



Lee Burgess: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today we're talking with Cathlyn Melvin – a 1L, freelance writer and editor, and a writer for the Law School Toolbox, so you can check out her stuff on our [blog](#). Your Law School Toolbox hosts are Alison Monahan and Lee Burgess, that's me. We're here to demystify the law school and early legal career experience, so you'll be the best law student and lawyer you can be. We're the co-creators of the [Law School Toolbox](#), the [Bar Exam Toolbox](#), and the career-related website [CareerDicta](#). Alison also runs the Girl's Guide to Law School. If you enjoy the show, please leave a review or rating on your favorite listening app. And if you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to us. You can reach us via the [contact form](#) on LawSchoolToolBox.com, and we'd love to hear from you. And with that, let's get started.

Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today we're talking with a 1L and freelance writer, Cathlyn Melvin, about some techniques for projecting your voice in class – a particularly relevant issue these days with everyone wearing masks. So, thanks for joining us, Cathlyn. I appreciate it.

Cathlyn Melvin: Thank you for having me. I'm super excited to be here.

Lee Burgess: So, to kick things off, why don't you tell us a little bit about yourself and where you're in law school, and how did you end up going to law school?

Cathlyn Melvin: So, right now, I am at University of Florida. I'm a 1L, and I'm halfway through my first semester, obviously. And although I'm here in Gainesville, I'm actually a virtual student this semester, which I know we'll talk about a little bit later. But I ended up going to law school after spending about a decade in the workforce after undergrad. So, I have a Theater Arts degree, and for the last 10 years-ish I have worked as an actor and as a teaching artist, and also as an arts administrator. I owned and ran a national touring children's theater for the last eight years. And then as artists often are, I was a gig worker, so I do pet sitting and I'm a freelance writer and all sorts of things. So I ended up in law school when I decided it was time to no longer be part of the theater industry, which turned into a bit of a serendipitous timeline since now in COVID, the theater industry is very much struggling. And so, that's how I ended up where I am now.

Lee Burgess: Awesome. Yeah, I have a friend who is a Broadway performer that I grew up with and used to perform with, and she posted on social media that she was singing hanging outside of a window at a hotel for people eating in some outdoor area. She's somebody who's had leads in Broadway productions, and she's just hanging out of a window singing, making it work. It's the first time she'd sang in public, I guess, since the whole pandemic started. So she was really excited about it.



- Cathlyn Melvin: Yeah. A friend of mine who is a dancer with The Joffrey Ballet, her husband is a professional violinist.
- Lee Burgess: Oh, wow.
- Cathlyn Melvin: And I don't remember what organization he's with, but one of the major symphonies in Chicago. And right now he's playing in parks and busking and doing that sort of work.
- Lee Burgess: It's a wild time.
- Cathlyn Melvin: Yeah, it's crazy.
- Lee Burgess: Well, the reason why it was suggested that I do this podcast with you instead of Alison is I was a theater person and did a lot of performing up until my mid-20s when it all fell away as I had to become more responsible. And Alison has many, many talents, but I don't believe that she was singing productions of Rent in the back of the theater in high school as I was, to date myself. Well, I've actually talked a lot about theater and performing and how it links to law school, so I think this is going to be a great conversation. But before we dive into the specifics, UF is doing a hybrid model of class. Is that correct?
- Cathlyn Melvin: They are. So, up until the middle-ish, end-ish of July, they were gung-ho going full speed ahead to have everyone in the classroom, but of course the numbers in Florida at that time were less than ideal and growing. And so, one day seemingly to us out of the blue, we received an email saying, "Hey, we're rethinking things. We're going to give you the option of going online." And in the end out of the... There are about 220 of us in our 1L class, and there are about 25 of us who chose to go online. So, the way that they've made that work is, first of all, all the small sections are smaller this year. The small sections are about 35 students each, so they've been about halved from what they traditionally would be. And there are two of the small sections that are hybrid.
- Lee Burgess: Okay.
- Cathlyn Melvin: So, my section and the other section each have about a dozen of us on Zoom, and we Zoom into the classroom. Some of our professors even put our Zoom camera faces up on a board, so that the students in class can see us. It's been an adventure, but I think that it's working fairly well, which is a relief.
- Lee Burgess: That's good. Yeah, this is a new frontier for teachers, for students, for everyone. Do you think that this has been a good thing as far as giving you extra time, or just the complications of being in-person in the pandemic? I think that that's just a lot to take on.



Cathlyn Melvin: Yeah. For me, I think that the biggest benefit is just the lack of anxiety. Shortly before we received our email that gave us the option to go online, we had received an email that if I printed it out, it was probably four-page lengths of procedures, of one-way stairwells going up and then, on the other side of the building, going down, and sidewalks one way. In our classrooms, the professors are behind plexiglass screens that roll with them, which they have the option to use or not, and at this point, most of them have not.

Lee Burgess: Said "bye-bye" to the plexiglass?

Cathlyn Melvin: And then, all of the students each have what look to me like middle school science fair boards. They're three-way partitions, but they're also plexiglass, so each individual student is in their little mini, partial cubicle. Everyone wears mask, of course. They initially had a policy where everyone would have to line up in a certain order 15 minutes before class started, and then you would file in your seating chart order so that no one was walking in front of each other. It is my understanding that they have also done away with that, but it was just very overwhelming to receive that, and so I was concerned about not just the safety of being indoors, which is still a concern of mine, even masked, but having to deal with all of the rules and procedures on top of what can already be an anxiety-inducing atmosphere and experience. So, staying home for me has allowed me to control my environment in a way that's been really good for me. You mentioned saving time, which is also enormous, from not having to deal with finding parking to not moving from space to space within the school. So, I log into my class about 10 minutes before class starts, and that's really the only buffer of time that I've needed to give myself, which is really fantastic because you can always use more time to read.

Lee Burgess: That's true. On one hand, right now things are somewhat boring, in the sense that we don't have a lot of other stuff going on. But then you're really busy in law school, so any extra time that you have, you can attribute it to some of the other things that you're doing.

Cathlyn Melvin: Exactly.

Lee Burgess: What do you think have been some of the challenges to the online learning, both from you or other friends that you have made in school?

Cathlyn Melvin: The technology and the adaptation to the new classroom style has been challenging, I think mostly for the professors really, because they're the ones that are having to maneuver through technology that they've never had to use before. Even when everyone went online in the spring and everyone was on Zoom – well, then you had Zoom. And now, you have your students in the classroom, you have your students on Zoom, and you're splitting your focus. There are mic systems, there are different screen-sharing programs, and polling



and quizzing programs that professors are using as part of their lesson planning and classroom experience that they're just being really, I think, wonderfully creative and adaptive. And my professors all seem to 100% care about making the experience for their remote students just as valuable as the in-classroom experience, and that just means a lot of extra effort and time and energy and creativity from them. So, I think they're bearing the brunt of it, is the short story there.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, and I think the technology is fatiguing for everyone.

Cathlyn Melvin: Agreed.

Lee Burgess: I think spending a lot of time at a computer, listening or trying to focus can be really challenging. A lot of people struggle with paying attention to law school classes when they're in the room, let alone at your computer, with the entire Internet behind you and nobody watching necessarily what you're doing as you're participating. What about the logistics of the Socratic method? Are your professors still trying to call on students? Is that working? Do you feel like as a Zoom student that you're getting that interaction?

Cathlyn Melvin: I think it is working. My professors are all still using the Socratic method, and they all have their own sort of iteration of what that method means to them, I think. Two main challenges that I've found, being on Zoom with the Socratic method, is that because we are on a screen and the rest of the students are in front of them, it's hard to tell whether people in the classroom are raising their hand, we can't really see them. And when they do speak, the mic systems that we have don't pick them up, which is another challenge. The professors have to repeat everything that the students in class say.

Lee Burgess: Right, that's tough.

Cathlyn Melvin: But the way that our professors are really working with the Socratic method, although it varies depending on what their personal style is, is still really working. They're calling on us on Zoom, sometimes it seems like either a professor might be focusing more on calling on Zoom students or more on calling on in-classroom students, and I think that that balance is really challenging. And then the other challenge that we have is the technology. For the most part, the students in the classroom can hear us as we speak on Zoom, but when it's the students in class that are being called on, we can't hear them very well, partially because they're masked, which is a challenge in and of itself.

Lee Burgess: Right, which is already a challenge, yeah.



- Cathlyn Melvin: And then partially because of the technology of the mic systems not working great. And they have plans, apparently, to redo those systems over winter break, so that the spring semester runs more smoothly.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. Do you have friends that are doing the in-person programming? Have you gotten any feedback on what some of the challenges are about being on campus, other than the obvious ones, that you are trying to follow all these rules and you're masked all the time, and you can't... I mean, I just think of the amount of junk that I carried with me when I was a 1L and then adding to that the COVID-related junk I have in my bag, which includes four masks and alcohol hand wipes, and different kinds of masks for different kinds of situations, and it's just...
- Cathlyn Melvin: Yeah, you used to walk out of the house and say, "Do I have my phone, my wallet, my keys?" And now, the list is 15 items long.
- Lee Burgess: The list is very long, I know.
- Cathlyn Melvin: So, one of the things that I think at least UF has done to help mitigate some of that is that each section is only in one classroom. So, the students who are in the classroom bring all of their stuff, unpack it into that classroom, and that's where they are for the day.
- Lee Burgess: Nice.
- Cathlyn Melvin: It's my understanding that sometimes people even leave things overnight, so I think that that's really helpful. One of the challenges that I had heard from one of my fellow classmates who's in-person that surprised me was that she really struggled on her breaks to find somewhere where she felt safe eating.
- Lee Burgess: Ah, that would be tricky.
- Cathlyn Melvin: Yeah, so she spent a lot of time in her car, eating her lunch or studying or whatever. There just weren't a lot of spaces where she felt safe and comfortable on the campus, doing those things.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, that's interesting. I could imagine, at UF at least, you have a lot more outside options, but in parts of the country as it starts to get colder, it's going to get trickier and trickier because where do you go if you can't be outside?
- Cathlyn Melvin: Yeah. When I moved to Gainesville, I moved from Chicago, so it's where I've lived for the last 10 years. And I am so grateful to be somewhere where right now, I can still walk outside barefoot. And I can meet up with people in a park, or go for a walk. And I just know that for most of the country, that's not going to be the case for very long, even if they still are able to do that in October.



- Lee Burgess: Yeah, it's tricky. I think the winter's going to be challenging on so many levels. When that cold weather sets in in California, we're very thankful that it rains, but it's nothing like what you live through in Chicago, or what's going to happen in certain parts of the country.
- Cathlyn Melvin: A friend of mine on Facebook the other day posted a video of it snowing outside of his window.
- Lee Burgess: Oh, wow. Ooh, it's coming. Winter is coming, winter is coming.
- Cathlyn Melvin: Yeah, he's in the Twin Cities.
- Lee Burgess: Okay. Well, I think that it's interesting, this new masked existence that we are all living in, that it is getting harder to be understood right now, whether it is over Zoom, whether it is in-person, because you don't sound very good.
- Cathlyn Melvin: Right.
- Lee Burgess: Not to totally show what happens behind the scenes in the podcasting, but it's not just me and some headphones. We had a little technology meltdown before we got on this call, and I've got a mic and a sound buffer behind it, which is connected to another thing. And that makes me sound better and it's much clearer, but that took a long time for me to figure out what was needed to make that technology work. And then speaking out in class, masked, all of that kind of stuff, it's going to be tricky. So, what do you think are the main challenges around communication right now, given our new masked existence?
- Cathlyn Melvin: I think there are three main sort of hurdles that we're running into in our masked communication – one of which is that when you are speaking through two or three layers of fabric, your consonants are muffled, we don't get all of those nice, juicy and crunchy sounds that really help our brains understand the shape of words, and our vowels get alighted. So, they're mushier, we all sound a little bit like we've got mush mouth. We also, because we have something sitting across our mouths and connected to our ears, or wrapped around our heads, or whatever style of mask you wear – we're more likely to forget to open our mouths wide when we're speaking. So, it's really important that we make that practiced effort, especially when we have our masks on. And the other challenge, I think, comes from the side of being a listener, rather than the speaker themselves, and that is that we are all under more stress than we are in an ordinary year. We're all sort of in survival mode. And as stress increases, cognition decreases, focus decreases. So even if, as a speaker, I'm speaking loudly and clearly, my listener might be struggling more than they ordinarily would. And so, there are several ways that we can help alleviate those issues.



- Lee Burgess: Yeah, I think that's interesting. I do think that, now that it really looks like masks are here to stay for quite a long time, it is interesting to see how everybody's negotiating it in different situations. And I joke that I have a different mask for different situations, but I totally do.
- Cathlyn Melvin: I totally do too.
- Lee Burgess: I have one that has a really great fitting nose piece, so my glasses don't fog up, but it's much around your mouth, it's a looser fabric. I was on a socially distanced outdoor walk with someone, and when you breathe in, the mask goes into your mouth a little bit when you breathe, and I'm like, "Okay, well, this is great because I can see out of my glasses, which is awesome, but this is making it hard to talk because now I'm eating fabric." So I have to come up with a new solution for that. And some people are doing surgical masks, which they find more comfortable, many people are doing other types of reusable ones. So, a lot of it does seem to be somewhat just trial and error, that you've got to find what works for your face and what you're most comfortable with. At the times when I have felt most comfortable wearing something like an N95 or something that has a harder shell, that you just talk normally because nothing's touching your mouth. So it's interesting how the different types of masks really seem to influence your comfort level and how easy it is to communicate.
- Cathlyn Melvin: Mm-hmm.
- Lee Burgess: So, what do you do if you're in class, you feel like you're not sounding your best, or maybe you've gotten comments that people cannot hear you, which I'm sure that some professors are like, "What? Can you say that again? What?"
- Cathlyn Melvin: I hear that over and over again.
- Lee Burgess: So what do you think are some of the steps that students can take to make it easier for them to communicate in this masked existence?
- Cathlyn Melvin: So, the first thing that I would encourage students to do is to breathe. And that sounds, on the surface, very simple – we breathe all day long. But especially when you're being cold called and your heart races and your body reacts, it can be really challenging to remember that you have the time, you can take a breath. And what I would encourage you to do as you take that breath is really focus on expanding your belly. We all have a muscle called a diaphragm, which is sort of shaped like an upside-down U and it sits underneath our lungs. And when we breathe deeply, that's allowed because our diaphragm expands downward and creates a normal U, which is why our belly pushes out, because it affects that shape. But what that does is allow our space behind our rib cage to open up for our lungs to expand. And I think a lot of us, through cartoons and other imagery, we start to imagine that a deep breath means that we're lifting



our shoulders up to our ears. But our shoulders don't breathe, our lungs do. So, your shoulders shouldn't be moving. You can take a nice, deep, relaxed breath, and a bonus of that is that when you take that breath, your systems all relax, and so you're going to think more clearly too. But taking that deep breath really allows you then to have the power in your body to project and to send that sound out into the classroom. So that's the first thing that I would offer.

The next thing is to slow down. A lot of us speak very quickly, and because a mask is covering our face, our listeners don't have any of the physical cues that they normally would. Most of us rely to some extent on lip reading, even if that's subconscious. We also rely on facial expressions, and when half of your face is covered up, you lose that stimuli and those signals. And like we talked about earlier, our listeners just aren't focusing as well and thinking as clearly, so as our stress increases and our cognition decreases, we intellectually can't keep up with that fast rate of speech. And so, because a lot of us are in the habit of speaking quite quickly, what I would suggest is, when you are at home, when you are talking with your significant other, when you're on the phone with your dad, speak so slowly that you think you sound silly. As a theater teacher, I would tell my students that if at some point during the program they didn't feel silly, that meant they were not theatering hard enough. And I would say the same thing as you practice speaking slowly – if you're not feeling a little silly with your rate of speech, you're probably not speaking slowly enough to really serve the purpose.

And related to feeling silly, another thing that I would suggest people to do is overexaggerate. So, we might feel very silly if we are opening our mouths very wide, if we're overdoing the shapes of all of our sounds, but the great thing is that we're wearing a mask. No one's going to see that we're doing that, so that gives us a little bit of a free pass to overexaggerate those shapes. And that allows lots of sound to come out, and that also helps us be clear with our consonants and our vowels. A challenge with that though is, like you were saying before, sometimes our mask aren't very comfortable or they don't fit us very well. And so, you want to make sure that the mask that you're wearing has enough space in it that you can yawn comfortably. So, when you're trying on a mask...

Lee Burgess: When you're doing the new shopping for 2020 and you're trying out different masks...

Cathlyn Melvin: Yes, which hopefully you're not trying on your mask.

Lee Burgess: That's true. That's true.

Cathlyn Melvin: But when you take it home. That first time that you put on a mask and you decide whether it's a mask that you want to wear to class or to your





presentation or what have you, take a nice big relaxed yawn and make sure that your jaw can drop in that way. And then a couple of other things that are related is to pronounce every single sound in every single word – your vowels, your consonants, they're all in there for a reason. They're for us to understand you. I speak to Americans because that's where I learned language and studied language and performance, but it's my understanding that Americans as a whole tend to do something that... Actors talk about "driving to the end of a line", and we naturally don't do that. So what that might sound like is if I say, "I'm going to go to the zoo to see *the lions*" – instead, I would probably say, "I'm going to go to *the zoo* and see the lions."

Lee Burgess: Right.

Cathlyn Melvin: And so we drop off that end of the sentence, and that makes it very hard. Even if you start strong, by the end of the sentence, I don't know what you're saying.

Lee Burgess: Right.

Cathlyn Melvin: And so really focusing on driving through to the end of each sentence that you say.

Lee Burgess: That makes sense.

Cathlyn Melvin: And then two last things – I know this is a long list, but I think they're all important – is to give space for questions, because your listener might not keep up with you and because we are all fatigued of saying, "What? Huh? Say that again?" If you allow for space, your listener is more likely to say, "I didn't quite catch that. Can you say that again, or can you say that a different way?" And you can check in with them too – say, "Does that make sense? Are you following me?", to encourage that sort of back and forth communication.

And the very last thing is, because we're all trying to project and we're all trying to be heard, before you walk into a classroom or a presentation, or wherever you're going and speaking, to warm up your voice. And while that may bring to mind an opera singer in the shower doing scales, that is not something that you need to do to make sure that you're treating your voice in a healthy way. But the breath that we talked about earlier, taking a few deep relaxed breaths, it relaxes all of your muscles in your throat, and your neck, and your body, and it's good for your mind too. And then to stretch, do some head rolls, some shoulder rolls to get all of that apparatus all loose and ready to work really hard, because it's all working really hard right now.

Lee Burgess: Right.



Cathlyn Melvin: And then as far as warming up your voice itself, I think the best way to start that is with just a gentle hum. Hum a lullaby, hum a Christmas carol, some simple tune; low, deep in your voice in just a relaxed way that just helps your vocal cords start to move in a way that's not flaming them together, and getting them comfortable. And then something else that you can do to warm up your articulators, which are your lips, your teeth, your tongue – all of the parts of your mouth that work together to articulate – is to do some tongue twisters. And I know as children, the goal of tongue twisters was to say them as quickly as you possibly could, and see who could say them fastest without messing up. But when you're warming up your voice, what you really want to do is say them slowly and overexaggerate all of the sounds. So I wondered, Lee...

Lee Burgess: Yes?

Cathlyn Melvin: If you had tongue twisters that you might want to teach from your time as a performer. Do you remember any that you thought were super fun?

Lee Burgess: You know, I was not as much of a tongue twister person; I would always do the singing vocal warm-ups. People who've met me in-person or sat in a class with me, I project fairly well, so getting my mouth running in the morning wasn't always one of my challenges. But it's funny, I was recently thinking about the tongue twisters because my son had an old school nursery rhyme book with, "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers", which I even can't always say without screwing it up. And I'm listening to myself and I'm like, "Oh, I kind of remember doing these", and then how difficult they are if you have not done them in a while. So even something as simple as, "Peter Piker..." See, I screwed it up again. Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.

Cathlyn Melvin: Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.

Lee Burgess: Yes, you've got to slow it down or it runs away with your tongue.

Cathlyn Melvin: Yes.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, I think that this idea of just doing anything so that the first communication that you have during the day is not the first thing that could come on the recording, the first thing that's in class. Makes a lot of sense, I think. Especially with the weather changing, people are going to have colds and things like that. Drinking hot water with lemon and honey, and all of that kind of stuff, to just try and hopefully take... Everybody needs to be taking care of their health anyway, but just trying to be kind to your body, I think makes a lot of sense.

Cathlyn Melvin: And getting a lot of sleep. I know that law students are often like, "Oh, sleep is the last thing that I can possibly fit into my schedule", but it's so important – not just because right now we're living in a world where it's extra important to stay



physically healthy, but when we are worried about taking care of our voices. You need to sleep, so that your voice can recover and you can wake up and still have one.

Lee Burgess: It's true. I think there are kind of two things. For the masking, the masked communications, I think that I have learned a lot by watching my children navigate the world in masks. I have a six-year-old, who is doing outdoor school with a mask on, and he can do everything masked, except eat. All the kids are doing it, and they are running around, and they're building, and they're screaming, and they're doing all of their kid things while wearing a mask and complaining about it a whole lot less than most of us adults. I think because they're not as self-conscious as we are, they aren't worried about what they sound like. And I think there are a lot of lessons in that, that if we just lighten up a little bit and do our best to shake off these frustrations, when we can't understand each other, when we have to ask for clarification, when we aren't being able to present ourselves. I was trying to do some sort of non-verbal communication to someone, then realized that it doesn't work when you're wearing a mask, and I felt like a total...

Cathlyn Melvin: Right.

Lee Burgess: I was just like, "Oh, you've no idea that I'm making this smiley smirk because you can't see anything." So I think there's just a lot about having grace around this. And with online communications, if you're in a Zoom classroom, if you're doing all of this online, if you're getting feedback that people are struggling to hear you, little tiny things can make it better. It can be wearing even just the headphones that came with your cell phone, can be a lot better than your computer's mic. If you are getting a ton of echo and it's hard, you do not have to go buy recording equipment; you can lay a towel on top of your desk and then lay your computer on the towel, and that's going to cut down on some of the sound echo. You hear, during the pandemic, podcasters and people who are like, "I'm podcasting in my closet", and like, "I'm on a pile of laundry." I don't think you have to do that on a regular basis, but I do think that there are just little things that you can do to help make yourself feel a bit more confident about how you're communicating. And if you don't know what you sound like, you can just use [QuickTime](#) if you have a Mac, or any sort of free software. There's one called [Audacity](#), and you can just record yourself and listen to your... I know a lot of people don't like to listen to themselves, but just record a little like five-minute little chat, or read part of a case and see what you sound like. Because I think that you might be surprised that it sounds pretty normal, and then maybe that reduces your anxiety. If you feel like you don't like how it sounds, you can practice and change it. I won't necessarily challenge anybody to this, and I haven't even done this in a long time, but I bet if you go back to our [very first podcast episode](#), a number of years ago, it is not as good sounding as probably this one, because the equipment wasn't as good, I wasn't as used to



doing it, Alison and I were still kind of finding our voices, and all of that kind of stuff. And that comes through practice and getting more comfortable with it, and all of that kind of stuff.

Cathlyn Melvin: And five years from now, you'll look back at this episode and you'll be like, "Wow, that sounds totally different."

Lee Burgess: Right. And so, I think there's a lot of just realizing that if there are things about communicating in this current world that are frustrating to you, there could be tiny tweaks that you could make, that are going to help you feel better. We've been talking most about sound, but even little things, like if you don't like how you look on your Zoom camera, raise your laptop up. Everybody looks better if the camera is not angled up your nose. And again, you don't have to buy anything; you just stack some books.

Cathlyn Melvin: Yep. In my desk setup, I have a regular riser, but I don't always like to sit at my desk, so I'll move around. And when I sit on my couch, I have two boxes that came from my Internet TV company that just stack up. I set my computer right on top of it, and it's the perfect height.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. So again, if that helps you feel better about the situation and how you're communicating, do those little tweaks. You don't need the swanky ring lights that clip to your laptop, unless you want one.

Cathlyn Melvin: No.

Lee Burgess: You can just sit with your face looking at a window, so you're not backlit. I can sit at a certain way at a certain window and it shadows my nose in a very weird way, and then I get those mountain looking things on my nose, and I find that very distracting. I'm sure nobody else has ever noticed that, but I'm like, "Oh, I won't sit in that angle anymore." But if you just turn...

Cathlyn Melvin: It's hard when your face is staring back at you on your computer, to not be like, "What's going on with my nose? Why are there mountains across my face?"

Lee Burgess: I know! So, yeah, it's a lot of trial and error, but I think the reality is, this life is here to stay for a while, so we should just buckle up, settle in, and do the best that we can to get as comfortable as we can with it. And then many, many moons from now, we can all look back at this time and talk about how we had our masked law school classes.

Cathlyn Melvin: Yep. How powerful and full of grit we all were to get through it.

Lee Burgess: Exactly. Exactly.



- Cathlyn Melvin: We can all feel very strong and special.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. Well, as we wind up our time together, do you have any final thoughts to the other 1Ls out there trying to make it through this unprecedented year?
- Cathlyn Melvin: At least the law students that I've interacted with, because this is the experience that we know – we haven't been to law school before, we don't really have a basis for comparison – we're all sort of relaxing into it and supporting each other, and finding ways of communicating. And so, I think that just acknowledging that we're all part of the same community, and working together, and being this big network and team, is really important and feels really good.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah.
- Cathlyn Melvin: So I think that that's something to be grateful for as we move through this, and something to focus on as well.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. Well, the law students that are coming through this time, there's going to be a special bond. Anyone who sees a resume of somebody who was in law school in this time, it's going to be an interesting point in history that we'll all be talking about for a very, very long time. Well, I appreciate you taking time away from your Zoom life to join me on the podcast. If people wanted to read more about your thoughts on law school and your experience, they can check out our [blog](#) at LawSchoolToolbox.com. And hopefully, we can hear more about how your pandemic 1L year goes.
- Cathlyn Melvin: Wonderful, I hope so. Thank you so much for having me.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, thank you.
- Cathlyn Melvin: This has been a great way to spend an afternoon.
- Lee Burgess: Wonderful, thank you for joining me. And with that, we are out of time. If you enjoyed this episode of the Law School Toolbox podcast, please take a second to leave a review and rating on your favorite listening app. We'd really appreciate it. And be sure to subscribe so you don't miss anything. If you would like some information on our career help or the opportunity to work one-on-one with us, you can check out the website [CareerDicta.com](#). If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to reach out to myself or Alison at [lee@lawschooltoolbox.com](mailto:lee@lawschooltoolbox.com) or [alison@lawschooltoolbox.com](mailto:alison@lawschooltoolbox.com). Or you can always contact us via our website [contact form](#) at LawSchoolToolbox.com. Thanks for listening, and we'll talk soon!



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