

## Ep #10: The Self-Coaching Model



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Olivia Vizachero

## Ep #10: The Self-Coaching Model

You're listening to *The Less Stressed Lawyer* podcast, Episode 10. Today, I'm teaching you everything you need to know about The Self-Coaching Model. 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 over the overwhelm 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.

Hello, how are you? I'm so good, I hope you're good too. I can't believe that it's already May. Anyone else just amazed by that? This year is flying by. I suppose that's a good thing because it probably means that I have a lot of exciting things going on, which is definitely true. A lot of travel this year, some for work, some for pleasure, a lot of different irons in the fire, so to speak.

I've got a women's retreat that I'm presenting at later this month, and I've got the mastermind coming up in June, I'll be hosting people here in Detroit for that. So, just a lot going on. really excited about all that's in the works.

Before we dive into today's topic, I just want to give a shout out to one of my listeners. I told y'all a few weeks ago that I was going to highlight some of the amazing reviews I've been getting on iTunes, because I'm so grateful that people take their time to go share their thoughts and let me know what they think of the podcast.

Time is one of our most valuable resources. So, it really does mean the world to me that people are willing to spend some of their time and leave a review.

This week, I want to thank Jay Telo, who wrote, "So much good advice here. I already have tips and reminders written on Post-it™ notes around my desk. Can't wait to keep learning from Olivia how to get out of my own way and create the life I want. Thanks, Olivia." Jay Telo, you're so welcome. It's my absolute pleasure.

## Ep #10: The Self-Coaching Model

If you're listening to the podcast, and you haven't left a review yet, I would be so grateful if you went and left me a rating and a review on whatever platform you're listening to the podcast. I love hearing what you have to say.

Those reviews help boost the podcast, so other attorneys who are struggling with overwhelm stress, feeling unfulfilled in their lives; it helps them find the podcast so they can start learning about the coaching concepts that I teach. And, they can start changing their lives and feeling better. So, help me help them; go leave a rating and review. And hey, if you do that, I might be giving you a shout out in an upcoming episode. So, thank you in advance if you take the time.

And, without further a-do, let's dive into today's topic. We're talking about the Self-Coaching Model, or the model," for short, which is how I always refer to it.

I love teaching the model to lawyers because I think our brains are already perfectly primed to look at the world through the lens of the model.

Law school teaches us the "it depends" mindset; to look at facts and circumstances from a multitude of different perspectives. the model has us do the exact same thing. So, I think lawyers are just naturally set up to really understand the model framework and to start applying it with ease in their lives.

The other reason I love the model, is how ubiquitously it can be applied. It literally applies to every single situation that we come across in our lives. There's no scenario it doesn't apply to. So, I love that we have a plug and play formula, so to speak, that we can take and apply to every situation. It's just completely universal. So, I love it for that reason.

It's also very formulaic. And I'm a little bit of a math nerd. If you know me personally, you probably know that I was the flowchart girl in law school. So, if you think in flowchart ways and systematic ways, your brain's probably going to love the model. I love math, I love equations. I love that

## Ep #10: The Self-Coaching Model

you can plug information into the model, and it spits out other awareness, other answers, so you can use the model in that formulaic way.

That being said, you don't have to love math in order to love using the model. Okay, I know some attorneys don't love math. That's all right, you can still love the model even if you don't.

Now, the model is ultimately an awareness tool. It allows us to figure out what we're thinking, how we're feeling, why we're doing what we're doing, or why we're not doing what we want to be doing, or what we think we should be doing. It informs us as to how and why we're creating our current results.

We can also use the model to reverse engineer our desired results by working it backwards. And I'm going to teach you how to do that in the next episode, because we've got plenty to cover today just introducing you to the model. That's where I want to start; with introducing you to it so you can start to get familiar with it and use it to gain awareness as to what's causing your current emotional experience, what's driving your action and inaction, and what's creating your current results.

So, here's the basic premise. the model consists of five interrelated components: Circumstances, thoughts, feelings, actions, and results.

Now, the main premise of the model is this. Circumstances are facts; words we say, things we do, things other people say and do, or things other people don't say and don't do, events that take place in the world. Anything factual that we encounter, okay? Circumstances are strictly facts. No qualitative statements, nothing subjective, no adjectives, no descriptive terms, or qualifiers that would open up room for disagreement.

Circumstances are going to be facts that we all agree upon. Words that we could read on a transcript, actions we could record and playback on video. Those are circumstances. Those circumstances, they are neutral. They're not positive or negative. They're just neutral. They don't cause how we feel until we think a thought about them. Okay?

## Ep #10: The Self-Coaching Model

Now, thoughts are sentences in our mind that our brains serve up to us. And those sentences, they're not neutral. They're positive or negative. Those positive or negative sentences that our brains serve up to us, they're what caused our feelings.

Okay, circumstances don't cause our feelings. The thoughts we think about circumstances are what cause our feelings. And if we're thinking a positive thought, we'll feel a positive feeling. And if we think a negative thought, we'll feel a negative feeling. Always, always, always, okay?

Now, feelings are one-word emotions that we experience as vibrations in our body. That might be one of the most woo-woo things that I say to you, but if you really slow yourself down to think about this, about how you experience emotions, you can actually place them in your body. Alright?

I'll give you a couple examples of this: When I feel angry, my face gets hot. When I feel stressed and overwhelmed, my shoulders get tense and heavy. When I get excited, I feel a fluttery feeling in my chest. When I feel embarrassed, one of my least favorite emotions, I tend to feel it in the pit of my stomach. It's like you're pouring bleach in my stomach. It's hollow; it's so uncomfortable. When I feel bored, I feel bored throughout my extremities. I just feel antsy, I want to get up and move. It's irritating. When I feel sad, I tend to feel it in my throat, kind of like my throat is caught up. When I feel guilty, I feel it in my diaphragm; really tense, uncomfortable feeling.

So, think of some of the common emotions that you experience on a pretty regular basis, and try and place them in your body. Now, why is it so important to recognize that feelings are just one-word emotions that we experience as vibrations in our body?

Here's the thing, we tend to do back-handsprings in order to get out of feeling a negative emotion. Because, the primitive part of our brain thinks negative emotions are dangerous, that they can actually harm us even though they can't think of it.

## Ep #10: The Self-Coaching Model

Despite being extremely uncomfortable, nothing else really happens when we feel a negative emotion, right? We just feel that vibration in our bodies, our arms don't fall off, we don't die, nothing all that horrendous happens. It's just an uncomfortable vibration that we experience. So, that's really important to know, because the feelings that we feel, drive the action that we take or don't take. All right?

If you're thinking a positive thought, you'll feel a positive feeling, and you'll take positive action. Action that serves you. If you're thinking a negative thought about a neutral circumstance, and that thought causes you to feel a negative feeling, you're going to take a negative action that doesn't serve you or no action at all. All right?

The action that we take, or don't take, produces the results that we have in our lives. So, if you're thinking a positive thought, you'll feel a positive feeling, you'll take a positive action, and you'll produce positive results. If you're thinking a negative thought, you'll feel a negative feeling, you'll take a negative action or no action, and you'll produce negative results.

Ultimately, what this means is that your thoughts determine your results. Now, why is this the best news ever? Because we can control what we think. We can't always control the circumstances that we experience in our lives. But the good news is we don't need to.

We can control our outcomes, our results, and how we feel, and what we do if we simply control our thinking. As humans, we're able to control our thinking, we're able to choose different thoughts. But that starts with becoming aware of what we're currently thinking. I'm going to walk you through that process today.

You can think both positive and negative thoughts simultaneously, about a neutral circumstance. That's really important to know because people will tend to think that they're able to take a positive action from a negative thought. That's not true.

## Ep #10: The Self-Coaching Model

You might have two different models going on simultaneously. But positive thoughts cause positive feelings, drive positive action, create positive results. Negative thoughts, create negative feelings, which drive negative action or no action, and produce negative results. The two will never crisscross. They may be going on at the same time, like the angel on your shoulder or the devil on your shoulder, but they don't get mixed. Okay? That's important to know.

It's also important to know that we are not taught this framework growing up. We are typically taught that circumstances are inherently positive or negative, and that they directly cause our feelings.

I'm going to walk you through a couple examples of how that's not true. They're the examples that I always use with my clients, when I'm first teaching them about the model. One is an everyday example. One is a big picture example.

In the everyday example: A friend will call me up out of the blue, and I'll answer the phone. As soon as I get on the phone, I can tell they're kind of huffy and puffy. They're upset about something. So, I'll say, "Hey, what's going on?" The first words out of their mouth will be something along the lines of, "Ugh, I cannot believe what, let's just say Samantha, just said to me. I can't believe what Samantha just said to me. What she said, was so rude."

Most of my friends know by now, if you call your friend the life coach, I'm not going to do, what we call in coaching, "jump in the pool" with you and just agree. I might ask a couple questions to find out what's actually going on. I'm going to look for the circumstance. So, I'll say, "Alright, let's try that again. What actually happened? What did Samantha actually say?" The person will tell me, they'll give me the quote, "Samantha said, 'insert words here.'"

And, I'll explain, "Alright, so that's the circumstance. That's the fact that we're dealing with." This person's thought is, "What she said was so rude." Now, when my friend, who's called me, thinks the thought, "What she said

## Ep #10: The Self-Coaching Model

was so rude,” she's going to feel offended. That's the one-word emotion that that thought is likely going to cause.

Now me, as I'm on the phone, I don't feel offended by this. I hear the exact same circumstance, what Samantha said, and my thought, based on what I know about Samantha is, “Of course, she said that. She says stuff like that every time you guys talk, right?” So, I'm not going to feel offended. I might feel mildly amused, maybe, because this happens every single time that they speak.

Or, I might feel a little confused as to why my friend, that I'm on the phone with, is upset when this is super on-brand, and it happens all the time. Samantha's acting in conformity with how Samantha always acts. So, my friend feels offended, I feel mildly amused or slightly confused, and if we were to call Samantha up, Samantha's probably not going to feel any of those feelings. She would probably think a thought something akin to, “I was just being direct and to the point,” and she might feel really justified.

Now, all three of us have three completely different emotional experiences, based on the thoughts that we're thinking. If circumstances were inherently positive or negative, and they directly caused how we feel, all three of us would have to have the exact same emotional response to that circumstance, to what Samantha said, right?

We would either all have to feel offended, we would all have to feel mildly amused, or we would all have to feel justified. The fact that we have three distinct, different emotional reactions, we know there's something going on in between the circumstance and our feeling that causes the difference, right? There's a causal relationship there.

It's our thinking. Each of us thinks a different thought about the circumstance, and therefore we each experience a different feeling as a result. Now, that's an everyday example.

Pushback that I get from my clients often is, “Well, everyone would agree with me that this circumstance is inherently negative.” And I say, “Great.

## Ep #10: The Self-Coaching Model

That doesn't make the circumstance negative, it just means you are all thinking the same thought, the same negative thought, about that circumstance." Okay?

So, a big picture example of that is: I like to use 9/11. The facts that we would agree upon there is that people took airplanes and flew them into buildings, right? People in downtown New York were able to witness that with their own eyes. We have seen it on television multiple times, hundreds of times since 2001. That is something that we can prove happened; facts we would all agree upon. People took airplanes and flew them into buildings.

Now, if you live in the U.S., you probably think thoughts somewhat along the lines of, "I can't believe this happened," and you feel shocked. "This should have never happened," and you feel outraged. "This could happen again," and you might feel scared. You might think the thought, "This was horrific," and you might feel devastated. Right? That's probably your emotional experience when you think about 9/11, and people flying airplanes into buildings, and the people that died as a result.

Not to be extremely bombastic, but if you're a member of Al Qaeda, you don't think any of those thoughts, and you don't feel any of those feelings. You probably think thoughts like, "The U.S. deserve this based on their involvement in the Middle East," and you feel vindicated. And, you probably think that it was a success, and you feel victorious.

It's easy for us to think that the other side is wrong. When people think different thoughts than us, "They're wrong, and we're the people who are right." What I want to offer you is that thoughts aren't right or wrong, we can think that we're right for us, other people can think that they're right for them. This isn't about being right or wrong. It's about having the awareness that the facts here aren't what caused your feelings. How you think about the facts, determines how you feel.

## Ep #10: The Self-Coaching Model

So, if you're thinking a negative thought, you're gonna feel a negative feeling. If you're thinking a positive thought, you'll feel a positive feeling. The thoughts are what caused your emotional experience.

Two things here: First of all, this is the best news ever, because we can control what we think. Also, some people get confused here, and they think what I mean by this is that you should think positive thoughts about all circumstances. That is absolutely not the purpose of the model.

This isn't to think lovey-dovey, rainbows and sunshine thoughts 100% of the time. Sometimes we want to think negative thoughts on purpose.

Now, when we know, intellectually, that our thoughts cause our feelings, we can choose to think negative thoughts on purpose. We'll feel much more in control of our emotional experience, rather than when we let our brain run on default, and we blame circumstances for our feelings. When we think circumstances are positive or negative, and they cause how we feel, rather than owning that it's our thoughts that cause how we feel.

For example, if either of my parents died, I don't want to think a positive thought about that. Right? God forbid. I would want to think very sad thoughts and feel devastated. I would want to feel grief stricken. I would want to be upset by that. Okay?

There are plenty of things that go on in the world that I want to think negative thoughts about. I want to choose thoughts that make me feel outraged. I want to choose thoughts that make me feel disappointed or frustrated.

It's pretty infrequent that I choose to think those thoughts because I don't like feeling those feelings, but they are part of the human experience. And, sometimes they're what make the most sense. Sometimes I want to feel heartbroken over a given situation, because I don't like how it turned out. I wanted it to work out differently than it did. So, I choose to think thoughts that caused me to feel that way.

## Ep #10: The Self-Coaching Model

This is really empowering because even though I'm feeling negative, I am feeling in control over my emotional experience. There's plenty that's going on in the world recently to think of these big picture examples: COVID, mask mandates, vaccine mandates, the recent SCOTUS leaked opinion about the possibility that Roe vs. Wade gets overturned, right? Those are all circumstances, and huge portions of our country have very different thoughts about them, and so they feel very different feelings, as a result of their thoughts.

Now, this isn't to say that one line of thinking is right, and one line of thinking is wrong. The model is just an awareness tool. If you're feeling a particular feeling, you're going to want to attribute that to the thought you're thinking, not the circumstance you're thinking the thought about. Okay?

Circumstances are neutral. Our thoughts, which are just sentences that our brains serve up to us. Our thoughts aren't neutral, they're positive or negative. And, our positive or negative thoughts cause our positive or negative feelings, okay?

Why are our feelings so important? Especially understanding our negative feelings because we tend to respond to them in one of four ways. Three of the ways we respond to a negative emotion typically don't serve us.

The first way we respond to a negative emotion is we resist it. We pretend it's not there. Think of holding a beach ball underwater, or shoving your negative emotions in a closet and pressing it shut with your shoulder, hoping that it doesn't get out. My mom hates to fly on airplanes. She white-knuckles the armrests on airplanes the entire time she flies, because she's terrified. But she's resisting her fear instead of just accepting it, acknowledging it, and allowing it to be there.

A really good pop culture example of resisting negative emotion, is that Friends episode where Ross gets super drunk on margaritas, and he's pretending that he's fine. He keeps telling everyone, "I'm fine. I'm totally fine. Do I not sound fine? I don't know why my voice is all squeaky. I'm

## Ep #10: The Self-Coaching Model

totally fine. Everything's great." And you're like, "Ross, my guy, you're clearly not okay." That's what it looks like to resist a negative emotion.

Now, the second, and very common, way we respond to a negative emotion is we avoid it by doing any other action that provides us with temporary pleasure, and instant gratification, and lets us temporarily escape the discomfort. So, this looks like eating too much, drinking too much, scrolling too much, shopping too much, streaming too much. Maybe indulging in certain substances that allow us to escape, things like that. Any activity that distracts you from the negative emotion you're presently experiencing, and provides you with temporary relief.

Okay, you can even do this in positive ways. Some people will clean in order to avoid a negative emotion, or they'll organize, or they'll exercise. There are ways that we can take a positive action, or a seemingly positive action, but it's still avoidant behavior because it doesn't produce the result that we want to produce.

I had one client, one day, tell me that instead of getting to work on her really overwhelming to do list, she organized her office. I have another client that frequently closes out and organizes all of their internet tabs, instead of tackling their to-do list, or they'll organize their email, right? This is avoidant behavior too.

So, think about the ways that you avoid negative emotion. When you do this, it ultimately leaves you at a deficit. Think of a bank balance; you're in the red when it comes to the results that you're producing. You can wait, have a hangover, waste time... All of those things. Spend money. You end up in the red in some way.

Now, the third way we respond to a negative emotion is we react to it. And, I tend to find that we react to negative emotions that have us feeling weaker. So, maybe you feel inadequate, or insecure, or attacked, or misunderstood, or overwhelmed. And, you will respond in a way that makes you feel more powerful in the moment, but it's still an unintentional reaction. It doesn't set you up for success in the long run.

## Ep #10: The Self-Coaching Model

People will feel insecure, and they'll lash out. Or they'll feel attacked or misunderstood, and they'll lash out. They'll criticize, they'll critique, they'll judge someone else. That makes them feel stronger. But again, it doesn't lead to anything good. It normally leads to conflict, which is not a result that you probably want to create.

Another way that I see this, is when people are feeling stressed, overwhelmed or behind. They'll just start doing anything, they'll hit low-hanging fruit when it comes to their work, rather than focusing in on the task that would really make the greatest impact in their day. It would help them accomplish the thing that really would be most impactful, when it comes to the work that they have on their plate. That's reacting.

So, we've got resisting, avoiding, and reacting. Those three ways that we respond to a negative of emotion, do not serve us. What we want to learn how to do, and when I'm going to teach you how to do throughout the course of the podcast, is learn how to allow a negative emotion to be there.

The way that I always describe that process to people, think of your negative emotions like screaming toddlers. You've got errands to run, aka you've got results that you want to create. But right now, when you're resisting, avoiding, or reacting to your negative emotions, you're essentially letting the screaming toddlers drive the bus, and determine where you end up. What results you end up creating. Maybe you don't leave the house at all to run errands, you let those screaming toddlers dictate your action in that way. Or, you let them drive and end up somewhere unintentionally, that you don't want to be.

What allowing a negative emotion looks like is: Identifying it by name, figuring out what specifically you're feeling, gaining awareness as to the thoughts that are causing you to feel those feelings, not blaming the circumstances for that emotional experience. Then, you just let the negative emotion be there. You take intentional action in spite of and despite it.

## Ep #10: The Self-Coaching Model

I always tell my clients, “Think of strapping the screaming toddlers, the negative emotions, in the car seat in the back.” Unfortunately, part of the human experience is feeling negative emotion some of the time. So, the screaming toddlers are going to have to come along for the ride.

That's okay, they can be in the car seat in the back, and you can intentionally drive and go about running your errands, and accomplishing your intentional results, in spite of and despite them. You can feel your negative feelings and take intentional action to produce the results that you want. You've survived every single negative emotion you've ever felt before you'll survive those, too. All right?

Now, this is the basic premise of the model: Circumstances are neutral. Our thoughts aren't; they're positive or negative. Our thoughts cause our feelings. Our feelings drive our actions, and our actions produce our results.

How do you use this framework to support you? I'm going to teach you how to use it in two different ways. The first way is as an awareness tool. And the second way, which I mentioned earlier, is in learning how to reverse engineer your results, which I'll teach you how to do in the next episode.

Today, I just want to teach you how to use the model to gain awareness. You want to understand what you're thinking, how it's causing you to feel, how you show up when you're feeling that feeling, and the result it produces.

The really neat thing about the model is you can start on any line, okay? You always want to make sure that you fill in the circumstance line. So, we have contacts, we know what we're thinking about, we know what we're talking about. But aside from the circumstance line, you can really start anywhere. If you are feeling a particular emotion, and it feels really strong and you want to gain awareness as to why you're feeling it, you can plug in the feeling line of the model. Start with overwhelmed, or anxious, or scared, or worried, or discouraged, defeated, disappointed, right? Start there with that one-word emotion.

## Ep #10: The Self-Coaching Model

And then you can ask yourself, “What thoughts am I thinking about the circumstance that are making me feel that way?” You can start with your thoughts. You can just look at the circumstance and say, “What do I think about this? What are the sentences that come up for me when I think about the circumstance?” You can do what we call a thought-download, just download all of the thoughts you think about a particular fact.

Then, you'll start to see, “Oh, when I think this thought, I feel this feeling. And then I take this action, or I indulge in inaction, and it produces this result.”

If you have an action that you don't like right now, that you want to understand what's behind it, what's driving it, you can start with the A-line of your model. You can plug in: Overdrinking, maybe that's the action you're taking. Or, procrastinating, or people pleasing, saying “Yes,” when you want to say, “No,” over-promising and under-delivering, indulging in perfectionism.

Any of the things that you tend to do that you don't like, that don't serve you, that don't produce the results you want to create for yourself. You can plug those in the A-line and you can work it backwards. Ask yourself, “How am I feeling right now that's causing me to show up this way? What's the thought I'm thinking that's making me feel that feeling?”

Or, you can start with a result that you have in your life. Maybe it's the number of clients that you have, or the amount of hours that you're working in a given week. Maybe you work every weekend, that's a result, and you want to see what's creating that. Maybe you are a certain weight, and you aren't thrilled about that weight. So, you want to figure out what actions are creating that current result.

You can work it backwards; start with the current result, ask yourself, “What am I doing, and what am I not doing, that's creating that result?” And then explore, “What's the feeling that I'm feeling, that's causing me to show up that way? And what thoughts are driving those feelings?”

## Ep #10: The Self-Coaching Model

Now, let's walk through a couple of different examples, so you can see how this works in practice. Let's take the circumstance, your job. We'll put that in the C-line of the model. What are your thoughts about that? Some people might be thinking, "I hate my job." And if you're thinking the thought, "I hate my job," you probably feel a negative emotion, something along the lines of feeling dreadful. Maybe be really frustrated, or discouraged, disappointed, something like that.

What do you do when you're feeling that feeling? The action you take: You might dwell, you might complain to someone, you might focus on all of the things that you hate about work, you might stew, you might slip into regret and kick yourself for not doing something differently, you might second-guess your decisions that lead you there, right?

All of those negative actions definitely don't serve you, but what results do they produce? It's a big waste of your time, and ultimately, by focusing on all the things you hate, you're just going to end up hating it more.

Maybe you think a different thought about your job. Maybe you think the thought, "My job is so hard." And when you think the thought, "My job is so hard," you feel the one-word emotion; something along the lines of exhausted. And what do you do when you feel exhausted? You might avoid work, you might procrastinate. In coaching, we call this buffering, where you do anything else that makes you feel better, in that immediate moment.

You might distract yourself with something that's more entertaining, or allows you to kind of check out. And what do we do when we avoid work, procrastinate, buffer, distract ourselves? We make our jobs harder, right? We're really inefficient with the way that we spend our time, we don't focus on the work in front of us, so we still have a ton to do. So, work will feel harder. We make it harder on ourselves.

Now, if you were thinking a thought about your job, like, "I'm so lucky to have this job." You might feel blessed, or grateful, or fortunate. What are you going to do when you feel those feelings, those positive emotions? You're going to focus on all the good things about your job. You're not

## Ep #10: The Self-Coaching Model

going to complain. You're not going to waste your time. You're not going to need to distract yourself from a negative emotion.

Ultimately, the result you'll create is you'll feel more grateful, and you'll show up and work in a way that expresses that gratitude. You're going to be much more committed and focused on doing a good job, rather than withdrawn.

Let's take the circumstance of email. Believe it or not, email is neutral. The number of emails you get, on a daily basis, is neutral. What your emails say, is neutral. But we tend to have a lot of thoughts about email. So, we're going to put email in the C-line of the model. You're going to ask yourself what are the thoughts that you think?

We're going to run through this. When you think that thought, take one of the thoughts that you think, ask yourself, "How do I feel when I think that thought? How do I show up when I feel that way? What do I do? What don't I do? What result does that action produce?"

If you think the thought, about email, that email is never-ending you probably feel overwhelmed. What do you do when feel overwhelmed? Probably one of two things: Either you shut down, you stop working, you avoid feeling overwhelmed, you procrastinate, you grab your cell phone, scroll through social media, do something else. You just don't engage with your email inbox.

Or, you react to feeling overwhelmed. Maybe you constantly check your email. You can't get your most important work done because you're constantly interrupting yourself with your inbox, instead of doing other work.

Either way, the result you create is that you make it never-ending. You either focus all of your time on it, or you avoid it and it's still there at the end of the day. So, if you think it's never-ending, you make it never end.

If, instead, you thought the thought about email, "It's so much better than talking on the phone." You might feel grateful. If you thought that it was a

## Ep #10: The Self-Coaching Model

convenient medium for communicating, you might feel grateful, or at ease, or relieved. Again, fortunate, might come up.

When you're feeling those feelings, you're not going to cringe when emails come in. You're going to utilize email effectively, maybe respond timely. There's going to be no need to avoid it, and you're not going to be reacting to it, either. You're just going to put email in its place, use it as a tool to get your work done, and you'll create the result of working efficiently and not getting worked up over your inbox.

Some of my clients, when I tell them that emails and what they say, are neutral... I always tell my clients, "Emails have no tone." People tend to think I'm crazy. Truly, the words that anyone says in an email are neutral, and they don't cause your feelings until you think a thought about the email.

Let's take the circumstance: An email comes in from your boss. Your boss says, 'fill in the blank....' Whatever your boss says in the email that you would tend to, normally, have a melt-down about, or spin-out in an anxiety spiral. The words your boss says in the email.

Your go-to thought is, "Oh my God, I'm going to get fired." When you think the thought, "Oh my God, I'm going to get fired," you probably feel terrified, or anxious. What do you do when you feel terrified or anxious? You spin, you freak out, you worry, you obsess over the email, you let it distract you from the work you have to do, it ends up consuming your whole day, you don't get your work done, you second-guess yourself.

The result that you create: A- You engage in behavior that probably makes it more likely that you get fired, because you're not doing your work. You're not focusing on what matters most. But also, you waste a ton of time. It's not an efficient use of your time.

Instead, you could take the email and you could think, "I wonder what my boss wants?" Or, "I wonder what's driving them to ask me this question, or say this to me via email?" You might feel curious when you think a statement that starts with, "I wonder..."

## Ep #10: The Self-Coaching Model

What do you do when feeling curious? Maybe you ask more questions, you stay calm, you don't get yourself worked up. Then you can inquire further to find out what they want or what's going on. As a result, you figure out whatever you're wondering about. You gain more information, you create more knowing for yourself when you think a thought that starts with, "I wonder..."

Take a situation, for my people pleasers who are listening, the circumstance of you saying, "No," to something. Maybe your boss or supervisor comes and asks you if you have time to work on a project. You think the thought, "If I say no, I'll disappoint them." When you think that thought, you feel afraid. What do you do when you feel afraid?

You avoid feeling afraid. You say, "Yes," even though you want to say, "No." Maybe you don't have the time. But you say, "Yes," anyways; you people-please. You do that because you're avoiding feeling afraid, when it comes to saying, "No."

What do you create, as a result? You end up disappointing yourself, and probably over-promising and under-delivering, ultimately, if you truly don't have the capacity, you don't have the time.

Take the exact same circumstance. You're thinking about saying, "No," when your supervisor asks you if you have time to work on X project. You thought, the thought, "The best thing for me to do here, is to be honest about my capacity." When you're thinking that thought, you might feel responsible. What do you do when you feel responsible?

You communicate your capacity. You say, "No," because you truly don't have the time. Then, you create the best scenario possible for everyone that you're working with. You're very honest, you don't over-commit yourself, you don't over-promise and under-deliver. You're able to have the most candid conversation possible, and be really honest about what your capabilities are, best case scenario.

## Ep #10: The Self-Coaching Model

Think about how you think of the circumstance of time. So many of my clients think the thought, “There’s never enough of it.” When they think that thought, they feel overwhelmed. Time isn’t what makes them feel overwhelmed. Their thoughts about time are what make them feel overwhelmed.

When they feel overwhelmed, again, you’re going to do one of two things: Either avoid it and procrastinate, or react and not focus on your most important work. You do those low-hanging fruit items that allow you to check the box really quickly, but don’t really move the dial on your most important work.

What result do you create? You don’t make the use of your time, and you still need more of it.

Now, what if you thought about time differently? What if you thought, the thought, “I’m in control of my time?” So many of the people I work with think they don’t control their time. Then, they feel out of control. They don’t control their time, they cede control of their calendar to other people, their reactionary and hyper-responsive, they don’t stick to their plan. And then, they create the result of not controlling their time.

But if you’re thinking the thought, “I’m in control of my time,” you’re going to feel very in control, perhaps powerful. What action are you going to take when you’re feeling in control and feeling powerful?

You’re going to set boundaries; you’re going to honor them. You’re going to make intentional choices about how you spend your time. You’re not going to procrastinate; you’re going to plan accurately, and follow your plan.

You’re not going to take un-scheduled phone calls. You’re going to stick to the constraint that you created in your schedule, in order to create the most intentional use of your time. As a result, you’re going to control your time.

Here’s another great example that comes up for people, especially in private practice, where they have to enter their time. So many of my clients

## Ep #10: The Self-Coaching Model

have a lot negative thoughts about time entry. You can think about your thoughts, right now, if that's something that comes up for you in your job.

A lot of my clients think the thought, "This is such a waste of my time." The circumstance is: Entering your time. It's totally neutral but their thought isn't. It's negative, they think, "This is such a waste of my time," and they feel really annoyed or bothered.

When they're feeling really annoyed or bothered, they avoid that emotion. They do other work instead. Maybe they stop working all together, they procrastinate, they distract themselves with something that is more entertaining. They create the result of not entering their time. They waste their time. They still have to do it later.

I always tell my clients, "The only difference between you and people that enter their time on a daily basis, in a timely fashion, is that they think different thoughts about time entry than you do." They might think the thought, "This is the most important part of my job because it's how the law firm makes money."

When they're thinking the thought, "This is the most important part of my job," they'll feel compelled. When they're feeling compelled, they'll enter their time daily. They'll create the result of treating it as an important part of their job.

Okay, I just gave you a lot of examples for you to start to get a sense of how the model works, and how you can use it to gain awareness over: Why you're feeling, how you're feeling, why you're doing or not doing, whatever you're doing or not doing, and why you have the current results you have.

If you go back to the first few episodes where I talk about *Creating a Life You're Obsessed With*, and *Life is Choices*, you're going to see how your thinking creates the results that you currently have. So, if there are any results that you don't love in your life, right now, you want to work it backwards.

## Ep #10: The Self-Coaching Model

What actions am I taking that are creating those results? What feelings are driving me to take that action, or to indulge in inaction? What thoughts are causing me to feel those feelings? You want to gain that awareness.

The model, as I'm teaching it to you, is a tool that was created by my coach, Brooke Castillo, the founder of The Life Coach School. She created the CTFAR framework: Circumstances Thoughts Feelings Actions Results.

If you think of the letters... I want you to think of it in your mind's eye, it's kin to how we think of IRAC, in legal writing, Issue Rule Analysis Conclusion. It's a structure. The Model is the same way. You can write it down on a piece of paper: CTFAR.

Fill it in to gain awareness as to what's going on, as far as your mindset is concerned. I know it's hard for you to get a visual of this while you're listening to me via audio, so I'm going to put a graphic in the show notes, so you can see what this looks like, visually, and how each component flows into the next component: How circumstances are neutral. Our thoughts aren't. We think thoughts. They cause our feelings. Our feelings drive our action. Our action creates our results.

I want to let you guys know; Brooke didn't create the underlying philosophy upon which the model is premised. The model is based on universal truths, which is why, since I first learned the model, I've noticed so many other people in the personal development and coaching space are all saying the exact same thing, in slightly different ways.

If you've ever read, *As a Man Thinketh*, by James Allen, which is short but very profound read, this book was published in 1903. You're going to see the same message as what's set forth in this episode, in teaching you the model. It's the same concept.

A lot of what Tony Robbins teaches also falls in line with these same concepts that the model is based on. I was just watching Brené Brown's *Atlas of the Heart*, on HBOmax™, and in the first episode she talks

## Ep #10: The Self-Coaching Model

about thinking, feeling, and behavior. Again, it's the same thing as the model.

It's this thought-feeling-action cycle. That's what the model is premised on, it's what so many people talk about. You may see this come up in a lot of other people's teachings. We're all saying the same thing, essentially. The model is just a great, simplistic framework that gives structure to what these other experts are teaching, as well.

Now that you've learned the model, I want you to know there are three ways to go through life. You can proceed on default, which is how most people proceed through life, very unintentionally. Where they believe that circumstances cause their feelings. They feel like they're living the effects of their circumstances, and blame their circumstances for how they feel. That's what most people are doing.

But now that you know the model, that's actually off the table. So, there's only two other ways that you can go through life, now that you know this tool and you've become aware that; circumstances are neutral, and your thoughts cause your feelings.

You can intentionally choose, on purpose, to keep thinking your negative thoughts. We think 60,000 thoughts a day; most of them are negative. And despite knowing the model now, you can choose, like I talked about earlier, to think negative thoughts on purpose, and to feel negative feelings as a result.

Once you become aware of what you're thinking, you can either change your thoughts and replace them with ones that serve you... But if you don't want to do that, if you want to choose to think negative thoughts about a particular circumstance, you can choose those negative thoughts on purpose. You can choose to feel the negative feelings that come with them. And, even though you'll still feel negatively, you'll at least feel more empowered and in control, because you're exercising your agency and you're making a choice.

## Ep #10: The Self-Coaching Model

The third option is becoming aware of what you're currently thinking, by using the model, and intentionally choosing thoughts that serve you. Replacing thoughts that are negative with more positive thoughts so you can control how you feel, regardless with what's happening in the world around you.

I'm going to teach you how to do that in the coming episodes. But for now, I just want you to start by gaining awareness. You can do that by taking a sheet of paper, I used to do this on a legal pad in my office when I first got introduced to the model, and just write down CTFAR; one letter per line.

Find a neutral circumstance. You can use some of the examples that I gave you earlier in this episode, or you can pick one that's coming up for you, that you're dealing with right now. Make sure you get it to a neutral C. Ask yourself, "Would everyone agree upon this being true? Is there any room for disagreement?" If there is room for disagreement, that's a thought, not a circumstance. Make sure you find the neutral circumstance.

When you have that, ask yourself the question, "What am I thinking about this? What's the thought that I'm thinking?" Make sure you use only one thought per model, and one one-word feeling per model.

From there, once you've got the thought, ask yourself, "When I think this thought, how do I feel?" If you've got a bunch of different thoughts, start different models for each thought. Then, find the different feeling you feel when you think each thought.

From there, once you've got the one-word emotion, ask yourself, "When I feel this way, what do I do? What don't I do?" Fill in that action line. Put in as many things down as you can think of, that you do or don't do, when you feel that feeling.

Then ask yourself, "What result do I create when I take this action, or indulge in inaction, in this way?"

## Ep #10: The Self-Coaching Model

It's going to give you so much awareness as to: How you're currently feeling, why you're feeling the way that you are, why you're doing what you're doing, or why you're not doing the things you're not doing, and why you have the results you currently have. It's so informative. It's such a useful tool.

I hope you enjoy using it. I hope you find that it's super helpful, and very informative, super enlightening. The more you practice using it, the better you'll get at using it. It'll get easier, if it feels a little hard at first, that's okay.

Alright, I hope you have a wonderful week. I'll talk to you in the next episode.

Thanks for listening to *The Less Stressed Lawyer* podcast. If you want more info about Olivia Vizachero or the show's notes and resources from today's episode, visit [www.TheLessStressedLawyer.com](http://www.TheLessStressedLawyer.com).