

## TIPS FOR STUDENTS FROM STUDENTS

# How to remain focused and confident in law school

**By: Imani Theodore**

*Osgoode Hall Law School*

Law school is filled with some of the most talented and interesting people that you will ever meet which is both inspiring and nerve-racking. Luckily, you are just as gifted and exciting which is why you got into law school. However, seeing people thrive in what you don't, answering questions in class you don't understand, or getting jobs that you did not can be scary and stressful. It does not help that the law school environment fosters competition and comparison with the curve and class ranking. You may find yourself comparing yourself to your classmates and not feeling good because you think they are doing better than you. Whether it is unconscious or explicit, these feelings of inferiority might come up during your law school experience. These feelings have a name: Imposter Syndrome.

Loosely defined as feeling of fraud, doubting your abilities, and a persistent feeling of doubt and shame despite major success.

So here are 5 tips to combat the feeling and overcome it!

### **Mind your own business**

It is so easy to get caught up in what other people are doing in law school. You see people bragging about being up until 3am studying, people posting photos of their ten-hour library study sessions, or the very exciting job or volunteer opportunities they are getting. Being around this can inspire comparison or disappointment in yourself. But these thoughts don't come if you ignore the drama and focus on what you have to do. Everyone's journey in law school is different and you are not less than the others around you because you don't have a certain job or go to bed before 1am. If you do what is in front of you and try your best, you will be successful and more confident in yourself and your work.



### Get a strong support team

Have a support group of people who are not law students. People from your life before you started the law school grind who know how hard you worked to get here, the skills and abilities that you have, and just how amazing you are. Friends and family are a reminder of all that you can do and all that you have done. So, keep these people around as a compassionate reminder of all your successes.

### Choose confidence

This sounds simple but do not be afraid to believe in yourself. Raise your hand in class, be confident that you studied hard enough or that what you earned was not based off luck. Try to turn those negative thoughts into something positive. You can do this with gentle reminders to yourself that you are doing your best, you are trying, and other positive affirmations. Reframing your thoughts is a helpful tool to build up self-esteem and avoid potential feelings of failure and depression.

### Remember you are here to learn

It is a learning curve to study law and for some people it comes naturally and for others it takes many practices exams to get it right. Many law students come to school ready to go and understand the law and be amazing at it, and if it does not come naturally, we can feel like a failure. However, grades are not the only indicator of success and they do not show what you learned. You are at law school to learn the basics of the law, become better advocates, and learn different ways to think. Enjoy what you are learning, take classes that interest you, and shift from focusing on the grade to enjoying the process.

### Accept that you don't need to be great at everything

It is a difficult concept to accept that one person does not have to be fantastic at everything. Sure, there are people in law school who will be, but the majority will be good, bad, and fantastic in a range of courses. It does not mean that you are failing if you got a C in something you thought you would be great at. It does not define your entire life or your ability to do well in the future. Accept the weaknesses you have and work on them, do not let them overwhelm or consume you. Use the resources around you to improve and

Law school goes by quickly and you want to look back thinking of all the fun you had and what you learned, not how inferior you felt. Success will come in various ways throughout school so embrace them all.

### Have a tip of your own that you want to share with Canadian law students across the country?

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