



# BEING GUIDE

2021 EDITION

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## ADVICE FROM ONE OF OUR LAWYERS – BUILDING RESILIENCE

My name is Clinton Bonomelli and after completing four six-month rotations across various practice areas in Australia and the United Arab Emirates during my Graduate Program, I became a settled Associate in 2019 in the Corporate Mergers and Acquisitions Projects Team at Clifford Chance in Sydney.

I have a few quick tips and tricks for **maintaining wellbeing in adjusting out of a graduate role and into the role** of fully fledged lawyer!\* (Subject to the practicing restrictions of your relevant jurisdiction).



### ***“Control the controllables” and ownership***

It is important to immerse yourself in the role by taking ownership of key deliverables. Lawyers are constantly battling with maintaining control; whether that be what happens with incoming work from seniors, clients or counterparties (people just do stuff!).

I would say, focus on what you can control and be the master of your domain, control the controllables and let the other stuff happen. A large part of this involves being organised, knowing when to elevate issues, ask for help and delegate workflow.



### ***Connected, involved together***

Being social, visible, out and about and connected is important at the beginning of your career. This connection and involvement could come in numerous combinations/packages whether that be through attending conferences, maintaining specific hobbies and personal goals. Get involved with pro bono initiatives, contribute to ideas and knowledge at your firm, seek out and attend special purpose conferences and drive firm initiatives.

Being an agent for change brings a lot of satisfaction, both personally and collectively. It only takes a few crucial fearless individuals to shape an entire culture. Be visible, social and vocal.



### ***Destressing***

Drink heaps and heaps of water, get out of the office at least once per day and exercise. It is key to develop good routines and avoid slipping into bad ones (the edgy coffee-alcohol cycle).

I tend to destress by breaking up time, allocating myself rewards when I reach thresholds, having things to look forward to and planning ahead. *Please remember to take leave as well.*



### ***Perspective***

A wise person recently prophesised “*Don’t doubt ur vibe Because it’s true*”. There is a lot of truth in these words. It is important to maintain life perspective and keep aware of the possibilities out there.

At the risk of sounding like a LinkedIn boomer with a sentence for their ‘job title’: try not to think of a career as a singular 60-year mortgage because there are many segments and forms a career may take!

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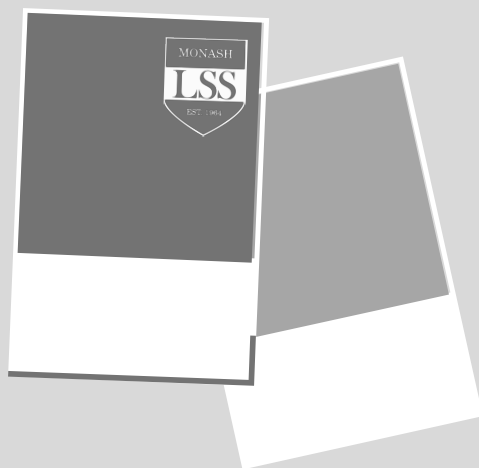
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# Forewords

**The Monash LSS Being Guide is incredibly important for law students.**

As a student body highly prone to burn out, stress and anxiety, we must all look out for each other and for ourselves. We must care for our mental health as we do our physical health and our careers! It is important to note that it is okay to not be okay. It's normal to feel stressed. However, when stress starts to affect your life, we need to look at how we can enjoy our lives more fully and I encourage everyone to reach out for help, because it can go a long way.

I would like to thank Clayton Utz and Clifford Chance for their support in the creation and publication of the Being Guide. I would also like to acknowledge the incredible work of the Education Publications Officer, Liz Walker, the Health and Wellbeing Officer, Natalie Barbazza, and the Education subcommittee. This Guide would be impossible without their contributions.

**Megan Liew**

*Director of Education*

**Balancing your mental, emotional and physical health and wellbeing is more important than ever.**

Law school and the legal profession as a whole are renowned for its pressures, stresses and competitive nature, which is why it is crucial that we normalise having conversations about our mental health and overall wellbeing. I encourage you to check in with one another, listen with an open mind, and most importantly look after yourself. It is okay to ask for help, and there are so many resources available to you both at Monash and externally.

The LSS Health and Wellbeing Portfolio are running a variety of events and activities this year providing a space for law students to wind down from study and university life, and to recognise the importance of health and wellbeing. We have our therapy dogs, Boof and Kaz, visiting each week, 'Wellness Wednesday' events, Morning Teas, Mindfulness sessions and seminars.

The Being Guide is an amazing resource and I encourage you to read through all the valuable tips and tricks shared by Liz and the Education subcommittee.

**Natalie Barbazza**

*Health & Wellbeing Officer*

# Forewords

Doing your best is what matters – everything else that comes your way is a bonus.

These are words that I have both struggled to live by over the course of my degree, but ones which have provided comfort whenever I have felt like I haven't reached my potential or feel a bit lost. Wellbeing is so much more than caring for your physical, mental and emotional health. Wellbeing entails a positive outlook on yourself and on the world. This often becomes challenging to maintain amidst the pressures we face at law school, in our careers and beyond.

Setting short term goals refocusses your attention and brings back that "joie de vie" that we often neglect in favour of our studies. Remember, goals are malleable and moveable. More importantly, while it is important to have certain academic or career goals in mind, focussing on yourself comes first. Without the focus being on ourselves, we may find ourselves constantly reaching for something more and missing out on enjoying the moment and the wins we do achieve.

Do your best, give your all and be true to yourself.

**Liz Walker**

*Publications (Education) Officer*

**BEING...**  
**HEALTHY**



Alicia Loftus

# Staying Motivated

There comes a point in each semester where motivation starts to dwindle. What may have been a great head start slowly becomes harder to maintain, particularly as assignments and exams loom. Readings get harder to maintain as assignments call for research and suddenly you find yourself stuck under the weight of it all. This is absolutely and completely normal!

After 5 years here at Monash, I can honestly say that it is critical to ensure that you have a 'break glass in case of emergency' motivational booster. Although mine often includes multiple viewings of Legally Blonde, there are many other ways to make sure you can remain focused on your classes.

With that in mind, here are some suggestions on how to get back on track when you feel your motivation slipping:

## Tip One

### **Break down large tasks into smaller chunks**

If you find yourself continually procrastinating, make a list of every small task that needs to be done. Oftentimes by breaking down a larger task into smaller, bite sized pieces, it is easier to finish it. Actually ticking items off a to do list also helps. The feeling of completion can be very soothing!

## Tip Two

### **Keeping on top of coursework**

Assignments and exam prep is difficult, but by blocking out a specific time to complete notes and readings, it means that there is less work to be done during SWOTVAC. Less work = (hopefully) less stress!

## Tip Three

### **Be smart about the notes you take during the semester**

There are plenty of resources available about cutting down reading and note taking time. The Monash Law Library website is a great place to start. Alternatively, why not peruse YouTube tutorials or online Podcasts on how to effectively take notes and comprehend reading material? Remember, studying does not have to mean reading every textbook cover to cover.

## Tip Four

### **Stay social**

Scheduling in coffee breaks, going for a walk or grabbing a bite to eat with your friends naturally helps to relieve stress. Additionally, taking a break and unwinding means that you can reapproach your tasks with a clear, focused head.

## Tip Five

### **Drinking plenty of water!**

It's a fantastic way to keep the brain fuzz from appearing. Not to mention that having to refill a drink bottle allows for some quick breaks throughout the day, too.

Although by Week 8 or 9 you may feel overwhelmed with due dates and assignments, there are support mechanisms in place to help you out. Check the Library website, talk to your peers and even your lecturers or tutors – they are human and appreciate transparency! Of course, if you feel overwhelmed, always remember that Student Services are there for you for special consideration if need be.

**Keep the motivation train going steady throughout the semester – you can do it!**

Caryna Ha

# Eat Well, Be Well

## Easy recipes for student living.

Here are two quick and easy recipes to add to your arsenal! For other tasty ideas, the internet is your best friend! Gone are the days of buying expensive and bulky cookbooks only to open them once; online recipe blogs and Youtube videos cover every cuisine imaginable!



## ASIAN STYLE SOBA NOODLE SALAD

This quick noodle salad is great as a side or as a quick alternative to rice. With the freedom to serve the dish both warm or cold, this makes it a great option to prepare as a packed lunch for uni or work!

**Serves:** 4 (as a side)

**Preparation time:** 10 minutes

**Cooking time:** 10 minutes

### Ingredients

- 200g Dried soba noodles (buckwheat noodles)
- 1 tbsp Toasted sesame seeds
- 125g Sweet corn kernels, rinsed and drained
- 2 Green onions (scallions), chopped

### Dressing

- 1 tbsp Neutral flavoured oil (canola, vegetable, grapeseed etc.)
- 3 tbsp Toasted sesame oil
- 2 tbsp Soy sauce
- 1 tbsp Rice wine vinegar
- 1 tbsp Honey (or another sweetener, eg. agave)
- 2 tsp Red pepper flakes (optional)

*Pair with your favourite protein and whatever vegetables you have on hand for an easy lunch.*

**Serving suggestions:** teriyaki chicken, steamed bok choy or broccoli.

### Method

1. Bring a large pot of water to the boil and prepare soba noodles according to the directions. This should take around 4-5 minutes and the noodles should be just cooked through.
2. Drain noodles in a colander and rinse with cold water to remove excess starch. Transfer noodles to a large bowl and set aside.
3. Combine ingredients for dressing in a separate bowl. Add to noodles along with corn kernels and toss to combine.
4. Top with sesame seeds and scallions.

For both students and families, finding the time to prepare meals can seem like a constant struggle, but cheap and healthy meals don't have to take a long time to prepare! Not only is it more cost-efficient than ordering takeaway, but cooking also gives you the peace of mind of knowing exactly what's in your food.

Perfect as a snack or ready to be dressed up into a brunch dish, these crispy fritters are quick to whip up and a great way to boost vegetable intake!

## ZUCCHINI FRITTERS

**Serves:** 2

**Preparation time:** 20 Minutes

**Cook time:** 10 Minutes

### Ingredients

- 3 Medium sized zucchinis, approx. 400g, grated
- ½ cup (75g) Plain flour
- ½ cup (40g) Grated parmesan
- 2 Spring onions (chopped, white and green parts included)
- 1 Egg, whisked
- 2 cloves Garlic, minced
- 2 tbsp Olive oil
- 2 Sprigs Thyme, chopped



### Method

1. Place grated zucchini in a bowl. Lightly sprinkle with salt and set aside for 10 minutes.
2. After, squeeze out excess moisture and drain completely. Transfer to a new bowl.
3. Stir in flour, parmesan, spring onions, egg, garlic and thyme and mix until combined.
4. Heat olive oil in a large pan over medium-high heat. Scoop in a three-tablespoon mound of batter for each fritter and flatten with a spatula. Cook until the underside is golden brown—approximately 2-3 minutes. Flip and cook on the other side for about 1-2 minutes.
5. Serve immediately by themselves or dress up with salsa, eggs done to your liking, or anything else you fancy!

Liz Walker

# Snacks to Sustain



*Find yourself reaching for the chocolate and chips far too often?  
Don't have enough time on your hands to prepare a nutritious snack?*

'Yes, Liz, I get it', I hear you say.... 'Healthy options are important'... 'Life is too short to not indulge'... Valid. And I hear you, meal preparation and planning ahead can be hard and it can be draining.

I do have some good news for you though. It does not have to be hard or draining. Spend a few minutes at the start of your week sorting out your snacks and you'll be saying no to that junk food in no time.

Here are my top healthier and easier snack options for when you're craving a tasty treat. When you're craving that ice cream, hot chips or croissant, try some of the below:

1. **Trail Mix** - this is a combination that you can create yourself, or you can purchase packs from a supermarket. I recommend making serving-sized packs that you can grab and take to work or uni.
2. **Frozen Mango** - this is fantastic post-dinner dessert or as a snack between meals. Healthy but filling, and with all the nutritional benefits of a serving of fruit!
3. **Greek yogurt** - for those who enjoy ice cream, this is one to try. Pair it with some berries, fruit or jam for a healthy post-dinner feed.
4. **Carrot or celery sticks (and dips!)**: transportable and quick, cut up your vege of choice, package up a dip and take it on the go!
5. **Fruit** - all you need to know is: *see fruit, buy fruit, eat fruit*. The rest is history. It is not hard.
6. **Cheese**: an underrated snack on its own and one that will keep your stomach full and your body full of energy. Plus, who doesn't like cheese? Either a block cut into sticks or cubes, or a slice works a treat with some crackers.
7. **Edamame**: slightly sweet but a lot of salt, edamame will attack that chip craving you have with one mouthful.
8. **Almonds & dark chocolate**: get your sugar hit and protein source all in one. This amazing combo is easy and quick - a block of dark chocolate and packet of almonds will conquer any mid-day sugar craving.

Jessie Wen

# Gimme a Break!



With the many hours of case summaries and assignments, it can be easy to experience burn out, otherwise known as 'study fatigue'. Taking breaks is essential to refresh the mind and help you stay motivated to complete work.

Studies have shown that taking breaks works more effectively for academic performance than pushing through long sessions where your focus can diminish drastically. It also helps to alleviate stress that can contribute to serious health concerns such as anxiety and depression.

Different techniques work for different people, but here are a few options to go off:

## Ultradian rhythm 90:20

If you prefer longer concentration followed by a lengthy break, the ultradian is for you! 'Ultradian', meaning 'many times a day', refers to the natural rhythm our brain goes through each day - 90 minutes of high intensity brain activity followed by 20 minutes of down time. Looking out for the times during the day when you feel less motivated, fatigued, or slow might be an indication of your own natural rhythm.

90 minutes of study can be great for catching up on missed lectures, or enough time to deeply engage with textbook readings. Whilst many people tend to ignore this natural rhythm, taking advantage of it may be highly beneficial for greater productivity and performance.

## The Pomodoro method 25:5

For some, taking short breaks frequently helps break down long hours of study into bite-size chunks. The Pomodoro works by setting a 25-minute timer for work each time and taking a 5-minute break in between. After 4 "Pomodoro's", you can reward yourself with a longer 15-30 min break.

Think of it as a study sprint, helping you divvy up complex assignments and tasks into manageable and achievable periods of time. This method might be good for procrastinators who find it hard to get started on huge projects, or those who get easily distracted.

## Traditional

Studies in neuroscience tell us that the average attention span lasts around 40 minutes on average. Therefore, you might prefer to mimic traditional lecture times, opting for 40-50 minutes of study with 10-minute breaks.

So what do you do during your break?

Depending on the length, you can go for a quick snack, or fit a workout in. Maybe do a quick tidy up of your study area if necessary. The goal is to get yourself up and moving, get some fresh air, and give your brain some time to rest and regenerate.

Overall, it's important to **do what feels best for your mind and body**. Take advantage of productive study hours, whether that be in the morning or afternoon. If there's another study method that you prefer to use, go for it!

Evie Belcher

# Staying positive!

*Attitude is a little thing that makes a **big** difference*

We often describe intellect, aptitude and skill as markers of success, but really the focus should be on an individual's attitude. Our mindset is a choice; something we can learn to develop and grow compared to the permanency of mere talent. Rewiring the brain to nurture an optimistic mindset reduces our vulnerability to trauma and failure and is fundamental in maintaining mental health and wellbeing. Positive thinking increases cognition, enhances creativity, lowers rates of depression and ultimately prevents us from labelling ourselves as 'not good enough', allowing life to appear full of possibilities. But how does one grow a positive mind?

## **Find the good in a bad situation –**

Train your brain to find a positive outcome in every undesirable situation. For example, if you're stuck in traffic, appreciate that you'll have time to listen to your favourite song or podcast. If you receive a disappointing mark on an assignment, acknowledge the opportunity to take feedback on board to improve for next time.

## **Practice altruism –**

Altruism involves improving the lives of others, often without recognition or praise. By radiating kindness and generosity towards others without expecting anything in return, we improve the quality of our lives and learn to make personal sacrifices for others.

## **Keep a gratitude journal –**

Writing down three things you're grateful for each day will force you to appreciate the good things that happened, rather than dwell on the bad. It's also a wonderful way to keep track of happy memories which you can reflect on in years to come.

## **Surround yourself with uplifting people –**

Try to connect with people who radiate positivity, as opposed to people who complain or gossip. If you consistently spend time with people who view the world 'glass half empty', you'll find yourself doing the same.

## **Be present –**

If you focus on the past, or live for the future, then you'll find yourself underutilising the present time. By appreciating each exact moment that is happening you'll eliminate sources of negativity which arise from the past or anxieties about the future.

## **Acknowledge your language –**

It's important to practice positive self-talk, given how easily we develop negative conceptions of ourselves. For example, instead of thinking "I'm so bad at exams," consider thinking "I'm glad each subject has an exam as I'll get better at sitting them."

Caryna Ha

# Budgeting 101



It's never too late to commit to improving your financial wellbeing! With the greater independence offered by university, now is a great time to get on top of budgeting and set yourself up for better financial habits in the long term. Whilst I've made every effort to be accurate and concise, this guide is merely meant to be a starting point; everyone's situation is different and there are plenty more resources available online and in print material which can give a far more in-depth explanation of the concepts listed here.

## What is Budgeting?

A budget is a spending plan to determine in advance where and what you will spend your money on. This process will allow you to ensure that you always have enough money for the things that you need, and you can even make allowances to help meet saving goals for the future. But how do we set out a budget in the first place?

Step 1: To get started, we must first list out all expected fixed incomes and expenses over a month. Set these out on paper or on a spreadsheet to help you keep track. Income will include things like working wages, Centrelink payments or any allowance that you receive, and expenses are likely to include rent, utilities, groceries, internet or phone bills. These examples are non-exhaustive and will be different for each person. Identify how much you have leftover.

Step 2: In order to get the most out of the budgeting process, we should identify some goals. Why are you choosing to budget? Do you have a specific purpose you're saving for? (eg. a new phone, a holiday). Calculate how much to put aside for it each month, which can be done simply by analysing the total cost and then dividing it by the length of time available to save.

Otherwise, keep track of the purchases you are making over a monthly period by using tools such as a mobile tracker app. Analysing your spending can help to identify habits you have, for example, a daily coffee spend or impulse online purchases. After this, calculate the total amount of spending you did over the period. Was this more than income?

Step 3: Armed with this knowledge, we can work out our budget. Start with fixed expenses, then set out an amount of money to spend on discretionary purchases, making sure to account for any saving goals you may have.

Step 4: Keep track of your habits and spending, whether this be through tracking receipts or using technology to help. A budget is only going to be useful if you are planning on sticking to it!

Step 5: Putting in place measures to reward yourself can help set you up for long term success! 'Gamifying' the process and rewarding yourself for being able to stick to your goals may potentially boost morale and motivation. For example, including allowances for a special night out or even a mini vacation. Additionally, even though it's important to stick to your budget, a level of flexibility is equally paramount. Sometimes life happens and unexpected things arise; taking a step back to reassess your financial situation can help to alleviate financial pressure.

Sinali Ratnayake

# Structuring Your Day

When it comes to work-life balance, students can often fall into two categories: students who study constantly without an adequate break, and students who often procrastinate and are unable to work productively.

While there are many ways to find the right balance for you, having a structure to your day of study can be a good starting point.

## **Start off with the hardest task**

One of the main reasons for procrastination is to avoid the tasks that are either long or take the most brainpower. Leaving such tasks to the end of the day guarantees unnecessary stress, and means that it will likely be pushed into the workload planned for the next day. Instead, by doing work that you find the most difficult at the start of the day, you will feel more accomplished and can allow time for relaxation.

## **Allow for room to be flexible**

It can sound counterintuitive to allow for leeway when planning a study day, but having a fixed study schedule is also a common issue. It can be difficult sometimes to predict the exact amount of time it will take to complete a task, so a rigid and timed schedule may prevent you from finishing work or even make you feel unaccomplished for not sticking to such a schedule. However, it is important to note that rigid scheduling may work for certain people, so it is important to adapt your study habits to what works best for you.

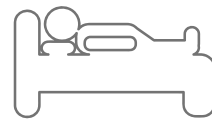
## **Write it down and stick to it!**

Once you have figured out everything you want to do within your chosen time frame, whether that be within a day, week or month, write it down! While it sounds obvious, many people rely on just remembering everything they need to do, which is always a risky move. By writing down your schedule and even putting it up somewhere, you are more likely to follow through with your plan and be more productive.



Jessie Wen

# Time to Sleep



As law students, it is likely that many of us are familiar with the woes of late-night cramming and early mornings. In a schedule jam packed with law readings, a part time job, and extracurricular activities, (and if you're like me, meaningful time spent on Spotify and Netflix) sleep often becomes the one thing we tend to sacrifice—and yet, it might be one of the most crucial parts of our day.

*How so?* Well sleep plays a huge role in our overall mental and physical wellbeing. During sleep, our body is working to repair bodily functions and support brain health, getting us ready for the new day. It also plays a crucial role in learning and memory consolidation, which helps us store all those relevant statutes and cases that our brain has 'encoded' during the day.

The circadian rhythm is the mastermind behind our sleep cycle, running in conjunction with each rotation of the Earth. As a 'body clock' which sends signals to the brain, it takes note of multiple factors including light exposure, temperature, and exercise. As the sun sets, the rhythm kicks into night mode, releasing melatonin to slow metabolism and lower bodily temperatures, helping us fall asleep.

Furthermore, when you're asleep, the body goes through cycles of Rapid-Eye-Movement (REM) and Non-REM sleep. REM sleep first occurs in the 90 minutes after falling asleep and is associated with lighter sleep and dreaming. After, the body falls deeper into Non-REM sleep, the kind of sleep that is key for feeling refreshed the next day. The cycle then repeats.

*How many hours to sleep?*

There is no set number, however most doctors recommend 7-9 hours of sleep on average. To feel energized and refreshed, it's extremely important to get a healthy mix of both REM and non-REM sleep cycles.

**Sleep hygiene:** getting the best sleep you can. Here are some tips that will help guarantee you a good night's rest:

## 1. Comfortable environment

Make sure your bedroom and bed are the most comfortable at night. This means dark, quiet, and at a good temperature to optimise deep sleep, the sleep foundation says this should be around 20 degrees celsius.

## 2. Listen to your body

Whilst it's often hard to prioritise sleep in the face of numerous assignments and exams, it's important to stick to your circadian rhythm and sleep at the same time each night. This way, you're able to get the most out of your rest time. When you start yawning, this is a good sign that it's time for bed. So instead of that coffee, reach for the toothbrush instead.

## 3. No phones!

We've all been guilty of scrolling on Instagram at ungodly hours in the early morning. However, putting the phone down and going to sleep isn't always as easy as self-control. Phone screens emit blue light, sending a signal to your brain saying that it is daytime which keeps you alert for longer. Therefore, it's important to leave phones out of reach at least 30 min to an hour before bedtime. Pick up a book or do a bit of journaling instead.

## 4. No caffeine

This one is a no brainer. Aim to stop drinking caffeinated drinks before mid-afternoon. Close to bedtime, chamomile tea is your new best friend.

## 5. Calm your mind

One of the biggest struggles preventing sleep is insomnia and anxiety. Some suggestions to assist this are scheduling time before bed for relaxation techniques, whether this be meditation, mantra repetition, drinking herbal relaxation teas or even journaling. If these don't work, it might be wise to seek out medical options.

**BEING...**  
**RESILIENT**

Ashley Stratford

# Navigating Law School

How to *burn brightly*, rather than burnout

## *What is burnout?*

Burnout is the process of physical or mental collapse due to overwork or stress.

Unfortunately, burnout at law school is not an uncommon phenomenon. We often have so much going on: assignments, internships, volunteering experiences, work commitments, and our social life. With all of this pressure it is not surprising that sometimes we get overwhelmed. A big part of law school is engaging in many different opportunities; however, these opportunities should not come at the expense of our health.

## *What can you do to prevent burnout?*

**Firstly, find your routine and then stick to it.**

Throughout your time at law school, you will meet a number of people that will tell you how to study.

‘You should be studying at night.’

‘No, it should be in the morning.’

I’ll let you in a little secret – it does not matter.

The way that you study will not necessarily be the same as someone else, and that’s totally fine. For me personally, I like to study first thing in the morning, as that limits my time to procrastinate but a lot of my friends prefer to study later in the day, and that’s okay to. There is no correct way to study, as long as you can establish a way to study that works for you and stick to that plan that’s all that matters.

**Secondly, maintain a life outside of law school.**

It is no secret that law school is hectic and sometimes it can feel like all we do is study. However, maintaining your own hobbies and interests is just as important as keeping up with your studies. In my experience the individuals that do well and are able to make the most of their time at law school are the ones who maintain employment and interests outside of university. In addition to allowing us to switch off from our studies, these outside opportunities also create valuable experiences and skills that can be used in our studies.

So, play sport, learn an instrument, make some art, maintain a part time job, volunteer – whatever it takes to give you a short reprieve from your studies.

**Thirdly...**

**And most importantly – forgive yourself!**

At some point, we all get a disappointing grade, have a bad day, or miss out on an opportunity, and that is okay. If that happens please forgive yourself and do not let this discourage you from achieving your goals. Remember to treat yourself with kindness and reach out for help if you need it.

Evie Belcher

# Navigating SWOTVAC

## *Help!* It's SWOTVAC!

Week 12 ends and exams suddenly loom upon you. It's understandable to feel overwhelmed, exhausted or completely unmotivated at this point in the semester. Nonetheless, it's important to utilise the exam period to the best of your ability in order to maximise your potential. I like to use the motto: 'Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can.'

### **Get organised**

Mapping out your SWOTVAC plan is the first step towards success. Sit down and write out exactly what needs to be done for each subject before you take the exam. Do you need to review lectures, create cue cards, condense notes, brainstorm essay responses or meet with a tutor? It's important to establish how you're going to tackle study for each subject and to set yourself specific, measurable and timely goals which you can cross off as you go. I recommend creating a list of which specific tasks you'd like to complete each day, in order of priority.

### **Stay motivated**

Without classes scheduled into your day, it can be difficult to maintain productivity during SWOTVAC. The best way to combat this is to organise group study sessions with two or three other students, even if it be over Zoom. This is a wonderful way to stay social whilst maximising productivity—you'd be surprised how much you can learn off your peers. It's also important to reward yourself for ticking off study goals by doing something to relax, like going for a run or getting Yo-Chi. Hint: Although tempting, Netflix can be a dangerously addictive pastime during exams, and I recommend steering clear.

### **Practice, practice, practice**

The most effective way to study is to complete practice exams to time. You will learn so much more from reviewing your answers than you will re-watching lectures or passively reading over notes. It's a technique that allows you to find gaps in your knowledge and build on your exam technique whilst psychologically preparing you for the exam. It takes discipline, but you'll thank yourself later...and no, exam conditions do not involve a pause to check Instagram.

### **Be kind to yourself**

Everybody finishes Week 12 at different levels of preparation for the exam. It's important to focus on yourself, and not waste time comparing yourself to others. Acknowledge that SWOTVAC is an opportunity to reflect on what worked well during the semester, and focus on content areas you feel less confident on.

Isabelle de la Masse-Homsy

# 'It's A Marathon...'

Welcome to the Law School Marathon! You have mustered up the courage to be part of the 5-year race to get a Law degree. You will have time to rest and perfect your technique between each year. However, be warned, the course is always changing.

It is normal to feel nervous! To help ease your jitters, here is how the first year of running the marathon went for me.

## Starting line

As I walked up to the starting line, I was nervous, excited, and realised that I actually had no idea what I signed myself up to.

I was filled with enthusiasm as I placed my feet on the starting line. I was finally on the path to realising my Jessica Pearson-like potential.

## 10km- Doubt

After getting through those first kilometres, a voice crept into my head.

The voice told me to think about the people running with me. It told me that those people were getting better marks than me, they were getting more work experience than me, and they were more cut out to be a lawyer than me. The voice then said that if I was not able to run ahead of them, I would never be successful in the workforce.

The voice weighed me down immensely. I lost my drive to get through the next 30km filled with readings, assignments, and tutorial preparation. I fell over as I hit tough bumps in the content. It felt like the marathon was never going to end.

## 30km- Light bulb moment

As I ran on SWOT VAC boulevard, a light bulb went off in my head.

I realised that I was not going to finish the marathon if I continued to compare myself to others. I was not going to achieve anything by resenting myself for not having the same technique as others. Being angry at myself was only going to lead me to dropping out of the marathon completely.

In the Law School Marathon everyone is running their own race. Some people might run ahead, while others might have a smoother technique.

However, everyone is running the exact same course.

It was up to me to think about my own pace and technique.

## 42.195km- Crossing the finish line

I turned onto eAssessment street and saw the finish line.

I blocked out the voice comparing me to everyone else and sprinted towards the line.

As I crossed the finish line, it hit me. The race was never between myself and others. It was between me, myself and I.

Joseph Lew

# 'Am I Doing It Right?'

When I was five years old, I wanted to be a farmer. The year after that, I was obsessed with becoming a veterinarian. This was followed by firefighter, zoologist, entomologist, and psychologist. By the time I graduated high school, this list of careers spanned 20, and I had no idea what I was going to do.

What I'm getting at is that I've always struggled visualising a path for myself. I've always been precariously balanced on the precipice of either wanting to do everything at once, or nothing at all. Maybe it's because I'm a Pisces or maybe I'm just plain indecisive, but either way, when I entered law school, surrounded by options upon options—I was overwhelmed.

Law school's a pretty brutal experience; it tears you up and spits you out. We're bombarded with the idea that we're not doing enough, and we're constantly pitted against each other. It's no surprise that we easily fall victim to the hyper-competition of it all. I've often found myself trawling through LinkedIn, stalking profiles listing internship after internship, clerkships and community legal centre experience, prompting the age-old question of: What am I doing and am I doing it right?

When you see everyone following a similar path and doing the same things, it's easy to feel like you're going about your legal education wrong. I've often fallen into the trap of self-doubt: comparing my progress to that of those around me, telling myself I have to follow in their footsteps if I want to succeed. Honestly, it's ridiculous; because there's no such thing as a 'right' way of doing law school.

Look, I'm not saying not to do internships and clerkships; I mean sure, it's important to make the most of the opportunities that the university offers you. I'm just saying that if moots and negotiations competitions aren't your cup of tea, don't feel guilty not participating in them. You don't *have* to volunteer at a community legal centre in your spare time if it's not something that interests you, and you shouldn't beat yourself up if you don't have three internships under your belt by the time you finish your first year.

At the end of the day, now's the time to figure out what you want, and explore your interests and your passions. It's not worth burning yourself out for yet another dot point on your resume, and frankly, there's no point in breaking your back trying to enjoy commercial law, just because that's what everyone else seems to be doing.

Grace Davey

# Managing Stress



Whether it's staying focused through a two-hour long torts lecture, finishing an assignment last-minute, or cramming for exam period, stress at law school is overwhelming. Whilst it's important to recognise its sources and impact, it's equally important to learn to manage it.

## Identifying Stress

What makes you stressed? Does the stress have a positive impact? Do you feel drained or motivated by the pressure? It may be important to acknowledge the role you play in creating stressors. Do you look at situations with a half-full attitude? Do you perceive opportunities as a springboard for growth or for rejection? If the sources of your stress are only external factors—a heavy workload, fast-approaching deadlines or harsh markers—your stress levels will remain outside your control. Through journaling or downloading apps such as SAM: Self-Help for Anxiety Management and MindDoc, you can chart any causes or symptoms.

## Managing Stress

Stress messes with your emotional and physical health, so learning to manage it can make you happier, healthier, and more productive in the long run. The four A's of stress management are often recommended.

1. **Avoid situations that make you stressed.** Learn how to say no and discard any unnecessary items that transform your manageable to-do list into an unattainable feat.
2. **Alter the situation.** If studying all day is making you stressed, compromise so that your schedule can be more balanced. Do something for yourself every day. Make time for sleep, relaxation, gratitude and hobbies. Break large projects into smaller steps, or delegate if need be.
3. **Adapt.** Become the boss of your emotions. What is to be reasonably expected from you in the circumstances and how can you adjust your standards accordingly? How does the stressful situation fit into the bigger picture? Will it impact your life a year down the track?
4. **Accept that some things are outside our control.** Whilst this can be particularly difficult, it will enable you to focus your energy on that which you actually do have an influence.

Finally, reaching out to a therapist or a mental health professional can be a useful step. All in all, learning to manage stress at law school will allow you to actually enjoy the experience!

Emmaline Ohri

# When it becomes 'a lot'

Stress is a normal part of life, but unfortunately university students experience stress disproportionately. A survey of Australian tertiary students found that 83.2% of students experienced stress that impacted their study. Although this statistic may sound pretty grim, the good news is that if you are experiencing stress, you are not alone!

As someone who experiences my fair share of stress and anxiety, I find it quite helpful to try and recognise the anxious feelings as they arise; and try to accept them and know that they will not last forever.

Everyone is different and deals with stress in different ways. Here are some suggestions for dealing with stress:

- **Exercise**

If you are like me, you probably rolled your eyes at 'exercise' being the first thing on this list; but there is so much evidence that exercise reduces stress!

Exercise produces endorphins, reduces skeletal and muscle tension and increases alertness and mental clarity.

Just going for a walk or 5-10 minutes of aerobic exercise each day can really help.

- **Social interaction**

Particularly around exam time, it can be tempting to immerse yourself in revision and feel guilty for doing anything else. However, taking breaks for time with friends and family is a great way to stay connected and relieve stress.

- **Colouring**

Colouring, drawing, painting, or any form of art can have an effect on the brain similar to meditation. This is because your attention is directed to the activity and away from negative thoughts and feelings.

- **Cooking**

Cooking activates your senses and encourages creativity, both of which are great stress-relievers.

- **Sleep**

Seemingly an obvious solution, sleep can often be overlooked, and we prioritise other things. Remember, nothing beats a good night's sleep!

- **Mindfulness**

Often, people function on 'default mode', inattentive to the present, absorbed in past or future thoughts and worries. Mindfulness is about bringing attention to the present and letting go of unwanted thoughts; being curious and self-compassionate in the process. You can practice mindfulness anywhere—while listening to music, colouring, walking or even doing the dishes! A great way to get started is by using an app with guided mindfulness meditations. My personal favourite is 'Smiling Mind', but there are so many out there with different focuses and formats.

If you feel that you need more help to combat stress, Monash offers free counselling services to students. It can be daunting to seek professional help, but it is important to know that Monash counsellors are experienced, understanding and create a relaxed environment free of judgement. Counselling really is such an invaluable experience and privilege.

If you are experiencing stress or anxiety, make sure you prioritise your wellbeing and be kind to yourself – I can't *stress* that enough!



Winuri de Alwis

# Why Am I Here?



In my first law lecture, Dr Fiona Hum advised, the lecturer advised - “always remember your why”. Your ‘why’ is your reason for studying law, the motivation behind choosing to dedicate 4-5 years of your life to this degree. She said our ‘why’ will be our driving force and warned against forgetting it.

## Here’s how to identify your “why”:

1. What are your interests?
2. What do you value?
3. Do you want to practice law and if not, how do you see your law degree benefitting the field you want to primarily work in?
4. What role/s do you see yourself working in?

## Without a strong ‘why’, you can be prone to confusion and lack the necessary drive to flourish in, and finish, your degree.

Half-way through my 1st year, I lost the note where I jotted down my ‘why’. Dramatic as it sounds, failing to recall what I wrote on that slip of paper significantly impacted my attitude to Law school. I quickly fell into the trap of comparison. Someone did a legal internship in Indonesia and I wanted to do it too, a friend mentioned how corporate law gave bigger bucks and I started re-evaluating my interests. When I didn’t get the opportunities that other people secured, I felt useless and unmotivated. That’s when I got out my new sticky note and wrote my “why”.

The lows in law school are difficult to climb out of. But in 3rd year, after finding my ‘why’ again, it was a little less challenging to keep pushing forward after a bad grade or when a work opportunity didn’t pan out. This was because I knew what my goals were and what my reason for being here was, which provided me with a newfound sense of determination.

There is so much at Monash Law to help translate your ‘why’ into a career. Clinical Placements are a great way to gain insight into what a career in your chosen field of law might be like. Monash offers a range of law clinics and firms for you to intern with, so you are bound to find an organisation that specialises in an area of law you are passionate about. You can also undertake electives that cater to your interests. If you’re looking to build those advocacy skills, the LSS and the Castan Centre for Human Rights (CCHR) run numerous moots on a range of topics for all levels of experience. Finally, check your student email for invitations from the Monash Centre for Law and Regulatory Studies (CLARS) and the CCHR—they are constantly offering interesting seminars on commercial and human rights law.

## Through finding your ‘why’, you set yourself up for a more purposeful and fuller law school journey.

It will help you forge a unique law school experience and lay the foundations for a career that you are passionate about.

Joseph Lew

# Imposter Syndrome

*'I'm not meant to be here...'*

You know that feeling when you enter a room and you're just like *I'm not meant to be here*? Or the moment you step into a job interview, and everyone around you seems more qualified, more successful, and more confident. When you feel like your presence is simply a fluke—a mere accident. Well now you know how I've felt for the bulk of my life.

Growing up, I always struggled in school. Maybe it was partly due to the fact I was more content climbing trees and reading books than studying, or maybe it was simply that my hyperactive brain meant that I had a pretty much non-existent attention span. Whatever the reason, a combination of overachieving friends and overbearing Asian parents meant that my high school experience was shrouded in a cloud of inadequacy.

When I eventually transferred into Monash Law—as my abysmal grades meant I had no chance of getting in first try—I naively thought that I'd finally feel like I had rightfully earned my way there. Instead, the homogeneity of the law cohort meant that I, a person of colour from a working class background, felt even more out of place.

In 1978, psychologists Pauline Clance and Suzanne Imes coined a new term—impostor syndrome. It described a phenomenon identified simply by the experience of a person feeling like their successes were a result of luck, rather than merit and qualification. In other words, feeling like they deserved nothing.

It's pretty ironic that the entire premise of impostor syndrome is that it makes us feel alone, when in fact, it's estimated that 70 percent of the population feel its effects at some point in their lives. Some of the most accomplished people in history have identified as 'impostors', including Natalie Portman, Tom Hanks, Maya Angelou, and even Albert Einstein. Yep you heard me, Einstein himself thought he was a big ol' fraud.

So what do we do when we're feeling like a fake?

First and foremost, it's important to look at things from a different perspective. Looking critically at the situation and observing your thought process helps you unpack and acknowledge the factors that have led you to this point.

Additionally, reach out to your support network—your friends, your family, and your mentors. If these feelings manifest themselves explicitly in the workplace, consider sitting down with co-workers or even your supervisor to review your performance and share your feelings. A third-party professional perspective can help relieve self-criticism, and hearing similar experiences from co-workers around you can be extremely validating. Besides, there's no better social glue than shared insecurities.

And last but not least, cliché as it sounds...

Fake it until you make it.

Gregor Campbell

# Vicarious Trauma and the Law

*Content warning: Discussion of Domestic Abuse and Suicide.*

Throughout my law degree, I have been incredibly fortunate to be able to work in challenging and engaging areas of the law. I worked as a volunteer paralegal with Eastern Community Legal Clinic in their family violence division at Ringwood Magistrates Court, and interned at the Coroner's Court last year. I am incredibly thankful for these opportunities and would encourage any prospective law student to work with these organisations in the future.

However, these opportunities also resulted in me being confronted by personal stories of both domestic abuse and suicide, and it was very difficult not to be affected by this work.

To this day, I remember working a case involving an applicant barely older than myself at Ringwood Magistrates Court. Unfortunately, the court did not decide the case in the applicant's favour, and the applicant shouted at the Magistrate, "What are you going to do when they kill me?". These words haunted me for the rest of the day, and I returned home feeling completely numb. I withdrew from those around me while I processed the day, and kept asking myself if we could have done anything more to help the applicant. I believe what I was experiencing were the early effects of vicarious trauma, and I am writing this article not out of some misguided attempt to gain pity but to arm other law students against it. Lawyers are vulnerable to vicarious trauma as we are regularly exposed to stories and images not generally seen by the public. As such it is of the utmost importance that we know how to identify and deal with vicarious trauma.

## What is Vicarious Trauma?

In short, vicarious trauma is a side effect of empathy. involves being traumatised by what we see and observe, existing at the end of a spectrum that includes both compassionate fatigue and burnout. Symptoms include social withdrawal, cynism, diminished interest in self-care and increased sensitivity to violence.

## How can we combat Vicarious Trauma?

Here are a few tips on avoiding Vicarious Trauma. This list is by no means exhaustive, and there are definitely people with far more knowledge on the topic than me.

**Reflect:** Think about the clients & cases that are most likely to impact you emotionally—for me, those are people of similar background and ages who I can easily empathise with. Approaching these cases with caution and reflection can keep you at arm's length from the trauma involved.

**Connect with others:** Talk and make friends with students studying other degrees or working in other fields. Even if they don't know the importance of *Carlill v Carbolic Smoke Ball*, they can provide a healthy escape from your work.

**Develop good coping mechanisms:** Whether this be exercising, making time for your personal life or even something simple like playing with a pet, these coping skills will help you maintain a healthy work-life balance and set boundaries from work.

If you're dealing with the effects of trauma, reach out to a mental health professional.  
Monash Counselling — +61 3 9905 3020  
<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/> or Call 1300 224 636  
<https://www.blueknot.org.au/>  
<https://www.lifeline.org.au/> or Call 13 11 14

Sources: Mental Health & Safer Community Programs, Caring: Double Edge Sword Vicarious Trauma and Self Care presented by Freddy Peredo

Matilda McNeil

# It's Okay to Say 'NO'

## **Reclaiming Responsibility for Your Own Wellbeing: A guide for chronic people-pleasers on when it's okay to say 'no'.**

*They're looking at you.*

*Your brow is heavy with the expectation of their stare. You smile politely at the ground. Panic has evaporated the moisture from your throat, and you let out a small cough—a precursor to self-deprivation. Their eyebrows are raised, awaiting your response. You can smell the anticipation in the room—the anticipation of your compliance. Or maybe that's just the smell of your own fear of letting someone down? Every fibre in your body wants to scream “no, sorry I can't today”, but instead you meet their gaze and smile. “Of course, I'd be happy to,” you say.*

When the word ‘no’ leaves your vocabulary, you might have a problem. If pleasing others comes at the expense of your own wellbeing and if the very whiff of confrontation is enough to make your stomach reel, you might be a chronic people-pleaser (join the club).

So, you think you might be a people pleaser—what now? Here are some tips on how to reclaim responsibility for your own wellbeing:

**Check-in with yourself and actually listen when you answer.** Whilst you are not responsible for the emotions of others, they are equally unaccountable for your happiness. Take a moment each morning to ask yourself what you need from yourself because your needs are valid and it's your responsibility to meet them.

**Be assertive.** Recognising your needs is important, but that will only get you halfway. Be your own advocate and stand up for yourself the way you would for a friend.

**Let go and accept that it's okay to take your hands off the steering wheel** (but only metaphorically, of course). You cannot control what others think of you and it's wasted energy to try. Find your validation in what you think of yourself, rather than the opinions of friends or strangers.

**Examine the relationships in your life.** The best kinds are the ones that don't need you to meet their needs, but simply want you in their orbit as you are.

Remember to keep ‘no’ in your back pocket and don't feel guilty for using it. Say goodbye to the smile-and-be-polite-lest-you-are-disappointing-someone rhetoric because at the end of the day...

**The only person you should be focussed on is yourself.**

**BEING...**  
**YOU**

Matilda McNeil

# The Opportunity Mindset

## The Only Difference Between Change and Opportunity is Your Mindset

Change is uncomfortable, there's no two ways around it. Sometimes its subtle and nagging, like the tag on a new shirt itching at the back of your neck—never at the forefront of your mind, but always one small slip of concentration away. Other times it smacks you in the face, and all you can do is hold on and wait until you stop reeling from the impact. Either way, its uncomfortable, but discomfort isn't necessarily a bad thing.

My first year of university was the sort of change that smacks you in the face. In the space of a week, I moved from a small rural Victorian town to a busy Melbourne suburb. I began studying a law degree at university I couldn't find my way around and started a new job in an industry I knew nothing about. My entire comfort zone was stripped away. But when there was no cushioning left, there was nothing for me to hide behind. I learnt more about myself and what I was capable of in that one year than in the 18 years of life that led up to it. I discovered my strengths and celebrated them, and as for my weaknesses, I acknowledged them and worked through them. The discomfort was temporary, but the growth was forever. For me, change became an opportunity.

With this in mind, I want to share three strategies for not only adapting to the inevitable changes life brings, but fearlessly embracing the opportunities that come with it:

1. **Change your mindset.** You cannot always control your circumstances, but you can control the way you perceive them.
2. **Whenever you make a decision, ask yourself who is in control of that choice.** Is it you, or is it fear? Fear is deceptive. It's easy to mistake the fear of change for the voice of reason, but the difference is fear holds you back from opportunity, whereas reason seeks out the best route towards it.
3. **Surrender.** It's great to have a plan but be open to changes, new experiences and bends in the road you didn't see coming. If your focus is too far in front of you, you might miss the chances that materialise in your periphery.

Your greatest experiences are formed outside of your comfort zone. So, remember that the only difference between change and opportunity is your mindset.

Emily Broadbent

# Self Worth



## Nurturing identity and self-worth beyond academic achievement

With law school being a highly competitive environment with demanding study requirements, and with law students' often perfectionistic tendencies, we can be particularly susceptible to the emphasis on productivity and achievement as core determinants of our self-worth.

A broad principle explored in McKay and Fanning's Self-Esteem is that founding self-worth upon variable, extrinsic circumstances is inherently harmful. This may translate into a tendency to attach our worth to a particular mark, a particular firm, or a particular number of clerkship offers. This construction of self-worth, to which I had unwittingly subscribed, presents a rigid, unattainable view of success and worth.

Certainly, as law students, achievement and academic excellence are important considerations. However, as McKay and Fanning elucidate, equating our worth with external markers liable to fluctuation can prove problematic when things go wrong. Perhaps a more constructive approach is to aim to cultivate a more unwavering sense of self-worth, harnessing our unique values and nurturing our sense of self independent of the legal arena.

I have observed that a better way of framing identity and self-worth involves affirming my values and applying them to my studies or career. While my values include success and excellence, I recognised that creativity, curiosity, and a love of learning were equally vital, and I sought to reconcile these broader values with my approach to my studies.

Allowing myself to fully engage with and to enjoy the content of each law unit, rather than being motivated by inflexible notions of success and achievement, has enabled me to focus on identifying and developing my acute interest in particular areas of the law.

As law students, equally important to affirming our worth independent of external criteria is cultivating a sense of self outside the spheres of academia or career. During assignment or exam periods in particular, academic achievement often assumed a magnified and disproportionate weight of my identity; I tended to neglect other important aspects of myself, including my interests, physical health and pursuits, and relationships with friends and family. This was often equally true during online study throughout COVID-19 restrictions whereby, with limited ability to nurture other components of myself, my identity and value hinged upon my output and academic performance. To overcome such stringent expectations, it is vital that I incorporate interests, regular exercise, and social pursuits into my routine from the beginning of the semester, and that I make a particular effort to foster these components of myself during periods of elevated academic pressure.

The concept of compassion, both towards oneself and towards others, is emphasised by McKay and Fanning as central to an enduring sense of self-esteem. Aiming to interpret disappointments through a measured, compassionate lens, and affirming our fixed self-worth in the absence of continual external successes, is a healthier and more sustainable way to navigate our law school careers.

Winuri de Alwis

# Resilience and Perseverance

## *The courage of perseverance*

Succeeding in law can feel like banging your head against a wall. Shaken out of the false reality that I had 'natural legal talent', I felt like I accidentally stumbled into the VIP room that is law school. In 1st year I was convinced that moots were a place for the 'smart kids' who I did not think I was. Since then, when I was unsuccessful in applying for law jobs my only explanation was that I wasn't smart enough.

I escaped into the comfort of my International Relations (IR) degree where opportunities were more attainable. Although I was rejected from internships, I persevered. Securing two amazing IR internships and taking part in competitive overseas trips cemented my belief that I could pursue a career in IR, so I invested all my energy into it. My law degree became an afterthought. Confidence blooming, at the end of 2nd year, I seriously considered dropping out of law, moving to Canberra and pursuing a Master of International Relations.

Met with vehement advice from my internship supervisor at the British Consulate-General and other career diplomats not to drop out of law school, I begrudgingly started my 3rd year of law. It is common knowledge that a law degree carries great value. But the value it provides is far deeper than an LLB certificate. Given Law school is a monumental test, completion of your course demonstrates you have the determination and strength to deal with challenges.

In 3rd year, I chose international law electives which I knew I would love. These units motivated me to re-think the possibility of a legal career. I researched opportunities and knocked on countless doors. Most times I did not get a response. Still, fuelled by courage attributable to slow and steady personal growth—I persevered. In hindsight, having to hone and develop 'legal ability' does not make you any less capable.

If I hadn't persevered, I would have betrayed my dream of working in a field of international law. I would not have completed an exchange with the Rothberg International School in Israel, learning from leading minds in international human rights and criminal law. The potential to create an incredible career would remain untapped.

Although it's hard when legal doors don't open, you must continue to grow in the meantime. Build resilience and have the courage to persevere in this field. The rewards are plentiful.



Sam Ponsford

# The PERMA Mindset

What makes us happy? This is a thought-provoking question, one which we have sought to answer since the dawn of humanity. One attempt to solve this ongoing quandary is the PERMA Model. Developed by Professor Martin Seligman from the University of Pennsylvania, the PERMA Model contains five core elements: Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Achievement. Seligman's research indicates that achieving these five elements will allow individuals to lead a life of happiness and fulfilment.

Here are a few ways you can achieve these five components whilst studying a Law degree.

## Positive Emotions:

This involves experiencing positive emotions (such as gratitude, hope and mindfulness) about the past, present and future. Consider:

- Practicing Gratitude. Write down three things each day that you are grateful for.
- Savouring physical pleasures. Eat delicious food, listen to music that you enjoy and immerse yourself in nature.
- Practicing Mindfulness. Download an App such as Smiling Mind, Headspace or Calm and incorporate five minutes of mindfulness into your daily routine.

## Engagement:

Experienced when someone “fully deploys their skills, strengths and attention for a challenging task,” enabling them to reach a mental “flow state.” Perhaps:

- Read a good book.
- Cook new meals from a recipe book.
- Learn or practice playing a musical instrument.
- Learn a new skill such as knitting or solving a rubix cube.
- Join a sports team or complete individual exercise such as running, bike-riding or swimming.

## Relationships:

Maintaining Positive, supportive and fulfilling relationships with others. Think about how to:

- Complete small random acts of kindness for your friends, family and neighbours.
- Join a Monash University club or society.
- Form a study group with students from your tutor group.
- Catch up with friends

## Meaning:

Seligman states that “a sense of meaning and purpose can be derived from belonging to and serving something bigger than the self.” Have a look at:

- Doing some volunteering. MSA have a plethora of volunteering opportunities: <https://msa.monash.edu/volunteers/all-programs/>. There are also many volunteering opportunities available outside of Monash University, such as serving food to homeless people, tutoring refugee children or helping out at an animal shelter.
- Becoming a member of a political organisation.
- Advocating for a cause that you are passionate about, such as the environment or human rights

## Accomplishment:

Achievement in a variety of pursuits, including academia, sport and exercise, career, leadership, awards. Have a go at:

- Setting SMART goals that are specific, measured, achievable, realistic and time-framed.
- Pursuing these goals with dedication and resilience.

## Harrison Philp

# Moving Out



### *What's the deal with moving out?*

Has a year of being locked in the house with your parents made you realise you just can't do it anymore? Maybe you fancy a late-night boogie at Revolver's without having to explain yourself? There are numerous reasons you may wish to move out, but you may still have questions. How can I afford it? How do I manage to take care of myself amongst uni and work? Is it really worth it?

As someone who moved overseas two weeks after their 18th birthday, and has just celebrated their five year 'living out of home' anniversary this February, I feel sufficiently qualified to at least provide my perspective on balancing living out of home and Monash law. I've lived in every situation imaginable: hostels, with a little old lady who even did the washing, a cash-in-hand share house with five people I'd never met, a share house with my partner and a friend, and finally, just my partner and I in a little apartment in Southbank.

The opportunity to live safely and happily with your parents is not one afforded to everyone. If you're lucky enough to be able to do so throughout your uni career, you should certainly consider staying if it still feels right. Notwithstanding the human benefits a positive family dynamic can provide, the raw financial upper hand you get from staying at home is not something to be abandoned hastily. Lower outgoing expenses mean you can work less to cover your costs, providing you with more time to focus on your studies and your social life. Alternatively, that extra time may be put towards unpaid positions and internships which can propel your career forward. So, is it worth moving out just for more freedom?

Just as it is obvious that living at home will be cheaper, it is equally so that moving out provides you with far more freedom. Want to have friends over tonight? Sure. Want to come home at 3am before your 9am shift? No questions asked. Want to play music at full blast while you have a shower? Fine—just don't wake the neighbours. Despite their allure, these 'pros' are superficial when compared to the life skills and lessons being solely responsible for your cleaning, food and bills can provide you. Better yet, the time management, discipline and organisational skills you learn are cross-transferable to uni and your career.

Responsibility best encapsulates the out of home experience. If you don't do the dishes, the dishes don't get done. If you don't pay rent on time, you'll get a nasty letter from the realtor. But growing and training your 'responsibility muscle' is an important part of the transition into adulthood, and there is no better place to start that process than in your early twenties while you are still at university. Learning to look after yourself, keep your room clean, your bills paid and your house in order is a valuable life lesson essential to success.

Above all, you will need to move out one day. Despite the pressures of university, you are far better off dealing with these problems now than when you are doing 80 hours a week at a firm. So why wait?

Emily Broadbent

# Obiter & Obsession

Contending with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), the onset of which coincided with commencing law school, has presented a unique set of challenges. For years, unyielding, intrusive thoughts and compulsions consumed my consciousness and energy, exhausting my academic focus and eroding enjoyment of usual activities.

That my OCD typically manifested in obsessions which were not study or career-related rendered my experience particularly isolating; yet, with research indicating elevated and persistent psychological distress among law students, including obsessive-compulsive behaviour, it is deeply concerning that my brush with often severe OCD is unlikely to be an exceptional or isolated law student experience.

Recovery and management may require time and support, particularly as stressors such as impending assignment deadlines or exams tend to amplify OCD symptoms and related distress. To disarm intrusive, obsessive thoughts, and to attain clarity and focus, I have found the following strategies valuable:

## Utilise university resources

Seeking professional help in the form of a brilliant psychologist through Monash University Health Services has been an integral component of the ongoing management of my condition.

Mutual trust, and a balance between pertinent cognitive behavioural therapy techniques and a genuine human connection, are central to our ongoing work. Further, particularly valuable is her drawing upon relevant literature that emphasises self-compassion and viewing human worth as independent of arbitrary extrinsic markers.

## Act now, and your mind will follow

It is important to recognise, particularly during a mental health rut, that feelings of discomfort or distress are impermanent.

Implementing action and planning for a future unimpeded by OCD is imperative in managing periods of elevated anxiety or otherwise debilitating symptoms. This may range from setting daily study objectives and structuring regular exercise (such as walking, yoga, or dance classes) into my routine, to completing the application process for a semester abroad or for a voluntary position in a field of interest.

Disrupting the relentless obsessive cycle with action renders it easier to resist engaging with an intrusive thought or relenting to a compulsive urge.

## Stay connected

Scheduling regular social interaction, whether it be an outing, a walk, or a phone call, is a great way to ground myself and to refocus on meaningful relationships.

Cultivating a sense of connection, both to my unique values and to others, is an important means of nurturing self-worth and working towards a full, enriching experience at law school.

**BEING...  
INVOLVED**

Liz Walker

# Coffee on Campus



**Whether you're looking for a meeting destination, a study get-away or are wanting to explore all that Monash Uni offers in its café culture, look no further.**

Monash is proud of its bustling café, restaurant and food culture. There is a lot of opportunity to step outside your comfort zone and experience the Melbourne food culture, right from your Monash door-step.

You will undoubtedly come across a lot of free food at BBQs, event stalls and other catered get-togethers that Monash Clubs, Societies and the Student Association run. While many university students have survived on free food alone (*for more on this, follow [@freefoodmonash](#), started by the MSA's Nick Broussard*), it's important to know your way around Monash using your nose.

## Here's a list of places to check out:

(this list was ascertained by surveying Law students in 2021)

- **Wholefoods:** Located in Campus Centre, Wholefoods have food, snacks, beverages and good vibes. A personal favourite is their dahl and rice that they do for an absolute steal of \$3 a pop.
- **Secret Garden Eatery:** Located underneath Hargrave-Andrews Library, Secret Garden offers an incredible range of salads, warmer dishes and tasty slices and awesome coffee.
- **Saporo Café:** Saporo Café is located past the Maths building and behind the Hargrave-Andrews Library and Engineering Buildings, on 20 Research Way. They do killer coffees and have an incredible display of hot food and sweeter snacks!
- **Nesso:** Nesso has an extensive menu which caters for all eaters. On the ground floor of the LTB, you cannot miss them (if not from the smell of coffee!)
- **Church of Secular Coffee:** An aesthetically pleasing café with a great menu, fantastic pastries and coffee, this is a great café to meet with friends or hold a meeting.
- **Artichoke & Whitebait:** With an incredible restaurant ambiance and awesome menu, Artichoke & Whitebait are an ideal location to sit down, pause your day and share a hearty meal with friends.

Liz Walker

# Clubs and Societies

Monash has a lot of unique clubs and societies for all areas of interest. From sporting or political, to cultural and faculty societies (such as the Law Students' Society!), there is absolutely something for everyone.

While challenging to take that first step, the experiences you will gain and friends you will make through clubs and societies will be formative to your University experience. Clubs offer a fantastic opportunity to network, broaden your mindset, develop skills and have a lot of fun.

And, particularly coming from a year of social inactivity, what do you have to lose?

## **You've convinced me... but which clubs can I join?**

This is up to you. Reflect on your interests, career ambitions, hobbies and social inclinations. For example, if you are interested in charitable work, why not sign up to Amnesty International? Conversely, think about whether there is anything you would want to tick off a "bucket list"... Always wanted to be a Cheerleader? Why not join the Monash Cheer?

Peruse this list of clubs, found here: <https://www.monashclubs.org/Clubs>.

## **How do I sign up to a Monash club or society?**

There are a few ways to join clubs and societies.

1. Purchase a Monash Students' Association (MSA) membership. For some clubs, the MSA offer discounts. Additionally, you can purchase club memberships online through the MSA portal: <https://clubs.msa.monash.edu/>.
2. O-week sign ups. Attend O-Week and visit the stalls of the clubs or societies which you wish to join. These are located around campus, so it is a great way to familiarise yourself with the mini-city that is Monash Clayton Campus
3. Missed O-Week and don't have an MSA membership? Contact the Club Secretary, listed on the club's page here: <https://www.monashclubs.org/Clubs>, expressing your interest in becoming a member.  
Alternatively, grab some friends and head along to an event the club holds. Be confident and most importantly: remember to have fun.

# Liz Walker

## Staying Active



**It's important to make time for yourself and do your best to live a balanced lifestyle.**

This includes remaining mentally and physically active amidst your busy schedule.

Here are some ideas about how to diversify your daily routine and keep your mind and body active!

### PHYSICAL EXERCISE

- **Walking:** Going for a walk everyday can help to remove yourself from your working environment, get some fresh air and get some exercise. This is a great thing to do with friends when you catch up, as opposed to going for a coffee. There are some great park areas in and around Melbourne. Near Monash Clayton Campus, Jells Park (located on Jells Road x Waverley Road) has some great walking trails leading to Scotchmans Creek Trail, Shepherd's Bush and others.
- **7-Minute Workouts:** There are a few apps out there which provide you with a small workout routine. This gets the blood pumping without stripping you of too much of your energy. It can be easily fit into your daily routine, does not require too much physical space and is accessible on your mobile device. Apps include Seven - Seven Minute Workout, Wahoo 7-Minute Workout, J&J Official 7-Minute Workouts and subscription services, such as Keep It Cleaner.
- **Running:** Many people I have spoken with started running over COVID-19 lockdowns in 2020 and have continued the habit. Runners have sung its praises - running is a great way to refresh your mind, pump up your endorphins, get outside and challenge yourself mentally and physically. It can also be something to do with friends!

### MENTAL AGILITY

- **Sudoku:** Sudokus are great for flexing your brain and are reasonably quick to master and complete. They are accessible on websites, online forums and in books at Officeworks or your local post office.
- **Memory Training applications,** such as Lumosity, Fit Brains Trainer and Happify: Training your brain does not require specific or studious environments - it can be done anywhere and any time you choose. Have a look at these applications for more information.
- **Meditation & mindfulness:** An essential ingredient to growing your brain is treating it well. This means sufficient sleep and providing the opportunity for it to relax and process your day. Have a look at apps such as Smiling Minds, Calm and Headspace for more.

Liz Walker

# Reading & Podcasts



## PODCASTS

### Brain-Engage

- She's On The Money - *Victoria Devine*
- The Party Room - *Fran Kelly & Patricia Karvelas*
- The Sure Thing - *Australian Financial Review*
- Casefile True Crime - *Casefile Presents*
- Philosophize This! - *Stephen West*
- Wait, You What? - *Erica Mallett*
- UnCommon Law - *Bloomberg Industry Group*
- Power Corrupts - *Brian Klaas*
- Who The Hell Is Hamish? - *The Australian*

### Disengage

- Hamish & Andy - *Hamish Blake & Andy Lee*
- Keep It Cleaner Podcast - *Laura Henshaw & Steph Claire Smith*
- I Just Called To Tell You a Joke - *Josie Steele*
- I Can't Sleep - *Benjamin Boster*
- Life Uncut - *Laura Byrne & Brittany Hockley*
- It's A Lot with Abbie Chatfield - *Abbie Chatfield*
- AusPol SnackPod: Australian Politics & Memes - *Zac & Noon*
- Shameless - *Zara McDonald & Michelle Andrews*

## READING

### Brain-Engage

- The House of Kennedy - *James Patterson*
- The Eggshell Skull Rule - *Bri Lee*
- Fight of the Century - *Michael Chabon et al.*
- 999: The Extraordinary Young Women of the First Official Jewish Transport to Auschwitz - *Heather Dune Macadam*
- Countdown 1945: The Extraordinary Story of the 116 Days that Changed the World - *Chris Wallace & Mitch Weiss*
- Humankind: A Hopeful History - *Rutger Bregman*
- The Deficit Rule - *Stephanie Kelton*

### Disengage

- You Never Forget Your First - *Alexis Coe*
- What Comes After - *JoAnne Tompkins*
- The Picture of Dorian Gray - *Oscar Wilde*
- Second First Impressions - *Sally Thorne*



Emma Anvari

# Disability Support Services

DSS is designed to support you in your studies throughout your time at Monash and if eligible, you should absolutely make the most of these services. Upon registration with DSS, you can access a range of services such as note-takers for lectures, flexible assignment deadlines, and alternative exam arrangements. These services are available to both students with disabilities and carers.

## Services for students with disabilities

If you choose to disclose a disability or physical or mental health condition that impacts your ability to study, DSS are available to support you! To register for DSS you must provide documentation from a medical professional to serve as evidence of your condition. This information stays with DSS and will not be passed onto Monash teaching staff or future employers. From Auslan interpreting, scribes, the provision of extensions and even accessible accommodation, DSS will try to support you and your academic pursuits. Other services include the provision of alternative formatting for learning materials such as electronic text or braille, and there is also the possibility for extra time and rest breaks for exams. There are a multitude of adjustments to exam conditions that can be made to accommodate individual-based needs and circumstances should you pursue them. Registering with DSS also means it will be easier for you to apply for special consideration.

## Services for students who are carers

Students who act as carers for a person who is elderly, has a disability or a physical or mental health condition can also access DSS. Where this role impacts your ability to study, reasonable adjustments can be pursued and made in order to support your academic success. To do this, you will need to register yourself as a carer.

For more information consult the DSS' website: <https://www.monash.edu/disability>

## Special Consideration:

It is quite possible that at some point in your degree exceptional circumstances beyond your control will find you needing an extension on an assignment or to defer an exam. To be eligible for special consideration you need to believe you won't be able to or did not in fact complete an assessment as a result of personal circumstances beyond your control. These circumstances include things such as acute illness, loss or bereavement, hardship or trauma and have high thresholds. Other circumstances such as involvement in military service, jury duty, emergency services or Monash Sport's athlete support program may also render you eligible. You should apply as soon as you can with the relevant supporting documents to evidence your claim for the faculty to consider. Consulting Monash Connect and the relevant online materials on special consideration is highly recommended to ensure success in your application. It's recommended you apply even if you're unsure whether you're eligible! Furthermore, if you're registered with Disability Support Services (DSS) you will not be required to provide a medical certificate when applying, but instead need to confirm your DSS registration and disclose that the reason you are applying is related to your registration. From May 2021, you may apply for up to a five-day extension on an assignment or essay to your Chief Examiner without documentation, on the grounds of a valid reason.

View the special consideration website [here](#) for more information.

# SETTING GOALS

Setting yearly goals? This may be an idea that you scoff at as you think about all the past goals you have abandoned. Well, this year is going to be different, and it is in your hands to make this change.

Setting goals will motivate you, it will help you bring your visions to life. Do not compare your progress to others, we are all moving at our own pace. If you ever feel demotivated, just remember that it is okay to take baby steps! Your goals do not have to be grand, it can be any tiny thing that you wish to achieve.

You can start by brainstorming the questions below, and then proceed to fill in your goals for 2021 on the next page.

## Brainstorming Area

1) I am proud of myself for achieving this in 2020...

2) I wish I worked more on this in 2020...

3) If I had more free time, I would love to learn/try...

4) I wish to change these bad habits...

# 2021 GOALS

## Studies

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.



## Career

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



## Health

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.



## Skillset

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.



## Personal

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.



## Places to Visit

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.



A little progress each day adds up to big results!

# Tracking Your Habits

## Why should I keep track of my habits?

Keeping track of your habits is a smart thing to do, it keeps you accountable to your actions. It also allows you to self-reflect and understand yourself better, which will allow you to realize what you wish to improve on. This is a way for you to be proactive about your mental wellbeing and take charge over it. Plus, it can be a fun activity to do! You can see an example of a habit tracker below!

## How does a *Mood Tracker* work?

On the next page, you will find a mood tracker template! You can print out the template and stick it on your wall. At the end of every day, fill in the box with the colour that matches your mood for that day. After a whole month, you can get a colourful overview of your mental wellbeing!

## Daily Habit Tracker

Sleep	.....	<input type="text"/> hrs
Drink Water	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	
Exercise	.....	<input type="text"/>
Going outdoors	.....	<input type="text"/>
Healthy diet	.....	<input type="text"/>
Study	.....	<input type="text"/>
Chores	.....	<input type="text"/>
Family/Friends	.....	<input type="text"/>

# 66 Mood Tracker

Month:  Year:

Goal of the month:

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

GRUMPY 🙄

MEH 😐

HAPPY 😊

TIRED 😴

SAD 😞

STRESSED 😡

*It is okay to have bad days! :)*



CLAYTON UTZ

**C L I F F O R D**  
**C H A N C E**