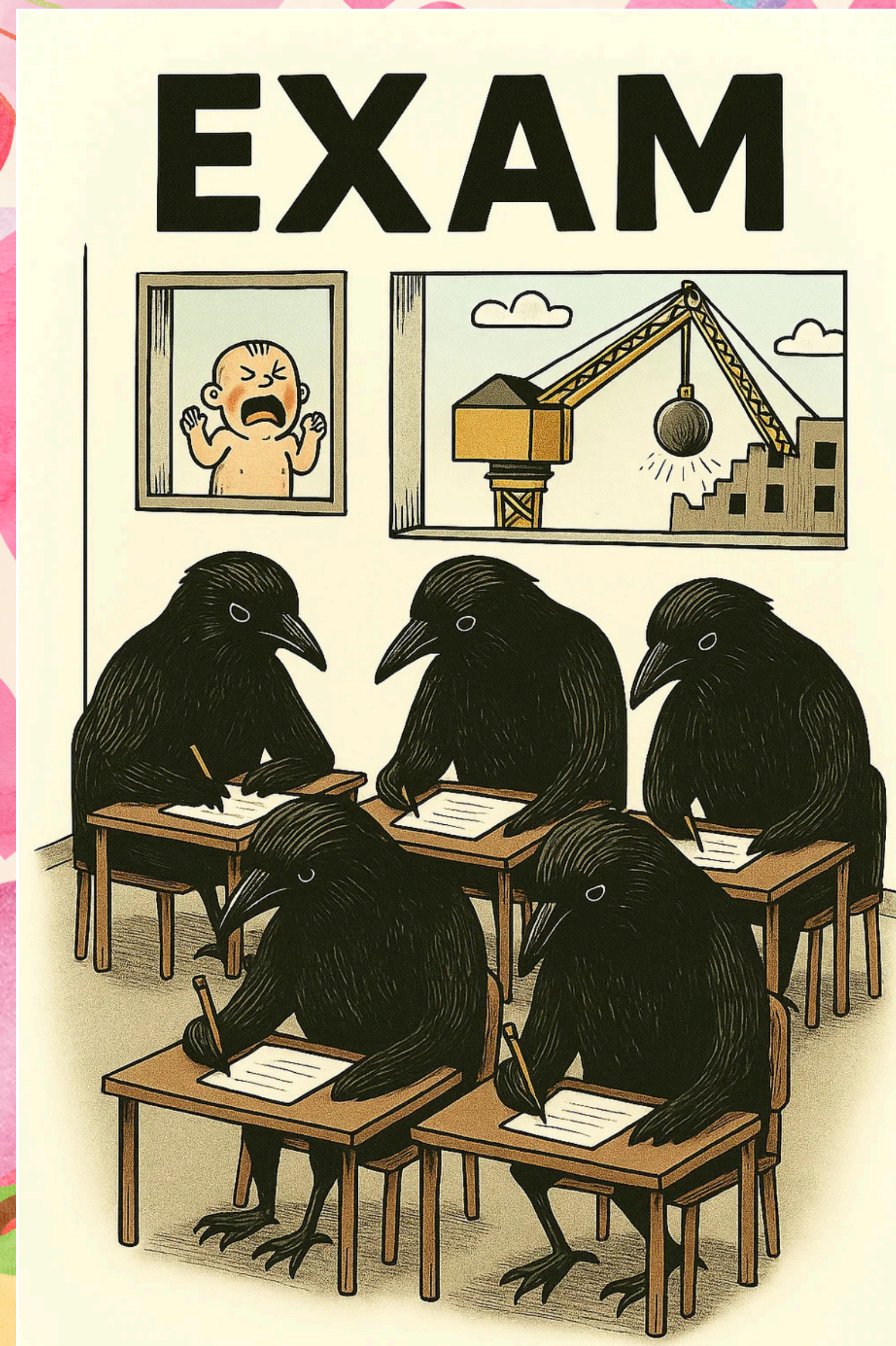
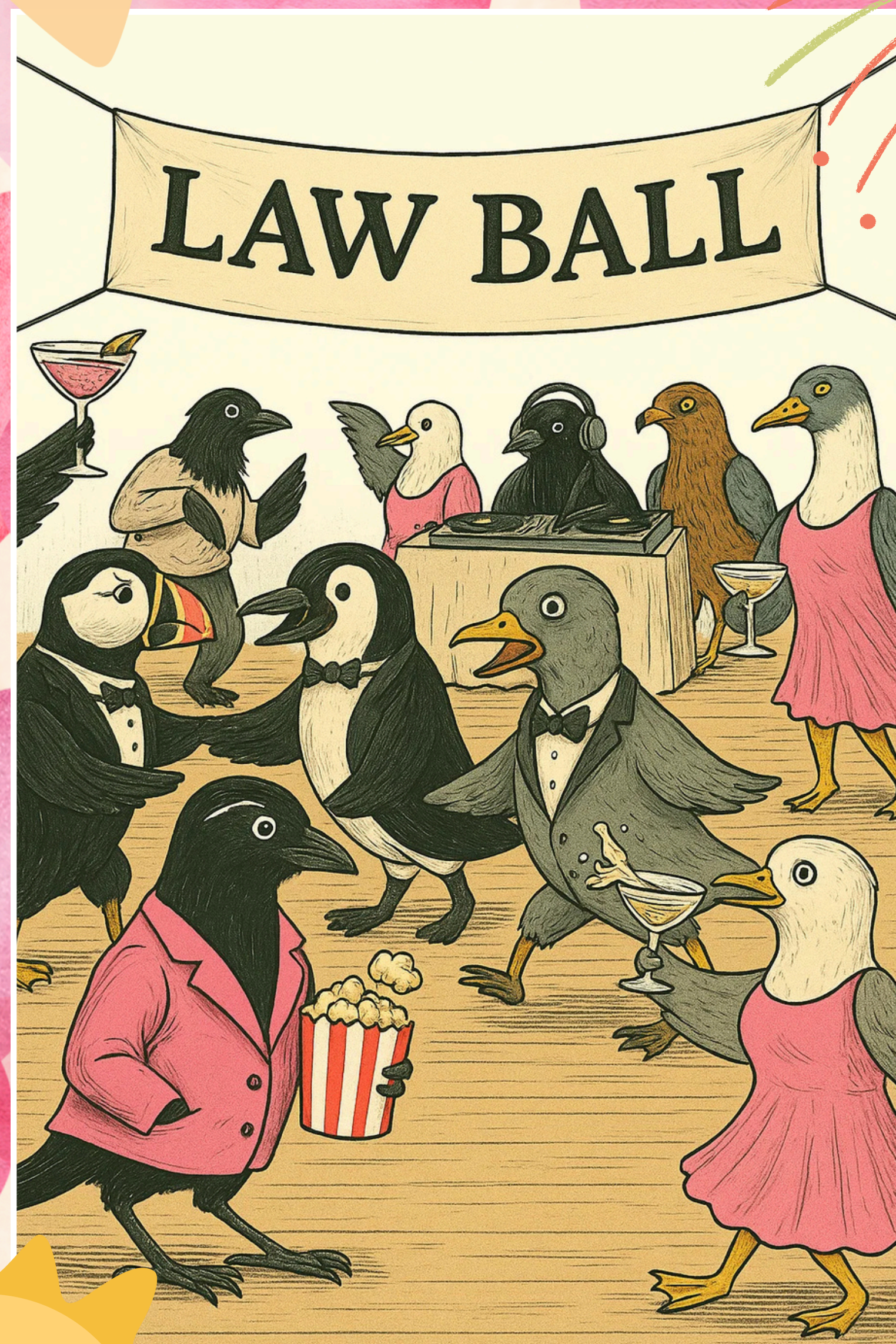
When anxiety tightens its grip, I step outside. Lacing up my shoes for a jog works like magic. The rhythm of my feet hitting the pavement syncs with my breath, and soon, the chaos in my head quiets. Joining our Blackstone run club transforms exercise into something bigger—a chance to push my limits while soaking in fresh air, greenery, and laughter. The shared struggle up a hill or the collective relief at the finish line bonds classmates into friends. Those runs taught me that physical strain, paired with good company, can melt even the heaviest stress.

Studying for hours once left me drained. Now, I break tasks into chunks. I work for 25 minutes, then pause to stretch, sip water, or gaze at the sky. These tiny breaks act as reset buttons. At night, I swap screens for a book. Getting lost in a story helps me shed the day’s worries. By the time I turn the last page, my mind feels lighter, ready to greet tomorrow as a fresh start.

Rest is not a luxury—it’s fuel. Whenever stress builds, I slip away to walk around campus or along Matilda Bay. The river’s gentle flow has always calmed my mind, washing away the day’s tension with each step. The simple act of moving my body, feeling sunlight on my skin, and watching life unfold around me clears my head. If exhaustion hits, I adjust my study plan, talk to friends, or just sleep. Sharing struggles with classmates reminds me I’m not alone; their laughter or advice often lifts the weight off my shoulders.

When fear whispers that I’m falling behind, I calm my mind. I sit still, inhaling deeply for four counts and exhaling for six, until my heartbeat steadies. I remind myself that today’s stress won’t last forever. And I also make time for connections by joining social groups, volunteering at campus events, or even chatting with a classmate over coffee. These moments anchor me. They’ve led to friendships, inside jokes, and memories that outshine any grade. Above all, I breathe. Stress compresses your chest, but a single deep breath can loosen its hold. Inhale the present. Exhale the noise. You’re here. You’re enough.

To every student: These years are challenging, but the habits you build now—prioritising rest, seeking joy in movement, and nurturing connections—will shape how you navigate the world. Don’t just survive this chapter; Thrive in it.





A Love of Music

Jamie Walvisch

Anyone who's seen me around campus will know that I'm usually wearing a band t-shirt. That's not just because I love music (though I really do). For me, music is more than a hobby or a way to relax - it's a way of making sense of the world. It helps me notice the rhythms around me, and more importantly, the rhythms within me. That might sound a bit philosophical, but when you're juggling teaching, research, marking, emails and life - it really helps to have something that cuts through the noise.

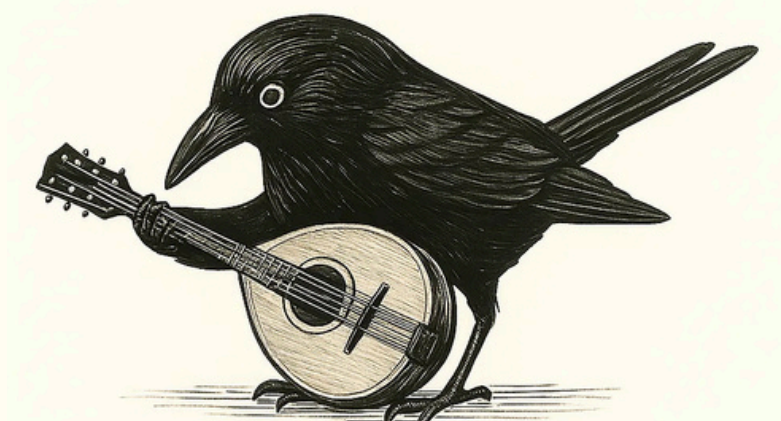
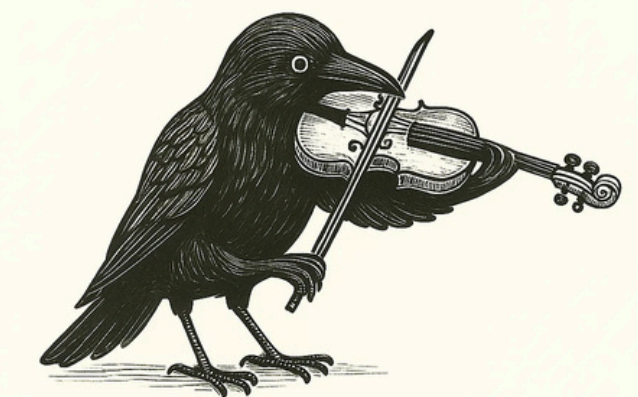
Music gives me a way to reset. I listen to it walking my dog, cycling into work, or when I need to decompress after a heavy day. Live music, especially, gives me a sense of connection that's hard to find in lecture theatres or Zoom calls. It's not about escaping reality, but about coming back to it with a bit more clarity.

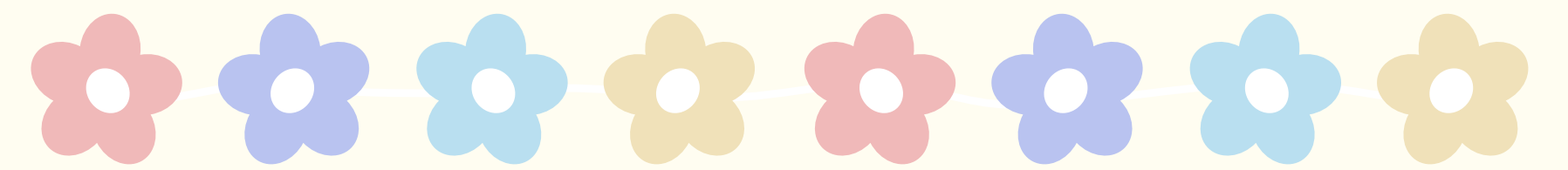
Law school - and legal work more broadly - can feel relentless. There's this constant pressure to be productive, to have your life perfectly mapped out, to be across everything all the time. It's exhausting. One of the most helpful things I've learned is to carve out small moments of quiet. We're constantly bombarded with notifications, messages, updates - so it's powerful to simply shut them off for a while. Put your phone on silent, step away from your laptop, and let your brain recalibrate. It's in these quiet times that I find I can do my best work.

I think we sometimes forget that law is a human profession. You can't bring your best to your studies or your work if you're constantly burnt out. So whether it's through music, exercise, going out with friends, or just watching your favourite reality TV show, finding your rhythm is everything. It won't look the same for everyone, but once you find it, hopefully life will start to feel a little more manageable.

Most of all, remember this: looking after your health - mental and physical - is more important than anything else. No assignment, exam or job is worth sacrificing your wellbeing for. Take care of yourself first. The rest can wait.

And if obscure indie rock bands happen to be your thing, let me know - I'm always happy to talk music!





The Tools You'll Need!

Jacinta Kingsbury

I often get asked by students who are thinking about studying the JD, ‘What’s the hardest thing about the JD other than the coursework?’ or ‘What is something you wish you knew before you started?’ They ask if studying a particular undergraduate, doing certain internships, or getting involved with different clubs or networking events are things that they should be doing. There isn’t really a straightforward answer to any of these questions—it all comes down to you. That’s because other than the coursework, the only challenge is organisation. Something that all students wish for is more time, and what you previously studied or got involved in all comes down to your interests, time, and support. ...which may not sound very helpful at all.

So, the best thing I can say to any student regardless of where you’re at is **ORGANISATION IS KEY!**

Don’t just give yourself enough time to get things right – give yourself time to get things wrong, fix those mistakes and fine-tune details. Make sure that you schedule in time to have fun and to be active, and also have things to look forward and work towards.

Additionally, create an environment that motivates and supports you. This includes studying on campus, and spending time with friends or being involved with clubs and activities. Coming to university and staying connected with others (especially those in your cohort) can help you stay motivated and combat procrastination and burnout. Organisation and creating a healthy environment will be what sets you apart from other students.

These are the tools you’ll need to be a resilient and motivated JD student.

Tips for wellbeing in the Law School

Tenayh Powell

Being a Law student isn’t easy, I often felt like having a fulfilling social life, seeing my family, volunteering, working, and staying on top of my studies were impossible to balance. One realisation that helped me is that there really comes a point where every extra hour studying is worth much less than an hour spent with friends or outside, and really believing this allows you to enjoy life outside the law library guilt free in those busy times.

One practical strategy that really helped me separate my studies and all the other things I had going on in my life was my task lists and calendar (which were colour coded and pretty). What this looks like for you will be different, I found hour by hour scheduling the most beneficial, but a daily to-do list and routine might work best for you.

A clear and well-maintained task list and calendar ensured I was aware of my commitments and deadlines. This clarity significantly reduced the cognitive load, allowing me to concentrate better on my studies without the constant worry of forgetting important tasks.

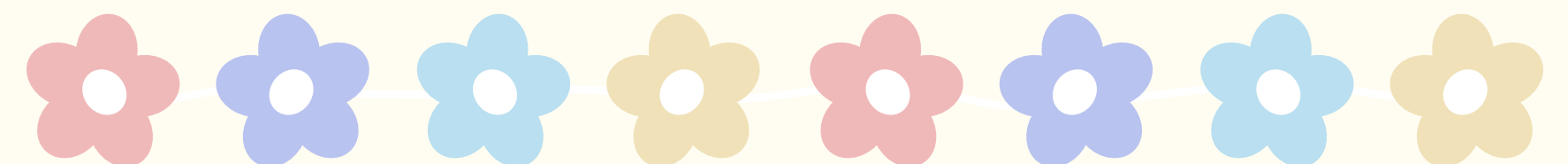
This allowed me to have a much better work/life balance. The efficient management of my academic responsibilities allowed me to carve out time for friends, family, self-care, and my hobbies. Having more in my weeks than work and study allowed me to enjoy the semesters more and feel less anxious about my academic commitments and progression. It really helped to remind me that Law School is not the be-all-end-all it sometimes feels like.

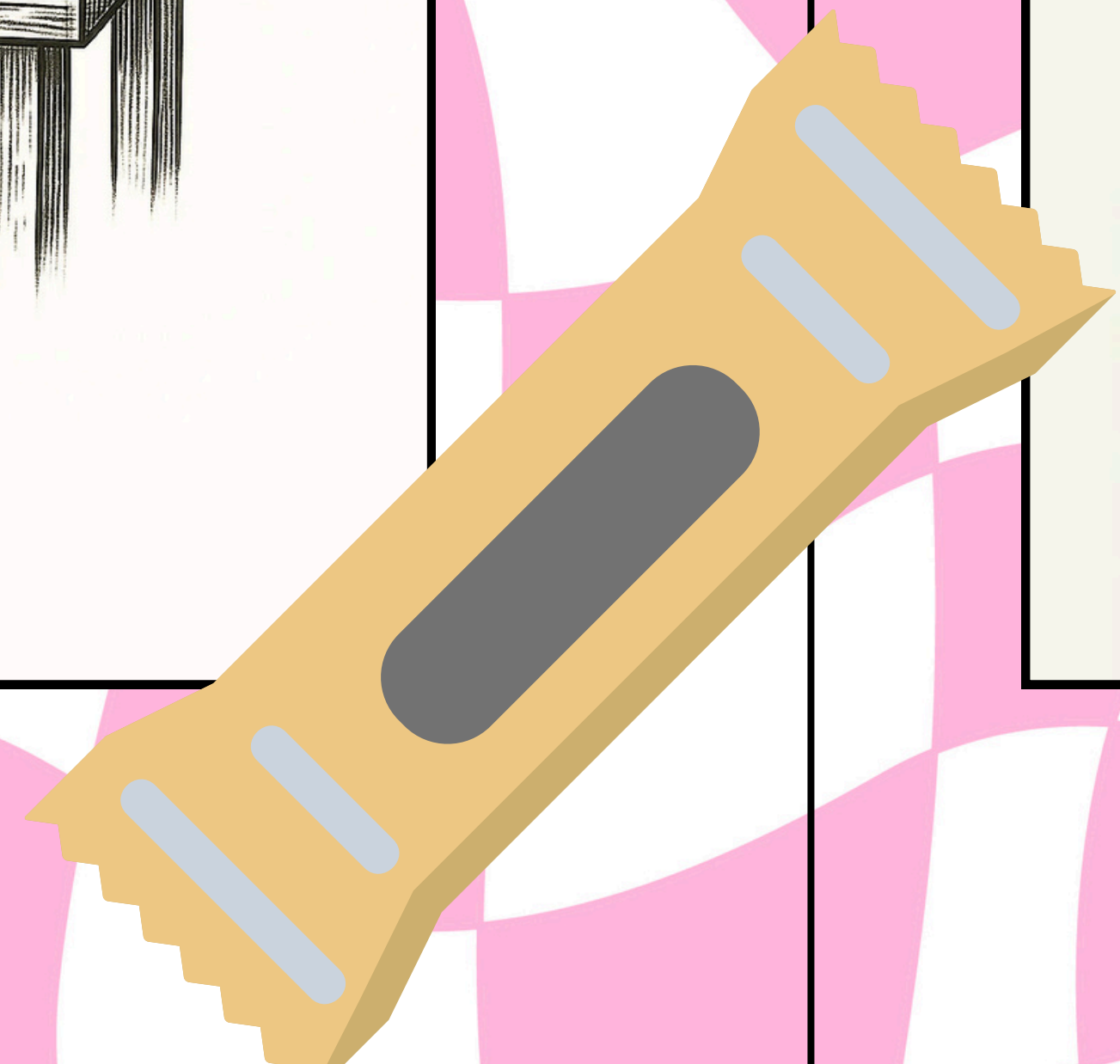
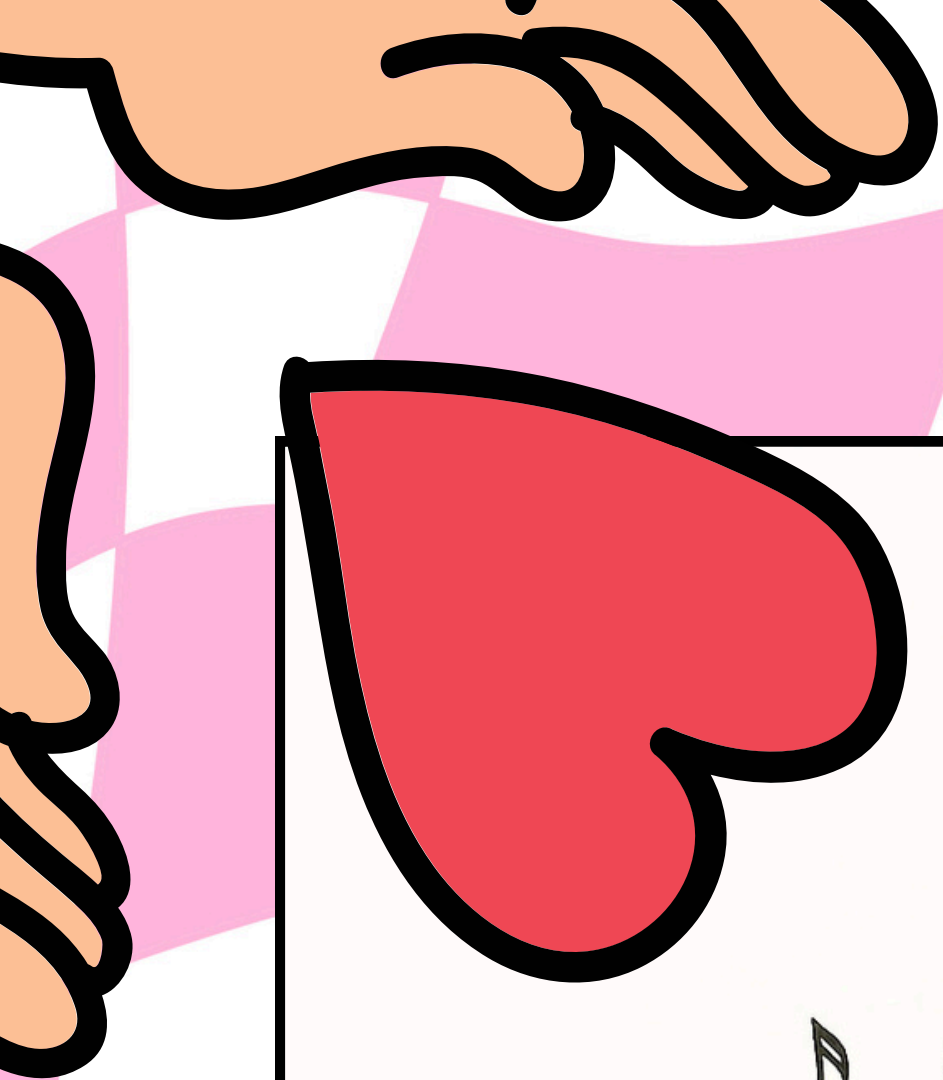
Finding your pace in Law School

Sarah Murray

We have all heard of the saying ‘it’s a marathon not a sprint’ but an aphorism like that can be so hard to actually implement. Our lives are so busy that it can feel like if you ease the rapid pace you are never going to get where you are going. I remember feeling like there were never quite enough hours in my day when I was in Law School to cram everything in!

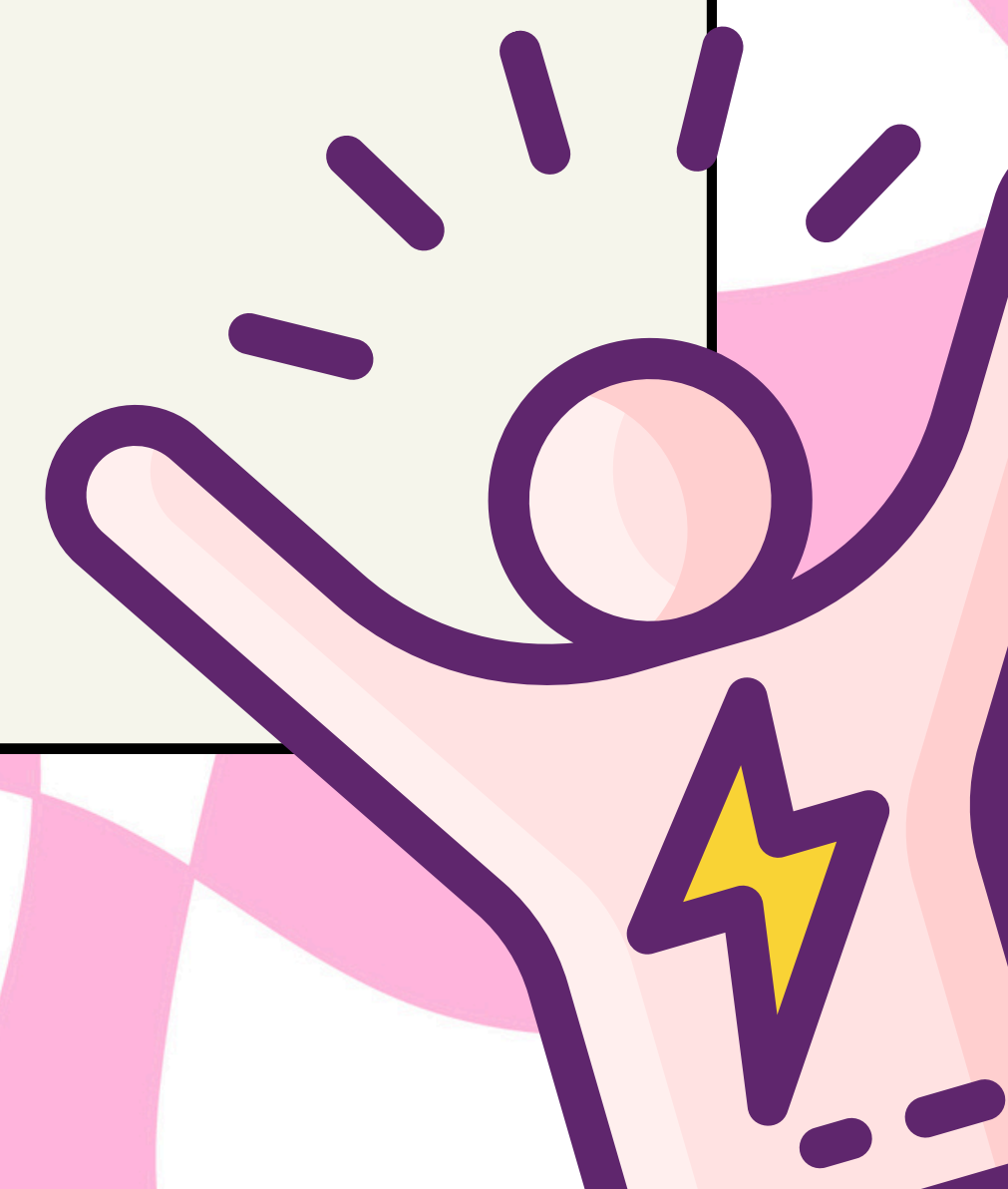
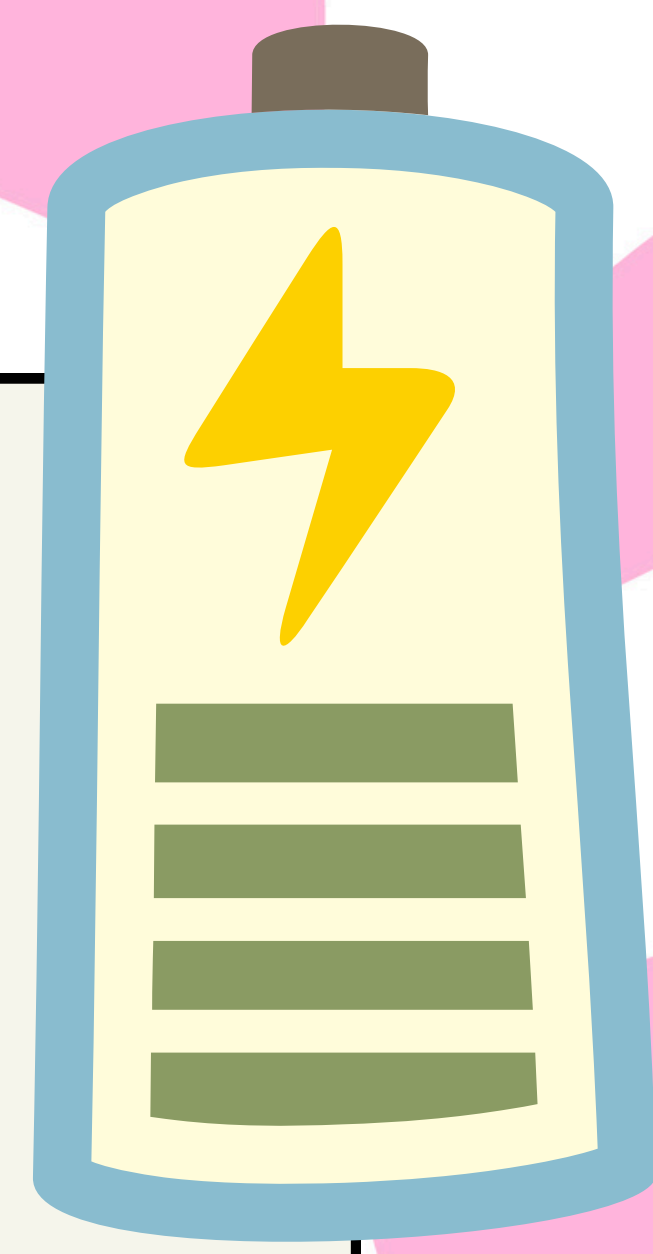
Ask yourself, ‘can I keep this up for 3 weeks, 3 months, 3 years?’. If you are not sure, a bit like running, if you can’t hold a conversation at the same time you are probably sprinting to that finish line and are going to run out of puff! In the same way, we need to make sure we are finding ways to enjoy the journey through Law School and beyond. If everything is just flashing by and you don’t have time for that coffee break or a popcorn movie night, you are missing out. Law School is such a great chance to find your tribe and to have fun at the same time: take up that pilates class before your tutorial, do that croissant-making course with some pals or volunteer with a program you really care about. Because it might be a marathon but it’s one that you don’t want to miss smelling the roses on.

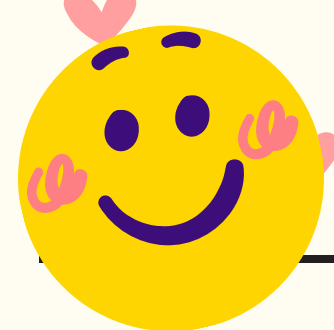




ENERGY GIVERS

1. sunlight
2. water
3. movement
4. nature
5. love
6. gratitude
7. fresh air
8. early bedtime
9. meditation
10. whole foods
11. laughter
12. creativity
13. routine





This will do

Aidan Ricciardo

Excuse the atypical contribution – this isn't the article I intended to write.

I intended to write something to the effect that life is better and easier when you realise that striving to be the 'best' at anything is pointless and kind of silly because it inherently involves measuring yourself against others, etc etc etc. I wanted to write about how being good and kind and doing just enough (what the Swedes call 'lagom' – yes I'm that person who went on exchange to Sweden 10+ years ago and is still talking about it) is better than putting the pressure on yourself to do everything you feel like you should do.

But just a week and a bit before the due date for this article my (very, very old but very, very loved) pup passed away. Some of you will have met her in her younger years, and if you've been around at the Law School for more than a few years you would have seen her regularly back when I brought her in every single day. Everyone who knows me knows how much I loved her, and most people I know have never known me without her – I got her from the shelter in Kalgoorlie (where I grew up) when I was still a teenager!

I'm getting to the point, I promise.

I wanted to write the article I intended to write, but the thought of sitting myself down and writing about something that involves ~feelings~ has felt impossible these past few weeks. The only ~feeling~ I'm ~feeling~ is sad because I miss my little friend. So that's what I'm writing about instead.



But in a way, I guess that comes back to my original point. I don't need to be the best, I don't need to do everything, I can cut myself some slack – this will do.

It's easier said than done, I know. Those of you who have been in my classes will probably have picked up that I'm a thinly veiled perfectionist who does too much (I'm a Virgo, I'm told it checks out). But it's helpful to remind myself that I am allowed to slow down, I am allowed to be imperfect, I am allowed to do a good enough job instead of the best job. And so can you.

Don't let your work or academic obligations get too much in the way of your real life (your real life is much more important). Cut yourself some slack. It's fine to give something a go and think 'this will do' – nobody else is expecting as much from you as you are expecting from yourself.

Tips for surviving Law School

Rebecca Rutigliano



There's no getting around it, being a law student is hard work. With all the readings, assessments, and classes to keep up with, it's easy to forget to prioritise your wellbeing. And so, many of us reach exam week feeling completely exhausted. But with a little intention, I believe this can be avoided.

First, let's remember that proper mental rest is a cheat code for being a better learner. You might think studying all day is super productive, but the reality is our brains consolidate information during downtime. Have you ever had trouble with a concept, slept on it, and found it makes more sense the next day? That's not random; your brain was working on it in the background. So the best thing we can do is work with our brains, not against them. How? Well, starting at the basics is a good place to start.

1. Time Management

In law school, good time management can save you from drowning in a landslide of lectures during exam week. Break tasks down into manageable chunks. Take regular breaks to move and eat. There's a million niche-themed pomodoro YouTube videos to help you. Avoid all-day study marathons.

2. Movement

Even fifteen minutes of walking can boost your happy hormones. Gym, social sport, dance, yoga, stretching, a walk to Broadway for lunch – it doesn't matter how. Just move your body in a way that feels fun for you. At least once a day for best results.

3. Sleeping

Sleep deprivation is like playing life on hard mode. It makes you more stressed, grumpy, confused, and forgetful. Treat your sleep time as sacredly as your study time. Establishing a circadian rhythm can be a powerful tool that takes advantage of the brain's natural love of routine.

4. Eating

It's tempting to live off coffee and instant noodles, but remember: food is fuel. Your body needs more than caffeine and sodium to function properly. If you want your brain to perform at a high level, give it the nutrition it needs to do so.

5. Having Fun


No, you were not born to study law all day. Even in the busiest times, making space for things you love will remind you there's more to life than fiduciary duties or the Australian Constitution. Try lying on some grass in a patch of sun (unless you're allergic – then lie on the floor or something).

6. Positive Self-Talk


It's normal to feel self-doubt and disappointment, especially in such a competitive environment. But you don't have to dwell on these thoughts. Remember that you deserve to be here. No grade, even a good one, defines your intelligence, potential, or worth. Have faith in yourself, you've already come so far!

None of this advice is new or revolutionary – but it's easy to forget when things get tough. Let this be your reminder to treat yourself kindly. Rest when you need to. Give yourself grace to make mistakes. And remember: law school is a marathon, not a sprint. Pace yourself.






















































































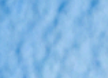

























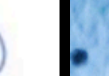




























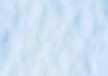












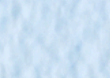













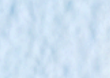


















































LOOK
AFTER
YOUR
BODY



MONTHLY WATER TRACKER



MONTH:

DAY 1	       	DAY 16	       
DAY 2	       	DAY 17	       
DAY 3	       	DAY 18	       
DAY 4	       	DAY 19	       
DAY 5	       	DAY 20	       
DAY 6	       	DAY 21	       
DAY 7	       	DAY 22	       
DAY 8	       	DAY 23	       
DAY 9	       	DAY 24	       
DAY 10	       	DAY 25	       
DAY 11	       	DAY 26	       
DAY 12	       	DAY 27	       
DAY 13	       	DAY 28	       
DAY 14	       	DAY 29	       
DAY 15	       	DAY 30	       
DAY 31        			

Finding Calm in Chaos

Bryce Davis

Throughout law school we consistently hear and experience how busy and chaotic the workload is. For many of us that means we burn brighter than a supernova for weeks at a time before burning out entirely. Often, this is right before something important, and it seems consistently like it is at the worst possible moment. Living through law school is chaos, especially when trying to balance life, relationships, studies, employment and everything that fills the ‘glass’ that make us who we are. Chaos kills the calm; it prevents our ability to focus and deprives us in many of the aspects of life we must balance. Whilst it may seem like law students thrive in the chaos and coffee fuelled fever dreams often these will be some of the hardest days. Navigating these days without feeling like a rat trapped in a cage is critical to surviving and thriving the JD experience. In the 18 months I have been at law school so far, I have found navigating these periods often involves stepping into the eye of the hurricane. In the eye of the hurricane there is quiet. This I have found is the opportunity to seize a moment of calm before throwing myself back into the chaos.

Everyone you speak to throughout the journey will try to provide you with advice and ways to find balance. I find sometimes that this leads to feeling like I’m torn between the remedies for everything that I’ve been told ‘works’ for others.

Managing mental health and balancing the ebbs and flows of life in law school is not a ‘one size fits all’ exercise. Each person will handle the tides and challenges thrown at them during their JD days in different ways. What works for you will naturally be different for what works for me. However, it is important to remember that at the mantle of the heart, a river flows inside – at times these tides define us, sometimes they deny us of ourselves because mental health comes in waves. Inside this river provides an infinite source of optimism, that fuels each and every day. I encourage you to take a moment to step into the eye of the hurricane, find what works well for you and seize calm throughout the chaos when you have the chance.

Whilst writing this, I stepped into my calm and incorporated 10 subtle references to things that keep me sane in law school. At times they are more pronounced than others. This is much the same for the struggles we will all go through during our JD. Just as I have with my subtle references that are incorporated into everything assessment I write; you will find ways to navigate the chaos and find a moment of calm.



Bella Marie

Four Things in Life - Words of Advice from My Father

Callum Lindsay

Law school has been a busy and fulfilling journey. But like many, I’ve had moments where the pressures of study, work, and extracurricular commitments have felt overwhelming.

In those moments, I often come back to something my father said in a speech at my 21st birthday. He shared that everyone needs four things in life:

- A connection to nature
- A creative aspiration
- To live in the heart of another
- Not to have unfulfilled ambitions

Each of these is open to interpretation, but I believe all hold a deep truth.

I invite you to reflect on these ideas, not in a rigid or traditional way, but through your own lens. Consider how they might apply to your life and how you might weave them into your routine. When things feel chaotic, reconnecting with these values can be grounding. Here are some of my reflections, perhaps they’ll spark something for you too.

A connection to nature

At UWA, this could be a walk through the Sunken Garden, lunch on Oak Lawn, or taking in the view at Matilda Bay. I’ve always found the peacocks near the Arts Building oddly comforting.

At home, my connection to nature comes through time spent with my golden retriever, Horatio, running along the coast from Trigg to Scarborough, dipping into the ocean, heading out bush, or just sitting in the backyard with my father on a Saturday morning listening to the birds. I also find joy staring up at the trees in Somerville or wondering what life must be like for the ducks in the Reid Library moat.

A creative aspiration

For me, this has taken many forms. Lately, I’ve found inspiration visiting the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, an underappreciated gem on campus. Creativity can come through journalling, learning an instrument, dancing, singing, photography, writing poetry, or even starting a small venture. I feel proud of the creative projects I’ve helped bring to life at UWA, reviving the Graduation Photo tradition, restarting the Law School Run Club, or clearing out the long-forgotten storage room left in memorial to the Cruikshank brothers. Some of my friends find their outlet in content creation, crafting with wood or mixing their own perfumes. The more unusual the outlet, the better.

To live in the heart of another

This is often interpreted romantically, and that’s one expression of it. But for me, this connection is found in my parents, closest friends and Horatio. Interestingly, the strongest bonds I’ve formed have often been with people I initially thought I’d have little in common.

Friendships let you glimpse a life you’ll never live, especially if someone comes from a different country, political belief, religion, gender, or age. I’ve found that investing in others, even briefly, is never wasted.

Strike up that conversation with the person next to you on the 950. Ask the mature-age student in your tutorial why they returned to study law. I did both and now count those two people among my good friends.

Of course, the flip side of connection is loss, when a bond is broken through distance, time or heartbreak.

Not to have unfulfilled ambitions

This is the hardest of the four to pin down. On the one hand, lingering ambition can hinder contentment. On the other, if you’re studying law, chances are you’re naturally ambitious, and such people always have more ambitions.

I now see this not as a quest to “achieve it all”, but as a reminder to be at peace with where you are. Goals matter, but they don’t define your worth.

As a child, I dreamed of becoming a pilot. That didn’t happen, but maybe one day I’ll get a recreational licence. A few years ago, I was focused on climbing the ladder in tech consulting. Now, my goals look very different, but they’re no less worthwhile.

Parting thoughts

I hope something in this reflection resonates with you. If you’d like to share your own thoughts, practical or philosophical, I’d love to have a chat.

Wishing you a rich and rewarding time at law school and university more broadly. It’s a magical time in life, a chance to explore your strengths, challenge your beliefs, and shape your view of the world. And when things feel overwhelming, take a moment to pause, breathe, and reconnect with the pillars that give you strength.

Finding Balance Beyond the Books

Nikita La Rosa

Balancing work and life in law school is an ongoing challenge, but it's also essential for staying healthy, motivated and grounded. The heavy workload, constant deadlines and the pressure we put on ourselves to perform can easily consume all our time if we let it. That's why I've learned that building in small, regular habits outside of study has made a huge difference to both my mental clarity and overall well-being.

Move Your Body, Clear Your Mind

A great way I've found to maintain balance has been committing to regular physical exercise. Going to Pilates a few times a week gives me the chance to slow down, strengthen my body and reset my mind. Even just walking the dog each day has become a non-negotiable break, a simple, consistent way to get fresh air, move my body and mentally step away from cases and readings. For students who want to add this into their routine, I recommend scheduling a short walk or workout into your calendar like you would a tutorial. Group fitness classes or even setting a daily step goal can help build consistency. As Ruth Bader Ginsburg said, *"Real change, enduring change, happens one step at a time."* Focusing on small daily habits and not overwhelming yourself with everything at once is what truly builds momentum.

Reading Without Rules

Reading something purely for enjoyment has also been a quiet but powerful tool for balance. Choosing to read novels or non-law-related books, even if its for fifteen minutes before bed, helps me maintain

a sense of self outside of law school. It reminds me that my identity isn't only tied to my grades or workload and that investing time in relaxation and creativity is just as important. If you're new to reading for fun again, start with something light and enjoyable. Even audiobooks during commutes or walks can be an easy way to reconnect with reading without adding pressure. As Albert Einstein said, "Creativity is intelligence having fun". Reading for pleasure gives your mind a space to grow, imagine and recharge, something that ultimately makes you a well-rounded thinker both inside and outside the law.

Clear Space, Clear Mind

Additionally, keeping my space clean and organised has also played a major role in staying on track. When my desk and surroundings are tidy, I feel much more focused and less overwhelmed by everything I have to do. Along with that, using a diary to plan out my weeks has been crucial. Mapping out deadlines, study sessions and even time for exercise or reading makes everything feel more manageable and less stressful.

Get Out There! – Growth Starts Beyond Your Comfort Zone

Finally, getting involved in extracurricular activities outside of law school work has also made a huge difference. Don't be afraid to join extracurriculars, it can definitely feel daunting at first, but it has truly been a really exciting and rewarding experience for me. Joining the Blackstone Society, participating in competitions and putting myself forward for opportunities have helped me grow skills beyond the classroom and build confidence. In particular, taking part in the Blackstone Negotiations has played a crucial role in developing my communication, teamwork and problem-solving skills. Don't be afraid of stepping outside your comfort zone because that's often where the best growth happens!



Law School Tips for Mental Health

Steele Hall

Studying the law is a demanding pursuit. It requires hard work, discipline, sacrifice, and most importantly, the mental resilience to push through difficult moments. For me, maintaining good mental health has been the most challenging aspect of law school. The importance of mental health is not a new revelation; however, I believe this area still requires more attention. I hope to share some advice which may help other students with their mental health.

#1 Don't Do Law School Alone

My first tip is don't do law school alone. University can be quite isolating at times – especially when you're in the depths of an assignment or exam period – so it's essential to build relationships with others in your cohort. If you're finding a topic confusing, an assignment overwhelming, or exam preparation stressful, others will be feeling the same way. Talking through these challenges with others often makes them feel more manageable and less daunting. Even if you only connect with a small group of people that you enjoy being around, having the reassurance that you aren't alone can make all the difference to your mental health and wellbeing.

#2 Keeping Balance

My second tip is to keep your life as balanced as possible. There is no escaping the reality that law school demands a significant amount of time and energy. The truth is you won't always be able to achieve the ideal study-work-life balance, which is a key reason why maintaining your mental health is often a challenge. To look after your mental health and physical health, it is essential to make time for activities that help you switch off, whether that's socialising, exercising, or simply doing something you enjoy. It might feel like you can't afford to take a break, but stepping away for an hour can reset your mind and make the next study session far more productive.

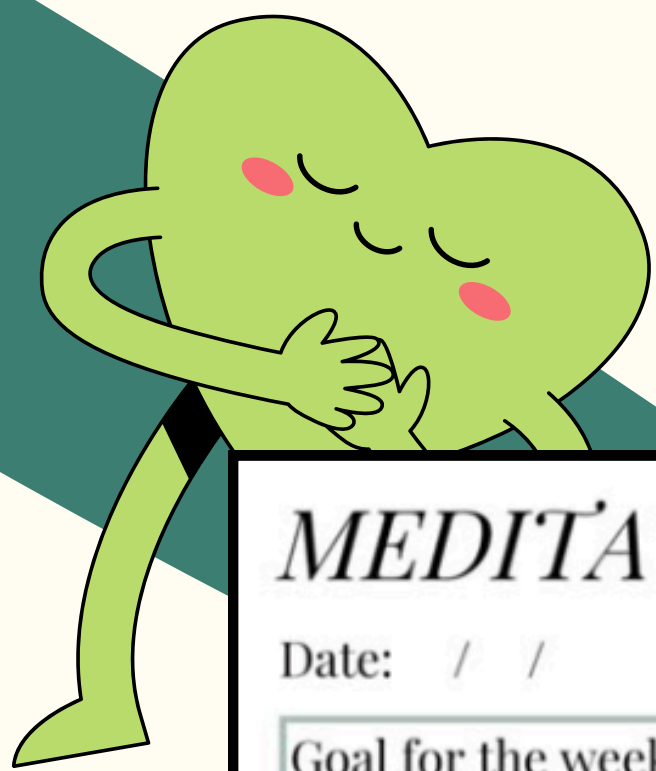
This is certainly a lesson learned from experience. For me, playing AFL for my local club has been incredibly beneficial. It provides me with a social and physical outlet, helps me clear my head and reminds me that there is more to life than studying.

#3 Be Proud of Yourself

My final tip is to be proud of yourself. What you are doing is hard and often we are so focused on the next task that we forget to take a moment to give ourselves a pat on the back. So, if you get a good mark, take the time to celebrate and share it with your friends and family. More importantly, if you don't get the mark you'd hoped for, you should still be proud of yourself. Everyone has different things happening in their lives at different times and these factors inevitably affect our performance. If you know you gave an assessment your best effort given your circumstances at the time, then that is all you can ask of yourself. Every single law student will receive marks they aren't happy with – it's normal. Wanting to do well is natural and can be a great motivator, but don't let the pressure to perform overwhelm you. Remember to always be kind to yourself.

These tips are by no means groundbreaking – but putting them into practice is often harder than it seems. Even in my final year, I'm still learning new ways to improve and often have to remind myself to follow my own advice. If you've read this far, my final word of encouragement is this: take a moment to stop and smell the roses every now and then. Everything will be okay!





MEDITATION TRACKER

Date: / /

Total Time: : :

Goal for the week:

Sunday

Type:
Duration:
Thoughts:

Thursday

Type:
Duration:
Thoughts:

Monday

Type:
Duration:
Thoughts:

Friday

Type:
Duration:
Thoughts:

Tuesday

Type:
Duration:
Thoughts:

Saturday

Type:
Duration:
Thoughts:

Wednesday

Type:
Duration:
Thoughts:



Daily Planner *every day is a new opportunity*

DATE

M T W T F S S

SCHEDULE

6:00 am

7:00 am

8:00 am

9:00 am

10:00 am

11:00 am

12:00 am

1:00 pm

2:00 pm

3:00 pm

4:00 pm

5:00 pm

6:00 pm

7:00 pm

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9:00 pm

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11:00 pm

12:00 pm

DAILY AFFIRMATION

TOP THREE PRIORITIES

1.

2.

3.

TO DO LIST

tasks

soon

later

REMINDERS FOR TOMORROW

NOTES



HD'ing in personal growth!

Joel Cronin

The first few days of law school were absolutely terrifying. I was locked into a class of over 200 people, in a 9-5 intensive over the course of two weeks straight – it was like high school all over again! I soon learnt that it was unlike high school in two key ways. First, the classes were much harder, both in workload and content. Second, and most importantly, everyone was so different, but so alike: we all wanted to be here, and we all wanted to excel.

The biggest part of this experience, I think, is the people. Making connections by going to law events, attending classes if you can, or doing group study sessions can make the experience a lot less isolating, and a lot more rewarding. I've found that talking to people, especially your friends and peers in law school, is really, really important throughout your time. Everyone is going through the same thing you are, and sharing the stress over upcoming Exams, or the frustration over a disappointing mark, or the excitement over a completed assignment can be really empowering.

Speaking of marks, I know it might not seem like it in the moment, but your value as a law student is not defined by one or a few bad grades. The purpose of your time at UWA is to learn, and to improve, and improvement shows up in far more ways than just your marks. I vividly remember getting back my first ever law school mark: it was truly the worst grade I've ever received. I sobbed, and then I mourned for maybe a week, and then I got over myself and kept trying – and I think that's a learning point in itself.

Improvement is also deeply personal. It can be very easy to get swept up in comparisons between your journey, and those of your friends and peers, whether that be over grades, extracurriculars, work experience, or otherwise. Everybody experiences imposter syndrome – make sure to keep perspective, try not to get drawn into feelings of competitiveness, and you'll start to enjoy all the opportunities that are opened up to you!



Your inner critic on trial: battling imposter syndrome as a law student

Nadia Cuschieri

Law school didn't break me, but the pressure I put on myself almost did.

I still remember my first networking event: almost thirty floors up in a sleek corporate firm, surrounded by polished professionals and my peers who seemed effortlessly confident. My thoughts spiralled. I came from a family of lower-class immigrants, the first to graduate high school, let alone get a law degree. All I could think was: I don't belong here. Somewhere between chasing high grades, competitive clerkships and multiple extracurricular commitments, I lost sight of my own value. Imposter syndrome became the voice in my head - and for a while, I listened.

If this feels uncomfortably familiar, you are not alone. Nearly 70% of people experience imposter syndrome at some point in their lives. For high achievers (yes, that's law students), that number is even higher. In our defence, law school trains us to find flaws and question everything. It is a useful tool; but not if we don't know when to put it down. The reality is, imposter syndrome is self-sabotaging and, in some cases, it can lead to physical and long-term health issues. The good news is these false beliefs can be unlearned. Here are a few tools I wish someone had told me sooner:

1. Take ownership of your achievements

You are likely where your past self dreamed of being. But humans are never satisfied; we hit one goal and immediately chase the next. I prayed for just one clerkship interview. When I got multiple offers, I immediately thought, "It's just a clerkship. Now I need the permanent role." Pause and look at how far you've come. Celebrate every win, no matter how small. It is evidence that you are worthy and capable.

2. Reframe your inner dialogue

Your inner critic isn't the voice of truth. It's just the loudest one. When self-doubt arises, remind yourself that it is just a thought, not fact. Reframe self-critical thoughts into empowering ones to shift negativity into positivity. The more you challenge them, the less they will show up.

3. Channel your inner cheerleader

You'd never say that cruel thought to a friend, so don't say it to yourself. When your inner critic gets loud, borrow the voice of someone who believes in you, whether it's a friend, loved one, or mentor. For me, it's a close friend who offers the perfect mix of realism, compassion and support. Imagine what they'd tell you and say that to yourself. (Note: if they thought you were a "loser" they wouldn't spend time with you). Be the friend you need on those hard days.

Even the most "successful" people question if they belong. But you didn't get lucky, you got here on purpose. At the end of the day, the longest relationship you will ever have is the one you have with yourself, so make it a good one.



Finding Joy in the Grind: Staying Well During Law School

Max Wilson

Law school and everything that comes with it can be intense. Between lectures, tutorials, assignments and exams, many students are also juggling part-time jobs, volunteer roles, committee commitments, mooted competitions, sports and the notorious clerkship application grind. When you add in the pressure of maintaining a social life and dealing with everyday challenges, it's easy to see why law school can feel overwhelming at times.

For me, I try to find one small thing to enjoy each day. It might be something as minor as grabbing a coffee from my favourite cafe (or the least worst cafe when I'm on campus), going for a walk with a mate, cooking a decent dinner, watching a show at the end of the day, or just stepping outside to get some fresh air. One of my favourite rituals from last year was heading to Ciao Italia for chilli mussels with my mates after our weekly evening Equity and Trusts class, then wandering around and chatting into the early hours of the morning. I looked forward to it every week, and it kept me grounded during an otherwise intense semester.

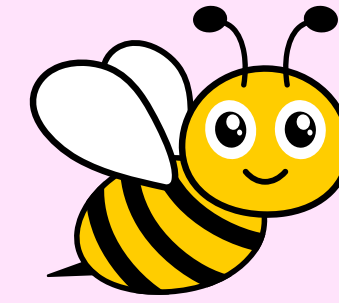
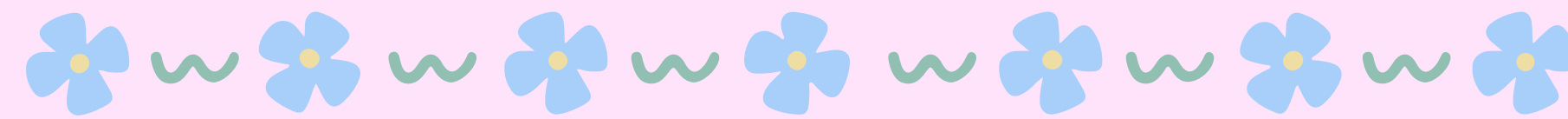
These little moments don't magically remove stress, but they help me stay present and give me something to enjoy when things feel overwhelming.

Having a solid group of mates in law school also makes a huge difference. They understand the deadlines, the pressure and the mental exhaustion. They're also usually the first to suggest ditching the law library for coffee or food, which I almost never say no to.

I also realise that looking after the basics genuinely matters. I know it sounds like a cliché, but getting enough sleep, eating properly and moving around is essential.

Lastly, I've learned how important it is to protect my time. Sometimes that means carving out a night where I completely switch off, or saying no when I'm stretched too thin. Giving myself space to rest is just as important as studying. It helps me set boundaries, avoid burnout and stay more present in the moments that matter. I recommend setting aside a day (or at least an evening) a week for this.

Law school is intense - no doubt about it. But with a bit of balance, good mates, plenty of laughs and the occasional chilli mussels or coffee break, it becomes something far more than just stress and deadlines. It becomes something you can actually enjoy.



Law Student v Life (2025)

Hannah Nguyen



I'm standing here today representing every law student caught up in this class action... against simply trying to live our lives.

According to the plaintiffs, Law Students, Life stands accused of inflicting emotional distress and causing frequent mental breakdowns. And let it be known, Your Honour, the prosecution rests... but only because we desperately need a nap.

In the now-infamous case of My Brain v. My Wellbeing (2024), the court ruled that mental health should never be sacrificed for the sake of productivity and endless responsibilities. It turns out, expecting students to operate at 100% all the time without a complete meltdown? Unreasonable.

Honestly, though, I'll admit it, I don't have it all together. Balancing uni life, work life, social life, even just trying to live a "normal" life, sometimes feels like trying to put together IKEA furniture... blindfolded. And just when things seem overwhelming, we make it worse by gathering in groups and launching into 20-minute panic spirals about how tough law school is, how none of us have started studying for the exam, and how we genuinely have no idea what's going on in the unit we're enrolled in... and that's just the first five minutes.

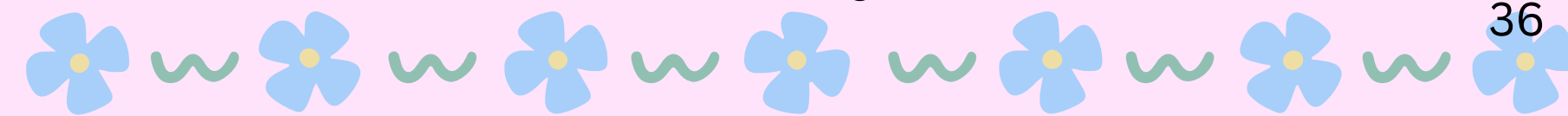
I am guilty of being envious of the law students who have the perfect study-life balance and have 20 other things on their plate, when in all honesty, I'm just trying to get through the week without falling apart and sometimes, showing up to uni is the win. Comparison is the poison of our generation, and being able to disengage from putting yourself on a scale against other people is a skill I am still trying to engrave in my mind. Especially in an environment where you are being pitted against each other for clerkships and graduate jobs, you have to keep reminding yourself to focus on your own path, measure growth by your own standards, and understand that someone else's success is not your failure.

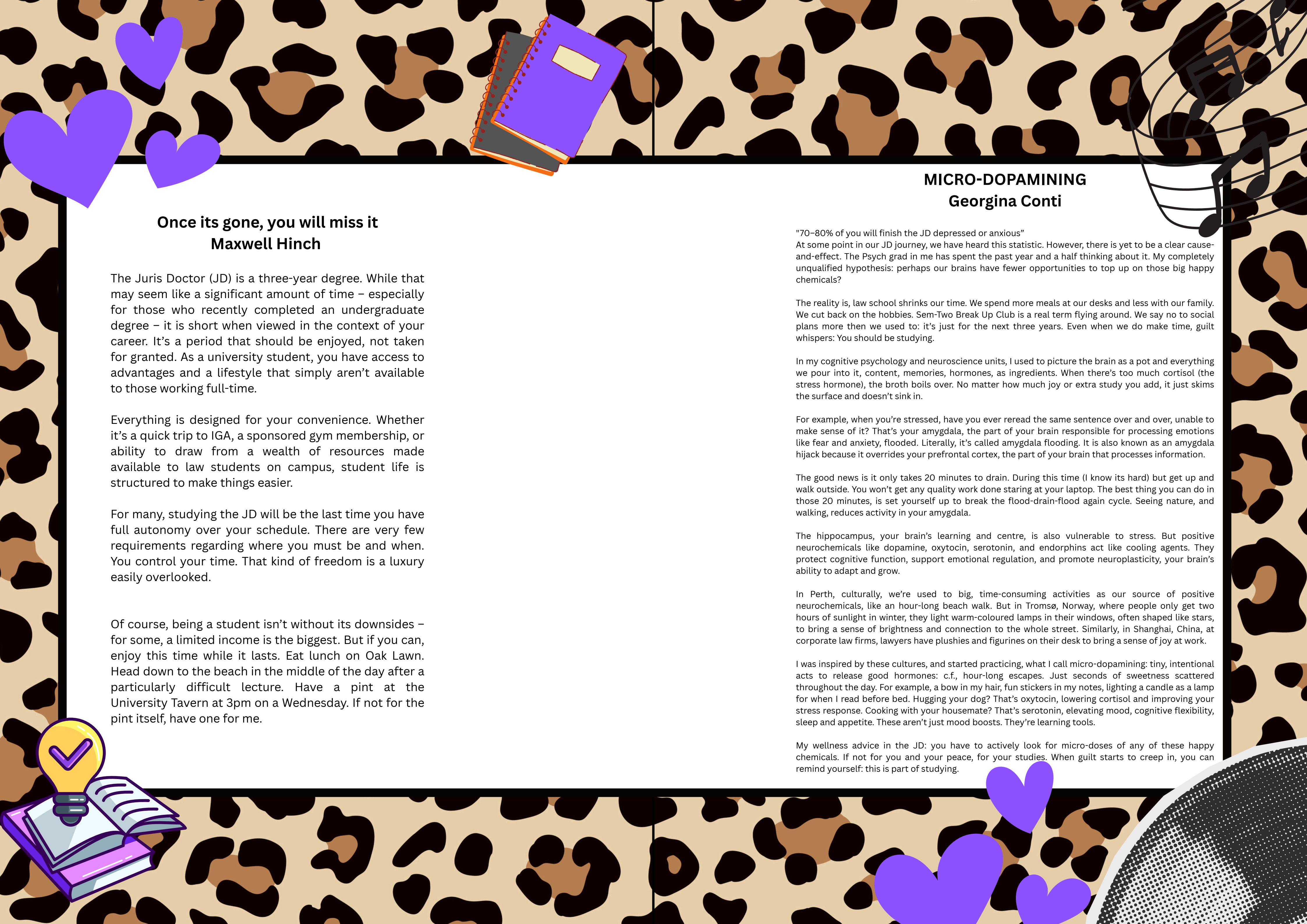
I am so grateful for all the friendships I have created during my time in the JD so far, with the people that laugh with me in the law library and have lunch with me on the Oak Lawn. However, it is just as important to me to maintain the relationships I have with my family and friends outside of law school. Carving time out to sit at the dinner table with my parents and my grandma are the moments I cherish the most, and the people who are forever supporting me and reminding me to stay grounded.

It is easy to become so immersed in the JD and forget how to love living your life. I will always regret taking law school too seriously in my first year and saying no to my friends and other amazing opportunities, like studying abroad, that just passed me by. If I could turn back time, I would tell myself to loosen the tight grip I had on life and say yes a little more, because to me, the memories and experiences are just as valuable as the grades.

This is usually the part where I bestow some insightful and helpful advice about how to maintain your well-being, but I truly believe I have no such qualifications to be handing out advice. Instead, I hope that this piece provides you with some comfort in knowing that if you are feeling drained and overwhelmed in life, you are definitely not alone. The reality is that no one expects you to have your life together, whether you're a law student, a professor, a lawyer or even just a human being. If you were to take anything away from this piece, it would be to book that flight to Europe for the summer, buy tickets to that concert you've been dying to go to, sleep in that extra few hours and say yes to getting late-night Yochi with your friends. Life is just too short to trap yourself in the legal bubble that we created for ourselves.

The mental breakdowns, the emotional stress and the whirlwind of it all that we call life is overwhelming and at times demanding, but as long as you surround yourself with the right people and stop punishing yourself for living life a little more carefree, you will be okay. So, I fear that there is no defence for Life's case here, because at the end of the day, exhaustion and burnout are not admirable; it is a mistrial of our well-being.





Once its gone, you will miss it
Maxwell Hinch

The Juris Doctor (JD) is a three-year degree. While that may seem like a significant amount of time – especially for those who recently completed an undergraduate degree – it is short when viewed in the context of your career. It’s a period that should be enjoyed, not taken for granted. As a university student, you have access to advantages and a lifestyle that simply aren’t available to those working full-time.

Everything is designed for your convenience. Whether it’s a quick trip to IGA, a sponsored gym membership, or ability to draw from a wealth of resources made available to law students on campus, student life is structured to make things easier.

For many, studying the JD will be the last time you have full autonomy over your schedule. There are very few requirements regarding where you must be and when. You control your time. That kind of freedom is a luxury easily overlooked.

Of course, being a student isn’t without its downsides – for some, a limited income is the biggest. But if you can, enjoy this time while it lasts. Eat lunch on Oak Lawn. Head down to the beach in the middle of the day after a particularly difficult lecture. Have a pint at the University Tavern at 3pm on a Wednesday. If not for the pint itself, have one for me.

MICRO-DOPAMINING
Georgina Conti

"70–80% of you will finish the JD depressed or anxious"
At some point in our JD journey, we have heard this statistic. However, there is yet to be a clear cause-and-effect. The Psych grad in me has spent the past year and a half thinking about it. My completely unqualified hypothesis: perhaps our brains have fewer opportunities to top up on those big happy chemicals?

The reality is, law school shrinks our time. We spend more meals at our desks and less with our family. We cut back on the hobbies. Sem-Two Break Up Club is a real term flying around. We say no to social plans more than we used to: it’s just for the next three years. Even when we do make time, guilt whispers: You should be studying.

In my cognitive psychology and neuroscience units, I used to picture the brain as a pot and everything we pour into it, content, memories, hormones, as ingredients. When there’s too much cortisol (the stress hormone), the broth boils over. No matter how much joy or extra study you add, it just skims the surface and doesn’t sink in.

For example, when you’re stressed, have you ever reread the same sentence over and over, unable to make sense of it? That’s your amygdala, the part of your brain responsible for processing emotions like fear and anxiety, flooded. Literally, it’s called amygdala flooding. It is also known as an amygdala hijack because it overrides your prefrontal cortex, the part of your brain that processes information.

The good news is it only takes 20 minutes to drain. During this time (I know its hard) but get up and walk outside. You won’t get any quality work done staring at your laptop. The best thing you can do in those 20 minutes, is set yourself up to break the flood-drain-flood again cycle. Seeing nature, and walking, reduces activity in your amygdala.

The hippocampus, your brain’s learning and centre, is also vulnerable to stress. But positive neurochemicals like dopamine, oxytocin, serotonin, and endorphins act like cooling agents. They protect cognitive function, support emotional regulation, and promote neuroplasticity, your brain’s ability to adapt and grow.

In Perth, culturally, we’re used to big, time-consuming activities as our source of positive neurochemicals, like an hour-long beach walk. But in Tromsø, Norway, where people only get two hours of sunlight in winter, they light warm-coloured lamps in their windows, often shaped like stars, to bring a sense of brightness and connection to the whole street. Similarly, in Shanghai, China, at corporate law firms, lawyers have plushies and figurines on their desk to bring a sense of joy at work.

I was inspired by these cultures, and started practicing, what I call micro-dopaminizing: tiny, intentional acts to release good hormones: c.f., hour-long escapes. Just seconds of sweetness scattered throughout the day. For example, a bow in my hair, fun stickers in my notes, lighting a candle as a lamp for when I read before bed. Hugging your dog? That’s oxytocin, lowering cortisol and improving your stress response. Cooking with your housemate? That’s serotonin, elevating mood, cognitive flexibility, sleep and appetite. These aren’t just mood boosts. They’re learning tools.

My wellness advice in the JD: you have to actively look for micro-doses of any of these happy chemicals. If not for you and your peace, for your studies. When guilt starts to creep in, you can remind yourself: this is part of studying.

Crash Out Queen, You've Earned It

Claudia Vacca

Having only completed one semester of law school I do not feel qualified to be giving wellness advice. However, reflecting on the first semester here are some important lessons I have learnt. (Also please take with a grain of salt - this is a disclaimer clause).

Go to Sleep

This is wise coming from someone who was up 48 hours straight finishing a contract assignment – but from that experience I have learnt GO TO SLEEP. The readings will be there tomorrow, looking just as unreadable as today. You will function better with sleep.

Comparison is the Thief of Joy (and Sanity)

Those people with the colour-coded notes, lawyer parents, summer clerkships and five-year plan? This is your reminder that they cry too and have also experienced imposter syndrome. Everybody has something going on, don't be deceived by LinkedIn. Remember that everybody is running their own race.

Vent Often, Vent Loud

Find your people – This could be someone who will respond to “I think I failed” with “same” and then send you nine Instagram reels and a meme about academic burnout.

Be Delulu, Strategically

You might be the next High Court Justice. You might live off Red Bull and academic denial for three years. Both can be true. Trust the process (but maybe also read the rubric). If being slightly delusional gets you through, then be delulu (within limits).

Wellness Looks Different to Everyone

Sometimes wellness is eating an entire tub of ice cream in one sitting. For others, wellness is running a half-marathon before sunrise. To some students, wellness is walking home from Northbridge at 4:00am on a Sunday morning with a kebab in hand and regrets looming. All are valid.

The point is: crash out before you burn out. Schedule regular breaks. Romanticise your walk to Reid or Beasley. Skip a reading. You are a human being and law school can be difficult, take care of yourself in whatever way works for you. Do what you need to do to get through.

Final Rule: Crash Out Queen

When exams and assignments are over, close the laptop. Reclaim your peace, you have done enough, and you are going to be okay.

Remember who you are, remember your roots and remember why you started law school. Be proud of yourself.

Affirmations: (repeat those positive self-talk affirmations) You are intelligent. You are capable. You are hardworking and you have got this.

DRAW MY HAPPY PLACE

Law Student v Wellbeing: The Elements of Staying Whole in Law School

Nurshamin Wan

Acknowledging Struggles

One of the first things that improved my wellbeing in law school was simply acknowledging and admitting when things are hard.

It's tempting to convince yourself you've got it together, because admitting a struggle can feel like a sign of weakness, especially when everyone else seems fine. However, it takes courage to say "this is hard." That simple acknowledgment opens up space to reflect, to talk to friends and family, and to seek support before things spiral.

You're not meant to get the hang of everything at once. That's what being in law school is for - to teach you the 'how-tos' along the way. It is helpful to have wellbeing conversations with other law students as these reveal how we're all navigating similar challenges, and everyone needs time to figure things out, just as much as you do.

Diversifying Interests

Keep your other interests alive! Read up, watch, and stay curious about everything under the sun, as law touches practically every aspect of life. For example, if you're learning about ocean law but don't know anything about the ocean and its wildlife, how will you know if the laws in place are effective? So it's perfectly fine to maintain your other interests - it may seem random and unrelated but when you're learning the law around a certain field, it can really help you appreciate the knowledge more.

This serves as a double hack - it gives you a break from dense legal material but helps you become a well-rounded law student. Personally, I find that sociology material is a good place to start. It is close enough to law to stay relevant, but different enough to feel like a mental refresh. You could also work your brain in other ways, like learning a new language. It can strengthen neural connections, ultimately helping you absorb more in your law classes without burning out!

Balancing Between the Present and the Future

It's important to think about career prospects and there are many opportunities for this through networking sessions, career fairs and more. I highly recommend going to a few because there's so much to learn.

However, it can get overwhelming so do pace yourself, for example attend a session every 2-3 weeks, or once a month, instead of every week. Speak with a diverse range of lawyers as some have really fascinating journeys - it is a good reminder that you can curate your own path however you like.

Remember to also take a step back and just be a student - embrace the pure joy of learning and make the most of it, as law school really flies by.

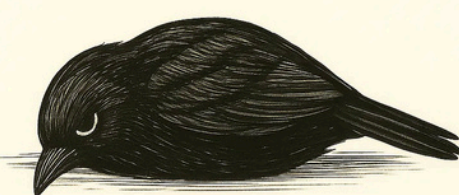
Keeping Up with Your Health

None of the above is possible if you're not physically well - nothing is worth sacrificing your health for!

Firstly - eat well! Pop in some fruit when you start your day to get your serving in early and set the tone for the rest of the day. Have balanced meals with enough veggies and nutrients but keep your favourite snacks or comfort food nearby during study sessions to keep you happy and motivated. Sleep! Set limits on your study time, for example making a rule to protect your sleep like no studying past midnight.

Find your calm or nature spots where you can go to de-stress: breaks are a right, not a reward - you don't need to complete a task just to earn one. If anything, taking that break could help you complete tasks faster than if you didn't!

Have one lazy day a week - don't pack your days to the brim. We're all humans who move in ebbs and flows, and sometimes we thrive best after doing absolutely nothing for a bit!



Perspective and Wellbeing

Anton Abrossimov

Starting the JD has been hectic, to say the least. I'm still in disbelief about that I'm doing three units this semester, whilst questioning how I will cope with four. From time to time I reminisce about APA referencing, which is a bit weird, yet understandable when one has had to suffer through the rigours of AGLC. The JD has also presented a large learning curve. Learning AGLC is one of these, but also a different style of assessments and a different type of content from my undergrad, Behavioural Science. The content itself also isn't easy, and simply put, there is a lot of it.

In the midst of this, it's easy to be hard on yourself. It's easy to compare yourself to other people who ostensibly 'have it together', who have busier schedules or are working harder. For me, reframing how I view law school has been crucial. Reminding myself that it is ok to be unsure of content, how to take notes, revise or how I should approach an assessment. All you can do is simply put your best foot forward, learn from your experiences, improve, move on and repeat. Doing your best, and then learning from this if need be is ok!

Leaning on the people around you is crucial. Whether this be those in the same cohort as you, to remind you that you're all going through the same struggle, or those in cohorts above, who have gone through this before.

And definitely, this is reassuring – as despite however you may be feeling now – someone else has been through this and come out the other end.

Law is also somewhat like a relationship. From time to time, I volunteer and run workshops for high school boys. When discussing toxic relationships, one of the things we emphasise is not forgetting, and not compromising on the core things that make you who you are. Despite this being relationship advice, I think it is broadly helpful with regards to well-being, particularly in law school. In and amongst the grind, it's so easy to get lost in it and forget what makes who you are – to forget to do the things you love. This tends to happen when we get the busiest, but this is also when it is the most important.

This can take many forms and will invariably look different for everyone. For me, this includes going to the gym, having a clean diet, catching up with my friends and starting some – probably most – mornings with a coffee and a croissant from Kith or Common Bakery. The raspberry pain au chocolat is wonderful. Importantly, this takes discipline. To schedule time to do the things you love, or that are beneficial for your well-being isn't a luxury or a waste of time. Rather, this is essential for well-being, and to not forget what makes you who you are.

Balance and Routine during Law School

Madison Dalziell

I have always found life at university, especially now life at law school, often feels like the ultimate balancing act. Constantly attending lectures, doing readings, completing assignments and meeting deadlines makes it easy to fall into a cycle of isolation, constantly grinding away. But, as semester 1 of the JD comes to a close, I've realised perhaps the key isn't working harder and for longer hours, but instead grounding yourself in a routine, and doing it with the right people.

Establishing a daily routine has transformed my university experience from something overwhelming to something very enjoyable and has created predictability in an otherwise demanding environment. Simple habits like arriving on campus at the same time each morning, grabbing a coffee from my favourite campus cafe or sitting in the same spot in the law library have added structure in my day. I don't have to worry what's coming next because it has already been decided.

What's even better? Doing it with friends. Having a regular crew to walk to lectures and share lunch with has made a world of difference. Creating space to laugh between classes, support each other through assignment season or celebrate achievements together has made law school less of a solitary grind and more of a shared journey. These friendships have acted as anchors and helped keep me stable through the semester. They have also made it easier to become more involved in life on campus – like participating in competitions and attending social events like balls and mixers.

Law school is not something I clock in and out of every time I attend and leave campus, but instead a lifestyle. A healthy routine, shared with like-minded peers, hasn't just made me more productive – it's made me happier. And in the long run, this happiness is what will make me want to keep coming back to campus every day.

A Pivot to Law: Adapting to a New Career

Grace Wholley

Before I initiated my legal studies, I had a career that was supported by an undergraduate and postgraduate degree. Given the many years I had dedicated to obtaining the qualifications and experience in my previous field, committing to the Juris Doctor was a daunting task. While I was initially hesitant about whether I had made the correct call, I can confidently say that enrolling in the JD was one of the best decisions I have made. However, this is not to say that it has been an easy undertaking.

In my personal experience, engaging in regular exercise has been the most effective way of alleviating the stresses associated with the study of law. Over the last year and a half, I have dedicated a set number of weekly hours to long-distance running and attending gym classes. A few friends and I have also been looking at completing an Iron Man, which has motivated me to further diversify my training, improve my endurance, and develop the mental resilience required for such a challenge. Pursuing this goal outside of law school has allowed me to maintain balance and build self-discipline in an environment entirely removed from my studies. Exercising may not be the cure-all for law students, but it has certainly helped me!

I also really enjoy listening to live music and was fortunate enough to attend some performances during the academic year, including Ben Howard, The National, and Fontaines DC. Knowing I had these events on my calendar gave me something to look forward to in times when there was an increased workload or greater study demands.

While studying law can be challenging, it continues to be both fulfilling and engaging. Ultimately, to me, the intellectual rigour and opportunities for personal growth make the study of law an incredibly rewarding pursuit.



My Experience and advice on wellbeing as an International Student Studying Law

Andy Wu

Mental Wellbeing

When I first started the JD as an international student, the first thing I noticed is how well my law school peers articulate their knowledge of law in such profound ways! Coming from a ESL background, I was very anxious about my command of the English language, fearing law school might be too difficult for me as an international student. Fortunately, this anxiety soon disappeared as I started to have solid friendships in law school. Some of whom have now become my best mates not only in law but outside of university as well. I cannot stress enough the importance of friendships in law school. Having friends in law ensures an iron-clad social support system which allows mates to lookout for each other in meaningful ways. However, having friends in law school isn't the only anecdote to anxiety as an international JD student. Reading many law material and modern classic novels have also helped a lot, as it improved my vocabulary and makes me more articulate.



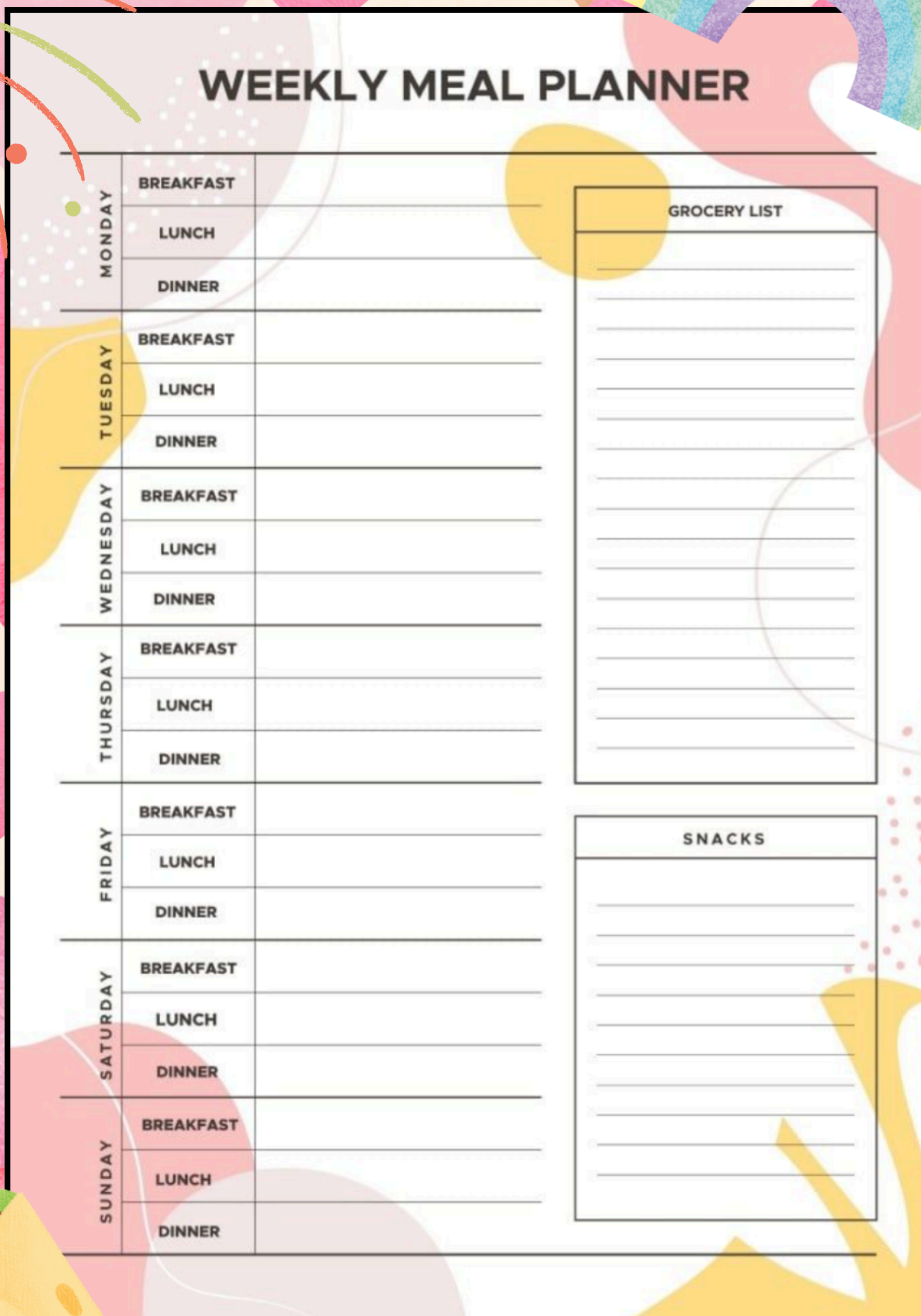
Physical Wellbeing

While mental wellbeing is important, physical wellbeing also cannot be overlooked. As the Roman poet Juvenal correctly pointed out, 'A Healthy Mind Resides in a Healthy Body'. An effective way of building up one's physical wellbeing in my experience is by going to the gym. By achieving the results I want in the gym through consistency has improved my overall health and self-confidence. Also the mentality I developed by going to the gym such as goal-setting and self-discipline are all transferrable back to my law studies and life in general. Therefore my advice is go to gym to improve your physical wellbeing. If a gym membership is expensive or you don't live close to the gym, Blackstone does offer free UWA gym memberships for all JD students, feel free to put in a quick session before you go to class!

Final Thoughts

Law might be intimidating at first, but it gets better with time. In my experience, reading, socialising and going to the gym has been the three greatest things you should do to improve your overall wellbeing and make your law journey easier.





MINDFULNESS BINGO

24 Mindful Practices For Beginners

Wake up early	Breathe deeply	Eat deliberately	Go for a mindful walk	Express meaningful appreciation
Observe the clouds	Visualize your ideal day	Set a daily intention	Create a vision board	Live purposefully
Draw or colour a picture	Listen to music	FREE SPACE	Notice and write your thoughts	Take a break from technology
Write your thoughts in your Journal	Take time to reflect	Meditate or sit in silence for 5 minutes	Get lost in the flow of doing what you love	Connect with your senses
Be in the moment	Say affirmations	Solely focus on your goal.	Declutter one space	Get a good night's sleep



You can't actually have it all. And that's okay too

Melissa Dinnison

I can't remember when I first heard of the word 'well-being' but I am fairly certain it wasn't something I considered seriously before entering Law. I had worked awful retail jobs before where my self-worth was on the floor at the end of a Saturday shift, but no one had told me that I should consider my well-being. The closest I got to a wellness strategy was the comfortable disassociation I'd slip into on the drive home after being yelled at for enforcing a returns policy I didn't write.

It wasn't until I started my law degree that I encountered well-being as something that should be taken seriously. Even then the thought that I should be prioritising my well-being while also being a legally literate turbo was aspirational, but I am nothing if not a go-getter, so I tried hard to be a good friend, student, daughter, partner and person all at once.

It took me about 18 months, around the time that I fell pregnant with my son to realise I couldn't be all of those things, all at once, to everyone. I couldn't have it all. The myth of the perfectly balanced law student - thriving academically, socially, emotionally, and posting humble updates on LinkedIn about well-earned achievements - started to crack. It turned out that my wellness and my WAM were not on speaking terms.

Because here's the thing: I could not build a sense of self, attend every lecture, maintain a household, look after a sick baby, study for torts, and remain emotionally intact. My well-being wasn't something I could schedule in after my obligations. It was something I had to fight for within them and protect at all costs. I was willing to accept that I couldn't do it all. Not at once. Not well. And that is okay.

It is okay to have periods where your sole focus is pumping out the most brilliant piece of constitutional law work that Murray has ever seen, while also knowing that you haven't texted your friends in a while. It is okay to fully show up for your family when they need you and get extension after extension only to hand in a pretty mid essay. Give yourself permission not to feel ashamed for finding balance.

True well-being in law is all about balance. Sometimes you will be able to give one part of your life everything you've got and achieve great results and sometimes you will feel like a failure and like you can't do this anymore. Balance is knowing when you let something go and accept that you can't achieve 100% of things, 100% of the time. True well-being will come when you learn to let go and embrace the chaos.

Sometimes you'll thrive. Sometimes you'll survive. Both count.

My Wellness Experiences

Associate Professor M Bromberg

When Blackbird editors contacted me about writing something for their publication, I couldn't say no. I strongly believe in the importance taking care of yourself, and that the younger we are when we start to do so, the better.

Every interaction that I have with others and everything that I do, generally, is of better quality when I take care of my wellbeing. The main things that I do to take care of myself are spending time with my dog, spending time in nature and taking singing lessons weekly.

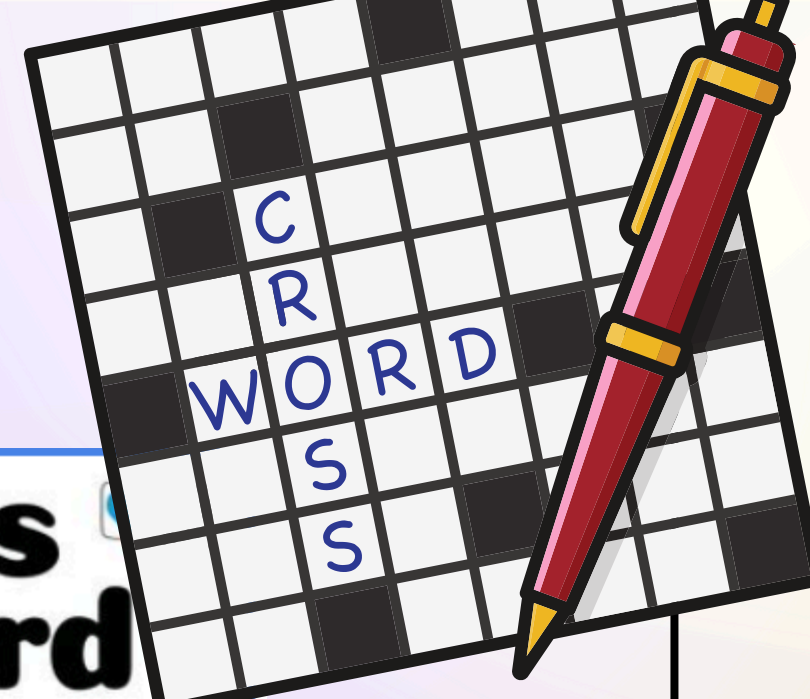
It is well known that there are mental health benefits from spending time with animals. My dog, a Miniature Schnauzer named Brave Bromberg, has wonderful calming powers and he's excellent company. As a side benefit, he makes any selfie that he joins much cuter.

In terms of spending time in nature, it is also well known that it can help mental health. I love going to the beach, hiking and walking outdoors. We are so fortunate to have such lovely weather in Perth most of the time here (I am from Toronto, Canada, so I do not take Perth's climate, or the fact that I need not ever wear snowpants here, or worry about possibly getting frostbite, for granted).

Finally, I take singing lessons weekly. I don't think that you'll see me on Australia's Got Talent (anytime soon, at least), but it is an excellent stress reliever.

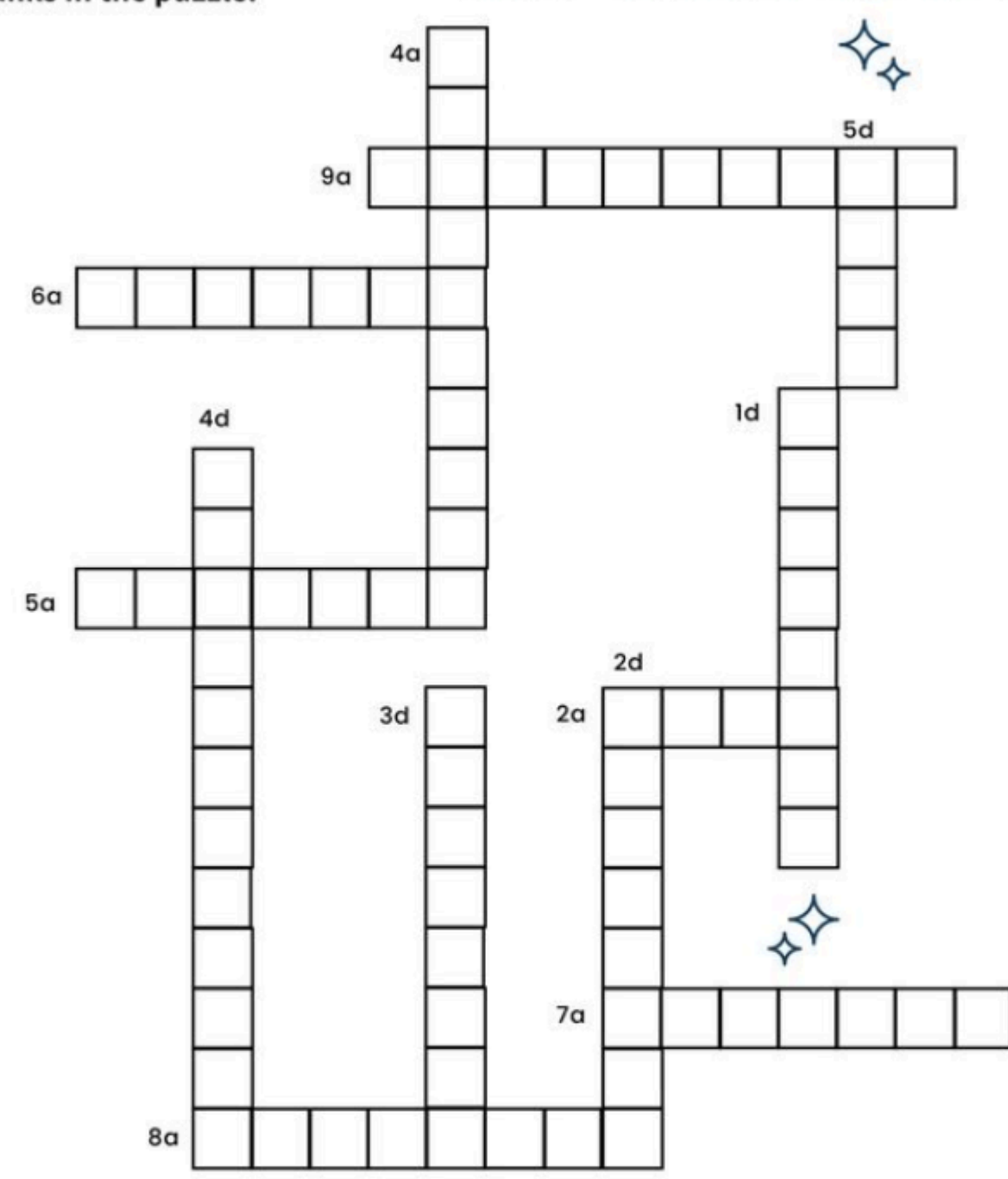
There are so many different ways that you can take care of yourself. Of course, you should do what works for you. However, I suggest that whatever type of wellness activities that you like to engage in, you consistently try to make the time for it, no matter what life may throw your way.





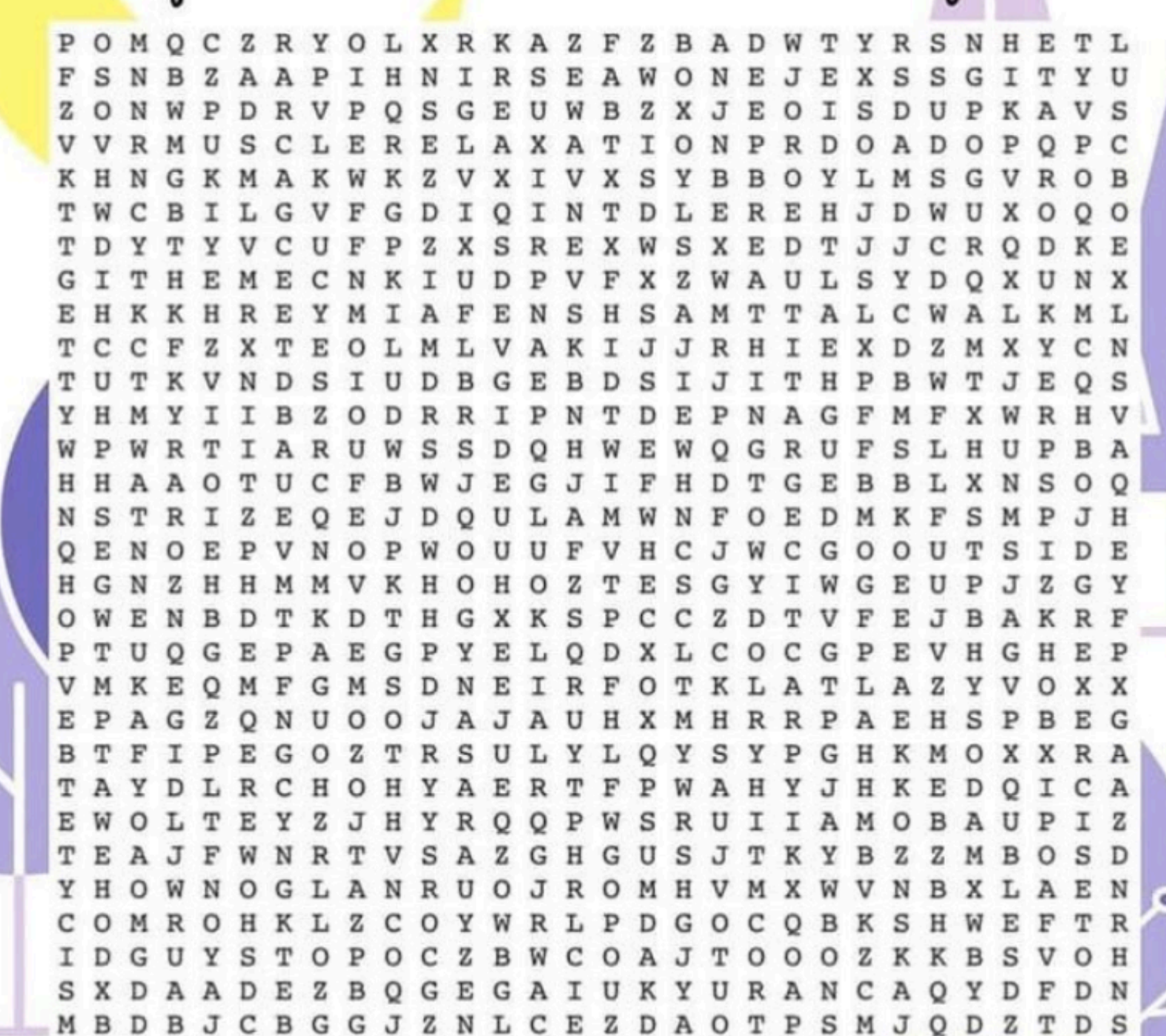
Kindness Crossword

Answer the questions below by filling in the blanks in the puzzle.

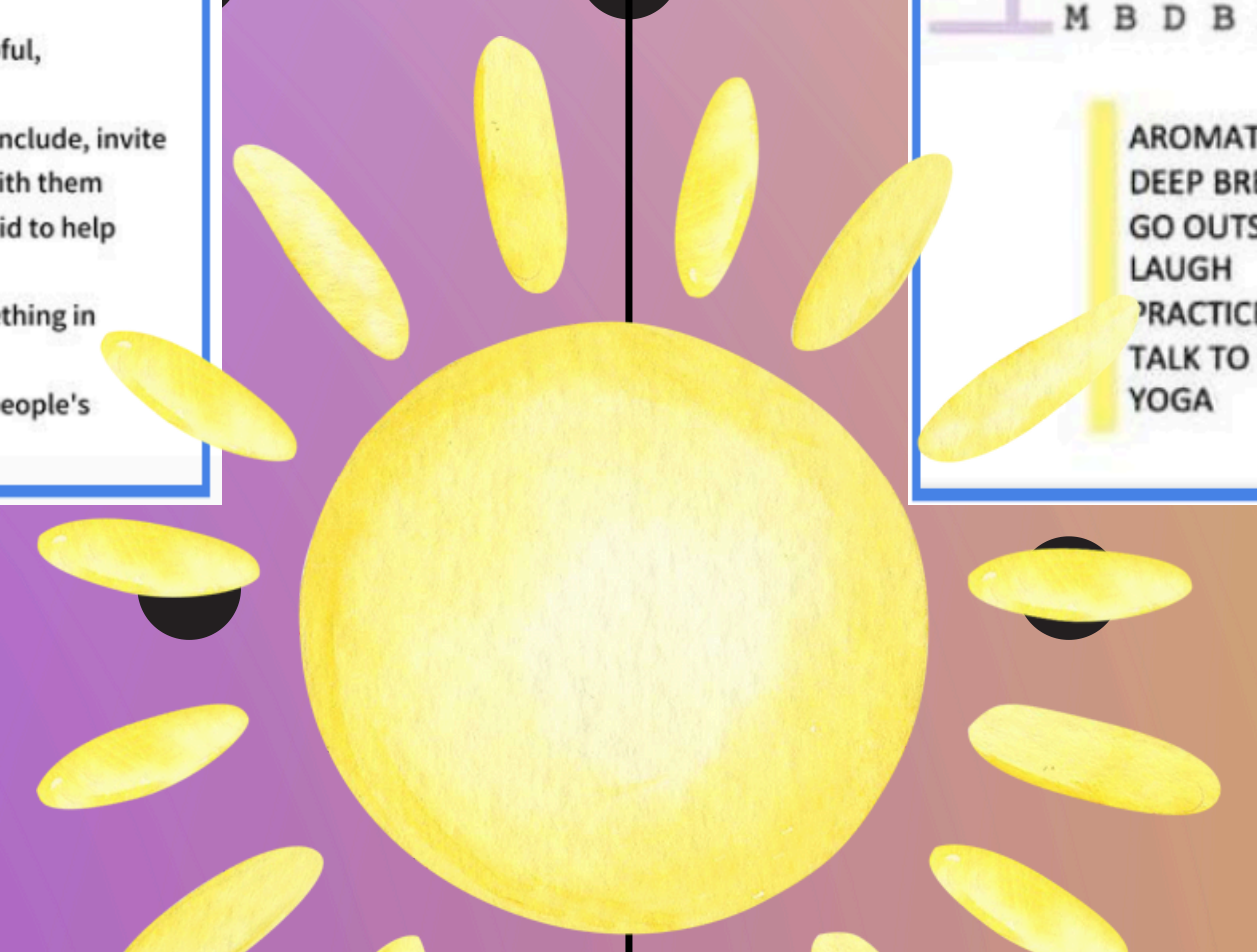


- ACROSS**
 - 2a - a considerate, generous, friendly, helpful, compassionate personality
 - 5a-ready to help, pitch in, make it easier for others
 - 6a-giving up a portion or part of what you have to someone else
 - 7a - the ability to feel or know what someone else might be feeling
 - 8a- being ready to give more of something than was expected or necessary
 - 9a-to give someone kind words for something they did, their personality, the way they look
- DOWN**
 - 1d - to act in a "warm" way that is welcoming or inviting, like waving or saying "hi"
 - 2d - a considerate, generous, friendly, helpful, compassionate way of acting
 - 3d-someone who goes out of their way to include, invite and welcome others to join or sit or play with them
 - 4d - donating your time without getting paid to help others, unpaid work
 - 5d - pleasant, agreeable, often to get something in return, might seem fake
 - 6d-showing consideration towards other people's thoughts, feelings or needs

Coping Strategies for Anxiety



- AROMATHERAPY**
 - DEEP BREATHING
 - GO OUTSIDE
 - LAUGH
 - PRACTICE GRATITUDE
 - TALK TO FRIENDS
 - YOGA
- CHALLENGE THOUGHTS**
 - EXERCISE
 - HEALTHY DIET
 - MEDITATE
 - SHOWER
 - VISUALIZATION
 - CUDDLE PETS
- FORGIVE YOURSELF**
 - JOURNAL
 - MUSCLE RELAXATION
 - TAKE A BATH
 - WALK



‘Alternative’ pathways (and why it’s okay to want them)

Amy Thomasson

If I had a dollar for every time someone has approached me asking about practicing in an ‘alternative’ area of law (‘alternative’ in that context being pretty much anything other than commercial law at a mid to top-tier firm), I would have at least \$10. That might not sound like much, but it means there are more of you out there who either don’t know who I am (likely) or are too scared to contemplate/ask about how you might do something other than commercial law when you graduate.

I get it, I’ve been there. While I was an Associate at the Court of Appeal, I accepted a deferred offer at a commercial law firm just so I knew I had something when I finished up at the Court. Us Type As are like that – certainty and job security are our primary focus. That means it is really easy to follow the course charted by the commercial firms – you get a clerkship, then you’re a graduate, and before you know it, you’re a senior associate on the conveyor belt to partnership.

Other areas of practice – family and criminal law in particular – can’t offer you that. So I get why it’s scary. I get why it’s hard to resist the lure of a well-trodden and transparent path to partnership, and why that might look like the only way to be ‘successful’ in law. But I am here to tell you it’s not, and it’s okay to want something different for yourself. I ended up ditching my deferred offer and working at a family law firm where I had previously (before I was an Associate) been a paralegal. It was a small practice (less than 10 of us in the office including support staff), and I liked and cared about the people I worked with.

In a career as stressful as law you need that, not to feel like a cog in a machine. While family law didn’t work out for me – and in accordance with the theme of this piece, insofar as there is one, that’s okay! – I have zero regrets. I wouldn’t be where I am today, in a job that I love, without having had that experience.

The challenge is knowing how to get those jobs. Unfortunately, there is no particular method in the madness. Generally speaking, it is a good idea to develop a relationship with a firm as a paralegal or similar first to help get an understanding of the vibe (sorry for my continuing bastardisation of the English language, Marco). Try not to go into this with an energy of being disempowered – you bring a unique set of skills and energy to a workplace, own it! If one firm doesn’t work out, try another (and another) until it feels right. Remember it’s okay to get it ‘wrong’ – although I don’t really believe in that anyway – much like anything, you’ll eventually see value in something that might feel like a misstep at the time.

You also need to be ready to receive a lot of ‘Awww, you’re going into family law, good for you!’ from your fellow students when they find out you are not going for the typical grad job at a commercial firm, as if your choice is in some way brave or bold (and what they probably think, deep down, is that it’s stupid). What I am here to say (and this is not to shit all over commercial firms, it’s a model that works for some people) is that you need to have the strength of character to ignore them. I am not denying that all of this takes confidence and a level of self-assurance, but I promise it is worthwhile. The best general advice I can give is to be honest with yourself. You will save yourself a lot of time and consternation if you do.

The Real Standard of Care: Looking After Yourself in Law School

Daniel Toluwade

Law school can be anxiety-inducing at the best of times, and exams worth more than half your grade certainly don’t help. With the constant influx of new information across units, and pressure to excel at every one of them, it’s no wonder that many view being a law student as one of the most stressful periods of their lives. However, there are strategies you can use to keep your head above water, to stay ahead of your studies while having an incredibly rewarding life throughout your time here.

Firstly, the most important thing to remember is that law school is not the be-all and end-all. Cliché, I know, but it really is true. Your experiences outside of law school, regardless of what they are, will be what you remember the most in the next five to ten years – not your incredibly nuanced and novel arguments on adverse possession in the property exam.

On a more practical note, it is surprisingly often that these same experiences will be the main point of discussion in interviews, for clerkships and beyond; deeply exploring the passions you have outside the law will almost certainly help you excel in your pursuit of a career within the legal profession, or elsewhere.

Additionally, try to consistently make time for your friends and family, as hard as it may be. One of the few things almost as stressful than being in law school is constantly thinking about law school, so having time set aside to truly enjoy yourself with the people you value is key to alleviating this.

This can look like participating in team sports, organising monthly brunches or even just the occasional facetime – the important thing is making the effort to do so, whenever you can. Both your pursuit of passions beyond law and fostering of a strong support system of loved ones should make every late night study session that much easier, and law school as a whole feel just a little bit less stressful.



Law School Advice

Indiana Bamford

Of all the advice you'll receive, if there's one thing to hold on to, let it be this: law school is hard. Like, really hard.

And that's okay.

It's not supposed to be easy - grappling with structured proportionality doesn't come naturally to anyone (not even the High Court). Feeling confused, overwhelmed, or even lost at times is part of the process. But while the content can be mentally exhausting, you have to remember that this degree is not your entire life. While upcoming assessments may feel like the be all or end all, life will go on regardless of your result.

You are more important than your grades.

As cliché as it sounds, you have to find your happy place—whatever that may be. Whether it's going for a run, grabbing coffee with friends, or getting lost in a board game, it's important to carve out space for joy that's entirely separate from your studies.

For me, that space is my garden. The clarity that comes from being outside, unplugged from screens, doing some good old fashioned manual labour is unparalleled. Spending time with my nieces and nephews also helps remind me of what truly matters – and spoiler alert; it's not grades. Stepping back from study and connecting with the people who love you helps you regain perspective and reminds you of why you're doing this in the first place.

And please, ask for help.

Law school is challenging, and you're going to have questions. That's normal. Your teachers have consult hours for a reason—use them. Asking questions does not make you a burden, and there is no such thing as a “dumb” question. If you're nervous about going to consults, bring a friend (or two). I've found them most helpful when I come prepared with a clear list of questions—especially ones that can be answered succinctly. Going in with broad, conceptual queries can sometimes leave you more confused than when you started.

And remember, your teachers are here to help you, and they want you to succeed.



How Are You Feeling Today?

What color is your feeling?

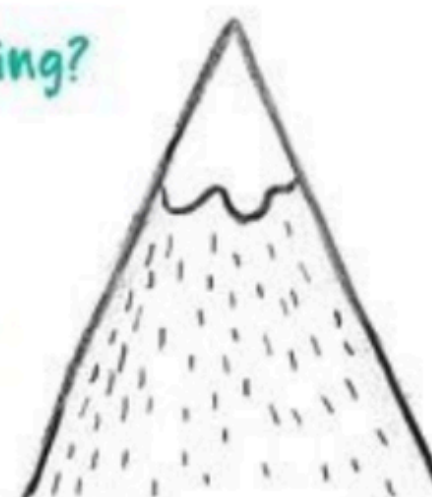


Where do you feel this color in your body?

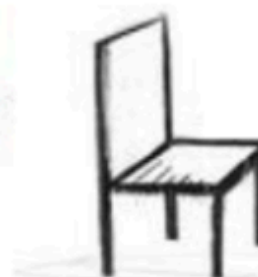


How BIG is your feeling?

Does it feel as BIG as a mountain?



Or does it feel middle-sized ... like the size of a chair?

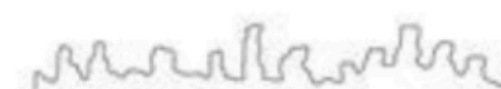


Or as small as a button?

If you could touch your feeling, how might it feel?



spikey



bumpy



prickly



wibbly wobbly



flat



swirly



soft



hard

What else would you like to say about your feeling?



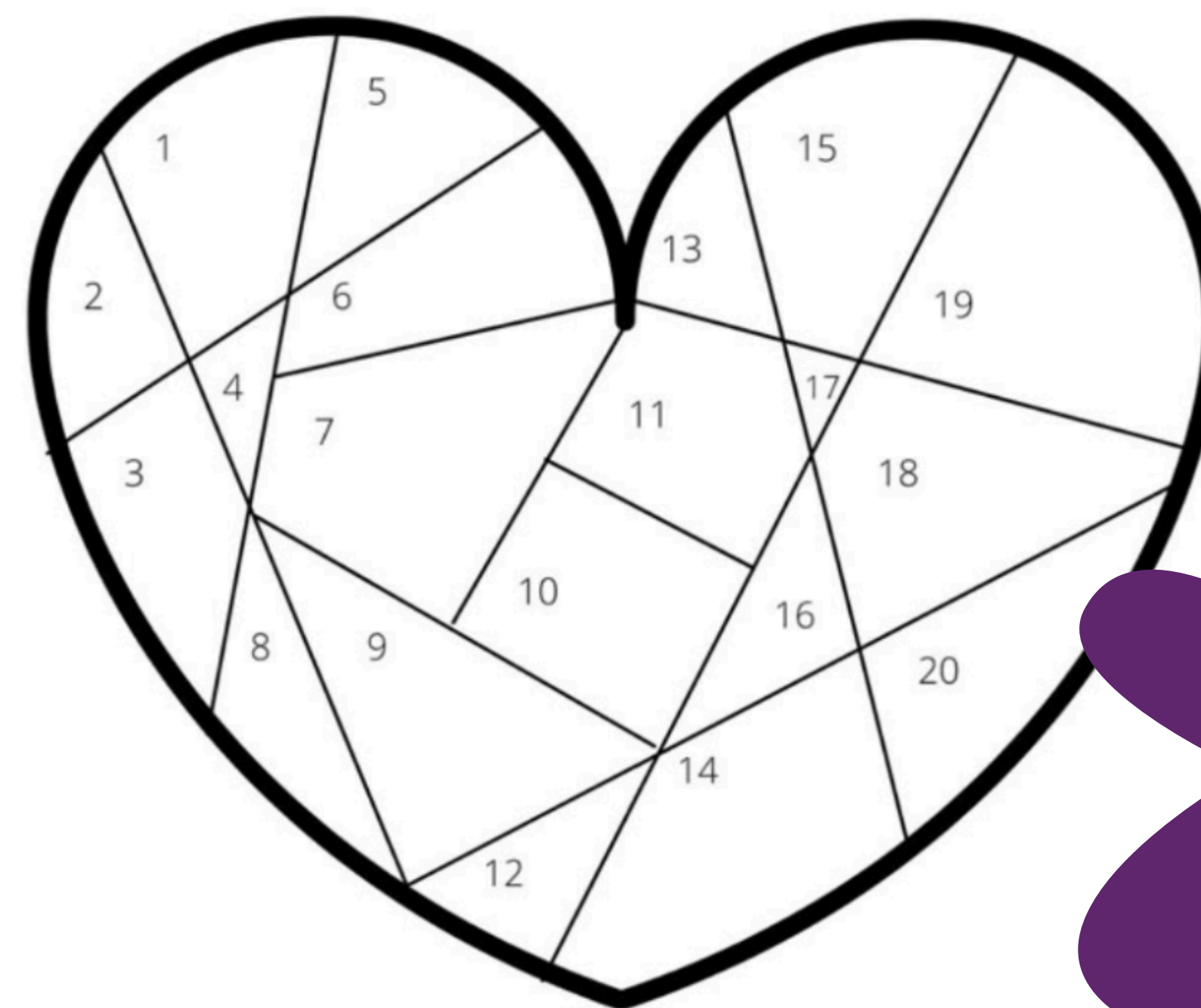
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Sharing children's books and free resources go to www.2epublishing.info

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GRATITUDE HEART

Color each space with a color that feels like a specific person, place, or thing you love and are grateful for. Open your heart to everything big and small.



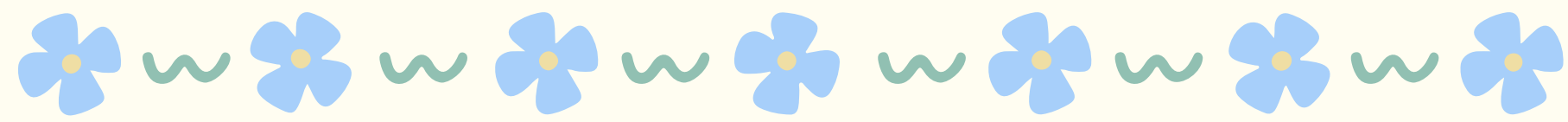
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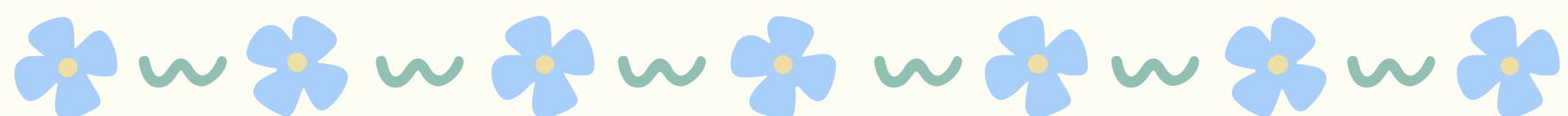
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@COURTESY



One good thing about
today was.....



Making the transition from university to full time work easier

Rustu Buyukcakar

Starting full time work is a brutal transition. University requires a lot of time and effort, the same as work, but you have more freedom around when you put the time in whilst at university. Full time work on the other hand gives you almost no freedom in terms of when you put the time in or when you work. Adjusting to this new lack of freedom is what makes the transition difficult.

Unfortunately, if you want a career in law (and most other professions), you will have to go through this adjustment period. However, there are certain things that you can do to make this transition more tolerable. What helped me make this transition is picking 1-2 hobbies or activities that I had previously enjoyed whilst at university and being strict with sticking to them when I started working. For me this was weightlifting, for others it was their sport they played during university or their creative endeavors like reading, painting or writing.

At the start of your career is the most important time to be strict with your hobbies as it is very easy to get caught up in working full time. That's why it is so important you make sure you don't let your hobbies fall to the side.

Find out your 1-2 hobbies you want to stick with and find out a system that allows you to fit them in with your schedule (ie whether you prefer to do these hobbies before or after work and how many times a week you want to do them).

The transition from university to full time work is brutal but having activities outside of work will make the transition easier. It will give you a break from work and the law and will add more balance to your life.

Brownie Bliss Balls Recipe

Eva Huggins

Sometimes in the chaos that is keeping up with uni, it can be difficult to remember to still look after yourself! Whether that's setting time aside for art, cooking, exercise, journaling, music or otherwise (TikTok), I have found that doing something I love every day is so important to reset and recharge.

If you ever find yourself needing a sweet treat during your next study session or want some time away from the books to do some baking - here is a recipe for the brownie bliss balls which have become my hyper fixation this semester:

- 1.5 cup pitted dates
- 3 tbsp oat flour
- 3 tbsp cacao powder
- 3-4 tbsp maple syrup/honey
- 1-2 tbsp nut butter
- Pinch of salt
- Block of chocolate (for coating)

1. Blend all of the ingredients (except the chocolate) in a food processor until smooth.
2. Roll the mixture into balls and melt the chocolate.
3. Coat the balls in the chocolate and sprinkle with flaky sea salt. Pop them in the freezer for about an hour. And enjoy.

Doing Well in Law Exams

Sagi Pearli and Cos O'Sullivan

Everyone wants to do well on their exams. Often, there are no shortcuts—students who consistently work throughout the semester, engage with the material, and participate in tutorials tend to perform better. However, law exams have specific aspects worth considering. Here are three tips:

Tip 1: Managing the open-book format

The open-book format requires discipline. Don't spend too much time flipping through notes. Instead, focus on writing your exam, outlining relevant laws, and analysing the case scenario.

Tip 2: Law exams are highly analytical

They typically follow a problem-solving format where you must identify the applicable law and apply it to a factual scenario. Some facts matter; others don't. This requires practice. Understanding the material is one thing; applying it is another.

Tip 3: Don't neglect your well-being

It is quickly coming up to exams which can be really stressful and something you have worked really hard at. Over the next week PLEASE remember these wellbeing tips:

- 1. Be super kind to yourself – If anxious thoughts come up do something that feels good and makes you happy.
- 2. MOVE – don't sit still for too long with eyes glued to screens – stretch out your limbs and shake it out as your studying
- 3. Get at least 8 hours sleep a night leading up to the exam – a rested brain will hold knowledge and answers more than a foggy exhausted brain.
- 4. When you eat things that fuel your body, it helps your mind too. Consider grabbing some healthy snacks to get you through your study period.
- 5. BREAK it up – small chunks of focussed study are shown to be much more productive than sitting for a long period getting distracted
- 6. Don't leave asking for help until the last minute. If you have any opportunities to talk to someone to at least see if you're on the right track – take advantage of them!

LASTLY – you've got this, you will be ok, and it will be all over really soon!

Handling pressure during your degree

Emma Watson

One thing that I don't think I was ready for in starting the Juris Doctor was the pressure we all put on ourselves to achieve. It can sometimes feel like there is a huge weight on our shoulders to balance uni, work, social commitments, and in second and third year, clerkships. This is a competitive cohort and imposter syndrome can rear its ugly head, but it's important to remember that for you to have made it here, you are good enough to belong here.

When everything just feels a bit too overwhelming, I find it beneficial to take a step back and reflect on how far I've come, and what is important to me. Often, I can quell the anxiety, and can think logically to move forward and manage my workload. This also allows me to recognise that the pressure I'm feeling is usually pressure that I have placed on myself, and that makes it easier to let go of.

However, the most helpful tip I can give in regard to managing pressure is to get out there and talk to others! Talk to your friends and peers from other year groups, go to as many networking events as you can, make connections, and organise follow-up coffee chats with the people you meet. Talking to others who have been where you are now can really put things in perspective. Every person you meet will have taken a different pathway to get to where they are, and every one of those routes are just as valid as the next.

At the end of the day, all of us - no matter what stage we are at, or what grades we are getting, or what work experience we have - are just doing the best we can! So find what works for you and stick with it. You've got this!

How to make the most of Law School

Regina Mobley

In my experience, law school is much harder, and much easier, than I had ever anticipated.

It is harder because there are a variety of competing priorities and expectations that appear overnight (internships, networking, volunteering, attending workshops and being ten steps ahead of the next assignment) as well as the ever-growing, pre-existing priorities of life.

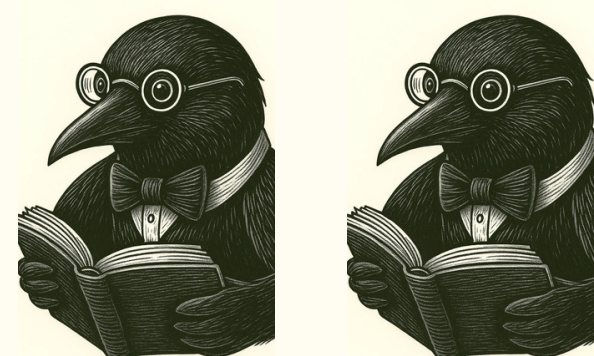
This I find can be particularly hard for students when managing high-stress employment, raising children, caring for family members, and/or are managing many of these stresses alone.

Law school is easier than I could have imagined, though, because despite all of that, we make it work and we persevere.

My tip to other law students is to remember that it is easy to be your own worst critic. I hope you all take the time to be proud of all that you achieve every single day studying a degree like law, while managing everything else outside of it that does not go away.

My tip would be to lean into your cohort, build friendships and attend the social events wherever you can. We are all in this together.

Take it one day at a time, and back yourself and your accomplishments.



Meditation, work life balance and prioritising exercise

Jacinta Dharmanada

Like most people, working on my physical and mental wellbeing is constantly in progress. But what lots of years of study and working has taught me is the power of your own mindset. We cannot eradicate pressure and stress from our life, but we can decide how we address it. I have found the following help me cope.

Prioritise regular exercise. There is so much research about the benefits of regular exercise for alleviating anxiety and stress. Even just a decent walk each day is a huge win.

Get outside. We tend to get stuck at our desks. But some blue sky and sun, or even fresh air on a cloudy day, reminds you of the big, amazing world beyond the screen and can be calming and refreshing. Eat well. If you can't cook or don't have time, don't underestimate the nutritional value of a boiled egg.

Sleep. It's tempting to cut corners on sleep but try not to do it regularly. Research shows how important sleep is for re-charging cognitive function and mood.

Reality check. Mark Twain famously referred to the old man who said he "had had a lot of trouble in his life, most of which had never happened". Try to save your worry for things that are real, not that are a possibility. (Key one for me!)

And finally, remember that the perfect is the enemy of the good. Just doing a few things to help is better than doing nothing because you feel you can't do it all.

Exchange and Law School

Elysee Ralph

This January, I took a step towards my personal growth. As a second-year Juris Doctor student, I spent the semester on exchange at University College Dublin in Ireland. These four months abroad have really broadened my perspective. Leaving the competitive environment of law school and stepping into the unknown was both daunting and empowering. I arrived alone, navigating a new University on the other side of the world from everything familiar... plus it was really cold.

This experience gave me the space to reflect on what I value, learning in an environment that supports both academic and personal well-being. Like many law students, I often fall into unhealthy study habits, isolating myself and feeling guilty for taking breaks. Here, I've visited over six countries, celebrated birthdays, gone on hikes and even gone on a night out or two and still managed to balance a healthy study routine. Being away forced me to build new connections and reminded me of the value of balance. I've learned how much I miss when I'm constantly self-critical about resting or having fun.

Academically, I've expanded my knowledge on International law, but more significantly, I've gained clarity about how I want to approach my studies moving forward. I'm hoping to return home with a renewed mindset, that it's okay to take breaks, to enjoy life, and to remember that there's more to my journey than a high distinction.

MY 10 AFFIRMATIONS

1. I AM ...
2. I AM ...
3. I AM ...
4. I AM ...
5. I AM ...
6. I AM ...
7. I AM ...
8. I AM ...
9. I AM ...
10. I AM ...

MOODS & FEELINGS TRACKER

YEAR: _____

KEY

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> HAPPY | <input type="checkbox"/> GRATEFUL |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SAD | <input type="checkbox"/> BORED |
| <input type="checkbox"/> UPSET | <input type="checkbox"/> LONELY |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ANGRY | <input type="checkbox"/> CONFUSED |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ANXIOUS | <input type="checkbox"/> STRESSED |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EXCITED | <input type="checkbox"/> OVERWHELMED |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CONTENT | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIEVED |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CALM | <input type="checkbox"/> PROUD |
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NOTES

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Law School Life

Angela Perry

It's easy to overlook your own wellbeing for the sake of productivity as a law student. If I ever find myself feeling off, I will always start by asking myself three irritating and cliché questions: 'am I exercising?', 'what am I eating?' and 'how am I sleeping?'

Assignment and exam periods are rough as is, and combining this with minimal movement, irregular meals and poor sleep will have you feeling rotten. Although easier said than done, prioritising these three aspects of your life, especially during stressful periods, will keep you above water.

Prioritising movement can be choosing to walk instead of drive, breaking up study with fresh air, or a short workout routine from YouTube. Making the time for at least 30 minutes of movement a day can make a massive difference in how you feel. Your body wasn't designed to sit still for hours, and neither was your brain. Movement is a simple way to reset both.

When you're studying and stressed, you tend to ignore sensations such as hunger. As annoying as it is, your brain needs energy from food to function.



Two coffees and a Red Bull will get you through the day, but you'll be a shell of a human being unless you have at least three meals. If you need to save on time, stick to simple meals that you can make multiple portions of. RecipeTin Eats is a godsend for these purposes.

Assignment and exam periods will have you hopelessly trying to think of essay ideas and solving factual scenarios in your head when you try to sleep. Try to give yourself at least an hour before bed to immerse yourself in something other than study, like a book, self-care, or a movie. An extra hour of sleep is generally more beneficial than an extra hour of study.

Doctors aren't lying when they tell you to exercise, sleep and eat well. Pay attention to those three aspects of your life and you'll likely end up feeling at least a little better.

Blackbirds

Neve Havercroft

Blackbirds are symbols of change. For all of us, law school is symbolic of entering a new phase of our lives. Try as we may, we cannot do law school without life. It is at times necessary to remove ourselves from the echo-chamber of the words life demands perfection. To find frustration in a failure to separate the perfect law school experience from life's challenges would be to do ourselves a disservice. Our strength should be realised by building a life for ourselves in which our triumphs and challenges can be fully experienced, accepting that our future careers will contain such fluctuation. We should dream for ourselves a life, of which our careers are but one important aspect of our future.

Blackbirds are a common bird. We share this common experience of law school. However, our own needs remain separate. There will be times when we will forgo a law school event for the purpose of filling our own cup with sport, family or rest. When we graduate, our success will not be trailing the well-worn path, but having comfort in having navigated law school for ourselves and for our values.

Blackbirds are also symbols of blessings. To remind ourselves of life's blessings is to find the joy in each day. It is to strive to feel grateful for our opportunity to learn and when that is too much, to appreciate our morning coffee. It is to build a community at law school so strong that we can recognise when others have been blessed and to have faith in our achievements to know that our turn will come.



A Bigger Story

Lyssa Lai

I'm so grateful that Law School is a part of my story, but I'm also grateful that it isn't all of my story. Something that helps my wellbeing is the set times during the week where I clock out of uni: these times are church service on Sunday morning and having the young adults from church at my place on a weekday evening. During these times, my attention shifts from worrying about me – my grades, my study preparation, unhelpful comparisons to other students – to worshipping God, learning truths, and caring for and loving people. This "other-than-" (or "outside-of-") -me focus is a refreshing reminder I am part of a bigger story which is secure and hope-full, no matter how difficult Law studies may seem.

Another perspective I'm trying to develop is "the humility of learning" (a phrase from Surprised by Oxford by Carolyn Weber). As an attempting high-achiever, I've often been driven by the "need" for validation from good grades, which can produce anxiety when grades are low and other students seem smarter than me, and frustration when the learning experience (e.g. particular teaching styles or law subjects) isn't to my liking or preference. But I'm starting to realise learning is actually supposed to be a humbling process: I don't have to know the answers easily or straightaway, and high grades only matter if they reflect I've learned something – a topic, a research skill, a way of thinking – and not if they simply demonstrate I'm good at "uni" (speaking strategically in tutorials, summarising lectures, reading and writing quickly in exams, etc.). The story is much more exciting when it has a trajectory of learning, not just stagnant performing!

I also think the humility of learning can make me a better friend and fellow law student: it means I'm less negative about uni stresses (embracing the challenges rather than complaining about them) and more encouraging to others when they are finding things difficult – after all, they are very precious and important characters in the story.



LESSONS I'VE LEARNT

MY 'FEEL GOOD' PLAYLIST



Redefining “Your Best”

Natasha Farrington

We’ve all heard the term burnout; in fact, as law students, we’ve all probably felt it. With all that law school entails, we often find ourselves caught in the paradox: trying to avoid burnout while constantly striving to “do our best”.

But what actually is “our best”?

Despite what your overachiever brain might tell you, your best is not always operating at the top of your abilities all day, every day. What constitutes “your best” will change – sometimes daily. If you only have 20% to give on a certain day, then giving that 20% is doing your best.

A key part to preventing burnout is being honest with ourselves about how much we can give and being kind to ourselves when that amount is less than we’d like. If we can recognise those lower capacity days early, we can adjust our expectations and avoid the slide into burnout.

So, how do we figure out what percentage we can give on any given day? What’s your litmus test?

One of the best tests I have heard came from Hannah Darlington, one of Australia’s top female cricketers.

o check in with herself, she plays her favourite song in the car on the way to training or work. How much she sings along, whether it’s full-blown karaoke or quiet humming, helps her gauge how much energy she has to give that day. It’s simple, personal, and surprisingly effective.

So, I challenge you: what’s your litmus test?

Because once you know what you’ve got to give, you can better recognise when you’re approaching the edge. Burnout often creeps up on us. Often, we only realise we’re in it once it’s too late.

Once you’ve figured out your daily capacity, the next challenge is to be honest with yourself and with others. Your fellow law students will often be the only ones who understand what you’re going through. So, when someone asks, “How are you?” – resist the reflex of saying “I’m fine, how about you?” Say how you’re really doing. People can only help if they know what you’re going through. And trust me, doing law school alone only makes it ten times harder. Lean on those around you.

So overall, to get through law school and to avoid burning out, start by redefining what “your best” looks like. Do what you can with what you have. And on the days when that’s not much, be honest, be kind to yourself and remember, as cheesy as HSM is, we really are “all in this together”

THINGS I LOVE

There is life outside of your law degree

Natalie Brown

A law degree is a means to an end, not a be-all and end-all. There is often too much focus on achieving high marks, marks you achieve during your law degree will not define how good you are as a lawyer. Practical experience will be far more important, and after a few years of practice your grades will matter far less, and the more years of practice that pass, the less they will matter, if they matter at all. High marks don't necessarily mean the best job, building contacts and relationships during your degree, getting your toe in the door (so to speak), is probably more important. So don't focus on the grade, focus on enjoying the learning experience and critically understanding the law, that will serve you better in practice. And by 'critical' I mean questioning, you don't have to agree with the law.

Research skills, statutory interpretation, social skills, team work, attention to details, care of clients, these are skills that will define you as a lawyer, not whether you smashed the exam. We are not all exam people; it is really a separate skill and one you will only use while studying: how to extract the most relevant information and put it on paper in a limited time while stressed out. In practice you will have time, to do things thoroughly and think through problems with guidance. Personally, I was hopeless at writing essays, even though I really

tried and put in crazy amounts of work into the research, I struggled. I did understand problem questions, so it balanced out, we all have strengths and weaknesses, that is normal. In a nutshell, do not lose confidence in yourself simply because you are not great under exam conditions, or don't have great essay writing skills.

There are more important things in life that achieving high grades, take the time to maintain relationships with friends and family, do the other things you enjoy doing, make time for self-care, keeping the balance and remembering there is a life outside of study will make sure you survive your degree in one piece. A tip to making study more integrated with balance is to remember that study does not have to be at a computer or buried in a text book. Taking a walk to think through problems or discussing law with your friends over a brunch or in the sun, is also study, and very valuable study, often more efficient than what we traditionally consider 'studying'. If you feel lost and panicky mid-semester because you don't understand the topic, disheartened by marks, and fatigued by working hard and not reaching your own (often unachievable) standards, that is normal. It will be okay. Seek help when you need it, normalise what you are experiencing by sharing with your student friends, forget your law degree when you can by spending time with friends and family and doing other things you love. There is life outside of your law degree, and that life is the important one.

Make time to enjoy the 'now'

Joanne Kingsbury

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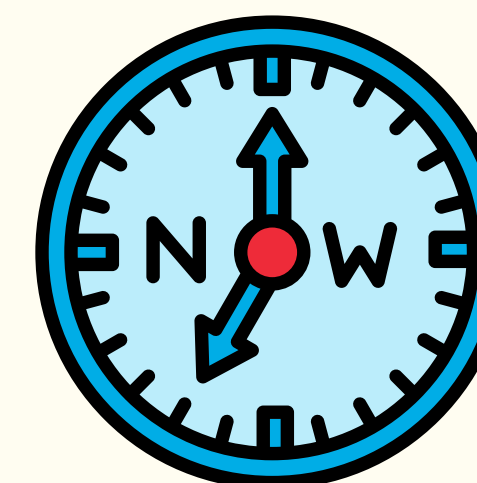
When looking back on my time at law school, what strikes me is how much time and energy students, including myself, focussed on where they wanted to be after law school and what they needed to do to get there. It is easy to become consumed with achieving all the 'requirements' that aspiring lawyers are told that they need to receive a graduate placement: excellent grades, clerkships, work experience, exciting hobbies, extracurricular pursuits, and demonstrating a variety of skills and attributes. But being overly focussed on ticking these boxes can be at the expense of the enjoying the 'now' and the broader university experience.

With the clarity of hindsight, I now see law school as far more than just a stepping stone to a graduate job and future career. Attending University is a short and unique window in life when we are mature enough to make our own decisions, but still relatively free of the demands of working life. It presents opportunities for growth and development and a certain freedom that we don't have once we enter the workforce.

When I think about university I do remember the demands of studying, assignments, exams, interviews, clerkships and also the joy of receiving a graduate placement. These achievements are important and fill me with a sense of pride and satisfaction.

But what also stands out are the moments beyond academics that enriched my university experience, such as being a student representative on the Blackstone Committee organising and attending social and career events for the student community. These activities provided much needed breaks from study, allowing me to enjoy the 'now', and lean into the university experience.

If I could give any advice to law students it would be to balance your academic pursuits with other activities that university has to offer and make time to enjoy the 'now'. It will enrich your law school journey with a sense of belonging, community and camaraderie, boost your wellbeing and create lasting friendships and memories.



HOBBIES

Shivani
Dharmananda

One of the best pieces of advice I was given when I started law school was to carve out time for hobbies or activities completely unrelated to law. While it may seem quite obvious and simple, putting it into practise, especially during exams or peak assignment periods can be a bit difficult. When study seems to take over every part of your life, maintaining that balance can be tricky, but it is important.

It is easy to feel like every spare moment should go towards reading another case or preparing for exams, but I've found that taking out time for something that is light, and enjoyable helps me reset and come back to study more focused. For me it's things like crocheting, reading or baking, but of course it doesn't have to be that. I have friends who play team sports, play music, knit, golf, hike, garden or swim.

The point is that doing something just for enjoyment isn't a waste of time. You shouldn't have to 'earn' your break. Prioritising rest, creativity or simply doing something for fun makes law school far more sustainable and liveable. In the long run, taking care of your well-being is just as important as achieving your academic goals.



Advice for Law School

Ben Cooke

Law school is definitely difficult, with innumerable ups and downs along the way, but at the end of every semester there is an extraordinary sense of accomplishment and reward for the effort that was required to reach it that makes it worthwhile.

It is very important to make friends in your cohort, because it makes the experience infinitely more tolerable. Times like the intensive units at the start of each semester, or the long days and evenings studying for exams or completing assignments, go far quicker when you get to do it in the company of people you can talk, complain and laugh with. These are also going to be the people you enter the profession with, so the connections you make may prove valuable and lasting. You will also want to refine your study techniques, as the workload is much greater than in undergrad for most people, requiring you to be both more efficient and effective in your study. Another key is to be consistent, whether it be watching lectures the week they are given so you can prepare for tutorials, effectively enabling you to go over the content twice in a short span of time, or beginning the preparation of your notes in advance of the study break. It is very easy to fall behind and begin to feel overwhelmed, so ensure you set aside sufficient time each week for study.

Finally, take care of yourself because law school is demanding and it's easy to feel burned out. Make sure to set aside time for exercise and relaxation. I have found that healthy habits such as regular sleep, sport and catching up with friends can significantly impact your focus and productivity over the long semesters. The Blackstone Society makes this much easier by running events throughout the year that allow you to socialise and unwind.

Trust the process, and take breaks

Kimberley Renner

Look, law school is a lot. On the one hand, it's interesting, fun, and exciting—and on the other, it's rigorous, complicated, and at times downright confusing. Sometimes you'll sit in the lecture theatre and everything clicks, and it feels easy. Other times, you'll reread the same passage of a case three times over and still feel like your brain is buffering.

And that's okay.

Law school has this way of making us think that if we're not always on top of things—always working and always understanding—then we're falling behind. But it's important to remember: law is a marathon, so don't treat it like a sprint. Doing so is a one-way ticket to burnout.

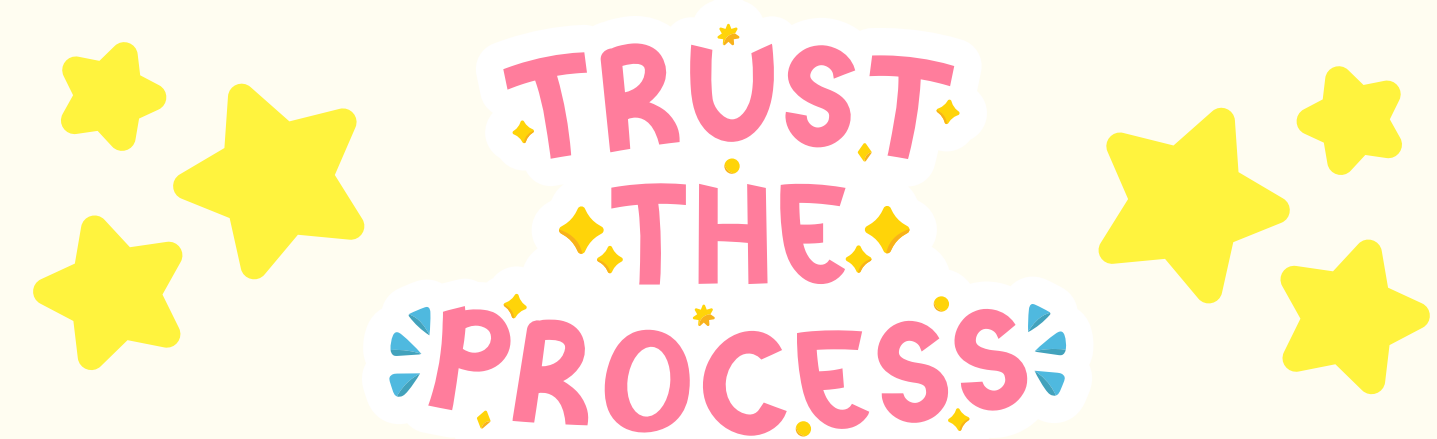
While the classic 'take a break' advice can sound cliché, it truly is important and—as I've learned in the past year or so—it's a skill that needs to be learned and practiced. It's not just about stepping away for a moment, but about knowing what actually recharges you. It could be baking, knitting, sports, or—for me—walking my dog, but the key is to find the thing that clears your head and takes you out of 'law mode', so you can come back to study with fresh eyes.

Something I used to particularly struggle with was recognising when to take a break. I'd sit at my desk for hours thinking I was being productive, only to catch myself zoning out and staring blankly at a wall. One technique that's really helped me is setting a stopwatch when I study. If I reach for my phone and see that it's only been four minutes, that's my cue—it's time to step away.

Another thing that's helped me is a piece of advice Justice Beech gave us in a lecture. He told us to remember that 'when things don't make sense, it's not always your fault.' That sometimes it's easy to think that you just don't 'get it', but really the law is messy and doesn't always hang together so well. And while that isn't true in 100% of cases, it's true often enough to keep as a reminder in the back of your head. Just because you feel like you aren't understanding doesn't mean you actually aren't, it just means you're engaging with complexity.

And that leads me to my final—and probably most important—piece of advice I've received: back yourself. This is something a close friend of mine tells me often, and it's something I come back to even more. In law, there often is no 'right answer' per se. It's a field of interpretation, arguments, and reasoning. So, trust that your perspective has value and that your reasoning has strength—even if it's different from what your peers are saying. The way you think about an issue is probably just as valid.

Remember to be kind to yourself, and you almost always know more than you think.



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