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Striking a Balance:

Navigating Law School and Personal Life with Ease

- By Celina Swamy

What is it like to be a first-year law student fresh out of high school?

One moment you are taking your final board examinations, where you must write about Mahatma Gandhi as a question totaling as high as ten marks. And three months later, you find yourself studying for mid-semester exams at 4 in the morning, delving into a completely new world of responsibility and self-reliance; learning about subjects like intellectual property rights and international law.

It is no surprise that the difference is vast. So, how do you cope with the stress when there are five more years of the same pressure, which will only increase?

Maintaining a balance between your personal life and law school is key to getting your degree while still preserving your sanity.

This blog provides tips and tricks to help you make the most of these five years.

Understanding the Requirements of Law School

As much fun as it is to learn about the vast and intriguing field of law, it tends to become equally as boring to comprehend and memorize the intrinsic complexities of legal codes, their codexes, and various case studies; not to mention having to memorize 100 case laws where your professors will expect a thorough and critical understanding of the material, not just its rote memorization.

On top of the heavy reading load, you are expected to actively participate in class discussions, prepare presentations, and write lengthy legal briefs all while parallelly tackling many exams.

The only way to reasonably attain this slew of equally important goals is to kiss your free time goodbye (well, maybe not entirely, but one still needs to be prepared to make sacrifices).

So, what is common between your peers who seem to have it all figured out? How do they maintain their grades alongside a stable personal life? EFFECTIVE TIME MANAGEMENT! That is what it boils down to at the end of the day.

How to make the most of the limited time you get after classes?

Compartmentalizing your Allocatable Time:

Not all tasks are equal. Learning what to prioritize and when is key!

Allocating specific time for everything that needs to be done can prove very effective in making sure that procrastination does not take up the time you have kept aside for leisure. Sticking to a pre-determined schedule helps you stay focused and avoid last-minute scrambles, redundant actions, and easily avoidable mix-ups.

Breaking down Longer Tasks:

Just like a mountain climbing novice would feel overwhelmed looking at Mt. Everest for the first time, a student is also bound to face large tasks making them feel overwhelmed while on a tight schedule.

Thus, it is always easier to break them down into smaller and more manageable chunks. This often proves to be of further help with easy systematization while also helping one avoid losing sight of the primary goal, motivation, or objective.

Avoiding Procrastination:

Scheduling and dividing our work throughout the week or at responsibly spaced durational gaps is crucial to avoid cramming everything into a hotpot of chaos right at the deadline. Consistency and determination are key in juggling many parallel tasks while still being able to bring them to fruition.

The Power of Saying NO:

Even in the case of an emergency, the cabin crew reminds a mother to first put on her own oxygen mask before turning to assist her children. It is extremely important to learn how to prioritize your priorities over doing others favors while being on a tightrope yourself. Learning and practicing to decline requests politely but firmly, in case they do not align with your preferences or schedule, is a core essential to nurturing the goal of achieving success in life.

It is common for law students to agree to every plan presented to them as they are under pressure to make the most of their already limited free time, but this is counterproductive as it leads to wasted hours, as well as engaging themselves in activities that do not bring any academic, emotional, or mental satisfaction.

This will inevitably make you regret not having spent that time in your college library studying for your exams or working on enhancing yourself. So, why put yourself in that position when you can simply say NO?

These are just some of the points I have observed being a student of law myself. At the end of the day, it is up to oneself to decide their own limitations, priorities, and personal boundaries. However, it will serve us all well to remember that relationships are as easy to ruin as they are hard to build and nurture. If we are unhappy with our status quo, we will be projecting the same negativity onto those around us. The biggest takeaway here is to focus on striking a balance between our academic endeavors and personal lives. This way, we will be able to hold onto our loved ones while not compromising our prospects either.