

Speaker 1: Welcome to the Extra Mile Podcast for Bar Exam Takers. There are no traffic jams along the extra mile when you're studying for your bar exam. And now you're host, Jackson Mumey, owner of the Celebration Bar Review.

Jackson Mumey: Well, hey, everyone. Welcome to the Extra Mile Podcast for Bar Exam Takers. This is Jackson Mumey. I'm so glad you're with me today. I've got a really special treat for you. In this episode, and in the next episode, I'm going to be sharing with you a conversation I recently had with 1 of my colleagues, someone that works with me here in the Bar Review, and her name is Elena DuCharme. Elena is the person that we work with, with our students who are really facing substantial challenges in the bar when it comes to the emotional, and the test anxiety parts, the neurolinguistic parts of their training. She actually anchors what we call our Successful Test Application Resources program, or STAR.

Elena and I got on the phone. You'll hear some background noises and things, but I think you'll be able to follow the conversation pretty well. We talked for about an hour or so about the things that we see in the bar exam right now that are affecting bar exam takers. It was such a great conversation that I decided to break it up into 2 episodes. In today's episode, we're going to take the first half of that conversation. In the next episode we'll cover the rest of the conversation.

Now let me just tell you some of the things that we're going to talk about today. Elena and I will talk about the intersection of the bar exam and neurolinguistic programming, or NLP. Elena is a highly qualified specialist. She's a certified specialist in neurolinguistic programming. She's also quite interesting in that she's got her JD. She's a member of the California Bar. She was on the faculty at Hastings College of Law. She has done extraordinary amounts of work, as you'll hear at the beginning of this interview, in the intersection of these 2 fields. She has worked with us at Celebration Bar Review for several years now. She's absolutely dead-on qualified to talk about these subjects.

Elena and I are going to talk about why people don't get what they want on the bar. You might think that that's a sort of obvious topic. But in fact, it's pretty specific, and it's something that will surprise you. The reason that people don't get what they want is not because they didn't study hard enough, or not because they aren't smart enough. But it's a lot of other things. We're going to dive deep into that. We're also going to talk about what Elena calls "walking the plank" of the bar exam. When you're out there and you're saying, "I've got to walk the plank now," and it's this terrible, awful thing that happens, what happens to you psychologically and mentally, and how can you deal with that.

We're going to identify, and Elena will address some of the blocks that can keep you from passing the bar exam. Again, I think you're going to be surprised by some of the things that she sees as potential blocks for many people. We also

looked at why some people freak out around the bar exam and other people stay calm and collected. It has very little, again, to do with intelligence or background or experience. It has a lot to do with your psychology, and that's good news, because you can change that. Elena talks about the fight, flight, and freeze system, what she calls the critter brain, and how that impacts you both in terms of your study and on the exam itself. It's a fascinating discussion.

Then we talk about the fear of success. Not just the fear of failure, but really the very prevalent notion that some people don't want to go forward on the bar and self-sabotage them. I call it that. She's going to call it creature neurology. But we talk about how there is this fear of success that can happen. I think you'll find that an interesting discussion as well. We talk about the things that can block you in your study, whether it's writing an essay, or it's the strategy on taking the multi-state bar exam. Elena will give you some of those blocks and ways to deal with them. Then we wrap up this part of the conversation with a longer discussion and look at this area of mindsets. We talk about Professor Carol Dweck, in her book "Mindset," and I'll link to that in the show notes for you. This whole notion of having a success mindset or a failure mindset, and what it does, and how you can change that. We'll take a pretty deep dive into that area of mindsets.

That's what's covered in today's episode. You can see there's a lot there. In our next episode, we'll cover the rest of the conversation, and I'll save that discussion for the next episode introduction. Now, I think you're going to really be excited to hear this conversation, and when you're done hearing it, you may be thinking to yourself, "Well, how do I get involved with all that?" There's a couple of ways. Within the Celebration Bar Review program we have, as I said, a program called STAR, Successful Test Application Resources. I'm going to link to that in the show notes so that you can see that. It's something you add on to your normal bar review course with us, and it includes a lot of these additional resources, meditation exercises and soundtracks, photo reading. We'll talk a little bit about photo reading in the next episode with Elena. The STAR Program also includes the opportunity to do counseling sessions with Elena. I think after you've heard her, you'll understand why that's such a special thing to be able to do. We invite you to check that out, particularly if you're a bar repeater. We've had great success with our STAR program and the students that have gone through it. I invite you to check that out.

Something else I would invite you to consider, whether you're a first time taker, or a bar repeater, is to join us for our free, live master class that we give on Thursday at 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time, so that's 12:00 noon Pacific Time, and I think about 8 o'clock at night in the UK. In any event, it's about a 90-minute course that I teach. It's completely free. But we do limit the registration so that we make sure that we can have the appropriate level of interaction in this master class. You can register in 1 of 2 ways. You can go to our website at celebrationbarreview.com/webinar. So that's celebrationbarreview.com/webinar. Or you can register by using text

messaging. Just text the phrase "nextbarexam," all 1 word, "nextbarexam," to 33444. Again, that number is 33444. Text the phrase "nextbarexam" and we'll get you registered for this Thursday's live master class, "How to Make the Next Bar Exam Your Last Bar Exam." It's the 4 steps that a passing bar taker has to know. It's been extremely well received by those that have gone through the course. I encourage you to join us for that opportunity.

Well, we've got a lot to cover today. It's a great conversation. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did, having the opportunity to talk to Elena. I think you're going to be really excited, and really learn a lot from what she's got to say. Let's dive into our conversation with Elena DuCharme.

A very dear friend and colleague. You heard my introduction in the podcast, so I won't reintroduce her, except to say, here's Elena DuCharme. Hi, Elena.

Elena DuCharme: Hi, Jackson. Hello, everybody.

Jackson Mumey: Welcome. We are so glad to have you. This is a really kind of cool opportunity for you and me, as our audience doesn't know this, but you and I talk all the time, and we talk about what's going on in the bar exam, and what's happening, and new ideas about how to prepare people for the bar. You work with a number of our students. I thought it would really be useful and kind of fun today to let people sort of in on, as flies on the wall if you will, or something more significant, to be able to share some of those conversations. Boy, that was terrible. Folks, I don't mean to ...

Elena DuCharme: Yeah, you never say that word.

Jackson Mumey: I'm sorry. Okay, forget that. See, this is what happens.

Elena DuCharme: Right that. I object.

Jackson Mumey: Elena makes me totally freaked out, because she's so smart and intuitive, and I suddenly become a bubbling idiot. Before I get any deeper into my own mess here, why don't you just share, if you would for a moment, a little bit about how you got involved in this sort of interesting intersection of the law and the bar exam and test anxiety and neurolinguistic programming.

Elena DuCharme: Okay, well, it was a long and winding road, I will say that. I was at law school and graduated in 1992. Then I got out. I worked at a big firm, and then I went ... That atmosphere was not a good fit for me and I went to start a law firm with my brother in San Diego. Working for another few years I realized this was not a good fit for me. Just for me personally. This is not the case with everybody, you'll be glad to know. I was a litigator, in commercial litigation, civil litigation, real estate business, that kind of thing. I ended up going into coaching in 1998. I saw a news article about it, and I thought, "Sign me up. I get to be nice to people for a living. I can do that." I went through a training at the Coaches

Training Institute, which is a great school. It was just a really different experience.

I started coaching, and what I noticed over time, even in the first couple of years, is my frustration around not having tools to actually change people at the root of their problem. I could get on the phone with someone and we could make a to do list, and we could say, "Yeah, you're going to do this this week. You're going to do this and this. You're going to have this tough conversation with someone." That would be all well and good. But then we'd come back the next week and the person may not have done any of the things on the list of desired actions. This was really frustrating, not just for me, obviously, but for my clients. I think I had always longed for a more forensic tool, or something that would allow me to get to the bottom of why people lose motivation, what causes them to freak out, what causes them to behave in a way that takes them away from the things that they actually say that they want, and that they know in their heart or their mind that they want, in their gut.

Anyway, I didn't have that tool. I was pretty frustrated with that. Then I went to work at Hastings College of the Law. I spent 5 years as a graduate career advisor. I worked primarily with 3rd years, but also graduates, recent and long-time graduates, to help them with career searching. I sent job listings, and went over resumes when I did that. That was actually a really fun job. I did that half time while I did my other private work on the side for about 5 years.

Then I landed in NLP because of an opportunity that came to me. I was asked to do some leadership in coaching, namely coaching on how to get clients for lawyers in big and medium-sized and small law firms, by some colleagues of mine. They said, "But you have to go to this NLP school." I thought, "Okay." NLP stands for neurolinguistic programming. I had heard of it over the decades and always been a little curious about it. I had heard the ugly, unseemly rumors about it, that it was a tool for manipulating people. There are actually, if you go to the speed dating sights and some other sights, you'll see that NLP techniques are used pretty effectively by lonely guys, I would say.

Jackson Mumey: And just to be clear, we are not a dating service, okay.

Elena DuCharme: No, we are not a dating service.

Jackson Mumey: We're a bar review. That does not mean a ... Okay, never mind. All right, go ahead.

Elena DuCharme: But that's what a lot of people are exposed to. They think about NLP, they hear NLP, they think Tony Robbins, or speed dating. Anyway, the fortunate thing was, this is a very high-quality school. It happens to be called NLP Marin. I went through the curriculum for a year and a half, and then I was a At for 4 or 5 years in the back of the room and working 1 on 1 with the students. It was a magnificent experience. It really showed me why people don't get what they

want, in the most blunt terms. Just ... How many words is that, 5 or 6? Why people don't get what they want. Seven words.

It all boils down to some reason, at a deeper, subconscious level, why it's not okay to have what you want, or why your belief does not align with your ability to have it. Either you think you can't have it for some reason, usually something that happened in the past that has convinced you at a subconscious level that ... to run the other way from that thing, because it's dangerous, or it's bad, or that you don't have what it takes. You're not worthy, or you're not powerful enough, or capable enough, or good enough, or lovable enough to have what you want.

When I first got into NLP, I remember sitting in the class thinking, "Wow, this would be really great for people taking the bar exam, because this comes up all the time." A lot of people, when they hit the end of law school ... Law school, first of all, is a huge winnowing process. First year can be really brutal, so there's also a lot of trauma around first year. So when people hit the bar exam, a lot of people happen to meet their ... This is sort of their crucible in life. They're chewing on this issue, the bar exam, sometimes for a very long time. That happens to be the place where they meet themselves, and they meet their motivation, their lack of motivation, their fears, their terror. For a lot of people, the analogy that I use is it feels like you're walking the plank. You're dreading the bar exam and you're terrified that you'll fail, but you're making yourself go toward it anyway. That sets up a lot of conflict, pain, and fear that gets in the way of people studying and passing.

I was aware of these dynamics, but it was when I really started working with people specifically on the bar exam in about 2010, 2009 or 10, that I realized, "Wow, the techniques that I'm learning really do work." There is a lot of trauma for people, primarily, and most overtly is first year law school when you don't, oftentimes you don't do as well as you'd hoped, or that you'd ... For some people it's the first time they ever fail or get a B or a C in anything. There is a real identity conflict that can happen there. A lot of people really take that with them. But then other people ... There are other reasons why people don't pass the bar exam.

But anyway, that's the world that I work in, is really looking at what's underneath it. It's not always just about how you study. However, you may have an underlying block to studying well. You may have a block that gives you a blind spot so you can't see why it is that you're not passing.

Jackson Mumey: Yeah, for sure. What you're saying raises just all kinds of questions. As we often do, you and I can go off down the rabbit hole.

Elena DuCharme: That's right. I did kind of divert it off of my path, too.

Jackson Mumey: No, no, no. I think there's some great stuff there. Let me just focus in on a couple of things that you said, that I think might be really interesting to our

audience. Because I think most people that are listening today are certainly taking, or have taken the bar exam. Maybe they're repeat takers. Maybe they're first time takers who have just heard all the horror stories. You talked about people freaking out about the bar exam. As you work with students over the years, why do you find that some people do have this freak out reaction, and some people stay relatively calm through the process. Is it really just based on their level of intelligence? Is that what makes the difference? Or is it something deeper than that.

Elena DuCharme: Intelligence could not be further from it. It has nothing to do with their intelligence. It only has to do with whatever is going on at the deeper level that is generating all of this fear in their body, essentially their fight/flight system kicking off. Now we're hard wired for safety and survival, and that's what the fight/flight system is all about. It's actually fight/flight/freeze. There is always some reason why that gets triggered. When that's triggered, what it does, the fight/flight system, let's say you look at the bar exam, you look at the date, you hear the words, you see the appointment with Jackson on your calendar. You're sitting down to write an essay, thinking it's all going to go really well, and then you freeze. There's some reason that's all going on. There's some paired association in your brain in a neurological level that is triggering an alarm, that sets off this fight/flight system.

What that's doing is actually mobilizing you for action to fight or run from a predator. This is millions and millions of years of evolutionary hard wiring that we just carry with us. We don't get around it just because we live in modern society. We're a blip on the radar screen in terms of not being prey or edible to some larger animal.

Jackson Mumey: You mean the Neanderthals didn't have to take a bar exam?

Elena DuCharme: Exactly. I mean, we are 1 second from Neanderthal, essentially. We haven't had time to catch up with our current day reality. The bar exam is often our big threat. Or what's on the other side of the bar exam. I would say there are, if I could just clump them into some big categories, and I'm a little bit riffing here, you're either afraid of the exam itself because of trauma from failure in the past. Typically this is 1 of the things that I find out about. This trauma could be back 1st, 2nd, 3rd grade. Like, my big chance and I blew it. You're able to strong-arm yourself through law school, but when it gets to the bar exam, it's your big test, and it's bringing up all this old, old stuff at a deep level that you're not consciously aware of, that makes you anxious, kicks off your fight/flight system. Your system says, "Run the other way. This is going to be bad." You end up having anxiety, or physical manifestations, headaches, stomachaches, or you can't sleep. You have incredible jaw tension. You might have overt freak out or not.

Now the second big reason, so here's the other thing that's kind of interesting to people. There is this fear of failure out of bad experiences that happened in the past. Then there is the fear of success. That's the other big cause.

Jackson Mumey: Ooh, that's a big one, isn't it?

Elena DuCharme: Yes. I find that's even more important than the fear of failure. You can overcome having blown a test or not done well at some point in your life, unless it's a really big trauma that's associated with that. But when it comes to passing the bar, most of us have some work to do there. Some of us really have a lot of work to do there. There are so many reasons why, know it sounds ridiculous, but why it might not be okay to pass the bar.

Jackson Mumey: I encounter that a lot. I just shared in an earlier episode a student who signed up and then drove me crazy for 24 hours nonstop with just nitpicky ...

Elena DuCharme: Really?

Jackson Mumey: Oh, she was totally unhappy with everything. The course was horrible. I was horrible. Everything was bad. She was driving me absolutely nuts. This was a 24-hour period. Finally then, to her credit, she came back and said, "You know what? It's actually not you and it's not the course. I think it's actually all pretty good." She said, "The problem is, I am terrified of passing the bar and giving up this really terrific life I've got staying home with my kids. I know what I'm doing is just exploding over you." We agreed mutually that she should probably not take the course. I don't know if she'll take the bar exam or not. But she recognized that it was the fear of success that was actually getting in her way.

I think oftentimes, when I'm working with people, with students, and you know this, Elena, I'll get people who bring a whole raft of personal issues into the discussion.

Elena DuCharme: Yes.

Jackson Mumey: The fear of failure, to be sure. That is a big part. But then there are those people who are really, at a deeper level, terrified about what happens if they pass, and are they committing themselves to a life they don't want. Are they committing themselves to searching for a job that they think isn't there. Those are really hard conversations to have when you're talking about contracts and property.

Elena DuCharme: Very much.

Jackson Mumey: As a segue, again for our audience, just so that you know, back in, I think it was probably April or so of 2014, Elena reached out to me. You saw a video I had done on sort of some of the deeper sort of thought process and NLP, and wrote to me, and in this kind way that only Elena can do it, she basically said, "I really

like what you're doing, but ..." Well, you shouldn't say, "You don't know what you're talking about." Actually quite the opposite. But it's sort of what ...

Elena DuCharme:

I didn't say that.

Jackson Mumey:

No you didn't. But actually I was like, "Oh, here's someone that actually is really knowledgeable and expert. I went and researched and went to Elena's website and looked and went, "Man, this is the real deal. This lady actually knows what she's talking about in this stuff. She gets it." So we started a correspondence, and that eventually turned into a collaboration for our students who are in what we call our Successful Test Application Resources program, where Elena actually works with those students on a series of conversations and techniques, and help get them ready along with my work with them sustainably. I'm wondering, maybe you could talk about, and obviously, we're not talking about any individual student here, but when you work with those students who are coming to you through the STAR program, you said earlier, sometimes people don't understand why they're not getting what they want. They all want to pass the bar. What's that about? What do you see when you're working with students who are saying to you, "I'm just not getting what I want here."

Elena DuCharme:

Well, okay, 2 things. One is, I think that had to have been 2012 or '13, not 2014.

Jackson Mumey:

Was it really that ... Okay.

Elena DuCharme:

Yes.

Jackson Mumey:

We've been working together since 2014, haven't we?

Elena DuCharme:

Yeah, we have.

Jackson Mumey:

Okay. My bad.

Elena DuCharme:

Yeah, so what we have ...

Jackson Mumey:

See? Folks, now you know, okay? Clearly 1 of us is way more competent than the other.

Elena DuCharme:

Time is flying for 1 of us.

Jackson Mumey:

That's crazy.

Elena DuCharme:

It really does come into that, into those. What I see, let's see. Sometimes it's something very nuanced. Let me tell you about the nitty gritty and the practical sense of what you might see someone doing that is causing them not to pass the bar exam. The most common things that I see.

Jackson Mumey:

Great.

Elena DuCharme: These are all due to an inner ... the way the brain is behaving when it thinks about doing these things. One huge block is essays, essay practice, either a total aversion to practice because of a deep terror that gets struck. Again, the fight/flight system goes off and you want to run out of the room, or you freeze. That's 1 of the fight/flight responses is freeze. It goes along with a bunch of chemicals, neurochemicals that flood your brain. Which is why you can't think when you're scared. This is not the ideal time to learn. It's certainly not an ideal time to write an essay. But for a lot of people, they have a real terror of even getting going with an essay because of trauma about writing, or failing around essays, or writing in the past. Or, again underlying all this, the fear of succeeding could be happening. But what they're doing is either not practicing, or the other big thing is they're saying too much.

That's the other one. I can't find where it is that I, at what point in my essay writing it's time to move on to the next point. Instead of skipping rocks over the lake, which is really all you can do when you're writing an essay, they're going way deep over and over and over again, and running out of time and blowing it, and then freaking out as a result of that. Those are the sort of practical things around essays that I see the most, is aversion to practicing so you never know what an hour feels like, or a half an hour feels like, and therefore how much you can write. Or always writing too much because of a belief of what will happen if you don't say everything. That usually goes back into, oftentimes to childhood events around not being heard, and things like that. That's 1 area.

Another area is what I call, for the MBEs, a bad final 2 strategy, where you get your MBEs down to the 2, and you pick the wrong one, reliably. That is a strategy for failing. It's due to a lack of trust. But it's also, I often see that connected up with ... I mean, a strategy based on fear of passing. I see that a lot with people who are afraid of becoming a lawyer. They choose the wrong MBE answer. And then success freaks people out in its own way.

Jackson Mumey: Would this be a form of self-sabotage?

Elena DuCharme: Yeah. It's what we would call self-sabotage, which is kind of a very ... that's a very negative way to put it.

Jackson Mumey: Oops.

Elena DuCharme: But that is what we call it in our society, self-sabotage.

Jackson Mumey: What would be a more positive way to call it?

Elena DuCharme: Your critter brain is freaked out and it won't let you do it.

Jackson Mumey: Oh, our critter brain. Okay, fine. See, and again ...

Elena DuCharme: Your creature neurology is shutting you down because something is wrong.

Jackson Mumey: So just again, for those of you who are just trying to figure out the dynamic here, I'm clearly the bad guy, and Elena is clearly the good guy. Our students get that ...

Elena DuCharme: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jackson Mumey: They get that very obviously. I say things like, "Hey, that's self-sabotage," and Elena say, "Well, your critter brain is not kind of playing nice with you."

Elena DuCharme: It's making it so you can't think.

Jackson Mumey: Okay. All right. So we've got that going on. When a student comes to you, and they say, "Well, listen, the reason I can't get the MBE questions right is I haven't memorized and learned all of the law, everything. I haven't put all that into my brain so I can spit it back out." Do you buy that?

Elena DuCharme: Sometimes. I mean, early on, obviously, if you have not learned enough, or if you've not been clear enough, clear-minded enough, and present enough with the material to have given yourself enough time to soak it in, obviously that is something you need to do. You need to go through a bar review course. You need to spend time with the material. You need to think about it. That's essential. But I would say probably 50% of it, or 60%, 40% or 50% of it is also your mindset.

Jackson Mumey: Yeah.

Elena DuCharme: I understand that yeah, "I haven't spent enough time memorizing," that's one. The whole issue with to memorize or not to memorize is 1 thing. But truly, the belief that you can do this, not getting in your own way, or not setting off your critter brain alarm so that you freak out while you're doing it, those are skill sets that are in the area of mindset.

Jackson Mumey: Yeah. I want to pursue this idea of mindset a little bit, because you turned me on a couple of years ago to a great discussion of mindsets, and the ... Now, of course, I'm going to completely whiff ...

Elena DuCharme: The book called "Mindset."

Jackson Mumey: Yes. The Stanford professor, and I can't think of her name.

Elena DuCharme: Carol Dweck.

Jackson Mumey: Carol Dweck. Of course. I knew that.

Elena DuCharme: Yes, you did. Somewhere in there you knew that.

Jackson Mumey: Somewhere in my critter brain I ... I'm having serious critter brain today, Elena. Let's talk a little bit about that mindset sort of picture. When you look at a student, can you assess their mindset from what they're saying to you and the way that they're reacting?

Elena DuCharme: Yes. Yes, definitely. Really that's what I see in my work as I'm working by phone or Skype or something like that. It's really just the words. But, so look, what she's laying out is the idea of a fixed mindset and a growth mindset. What I find is a heck of a lot of people that are attracted to go to law school, successfully get through law school, go in for the bar exam, having a fixed mindset. What that is about are people that believe that intelligence is fixed, in a sense. They grow up with an identity, usually as a smart person, or as a not smart person. But let's say a lot of people that are attracted to law school are classic over-achievers, let's say. We've always done well. We gave up on things that we have to really work at, but we believe in this innate talent and our innate intelligence. For the people a growth mindset, they're people that learn that you work at it and you grow. You succeed by trying and learning, trying and failing. You get better.

Professor Dweck is making the point that the growth mindset is much more useful to human beings. The fixed mindset is very damaging and limits us. But a lot of very, very intelligent people have the fixed mindset, because they were always told they were brilliant. You can do anything. You do so well in elementary school, and then junior high and high school. Then you go to college, and then you get to law school, and Blah!. That first year, you're with all these other smart people with a fixed mindset, and not everybody can be an A student anymore. It just ... it ends up damaging, or it's really just like being stabbed with a new identity. Your balloon gets popped, so to speak. Because if you don't do as well as you always have, this threatens your identity as an intelligent, capable person.

That's something that I see a lot, is people with a fixed mindset who have been traumatized by first year law school. They never quite recover from not being, not getting all A's, or something like that, or the competition.

Jackson Mumey: Right. When you encounter someone, Elena, who's taken and let's say they've failed the bar exam multiple times, what happens to the mindset after 3, 4, 5, 6, or more failures?

Elena DuCharme: Your identity, you start developing an identity as a person who fails the bar exam. Not always. But I know of people that have taken the bar exam substantially more often than that, and are just fully gamed to just do it until they pass. That's an amazing and unique person, 1 in 100,000 persons, who has that mindset. But they're okay with learning, trying, failing, trying again, finding out what wasn't working, trying something different. But for most of the people that are taking the bar exam, they're really having a problem. It ends up being a

series of wounds, or something where it gets under their skin, and they start really seeing themselves as a failure.

Jackson Mumey: What would you say to that person, who sees themselves as a failure. They've failed the bar and now that failing a test has become failure as a person. I'm a failure.

Elena DuCharme: Exactly.

Jackson Mumey: Not I failed the test. What would you advise that person? How should they change their mindset?

Elena DuCharme: Well, that's a big question. Let me think about I would advise them.

Jackson Mumey: It's a great question. Oh, good, I've got ... Wait, wait, wait, wait.

Elena DuCharme: Of course, I would give them a good talking to first.

Jackson Mumey: Okay, wait. I just want to point out, folks, I've actually got Elena on her heels here for just a moment. This is so cool, because I never stump her, ever. I'm really thrilled that this is a moment when she's got to actually regroup.

Elena DuCharme: Well, I want to actually give a decent answer.

Jackson Mumey: I know you're going to give great answer.

Elena DuCharme: So what would I advise the person that is starting to develop an identity that they are a failure as a person. Well, first of all, I would just have to reframe that for them. Because this is what we do in our culture, is say that you ... If you don't, at first you don't succeed, you're a failure. I talk about all of the people. Now, this doesn't always help, because it is so painful, so painful to fail the bar exam. There is so much trauma around that, around getting your results and seeing that on the computer. There are so many little mini traumas that occur in that, and I don't want to diminish the pain of that. But I will often remind people about, just the famous people who will always say, well, success is all about being willing to fail. Like Thomas Edison, obviously, said, "Well, I didn't fail. I tried a thousand times. I failed a thousand times to get the right light bulb." But there's really such a setup in our culture that you're just supposed to be able to pass it and move on.

There's a couple things. One is that I do reassure them that everybody that I know that has really taken it to heart and taken a good look at themselves and the reason that they failed, and the reason they feel bad about themselves find something so much deeper than a person that just passed and moved on. That this can be the opportunity to really learn about yourself as a human being, to change the way that you relate to yourself, to become more compassionate. Also, ultimately, it gives you the fuel that allows you to have compassion for

your clients, all of whom are going to be beating themselves up. They're either going to be outraged at something that someone else did to them. Right? They're going to sue. Or if you're in the criminal justice system and you're working either as a prosecutor or a defense attorney, it gives you much more range as a human to have gone through something yourself. This is actually ... it's actually a good experience on many levels, however painful as it is.

Jackson Mumey: It's a great experience for teachers, too, isn't it?

Elena DuCharme: Oh, yeah. It is. We all have to be willing to fail. This is the thing. Learning requires failure. If you are not willing to fail, and you cannot be with failure, you cannot learn. It's harder as an adult, because we're programmed. When we're in school, when we're little and we're in school, learning is our job. That's all we need to do. We're not learning necessarily for purpose. We're just growing up. We take it step by step based on where we're at. When we're doing an 8- or 9-week course to pass the bar exam, or a 16-week course, or whatever, we are so goal oriented. It is all building towards something that for a lot of people is at least slightly scary. It's a very different type of learning. Adult learning is very different. It can really, really trigger us.

Anyway, the whole issue of failure, "Does it mean I'm a failure? Does it mean I'm not a failure?" Of course, I don't think anybody is a failure. But everybody has ... If you didn't pass the bar exam, there's probably a good reason, and it has to do with something, which, if you investigate it, you will get an enormous amount of value out of that. This is 1 tiny aspect of the "Am I a failure?" question.

Jackson Mumey: Well, that wraps up today's episode. Thanks so much for listening. If you'd like to be part of our Extra Mile for Bar Exam Takers private Facebook group, just check the show notes. You'll find a link, in which you can request an invitation. We'll see you along the extra mile.

Speaker 1: Thanks for listening to the Extra Mile Podcast for Bar Exam Takers, at www.celebrationbarreview.com.