**The Night Before Your Exam…**

I’m Laura Mott from CUNY School of Law in New York City, and this is for anyone about to take your first - or ANY! final exam in law school.

So, it’s the night before your final. Time flies! It probably seems like just yesterday it was a warm, sunny day, [Sound effects: birds chirping] and you were meeting your classmates for the first time! Now, after weeks of outlining and preparation it’s time to finally prove all that you know!

It is completely normal to be very nervous right now. But try to think about this: you began law school, navigating the challenges of attending classes with unpredictable distractions, and you’ve now managed to make it through a semester of very difficult classes. Maybe you even started school during the pandemic! In short, you have already accomplished so much. This exam is the last step and one you’ve been preparing for since the semester began.

So today and tonight eat good food. [Sound effect: silverware clicking on plate] And make your plans for what snacks and drinks you will need to have close at hand during the exam. Pack your bag with everything you’ll need – scrap paper, pens, pencils, highlighters, etc. Try to get to sleep at a reasonable time.

Tomorrow, if possible, don’t do anything too cognitively demanding. Any and all extra mental endurance for the exam will help. Don’t write through any practice tests – read or **outline them only** if you plan to look at any.

So at test time, plan to take the first 5 minutes to read through the facts in depth and mark up the exam. [Sound effect: clock ticking] Issue-spot for facts relating to things you know will be tested and write down the legal rules next to the corresponding relevant facts.

Make an outline on scrap paper or write on your exam of the main issues, and map in how many IRACs/analyses you want to include. When you start writing your answer cross-off facts as you include them in your analysis.

If you’re using case analogies make sure to sufficiently describe what happened in the case you're referring to, including the holding.

So, it’s okay if when you first open the test you’re too nervous to start reading through it. It’s very common for this “freezing” to happen. [Sound effect: calm, slow music]

If it happens to you, just keep breathing deeply until the feeling subsides (which it will.) Even getting up to stretch and drink water is okay. Remember, you have plenty of time to do the exam.

The last step on test day before turning your exam in, make sure you’ve followed all the instructions as specified. And, if you’re taking the test on a laptop, know who to contact if you have computer issues.

Before tomorrow’s test, also take a minute to think about all of the reasons you are in law school in the first place. Get a mantra or perhaps a song [sound effect: Slow, calm music] that inspires you when you need to be boosted up. Say it or play it right before you take the exam. Think about how many folks in your life are already so proud that you have made it so far.

Also, consider what the future holds. Even though it is an extremely unsettling and uncertain time in the world right now, what is absolutely certain is that the future will need **really** strong attorneys. You have displayed incredible fortitude by getting through your first semester of law school, and this first final exam is your chance to show your professors (and yourself!) everything you’ve learned.

Only take in what helps you tomorrow. Leave *everything else* at the threshold of the room.

You’ve got this. Take a couple of nice, deep, reflective breaths right before you get your exam. All of the frustration, anxiety, late nights, doctrinal confusion, case briefing, are almost over. You have come so far and now you’re going even further.

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