

Ep #4: Comfort Entitlement



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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Welcome to *The Less Stressed Lawyer* podcast episode four. We're talking all about comfort entitlement. You ready? Let's go.

Welcome to *The Less Stressed Lawyer*, the only podcast that teaches you how to manage your mind so you can live a life with less stress and far more fulfillment. If you're a lawyer who's overwhelmed and tired of trying to hustle your way to happiness, you're in the right place. Now, here's your host, lawyer turned life coach, Olivia Vizachero.

Welcome. How are you doing today? I am recording this episode right before the podcast launches. Literally, it's the night before the first episodes go live first thing tomorrow morning. I am so excited I can hardly stand it. If you've already listened to the first three episodes prior to tuning into this one, first and foremost, I just want to say thank you so much. I hope you loved them. It's an absolute honor to have the opportunity to speak with you each week through your speakers. I can't even begin to tell you how humbled and grateful I am that you've embarked on this journey with me by choosing to tune in.

All right. Now with all that out of the way, let's get to today's topic. It's a little bit of a natural extension to something I discussed on the last episode. In the last episode, I talked a bit about discomfort avoidance. As a little bit of a refresher, discomfort avoidance is where you identify the action you need to take to produce your desired results, the results you want to create. But then when it comes time to take that action, you don't take it because it's uncomfortable.

Instead of moving forward in spite of and despite that discomfort, you will avoid experiencing that discomfort by not taking action at all or doing something else instead that's more comfortable in the moment. That's discomfort avoidance. Okay.

Now today I want to talk about a related problem. It's actually one of the driving forces behind discomfort avoidance. That's comfort entitlement. What's that? I'm so glad you asked. Comfort entitlement is an expectation

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that you have that you should be able to take a particular action and have the experience of taking that action feel comfortable.

The entitlement part comes in when invariably you go to take the action, and it isn't comfortable. You start to feel that sense of discomfort, and you refuse to take action and move forward because you feel entitled to feeling comfortable while you take that action. You make that discomfort a deal-breaker.

Why is this an issue? First and foremost, it is an issue because it defies the natural human experience. Almost any time you're learning, doing, or creating something new, whenever you're changing the status quo or embarking on an intentional action that produces results you want in your life, you're going to feel some kind of uncomfortable. Some flavor, as I like to call it, some flavor of discomfort.

All right. Now if you're feeling entitled to feeling comfortable. So much so that you make experiencing that discomfort a complete non-starter, you're never going to accomplish anything you want to accomplish.

Now, where does this entitlement come from? There's a primitive part of your brain that's actually designed to keep you safe, and it's always trying to do three things. Seek immediate pleasure, avoid immediate pain, and conserve energy. It perceives any type of discomfort as going against those three goals, those three initiatives, and it perceives it to be a threat.

This primitive part of your brain cannot discern between discomfort and danger. So it sounds the alarms when you start to experience any type of discomfort, and it tells you to abort that action in favor of maintaining the status quo. That's what it thinks is the safest thing to do.

The problem here is that most of the discomfort we experience when we're working on accomplishing our goals, when we're working towards something and taking that intentional action, it's not an existential threat to our survival, to our safety. So avoiding the discomfort doesn't keep us safe. It actually keeps us stagnant. Okay.

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In addition to this primitive preconditioning that's always trying to seek immediate pleasure, avoid immediate pain, and conserve energy as a protection mechanism, we also tend to buy into the belief that we should feel comfortable all the time. All right. That if we don't feel comfortable all the time, something has gone wrong. That there's a problem, and we need to solve it. The way that we solve this problem is by avoiding the discomfort altogether.

Now, knowing these two things, here's what you can do. First, when you understand that your brain's natural instinct is to avoid discomfort in order to keep you safe, you can override this natural response by taking action in spite of and despite the negative feeling you experience.

Second, you can start to actually reconfigure the way that you think about experiencing discomfort in the first place. Instead of thinking that it shouldn't happen, you can anticipate it and decide it's not a problem at all. It's all going exactly as it's supposed to. It's just part of the program.

After all, it really isn't a problem. If you think about it, think back over the course of your life, you've survived absolutely every negative emotion you've ever experienced. So you can and will survive all of the ones you experience going forward. Experiencing different flavors of discomfort is not an issue. Okay.

Now that you understand what's driving your comfort entitlement, I want to walk you through several examples of what comfort entitlement looks like. Okay. The reason I want to do this is because I believe that it's the best way for you to learn and really understand this concept. I'm going to do this all throughout the course of the podcast because we learn when we see how it comes up in our own day-to-day lives.

Hypotheticals and theories are great, but you'll really start to make meaningful changes in your life when you could identify when you're indulging in patterns like this. Specifically, in this instance, when you're indulging in comfort entitlement. When you can spot it in the moment and course-correct, that's when things are really going to start to shift.

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The best way to become skilled at making that identification in the moment is to see a ton of scenarios where this pattern comes up, this habit comes up so you can identify it. You'll be more familiar with it, and it's easier to recognize when it happens to you. Okay.

So I'm going to go through a bunch, but let's start with a super common one. I want to start with saying no. All right. Someone asks you to do something, maybe it's work-related, maybe it's not. It could be going on in your personal life. Either you don't have time to do it, or you simply don't want to do it. Chances are it could totally be both right? Maybe you don't have time for it, or you feel like you don't have time for it, and you don't want to do it either.

But when you think about saying no or you're about to say no. Maybe you've decided ahead of time, I'm gonna say no, but then it comes time to actually say the words, "No, I'm not going to do that. Or no, that doesn't work for me." You start to experience some type of discomfort. It starts to bubble to the surface.

Most oftentimes with saying no, I find that people start to experience guilt or fear. Right? They feel guilty because they think they should say yes, or they feel afraid because they're worried about what the other person's going to think, how they're going to respond, whether or not there's going to be a negative consequence as a result of them saying no. Okay. Even though they really want to say no, they make that discomfort, that guilt, or that fear a deal-breaker.

Now, consciously or unconsciously, most people think that they should be able to say no and feel comfortable while they do it. They think the guilt or the fear shouldn't be there. That it should be easy. That it should be comfortable. Because they don't feel comfortable, they don't move forward and say no. That's comfort entitlement.

The next example I want to talk about is sticking to your schedule. I work with so many of my clients on time management. It's one of the things that I coach on the most. I'll talk a lot about time management over the course of

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this podcast. I'll specifically get into the mindset you need to have when it comes to time management, and the specific strategies that I teach. I'll dive into great detail about that in future episodes.

Here I just want to talk about the discomfort that comes up when it comes to sticking to your schedule. One of the specific components of time management that I teach is for people to plan their schedules ahead of time, and then go ahead and honor that plan. All right. My clients hate doing this, and I can't blame them. Years ago when I first started practicing time management, I hated doing this too. It felt super uncomfortable.

Because it felt super uncomfortable, I wouldn't do it. I wouldn't stick to the schedule. I see the exact same resistance coming from my clients. I think this, out of anything that I teach, is the thing that they loathe the most is sticking to their schedule.

Here's why. It forces them to feel super controlled, bothered, restricted, and oftentimes even bored. They think that it should be comfortable to stick to it. So when those negative feelings start to make an appearance, they abandon that plan, that schedule that they set for themselves because they're entitled to feeling comfortable. Sticking to the plan isn't comfortable. So they refuse to stick to it. That's comfort entitlement too.

Now, another example is posting on social media. This is actually something that I struggled with when I first started my coaching business. I knew I wanted to market myself online, but I could not bring myself to post content on social media.

Here's why. In order to do it, I had to be willing to feel exposed and embarrassed in front of former colleagues. I was really concerned about what other people would think. I thought that they would think life coaching was really silly or stupid, much different than what I assumed people thought about me practicing law, right. That it was practical and responsible and impressive and prestigious and admirable, all of those things.

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So I had a ton of mind drama about putting myself out there on social media, and marketing myself as a coach. Now, in the beginning, I made those negative feelings. That feeling of feeling exposed, that feeling of feeling embarrassed. I made those feelings deal breakers. I was completely entitled to feeling comfortable when it came to posting. And because I wasn't comfortable posting, I didn't post. That's comfort entitlement too.

Another great example here is weight loss. This is an area where I see a ton of comfort entitlement. I've actually even had this issue myself. I'm giving you guys, you know, full disclosure of all the things I've previously struggled with in this episode that I've had to work through where I've had comfort entitlement come up for me.

So in the past, I wanted to lose weight, but I wanted to feel super comfortable while doing it. I wanted to eat all the foods that I typically enjoyed eating. I'm a huge foodie. So I wanted to be able to eat all of the delicious meals that I love to indulge in and really enjoy. I was really kind of treating food as entertainment, right?

I didn't want to plan my meals in advance or stick to a restricted diet that actually supported my weight loss goals. I didn't want to give up cheeseburgers or Reuben sandwiches or certain desserts, or that extra glass of wine that also probably didn't support my weight loss goals at the time, right? I didn't want to do any of that. I wanted to be able to eat whatever I wanted and lose weight.

In order to stick to the schedule and plan meals in advance and really constrain what foods I was eating that would support those goals, I would have been forced to feel deprived and honestly probably pretty bored with eating the same thing or eating a limited selection of food choices. So for so long, I didn't change my eating habits because it wasn't comfortable for me to change them. I was entitled to feeling comfortable when it came to food. It wasn't until I dropped my comfort entitlement that I made a change to my diet and began eating in a way that supported my weight loss goals.

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I also see comfort entitlement come up a lot when it comes to people applying for new jobs. My clients will come to me, and they'll want to switch jobs. But when it comes to applying, they only want to have to apply to a few of them. When they start to apply and they don't get callback interviews, or they get told no and they don't get that position that they went out for, they have this natural inclination to want to quit applying.

Why? It's because they're feeling entitled to feeling comfortable. Continuing to keep applying, despite that rejection that they've already faced, would mean that they'd have to keep feeling rejected and discouraged and keep showing up in spite of and despite those feelings. But they think they shouldn't have to feel those emotions, and as a result of thinking that they shouldn't have to feel them, they quit. That's comfort entitlement too.

My last example that I want to talk about is one, it's probably my favorite one, to be honest. It's the comfort entitlement that I see when people have a desire to start their own law firm or start their own business that might be outside the practice of law. I see so much comfort entitlement here. People think that they should be able to start their own business, and that they shouldn't have to feel uncertain or nervous or misunderstood as they do it. They want that experience to be comfortable.

But when you're doing something new, you're not going to have everything figured out. You're not going to know all of the answers in advance. You're not going to have that crystal ball that's going to tell you exactly how it's going to go. So you're gonna have to feel uncertain. You're probably going to have to feel nervous, like, "Oh, what if it doesn't work out? What if it takes longer than I'm expecting, right?" Those nerves are going to be there.

A ton of people want other people in their lives to support their decision to make a big shift. I know that's something I had to work through. Really allowing myself to feel misunderstood when I made the shift to start my own business because other people are concerned, and they might be not as risk-tolerant as you. Or they might think that you're pursuing a route that isn't as safe or secure as maybe what they think you should do or what's right for you. So you're going to have to feel uncertain. You're going to have

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to feel nervous. You're going to have to feel misunderstood by those people that are in your lives.

When it's not comfortable, when those feelings come up, people make them a deal-breaker. They refuse to move forward. They just spin. They indulge in an action. They quit before they ever get started all because they're entitled to that process feeling comfortable.

Listen, in a perfect world, we wouldn't have to feel negative emotions, right? It'd be all rainbows, daisies, and sunshine every day. We'd get to take action and feel totally comfortable while we do it. But unfortunately, and I am fine really emphasizing the unfortunately here, you guys. I would love to be able to do all the new things and take all of this action to produce the desired results in my own life and get to feel comfortable while I do it. All right. But unfortunately, that's just not the way the world that we live in works. We're going to have to take action and feel uncomfortable while we take it.

Now, there's one caveat here that I do want to emphasize. Can you just adjust your thinking and reduce the discomfort that you experience? Yes, 1,000%. Absolutely. Your thoughts cause your feelings. I'm going to dive into that in a lot more detail in future episodes to really explain how that causal connection works.

But since your thoughts cause your feelings, if you want to feel differently and you want to drastically dial down the discomfort that you experience, all you need to do is change your thoughts. That discomforts coming up because you're thinking negative thoughts about taking that action that you intend to take. All right.

But here's the thing. What I found with my clients, and also I found this to be true with myself, is that no matter how much you practice believing new thoughts, positive thoughts that really fuel you to move forward, some of the discomfort caused by those original negative thoughts, that negative line of thinking, it's going to continue to linger. All right. Because part of you is just still going to hold a little bit of belief in that previous negative thinking.

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If you're entitled to feeling comfortable, you're going to make that lingering discomfort a deal breaker. Whether you do that, though, is totally optional. It's completely up to you. You can choose to continue to be entitled to feeling comfortable, or you can choose to drop your entitlement to comfort at any time. Totally up to you.

Now, why is it so important for you to drop your entitlement to comfort? Here's the thing. As long as you hold on to it, you're never going to create the life you want to live. A life you're obsessed with. After all, one of the things you hear me say time and time again. If there's no feeling you're unwilling to feel, there's absolutely no results you cannot create, okay?

But in order to create a life you're obsessed with, you're gonna have to gag and go through that discomfort. That discomfort is just going to come with the program. It comes with the territory. You're going to have to feel it and take action in spite of and despite it.

Now with this in mind, if you're hearing me explain all of this and you're realizing that you've come down with a case of comfort entitlement and have been avoiding taking the actions that you need to take in order to produce the results you want in your life because you're feeling entitled to feel uncomfortable while you take those actions. I want you to ask yourself these questions, and really let these questions marinate the rest of the week, okay? Let them sink in, really mull them over, give them some deep thought.

Here they are. There's three of them. They kind of all go together. Who would you get to be? What would you get to create? What kind of life would you be able to build for yourself if you weren't entitled to feeling comfortable? I really want to urge you here to come up with as specific and detailed answers as you possibly can. Really give those three questions some deep thought. Who would you get to be? What would you get to create? And what kind of life would you be able to build if you weren't entitled to feeling comfortable? Okay.

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Let me say this. I don't want to manipulate your answers or kind of do a spoiler alert here. I really want you to come up with your own original responses to those questions. But I will say this. Chances are if you dropped your entitlement to feeling comfortable while you take intentional action, everything about your life would likely be different.

More specifically, everything about your life would likely be better than it is right now. Okay, let that sink in. Again, go through those three questions. Really mull them over. Let them marinate and be detailed and specific with your responses to them. Okay.

Then lastly, I want to let you in on a little secret. I really think that this is so important to remember. The truth of the matter is there's always discomfort both ways. That primitive part of our brain really loves to play tricks on us here. It's only focused on avoiding the most immediate discomfort when you're entitled to feeling comfortable.

So it's identifying the most immediate uncomfortable feeling in that moment. It's telling you that you need to avoid it, abort the mission, stop taking action, all right. It's not thinking further down the road and being logical and comparing these two different kinds of discomfort. All right? But the truth of the matter is that there's always discomfort both ways in taking the intentional action and in not taking it. All right.

I'm going to go and walk through those examples that I gave you earlier and show you how this is true. When it comes to saying no, there's the guilt and worry that comes from saying no, or there's the resentment and overwhelm that comes from saying yes, right. When it comes to sticking to your schedule, there's feelings like restricted and bothered and constrained and maybe bored that come from sticking to it. But then there's anxious, behind, and overwhelmed that come when you don't. So there's discomfort both ways there too.

When it comes to posting on social media. If you are going to post like me, you might be forced to feel exposed and embarrassed. That's what comes up when you put yourself out there publicly in front of other people for them

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to have opinions about whatever it is that you're doing. So that's the discomfort that comes from taking action.

But on the flip side, when you avoid feeling exposed and embarrassed, there's also discomfort there too. You'll probably have to feel disappointed or frustrated or maybe stuck that you're not developing the business that you want to be developing. You're not building a book. You're not creating leverage for yourself in the future of your legal career, right. Discomfort both ways.

When it comes to weight loss, there's feelings like deprived and bored that come from sticking to that meal plan and eating only certain foods that really support those goals that you have. Or on the flip side, you can eat whatever you want, but there's discomfort associated with that too. You might have to feel dissatisfied or insecure with how you look when you don't feel comfortable in your body. Right, discomfort both ways.

When it comes to applying for jobs. Yeah, you might have to feel rejected and discouraged if you don't get that callback or you get told no. They don't consider you for the position. They give it to someone else. But if you don't continue to apply for jobs and you stay in your current position that you really can't stand, you probably are going to have to feel uninspired, stuck, and maybe even hopeless, right? Discomfort both ways.

When it comes to starting your own firm, yeah. There's going to be that uncertainty, that feeling of nervousness. Maybe some fear or worry about the future. What's going to happen? That's going to come up. It's just part of the program. We like to tell ourselves that that's the only type of discomfort, but that's not true.

If you keep doing something that you don't want to be doing instead, maybe you continue to stay working for other people. You might have to feel dejected, dispassionate, may be undervalued. So if you're going to be a truth-teller, you want to make sure you're telling yourself that there's discomfort both ways there as well.

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Now, if the truth of the matter is there's always going to be discomfort both ways. The question I really want you to give some thought to is why not choose to experience the type of discomfort that also comes with your desired results?

If on one hand you've got taking action while feeling uncomfortable, and at the finish line of taking that intentional action, you get the results you want. That's on one side. The other type of discomfort is the discomfort that comes from maintaining the status quo and not making a change where you don't get the results you want. If there's discomfort both ways, why wouldn't you choose to experience the type of discomfort that produces the results you want?

I really want you to think about that as you contemplate whether you're willing to give up your entitlement to comfort. I promise you if you do, the results will be more than worth it. Okay. All right. That's our show. I hope you have a beautiful week. I'll talk to you in the next episode.

Oh, and one more thing. If you enjoyed today's show and don't want to worry about missing an episode, be sure to follow the show wherever you listen to podcasts. If you haven't already, I'd really appreciate it if you would leave a rating and review to let me know what you think about *The Less Stressed Lawyer* podcast. It doesn't have to be a five star review. Although I really hope you love the show. I really want your honest feedback so I can create an amazing podcast that provides you with a ton of value. Visit thelesstressedlawyer.com/podcastlaunch for step by step instructions on how to follow, rate, and review the podcast. I'll talk to you guys soon.

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