

Ep 5. Time management and self care in LS .mp3

Carlos: Closed captioning for this episode is available thanks to the Office of Disability Service at the Syracuse University College of Law. Good afternoon, everyone, welcome to S Obsessions. My name is Masago. I'm a rising tool here at Syracuse University

Elizabeth: And my name is Elizabeth Boswell and I'm a rising 3L And today we're discussing time management and self care in law school. So let's get right into it. Let's start with time management. So what's your typical schedule like?

Carlos: So I'm usually pretty ambitious. I like to do most of my reading on Sunday and then I outline as the week progresses, I normally finish outlining on Friday. So if I have a bunch of morning classes, I'll outline in the afternoon. If I have a bunch of afternoon classes I usually like to outline in the morning,

Elizabeth: I hear you. You've got to find a rhythm that works for you. My first semester of law school after classes, I'd work a bit, then I'd hang out with my friends and relax more in the evenings, but then I'd have to work a lot more on Saturday and Sunday of this past. Master wanted weekends to myself with like no law school. It's all over from like Friday evening until class again Monday morning. But that meant I had to work until nine or 10 some evenings. That worked for me. But like, you've just got to find your own rhythm, I guess. Yeah.

Carlos: I mean, look, I hear you, and that makes a lot of sense. You take some of your days off, I think usually Saturday off. So Friday afternoons, like Sunday morning, I'm not really a functioning law student, but generally speaking, that means that my weeks are usually pretty tight. I think one of the misconceptions is that in law school, you have to work 24/7 and you're busy 24/7 and there's no time to eat, no time to sleep, no the time for yourself. That's not necessarily true. You know, even, you know, everybody listening. You're going to get a syllabus and it's going to tell you how many hours before to allocate to each class. It's usually two to three hours per credit. So if a class is two credits, they'll tell you, you know, four to, I guess four to four hours, let's say four hours. Right. Four to six hours that you're dedicated to studying outside. Even if you take it and

you add all those up, taking a 16 credit, let's say that's about forty eight hours worth of studying on top of it, that's only comes out to like sixty four hours. There's still a bunch more hours during the week that you can unwind, exercise and really get a bunch of the stuff that you like to do out of the way.

Elizabeth: Yeah, definitely. And like that was something a misconception I had when I started law school too. I thought I would be super, super busy all the time. And then, like, I, I would do all of my work and then I'd have free time and I would feel like I was doing something wrong or be like, oh, am I missing something because I've got free time still. I just didn't think I'd have any. But I mean, it's really important, actually, just like as part of a self care thing to, like, really soak up that free time and really Milkha and like, you should take time away from law school or else you'd go crazy, like make an effort to make time for the things you like. So, like, I'm like super into this for you in pub, just like every weekend I would like take time on like Saturday or Sunday to make sure I like a few games and just to get away from the books and stuff. Some of my friends like are very into going out to eat. So like they always make time to do it or like whatever you like, going to the gym or like playing a sport or like doing art stuff like whatever gets you away from thinking about the law, I guess for sure.

Carlos: Look where we're going to be here for the next. Well, I'm here for the next two years, you're here for the next few months, and everybody else is going to be there for the next three years, if your time over the next two years is only doing lost stuff, you're going to be miserable. So I set a time I set aside a day, a week, about twenty four hours each week. I don't count, obviously, evenings when you're done studying everybody, we don't have to lie. Everybody watches that one episode of that random show on Netflix, 30 minutes, the office part, whatever it is you like and you're trying to get it out. But I think it's important not to overwork yourself because at some point you're actually working backwards. There is a point of diminishing returns where. You've been working for X amount of hours, you're actually not getting anything now, have you ever had that experience where you've been reading all day and now you're just reading the same paragraph over and over again and you're not getting anything? You're basically done mentally?

Elizabeth: Oh, definitely. Like, there's some some days I wake up at like eight in the morning and just start working and then I'll work all day. And then, like by like nine or ten o'clock I'll be like, oh, I'll be like, oh, I have like two more pages left. I'm so close to being done. And then like I just end up reading the same paragraph over and over again and I didn't read it at all. And then like at that point I'm just like, even if I have two pages left and I'm so close to being done, I just need to step away from it because I'm, like, not absorbing anything at this point and it's not productive.

Carlos: Yeah. Do you, um, do you keep a planner?

Elizabeth: Oh, no, I don't keep a planner. I for a while I would just write things down on Post-it notes in each of my so I have a folder for each class and then I would just like write what I have coming up on a Post-it note, but then I just kind of ditch that. And for the most part I just like try to remember everything and I usually do. So it's not like a huge deal. And plus, like in law school, there's not like a lot of like assignments. Yeah. So to speak. So it's not like I have to remember, I like to do homework or something because anything that you have to turn in, like you're reminded of plenty of times in advance. So it's not like you can forget to do stuff in law school as much as like undergrad. Yeah. Um, but like for important like events and stuff, I just keep it in the calendar on my phone, but I've never been a planner person. I'm not disciplined enough to keep a planner.

Carlos: I mean I've seen people with the hourly planners. I just recently started doing that this summer. We'll see how it goes that drags on or like the day to day planners, because so much of what I'm going on and I would say something that I've heard from a few people is that if you find yourself in situations where you're working so much on, you're forgetting to do stuff like eat or exercise or give yourself free time. Maybe if you have a planner, you can plan those stuff in. So the same way you would plan in classes on appointment. Now you have an appointment to eat something, an appointment to, you know, maybe thirty minutes at the other day to read something that's not law based or an appointment to go and do something fun, hiking, rock climbing, whatever it is that you like to do, because the pressure of law school so much that if you don't set aside time to rest, you can easily just never actually do that.

Elizabeth: Yeah, definitely. I know that there have been times where I just, like, plow through a whole week without taking time to myself just because, like like you said, I didn't plan to take time away from myself. And so I just ended up doing work stuff the whole time. And then I end up being really burnt out at the end of the week and wondering why.

Carlos: So, yeah, I mean I mean, I've felt that let's say that at the end of finals. You've been studying for most likely a few weeks, and I mean, this is the environment we're cramming as difficult. So I can't say you've been studying this night before, even studying for a few weeks by the end of finals week or the end of midterms, we normally the fatigue hits pretty bad. And that's kind of like a small a small piece of the bigger puzzle. If you are doing that every week of the whole semester and you're burnt out every weekend and you're feeling the effects every week and eventually it ends up building up, which is why I self care time management so important like some days. Things aren't going to go your way. There are some days I've had days where I plan on studying, I'll start studying for a few hours and I and my mind is just like not having it. And I'm like this because I will study for X amount of days for today. I kind of just need to relax a little bit and recharge. Yeah. And then other days things are going extremely well. Just you have to be content with yourself. Remember that tomorrow's a new day and you can, you'll be OK. You'll be OK. But if you're too unkind to yourself and you work your way to the bone, your body's kind of what in your mind is what you need. So if you're physically not there, you can't really be mentally all there to then do finals two exams and do all of that kind of stuff.

Elizabeth: Yeah. And like, I have a problem or I'll forget to eat or drink water and then like hours later I'll be like in a brain fog and I'll be like, I wonder what's wrong with me. It's just like I didn't eat all day. That's why I can't think so. I have to remind myself to eat. So Bulik and like other people need to remind themselves to study. So I guess it just depends on like what you need to do and what works for you. But I think a big part of like time management and like more for self care honestly, is making sure that you do manage your time because like, there are some people who wait in line to like the end of the semester and then like the last three weeks of school, they're so stressed and

like, that's not good self care because you just weren't planning. And like, if you had planned better, then you would be in a better position at the end of the semester. So I think they just kind of go hand in hand sometimes because you just need to think about your future self as much as you do thinking about your now self,

Carlos: Because the the all of the work piles up. So if you're not planning the right way and you're not doing certain things the beginning of the semester, it's not like you're never going to have to do certain things. You're going to eventually have to do them, especially if you want to continue being a student. So if you're not studying at the beginning, the plan can't be. I'm just never going to do because if you do overdo it, you're not going to do well academically. So eventually you have to study. And if that's all of the outlining is piled up until the end or let's say you did pre read and you want to read for a whole class an hour before class starts and we know how bad some of the information are, how complex some information are. It can come back to bite you and sometimes the worst way.

Elizabeth: Mm hmm. Yeah. Um, I think. I a that I do to manage my time is I always try to read whatever I have like three or four days that and like maybe that's too early for some people I know, like some classes, especially like when the professors get behind on the material, it's too far ahead. But like, just because I like to give myself a time cushion, like in case like I have an emergency, like the day before class and I end up having to do something all day and I can't read. So that way I don't fall too far behind and end up like cold called on something I didn't read. So that's something I, I do to do to manage my time better. Some people like to read like right before class because then it's fresh in their head and like that's great for them. It's just not what works for me.

Carlos: I so I'll read a couple of days before and then I'll skim it right before class. But it's not I'm not reading before class. It's a quick skim. Like I literally look at the names of cases, some larger points. If I if there's enough time, that's the time where I maybe watch a Quamby about a case because now I've read about it already. I know it's about let me just see a snapshot before class just to jog my memory. But I know that for me seeing it twice normally helps if it's too many days before. If I get called on I'm like, look, I don't even like the average study day. If you read on a Sunday for class that's coming

on Tuesday, let's say you ready for that class at the beginning of Sunday. Then you did a bunch of stuff after that. It's like, yeah, you've essentially suppressed the memory, you don't even know if Monday's hectic, so I like to do a quick skim right before class, at least at the very least, I want to know the cases. Right. Because, you know, there's a bunch of stuff in between, whether it's like talking points, doctrinal overview, review questions. At least one other case is just so I know. Great. If I get called on, at the very least, I'll know what's going on of the cases. If it's an abstract question, maybe I won't know. But if I know the cases, I can kind of put the pieces together. Is there any piece of advice, like a single piece of advice that you wish you can tell your one self?

Elizabeth: Hmm, I guess so for me, I would say go to office hours more because I don't know, I was like afraid to go to office hours. I never really went to office hours in undergrad. So it was just like a foreign concept to me. And like, I eventually understood everything enough. Like I'm doing fine in law school. But like, I don't know, I think I would have been able to get there more quickly if I had not been stubborn and just gone office hours. But like, I know part of me was, like, embarrassed that I didn't understand because, like, maybe I'm stupid because I don't understand and I don't belong in law school. But many professors are there to help you and like, they want to help you for the most part. And like, I don't know why I didn't utilize that tool sooner. And it would have been better for my stress level if I had just asked for help and sort of forced myself to figure it out.

Carlos: I think something that helped me, what I would tell myself is actually look back and assess if you actually did everything useful to do that, because there's like a habit of, well, if I miss something and then the class ended, I, I don't look at it again. And mentally, it's like, well, no, I probably shouldn't look at it now that I have the time. So I think a good habit that I would have gotten into sooner would be at the end of the week, looking back at the week and going that I miss doing anything, is there anything I could have done better? Because then in that way, every week I can get better. But if you're not changing every week by week, which life is always changing, then you can almost find you can build on bad habits without ever reviewing any sort of self reflection, like an honest self reflection, not like a fake self reflection, like I'm doing great. And it's like, no, you're not. You haven't studied like you've gotten every question wrong. You're not really

doing great. So what's like what what can I adjust in my time management or looking back, like you mentioned, forgetting to eat like all of us do that I, I look back and be like, why did I eat out every day this week? I got this food now and I'm like, oh, it's because I was managing my time crappy. I was probably studying really, really, I'm really late. I was super stressed and my reaction to that was, well, I deserve that. I deserve to eat a certain kind of weight right now. So those kind of stuff helps. And then, you know, I mean, if I can go back in time and tell him, maybe he'd probably have gotten one more A or something like that. I don't know. I don't know. Is that it? I feel like they they might be tired of hearing us talking or we might have missed something. But I think another thing is that everybody's different. Right.

Elizabeth: And so, like, what works for, like, you and me won't work for other people. And like, none of this is like you have to do something this way and everyone's going to tell you something different. Like if you, like, pull a bunch of different people out of a classroom and law school, they're all going to tell you something different. And none of them are right. And you just have to take the time to figure out what works for you, because law school is such a different environment than anything you've probably been in before. So like as stressed as you're going to be, like, just make sure to take time to, like, breathe and do something that's not law school related and. And just remind yourself that it's OK that you're new with us because like everyone's new and you're not expected to know exactly what you're doing at the beginning.

Carlos: Yeah, I mean, the only people who graduated law school are the professors. So like I like. So you're in class. No one else in your class actually graduated law school before, like, they're all there because they don't know. So take comfort in the fact that, you know, even though somebody might appear to know everything, you know, we're all here because we're here to learn and we're all trying to figure out a day at a time. Hopefully this session has been really helpful and I'll be around campus. Was able to be around campus. Yeah, definitely. You guys if you guys recognize my voice and somehow find us,

Elizabeth: If you have, like, any other questions or just need someone to tell you that it's going to be OK, you can reach out to us and we'll be happy to help.

Carlos: Yeah, perfect. Talk to you guys.

Elizabeth: Thanks for listening.