

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. Now, to your host Jackson Mumey, owner of the Celebration Bar Review.

Jackson Mumey: Hey everybody, welcome to the Extra Mile podcast for bar exams takers. This is Jackson, and I'm really glad that you're with us today to find out a little bit more about the bar exam and share the journey along with us. We do these episodes twice a week, and we're glad you're here this time. If you're not a subscriber, I'd love to have you do that. You can go to our iTunes and subscribe, or you can actually go to our website at celebrationbarreview.com, and look for the link to podcast at the top of the page. You can find all the past episodes as well as show notes and subscribe from there. In today's episode, we are continuing our discussion of two words that don't seem to go together very well, and that's bar exam, that's one phrase, and the word peace. The bar and peace really seem to be two things in direct conflict with one another. The bar exam puts a lot of stress and distress into most people's lives. It's not a happy time for sure, but it doesn't mean that it has to be an angry, distasteful, miserable, awful, go-through-hell experience, but for many people frankly, it is.

In a series of lectures that I did a couple of years ago, I talked about how you can bring some peace to your studies and to the entire process. In today's episode, we're going to be talking about something called telling a better story as a way of bringing some peace into your life. What I mean by that is that you have the ability as we all do, to choose how to write your life story. If you choose a life story that's filled with anger, and bitterness, and unhappiness, and frustration, and despair, that's certainly one type of story. Most of us would say that we probably don't want spend a lot of time with people who've written that story. The other kind of story is one of hope, and inspiration, of courage, of success, of accomplishment. You might say well, yeah it's all great if I pass the bar I can do that. The reality is that just getting to the point where you can take the bar exam actually does put you in a position where you've accomplished something, you've got hope, and you should be a person of optimism and encouragement rather than a person of despair and pessimism.

In this episode today we're going to talk a little bit about that concept of telling a better story. You'll also hear me mention Donald Miller's book, it's one of my favorites, and there's a link in the show notes if you're interested in reading that. I really want you to sit back as always as I say with these episodes and just sort of suck them in, listen with an open mind and see if it would make a difference for you. In my experience, the people that can tell a better life story do better on their bar exam. They pass at a much higher rate than people that come in angry and unhappy and having kinds of frustration and problems. If you'd like to know more about that approach to taking the bar exam, to studying, I want to also invite you to join me this Thursday for a special live masterclass called, how to make the next bar exam, your last bar exam. These are the four steps that every bar taker must know in order to pass.

I'm excited about it, it's all new content in that we've taken a lot of the secrets and tips and things that I've learned over the years, and I'm actually providing those in about a 60 to 75-minute presentation, it's totally free. You will come away with a lot of information, a lot of ideas that you can take action on right away, as well as some special offers that I think you'll be pretty excited about. This webinar will be live online Thursday at 3:00 pm Eastern, so that will be 12:00 noon Pacific time. You can register and grab your seat, I keep the course size very small, so you do need to register for your seat. You can text the words, "next bar exam," that's "nextbarexam" to 33444. Text, nextbarexam to 33444 and register that way, or you can register by going to celebrationbarreview.com/webinar. I'd really love to have you join me on our masterclass on Thursday. I think you'll find it to be a really helpful and enlightening period of time, and a chance to kind of peek behind the curtain and see the things that we're teaching our students to do with, with I think great success, well I know great success over the years. I really look forward to that.

I also want to invite you to join us in our private Facebook group called the Extra Mile. You can do that, the link is in the show notes. It's by invitation only so you got to click on the link and request for an invitation. Then you can join us on this Facebook group, it's made up of current bar takers, future bar takers, and past successful bar takers. I pop on there a couple of times a week just to answer questions, and it's a great resource and so I hope you'll join us there as well. One final note coming up in episode 27, the Florida bar exam results will have been released by that time, and I'll be doing a special recap of those results and of the Florida bar exams. If you're a Florida bar taker or a potential Florida bar taker, I think you're going to want to stay tuned for episode 27. For now, today, for everybody, we're going to talk about bar exam peace and telling a better story.

Hi, welcome to Celebration Bar Review. We're continuing a series that I've titled, "exam peace," two things that don't seem to go together for most people. I put out a couple of these messages already, it's been interesting some of the comments I've gotten back. A fair number of people have contacted me to say, "you know I'm not sure I quite get this whole idea of, being at peace with the exam, because I feel like I'm at war with the exam." That's really the point I'm trying to make. I don't think you have to be at war with the exam. In fact, I think that really hurts your ability to be successful on that test. What I'm trying to do in these series of brief messages is to give you some ways in which you can kind of put the test in its proper perspective, its right place, make peace with it so that you can be most productive with it.

This week I've just finished reading the book by one of my favorite authors, his name is Donald Miller. You might know him from a book called Blue Like Jazz, and he's written a number of other books. He's a very interesting, I guess as a Christian writer, certainly he writes from a faith basis, but he's a much more I don't know ... he's a tortured soul. He's just finished a book called A Million Miles in a Thousand Years. Boy, it's a quick read, it's a wonderful read if you

haven't picked it up I will encourage you to do so, and if you've read any of Donald Miller's other work, I think you're going to really like this one. In any event in this book as in many of his books, you go through the first third at least if you're ... I do, and I have no idea what's he's talking about, and in some way it all kind of comes into focus and I go, "oh, that's the point."

For me, the Aha moment in this book, *A million Miles in a Thousand Years* was this concept of that they were going to make a movie about one of his books, probably *Blue Like Jazz*, and he was trying to figure out how to write a story about his book or about his life. He started doing some research into what good storytelling is. What he discovered was that we all live stories in our lives, but that what he described as the need for a better story was what really separated the significant lives from the ones that were just kind of like treading water. I was really struck with that notion of a better story because when I think about the bar students that I've worked with over the years, I would say that there are those who really had better stories. They were the people who seemed to be most at peace with this entire process of studying, of sitting for the test, of waiting for their results, of dealing with the results good or bad, and then moving on. People who had a better story were those who had a better reason, a bigger picture for why they're going through this.

I realize as I record this today that there are lot of people in law school in that part of their law school career where they're just treading water, they're just trying to get through it all. It's your third year of law school or your fourth year of law school, and you're just going through the motions. In this environment, maybe you're going through the motions and there aren't a whole lot of jobs out there waiting for you, and it's a scary time. You might be saying to yourself, what have I done? I've gotten myself into debt, I have given up these many years of my life, I put myself through hell, and for what? I don't even know if I can find a job when I get out, I don't know what the possibilities are. When someone comes to the bar exam in that state of mind, let me tell you, it's not fun for them, it's not fun for us, it's not fun for their families or their friends.

One of the ways that I find this person who doesn't have a better story if you will or I can recognize them early on, is that they'll call me to talk about potentially taking our course, and they will be very aggressive very confrontational. Tell me right now, what makes your course better than, fill in the blank, ---- bar review. We are not sitting at the table on a law school campus I didn't solicit them, so it's a bit much. There's just sort of this anger about, "I know you're here to cheat me so, you prove to me that you should have my whatever number of dollars." I get that, I think it's useful to be a good consumer and I think you definitely want to know with a purchase as large as a bar review that you're getting what you want and what you need. It's really interesting the people that don't have a particularly good story, are angry right from the beginning, and that's really my point. They're angry that they have to take an exam, they're angry that they're in some cases they're in a nice profession, I

hear from people who are already licensed and they are in one jurisdiction and now for whatever reason they have to get licensed in another jurisdiction.

Talk about anger, the cognitive dissonance there, "I passed XYZ bar exams in XYZ, why do I have to do this again?" I don't know, you don't understand, I didn't make the rules. I can help you pass but I'm not rule maker here. Again, not a very good life story. You can tell when people don't have a very good life story or a good reason for this because they are so embittered, they're so angry, they're so hostile, they're so anxious. Compare that to someone who has decided that taking the bar exam is the gateway to something that's really important in their lives. This is a chance to be the first member in my family with a professional career. It's a chance to change my financial future. It's a chance to go do the work that I've wanted to do with women and children and families for years, and years, and years, but couldn't because I wasn't a member of the bar. It's a chance to come to a new country, to come to America and help my family back in a forward country.

When I talk to those people, the challenges for them often times are actually greater than for the person who's just kind of treading water. It may be someone for whom English is not a first language, or someone who's had to really cobble together going to law school at night or using a correspondent's course or whatever it might be. Those people really have a motivation, they have a desire and a drive that makes them really sense or give the sense of a bigger thing happening, a better story happening. I've seen in my own life there are seasons in my life when I'm certainly feeling like I'm compelled to move to a better or a bigger story, and then times when I feel like I'm just treading water. I know that my most productive work always has come when I thought there was bigger, better picture out there, a better story to tell. Something that was more than just me, and more than just getting through the next day. Oh sure, there are times when getting through the next day is really a goal, and it's a great goal to have. Sometimes we're really motivated by the bigger, better story that we have in our lives.

If you're struggling with the bar exam and the thought of taking the bar exam, I would suggest that one of the things you want to do is sit back and ask yourself, what's my story? What is it that I want to do? It doesn't have to be something noble and grand. It literally could be, I just want to pass the bar exam so I can get a job and pay back my loans and start to live the life that I think I deserve, that's a pretty good story. It could be, I want to pass the bar exam so that I can take that first year associate position, that big, big huge and enormous in downtown Manhattan and be the lawyer I've always wanted to be, and crush everyone else. That may be your story, and it's a better story. The point is, if you don't have a story, if you're just doing this because you have to do it, oh, what a painful period of time this is going to be for you. What a struggle when you hear that your studies aren't going so well or that you've got to do something that feels uncomfortable or new to you, or that you're giving up time away from other things that are important, to study for the bar.

If you've got that picture in your mind, this will be a torture for you. Here's the worst part, you won't do better on the exam. In fact, if I have to go back and categorize I would say that people who have the most instead of the best stories, were the people who overcame the most and passed the exam. I talk about the people that have failed the exam eight, nine, ten, twenty times before they came to us, and they passed. They passed I think in large part because they had a compelling story, a compelling reason why passing the bar was more important to them than continuing to fail it. Even if you've taken this test and not been successful in the past, I would tell you that you can reach peace with the exam if you have a good reason, a better story in your life. If you're really struggling with this, sit down, take some time, think about, what is your story? What is it that's driving you forward? If that story isn't compelling enough to make you do what it takes to be successful, you need a better story.

I highly suggest that you read Donald Miller's books, he's a great writer a very witty bright guy. I hope that you find a better story, and I do hope that you'll share that story with me as well. I love to hear about the things that people are doing and the reasons they're involved in taking the bar exam. That's our message for this week, I'll be back next week and we'll take another look and another way to look at exam peace. Thanks very much for watching.

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 and we'll see you along the Extra Mile.

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