

Seattle University School of Law, 2011.

**1. Everyone knows that law school and the Bar are difficult and stressful, and California has one of the highest standards for Bar passage in the country; what helped to keep you focused and your head above water? Any tips for current students?**

It was just having that end goal in mind and having a direction to go. It also felt like I was already set up because I was working as a legal assistant at that law firm and I kind of knew that I basically had a job opportunity waiting for me. So I didn't have to stress too much; I know there's a lot of stress for law students where they're like, "I want to be on Law Review" and do all the writing, get an internship/externship, etc. But I think it was a bit easier for me knowing the direction I wanted to go and having a clear plan on how to get there.

I also had outside sources of relief and entertainment. I met my now-husband in undergrad and we moved in together the summer that I started law school, then got married after my first year in law school. Having that established home life and somebody that I could fall back on, having set times that I knew were dedicated to studying vs. times that were saved for a social life [sic].

**2. July 2018 Bar pass rates in California saw a drop that hit a 70-year low, with 20 out of the 21 ABA-accredited law schools in the state suffering a [pass rate decrease ranging from 1%-21%](#). As a result, many students are preparing to take it again in 2019 (in addition to new first-time takers). If you did not pass the Bar on your first attempt, how did you prepare differently the next time around? If you did pass on your first try, what do you think helped you the most, and were you able to carry any of those strategies into your professional life?**

Luckily I only had to take it once, but I do know several people that had to take it multiple times. I would say to make sure you're prepared in terms of the format. I don't know what the format is in California, but I know the Washington format has recently changed. So just being aware of how it's tested, what they're looking for, and learning that strategy. Also, making sure to focus on your weakest points and trying to improve those as much as possible.

**3. After graduating, what were the first few years of your professional life like? How did that compare to the expectations you had during school?**

I don't think I was that shocked because I already had some exposure from what I was doing previous to graduating. I do think it would be shocking to anybody else who didn't have as much experience because a lot of what you're taught in law school is theory and not a lot of practical applications. Like with geometry: who uses that on a day-to-day basis unless you're a mathematician? I did notice near the end of my law school career that they [offered] more practical application courses, things like a Bar prep class and something like, "how to navigate the King County Superior Court system" – things that focused on the practical aspects rather

than talking about the theory behind the law and a bunch of general principles. That's probably the most frustrating thing in terms of how they differ between law school and when you're actually out in the real world.

**4. Being able to effectively network with peers, associates, and employers is a major factor in furthering a professional career, particularly in the legal field. Are there any common misconceptions or outdated advice that you've heard regarding the "proper" way to network in today's work environment?**

I was pretty locked in to what I would consider to be my "immediate network". I was in a medium-sized firm, so I had other colleagues to turn to and didn't need to look elsewhere for advice. Unfortunately, I was never really involved in extracurricular activities like lawyer groups or things like that, but I know that can be helpful for a lot of people.

**5. What are the top 3 things you learned as a lawyer that you wish you'd known when first starting?**

I don't know about three, but the hardest lesson for me was that I do have the knowledge, knowing that I was prepared and have the ability to learn my field. You don't have to go into every client meeting or interaction already having all the answers. You can still gain the knowledge in time. I felt really uncomfortable counseling people at first, especially other people that were older than me, on really personal issues. If I could go back to newly-attorneyed Anna... having seven years in practice, you gain a lot of confidence.

**6. What are, or would be, the top 3 skills or characteristics you look for when hiring a new lawyer? Why are those so important to you?**

They have to be able to effectively communicate. Talking to the client and actually get their message across, as well as listening – communication both ways.

Also, they have to be willing to admit when they don't know something. That was hard for me. I didn't want to go to others for advice because I felt like I should be able to figure it out on my own. So they have to be able to go to someone else and admit that they don't know something. They need to have a positive personality because the legal field can be so draining. You have to make sure you have an outside source of entertainment, or some kind of outlet, whether it's family and friends or just enjoying something other than work. That's a very important quality to have. I've seen so many of colleagues say that they haven't taken time off in years and can't even imagine trying to schedule it, but you really *need* it for your mental health and being able to perform for your client.

**7. Any last words of advice for our students and recent grads?**

People always say, "You can go hang your own shingle", but that's easier said than done. Even if you have to do the grunt work – contracting with a law firm, taking a job here and there – even if you're not sure where you want to end up because there's so many different fields to practice

in, you don't have to hone in on just one unless you're extremely passionate about it. And it's NEVER too late to change.