

ENDURE

A 5-STEP ACTION PLAN *for*
RETAKEING THE BAR EXAM

VINCO

WELCOME

HEY YOU.

Yes, YOU.

I have something very important to say to you. This test does not define you. It does not determine your worth. You are smart and capable. You are also going through a really tough time. You poured all of your time and effort into passing this exam and it did not work out. You are allowed to be upset and frustrated. It is totally normal to feel confused and overwhelmed. But I don't want you to take up residence in those feelings permanently. You are going to study for and take this test again. And this time, you are going to kick its ass. That is

why I have created this 5-step action plan to get you through your emotions and onto productive study sessions. Let's get started.



You always pass failure on your way to success.

-Mickey Rooney

GRIEVE

Grieve your loss.

You have just been hit with a major life change. You are feeling **ALL YOUR FEELINGS**. All at once. You have to allow yourself some time and space to work through this. You cannot simultaneously be angry, frustrated and sad

while productively studying. Phase one of bar fail grief is usually complete and utter shock. Of course you were afraid you could fail but you never REALLY thought it could happen to you. In this phase you feel completely paralyzed by your emotions. You aren't sure what to think, feel or do.

Phase two involves sadness and/or devastation. You've moved on from not really feeling anything at all to feeling completely freaking miserable. In this phase you are feeling really bad for yourself. Phase two frequently dissolves into phase three: frustration and anger. I think phase three is the most dangerous phase. Phase three is where people get stuck. They are angry at themselves, their law school, the board of law examiners, their bar review company, their dog and the guy at the grocery store. They are mad at everyone and everything.

Now, I am not a psychologist, but I think the reason people hang around in phase three is because it feels the least shitty. Being sad is awful, right? People will usually do anything and everything to avoid feeling sad. And the next phases require you to be self-reflective and look at the road you have ahead of you, which is hard work. But phase three is easy. All you have to do is be mad. You don't have to face the past or the future and you don't have to feel bad all the time. Don't be the person who lingers in phase three for too long. You are only hurting yourself and decreasing your chance of being successful.

I call phase four the "what the hell happened?" phase. This is where people get really self-reflective and start to evaluate how they studied and performed on the test. This is a really important step and you can really use it to your advantage. I go into more detail about this in steps 2 and 4.

Last, but certainly not least, comes phase five: acceptance. In phase five you have come to terms with the fact that you did not pass, you processed through your feelings, you've forgiven yourself for any mistakes you made and you are ready to get to work.

As with any kind of grief, or stress, you may experience these feelings in a different order or you may have some and not others. Some people go through all of these phases in a day, some in a week, some in a month and some get hung up in phase three and never move on. What is important is that you remain patient with yourself as you go through the process and eventually reach a place where you can stop letting your feelings run the situation.

Let go of the “should haves, would haves and could haves”



“You make mistakes. Mistakes don’t make you.”

-Maxwell Maltz

You might have thoughts running through your head such as “if I had only done THIS differently,” “I should have studied more” or “I should have been less distracted.” This, again, is totally normal. However, it is an unhelpful way of thinking. There is absolutely nothing you can do to go back and change the way you studied last time. In step 4 you are going to have a chance to do an in depth evaluation of your prior study plan. Use this as your one opportunity to be very critical of how you studied last time. Be brutally honest. Get it all out. Figure out exactly what worked and what did not. Then, once you move on to step 5 and create your new study plan... never.look.back.

REACH OUT

Reach out for support.

You may be feeling embarrassed about failing the bar exam. You may want to stay in your deep dark hole of despair. However, as you

have probably guessed by now, I am going to advise against this plan! Look, I get it. You feel like you already used your free “give me all your support and patience” pass the last time you took the bar. Your *family and friends* love you and that never gets used up. You still need

REACH OUT

their support and patience. Make sure that you reach out and communicate about what you are going through and how you are feeling.

You should also reach out to the *academic support* department from your law school. You paid a lot of money for your degree and you should take advantage of this resource. An academic support professional can help you with steps 4 and 5 of this process (reviewing your previous study plan and creating a new one). They can review your exam results with you and help you make sense of what they mean.

They may also be able to put you in contact with a *mentor*. Specifically, you should ask if they know any alumni who did not pass the bar on the first try and would be willing to speak with you about their experience.

Finally, I welcome you to join the [Vinco Facebook group](#) which is a community of lawyers, law students and bar exam candidates. The Vinco team (and other academic success professionals) are in this group every single day answering questions and offering support and guidance. We regularly share helpful tips, advice and material which may aid you as you prepare to retake the exam. If you believe we can assist you in anyway please join and become part of our family.

[JOIN THE
FACEBOOK GROUP](#)

REVIEW

Do a post-mortem review of your study plan.

Okay, real talk time. Clearly something you did last time did not work. But, that DOES NOT mean that everything you did last time did not work! You most likely do not need to start completely from scratch, but rather, need to make some adjustments. I have created a

list of questions to help you assess your prior study plan. Answer each of these questions in as much detail as possible and see what red

flags stand out to you. It's very important to write out the answers to these questions.



Failure is not fatal, but failure to change might be.

-John Wooden

Did you have a study plan or schedule? If yes, describe it.

Where did you study?

Who did you study with?

Did you find that you learned better studying alone, or in a group?

When did you study? (time of day)

How many hours a day did you spend studying? Do not include time that you spent taking breaks, texting, browsing Facebook, chatting on Gchat, or browsing the Internet.

Did you find that you were easily distracted while you studied?

What methods did you use to break down complex ideas and/or questions?

(outlines, charts, index cards, etc.)

How many practice MBE questions did you complete?

How many practice essays did you complete?

How many practice essays did you have reviewed by your bar review company, tutor or academic support staff?

How many practice MPTs did you complete?

How many MPTs did you complete which were reviewed by your bar review company, tutor or academic support staff?

How much did outside influences impact your studying and ability to perform on exam day?

How much did stress impact your studying and ability to perform on exam day?

Did you take advantage of any free supplemental bar programs that your law school offered?

Did you complete practice questions under timed conditions?

How did you track your time during the exam?

How did you organize your materials?

What areas were your weakest substantively?

What areas were your strongest substantively?

What was your score in each portion of the exam?

Develop an active study plan

It is now time to create your new and improved study plan using the data that you collected in step 4. This is your chance to plan for success. Did you realize that time management and organization were your problems? Great, use the attached calendar to plan out your time and buy some folders! Did you figure out that you did not do nearly enough practice questions? Set goals for yourself TODAY for exactly how many practice MBE, MPT and essays you will complete. Bottom line: now is the time to put safeguards in place so that you do not fall back into any bad habits.

As you create your study plan you want to make sure that it is active. This means that your study plan includes activities that require you to break down and apply law. Passive studying is your enemy and is a waste of time. While the videos that you watch for your bar review companies are important to refresh your memory of the law, they take up a lot of your time and constitute passive studying. If watching those videos is helpful for you – definitely do it! However, also make sure you build in time to create your own outlines or flashcards (or other active studying techniques) and do tons and tons of practice questions.

Thanks for downloading Endure: A 5-Step Action Plan for Retaking the Bar Exam!

Now that you have your action plan ready to go I am going to shut up so that you can get started. I hope this guide has put you on the path to success on the bar exam and that you are ready to confidently move forward with your study plan. Remember, you don't have to do this alone. The Vinco team is here for you everyday [in our Facebook group](#). I wish you the very best of luck and am confident that following these steps either on your own or with the assistance of a tutor or coach will lead to great success.

Yours truly through law school & the bar exam,
Kerriann

STAY IN TOUCH



And don't forget to [join our Facebook Group!](#)

WWW.VINCOPREP.COM

VINCO