Ep #28: Thoughts About Time & Your To-Do List (Time Management Series)

Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Olivia Vizachero

Ep #28: Thoughts About Time & Your To-Do List (Time Management Series)

You're listening to *The Less Stressed Lawyer* podcast, episode 28. Today, we're talking all about your thoughts about time and to-do lists. 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.

Well, hello there, how you doing? I am great. I'm back from Mexico City. And I've got a short break in between bits of travel that I'm doing. I've got another big trip coming up towards the end of the month. But I'm back home in Michigan for a little while, and getting settled back into the swing of things.

Now, we're picking up where we left off. We've been talking about the three P's; people-pleasing, perfectionism, and procrastination. And now, we're focused on the last P, that procrastination part. So, we're really going to do a deep dive in to time management.

And in the last episode, I talked to you about the two different time management styles, right; you can either be a firefighter or a procrastinator. Sometimes you're a combination of both. Normally, not at the exact same time. But you might flip back and forth between one or the other.

As we've talked about that, now I want to start to go into more specific problem solving. And once we gain awareness, then we're going to go into the specific tactics that you need to apply and implement, in order to solve your time management problem.

So today, I want to focus on gaining some more awareness. You've probably heard me talk about this already. But it's so important to start with gaining awareness, because it's really impossible to solve any problem if you aren't clear on what's causing it in the first place. Right. So, we want to

Ep #28: Thoughts About Time & Your To-Do List (Time Management Series)

create some awareness around what's causing your time management problems.

Now, normally, when I talk about gaining awareness, I always want to address two specific problems. I've told you guys before, there's always only two problems, or two causes to any problem; the negative thoughts that you're thinking, that don't serve you. And negative feelings that you're unwilling to feel, that you react to or avoid. All right.

So normally, I will approach gaining awareness with this two-prong focus. We'll focus first on the thoughts that don't serve you, and then on the feelings that you're unwilling to feel. But I'm going to do this a little differently this time. Because I'm going to address all the feelings that you resist or avoid when I walk you through step three of my three step time management process. So, that's going to be in a couple of episodes from now.

In the meantime, we're just going to focus, especially for the purposes of this episode, on the thoughts that you think about time, time management, and your to-do list, that don't serve you. Okay, we're going to focus specifically on the thoughts.

Now, a little bit of a refresher here, right? Why are our thoughts so important? It's because the thoughts that we think create all of the results that we have or don't have, right. We encounter a circumstance, a task on our to-do list, time, time management, sticking to a schedule, any of those facts; circumstances are always just facts. And then, our brain serves us up thoughts about them.

And our thoughts cause our feelings. Feelings are just one-word emotions that we experience. And then all of the action that we take, is driven and caused by the feelings that we feel. And it's that action that we take or don't take, that ultimately produces our results. So, our thoughts cause our feelings, our feelings drive our actions, and our actions produce our results.

Ep #28: Thoughts About Time & Your To-Do List (Time Management Series)

Which ultimately means, if you're following the flowchart, that your thoughts create your results, always.

So, our thoughts are so important here, right. They're going to determine how we manage our time, the result we have when it relates to time management. Now, before I talk about the common thoughts my clients think about time, I want you…

You can pause this episode and just take a second, and write down, do a quick thought download. And all that means is, you're going to write down the most common thoughts you think about a particular topic. In this instance, use the topic, time. What are all the thoughts you think about time, right? Take a second and list them all out.

Either make a list in your head, you can write them down, but make sure you flush this out really specifically. What happens when we don't take the time to get clear on the specific individual thoughts that we're thinking, is that they end up being all tangled and jumbled together in that head of ours, right?

And it makes it really hard to make any change when you aren't clear on the specific thoughts, the sentences that are running through your head, about a particular circumstance. So, you want to parse these out. Go one by one, get really clear on the individual thoughts you think about the circumstance.

All right, now that you've had a second to think about what are your most common, most practiced thoughts about time, I want to clue you in on what some of the really common ones that I see in the coaching work that I do with my clients are. And you should start to see, when you do a thought download, you're going to be able to pick up on the thoughts that don't serve you.

A way to flesh this out a little bit further, next to each thought that you write down, in parentheses put the one-word emotion, the one word feeling, that

Ep #28: Thoughts About Time & Your To-Do List (Time Management Series)

you feel when you think that thought, all right. And you'll identify pretty quickly whether it's a feeling that serves you, or whether it's one that doesn't. If it's a negative emotion, that's probably going to drive you to take negative action, or no action at all. All right, that can help you get a better sense of what's causing your time management problems.

So, some thoughts that are really common for my clients. First and foremost is the thought, "I don't have enough of it," when we're thinking about time. I don't have enough of it. And when they think that thought, I don't have enough time, they end up feeling scarce, or pressured, or helpless.

And when they're feeling those emotions, they tend to do one of two things; either they react in a really unintentional manner, they try and multitask, they reshuffle, they're jumping from one thing to the next, constantly interrupting themselves, being really inefficient and unproductive, as far as how they use their time, right?

Or, they avoid these emotions by doing something that brings them temporary pleasure and instant gratification, instead. So, this is what it looks like when you're procrastinating right? You do something else that brings you more entertainment or more pleasure, instead of sticking with your game plan, and doing what would really benefit you in the long run.

Now, when you're thinking, I don't have enough time, and you're feeling these negative feelings, and you're either reacting unintentionally, or avoiding these emotions altogether, you create the result of still not having enough of it. You need more time to get done what you need to get done.

Now, I'm going to introduce you, a couple episodes from now, to all of the thoughts that you're going to want to practice about time and time management. So, you can really cultivate the time management mindset you need, to be able to manage your time effectively and efficiently. Like I said, I'm going to talk about that a couple episodes from now.

Ep #28: Thoughts About Time & Your To-Do List (Time Management Series)

But right now, I just want to offer you that whenever you're thinking the thought, I don't have enough time, I want a little alarm bell to go off in your head. That's really, for coaching purposes, an incomplete thought. All right, instead of thinking I don't have enough of it, I want you to complete the sentence. So, you're going to do that by answering two questions. I don't have enough time. Question number one; to do what? Question number two; in what timeframe or by when?

Our brain likes to just throw spaghetti at the wall with some of these thoughts, to see if they'll stick. Telling yourself that you don't have enough time is a surefire way to react and distract yourself or avoid, which is always what your brain is going to try and get you to do. Because it's easier to do that than to do some of the heavy lifting, and stay patient, and focused on one task. All right.

So, you want to be on to that brain of yours. You want to know that it's going to try and serve you up the thought, I don't have enough time, to get you to hit the escape button, and do these activities that feel better in that moment, in that instant. You want to be able to interrupt this thought pattern and say no, no, no, that's an incomplete thought.

Let me provide context, let me get more specific: I don't have enough time to do what, by when. And when you get more specific, you're going to find out one of two things is true; either that's an accurate statement, you literally do not have enough time to complete a specific task, by a certain deadline; like the math just doesn't work out.

Or, you actually do have enough time, and your brain's just lying to you because it wants you to slip into one of those reactive, avoidant patterns. So, you want to create context, so you can get clear on whether or not you even have a time management problem.

All right. Another thought that people think about time, is that they need more of it. And if you're thinking the thought, "I need more time," you'll probably feel something like desperate, right? And when you're feeling

Ep #28: Thoughts About Time & Your To-Do List (Time Management Series)

desperate, again, you'll react, or you'll avoid. And however you do that, whatever reacting or avoiding looks like for you, you'll still end up creating the result of needing more time.

So, you can see how your thoughts start to mirror or match your results; thoughts create results, right? So, if you're thinking that you need more of it, you're probably going to squander time. And then, you'll end up still needing more of it to get your work done.

Another super common thought that my clients tend to think when they come to me, is that they don't have control over their time. When they're thinking about time, one of their most practiced thoughts is, "I don't have control over it." And when they think that thought, they end up feeling really out of control, really helpless.

And guess what they do when they feel out of control and helpless? The action that they take is, that they relinquish or cede control over their calendars, over their schedule. They take a lot of unscheduled calls, they let emails "interrupt" them, even though nothing ever interrupts us, we allow ourselves to be interrupted.

That's definitely a radical ownership concept, when you really start to look at time in that way. Where you're always the one distracting yourself or interrupting yourself; it's not happening to you, it's something that you do. Alright. So, when you're thinking, I don't have control over my time, and you're feeling out of control or helpless, and you relinquish control, you create the result of not controlling your time, right? You still don't have control over it.

If this is a thought you think, I want you to start to identify how are you relinquishing control over your time, over your calendar, over your schedule? Who do you give control to? Maybe to your supervisors, maybe to your subordinates, maybe to your clients, maybe to friends and family members, maybe it's outside of work.

Ep #28: Thoughts About Time & Your To-Do List (Time Management Series)

I really want you to start to identify the patterns where you relinquish and cede control. Gaining that awareness is really going to help you course-correct here, you'll be able to stop yourself and interrupt yourself when you're in that relinquishing pattern.

Another really common thought that people will think about time, is simply that they waste it, and that thought is probably going to feel very true for you. It might feel like a fact. But waste is something that's going to be subjective. What you consider a waste of time or wasting time might not be what I consider a waste of time or wasting time. So, that's always going to be an opinion, that you've wasted time.

Now, if it's an opinion, it's optional to think. I have unsubscribed from the concept of wasted time. I don't really think that it serves us to think that we're wasting it. I think we can always benefit and learn from how we spend time, how we deposit our time allowance, so to speak.

And maybe you don't love the result, the ROI (Return on Investment) that you got from how you made a time expenditure in the past. That's fine. Just learn from it. You don't have to think that you've wasted it. You just gained some intel and you do better next time.

But if you're thinking the thought, "I waste time," you'll probably feel guilty, or ashamed, or disappointed in yourself. Maybe you'll feel inadequate, right? And when you're feeling guilty, ashamed, disappointed, or inadequate, you'll again, slip into a really avoidant pattern. Because those emotions are so uncomfortable, you want to throw them away like a game of hot potato and get out of them.

 So, you'll slip into an avoidant pattern. You'll seek that temporary pleasure, that instant gratification, so you can feel better in the moment. And, what do you end up doing when you're in that avoidant action? You'll end up wasting more time. So, this creates a self-fulfilling prophecy. You think the thought about time, that you waste it, and then you end up wasting more of it.

Ep #28: Thoughts About Time & Your To-Do List (Time Management Series)

Another common thought that people choose to think about time, is that time flies. And, that might seem like a really innocent thought, but ask yourself, if that's a thought that's really common for you; how do you feel when you think it? Maybe you feel hurried or rushed? It's never going to feel good.

And when you feel hurried or rushed, you're going to do one of two things again; you're either going to react to feeling hurried and rushed, and take a lot of unintentional action. Or, you're going to avoid altogether, you're just going to try and get out of that discomfort.

And then, what result do you create? Time ends up flying by without you accomplishing much. So, you create more evidence that time flies, that you don't have enough of it, that it's precious, right? But not precious in a good way where you're cherishing it, precious in a way where you feel scarce again, you don't have enough of it.

You can also feel really overwhelmed when you're thinking, "I don't have enough time." I know I mentioned that thought earlier, I haven't mentioned the feeling of overwhelmed, yet. But I want you to ask yourself if you feel overwhelmed often, ask yourself; what thoughts do you think about time that make you feel overwhelmed? Maybe it's the thought, "I have too much to do," right.

And when you're thinking about time, I have too much to do, in a given amount of time, you'll feel overwhelmed. And then again, you'll react or avoid to feeling overwhelmed, in the ways that I've described already. And then, what happens when you react or avoid to feeling overwhelmed?

You still don't have enough time, to get done what you need to get done. You still have too much to do. Because you haven't gotten through those big-ticket items, you haven't made enough progress on your to-do list. So, that thought still feels true for you.

Ep #28: Thoughts About Time & Your To-Do List (Time Management Series)

Another very common thought that my clients come to me thinking, is the thought that they're always behind. Oh, what a painful thought that is to think, right? When you think, "I'm always behind," you're going to end up feeling overwhelmed, and probably discouraged, or defeated. And when you're feeling overwhelmed, discouraged, and defeated, again, you're going to react and avoid.

And what happens when you're reacting or avoiding? You end up staying behind. Either because you're constantly reshuffling your schedule, you're procrastinating. And then, the third reason people are behind, is that they just plan inaccurately; they plan 10 hours of work in a 5-hour period. And if you do that, if you get the math of time management wrong, you will always feel behind.

That's one of the things that we're going to work on in this time management series, is learning how to plan accurately. Okay, so you can start to see how your thoughts about time create your results, that you experience in your life, as far as time is concerned. Now, let's talk about your thoughts about time management.

Again, take a second, if you need to pause this episode, and just do a quick thought download. What are your most common, your most practiced thoughts, about time management? Start to think about how you think about time management, is what's creating your results with time management.

So, if you don't have results, as far as time management goes, that you like, if you have negative results in the time management department, it's because you think negative thoughts about time management. What are those thoughts? All right, take a second, write them down, list out those thoughts one by one. And again, to gain extra clarity on whether these thoughts serve you or not, you can put in parentheses next to the thought, what's the one-word emotion that you feel when you think it.

Ep #28: Thoughts About Time & Your To-Do List (Time Management Series)

Or, you can run a complete model, and that's what I've been walking you through in this episode. As I go through the thoughts, feelings, actions, and results that get created when you think these thoughts, about whatever the circumstance is, time, time management, or your to-do list. Okay?

So, you can run a model, and that just means filling in each of these lines. So, you've got the circumstance, I'm giving that part to you, time, time management, your to-do list. That's the C; the circumstance. And then, you're going to identify these individual thoughts, that you think about that circumstance.

And then, you're going to identify the one-word emotion you feel, when you think that thoughts; put that in the F line. And then ask yourself; what do you do? Or, what don't you do, when you feel that feeling? Put all of that on your A line? And then ask yourself; what result do you produce when you take that action, or when you indulge in that inaction? You put that in your results line, in your R line.

And, it looks like an acronym. It's just stacked on top of each other: C-T-F-A-R (Circumstances-Thoughts-Feelings-Actions-Results). That's the model. I have a whole episode on the self-coaching model. I believe it's Episode 10 of the podcast. So, if you haven't listened to that yet, go give it a listen. And, you will have just greater context for what I'm talking about in this episode. But do that after, let's finish this one first. And then, you can go listen to that.

Now, conduct a thought download, list out those thoughts, or run some models on your thoughts about time management, to see how your thoughts are creating your current time management results. Some common thoughts my clients tend to think about time management, are something like this:

They'll think, "I've always been bad at time management." And when they think that thought, they'll feel discouraged or ashamed or maybe even

embarrassed. And when they're feeling those emotions, again, they'll avoid the work that they need to do.

They'll avoid managing their time. They might quit and give up. They may start attempting to manage their time, but they'll give up pretty quickly, they'll stop. They'll also judge themselves, really beat themselves up, instead of getting curious of valuating how they're managing their time, and how they're spending their time, and making consistent improvements over time. They won't be patient; they'll be really impatient, and get frustrated easily.

So, when they're thinking the thought that they're always bad at it, they've always been bad at it, they'll continue being bad at it, that's the result that they'll create.

The same thing goes if you think thoughts like, "I suck at time management." If that's the thought that you think, you'll probably, again, feel defeated, exasperated, maybe even resigned. Like I suck at it, it is what it is, there's no changing that. It'll feel very out of your control. And when you're feeling defeated, exasperated, or resigned, you'll probably just accept the status quo.

You won't do anything to fix the problem, you're going to give up, maybe you start and stop again, maybe you don't even get started in the first place. You just accept it as being, it is what it is. And the result that you create, when you think I suck at it, is that you continue to suck at it. You don't get any better.

You might also think that, "It's so hard to manage my time." And if you think that thought about time management, you're probably going to feel discouraged, exhausted, tired, maybe frustrated. And when you're feeling those feelings, again, you're going to avoid; quit give up, you're not going to get curious, you're not going to stick with this.

Ep #28: Thoughts About Time & Your To-Do List (Time Management Series)

And you're not going to get better at managing your time. It's going to stay hard, you're going to make it harder on yourself, right? You're not going to learn, you're not operating from curiosity, you're not figuring out what's working and what's not, and making changes and improvements moving forward. So, it will always be as hard as it is right now. We've got to change your mindset if we want it to get easier.

You also might think the thought, about time management, that you don't know how to do it. Right? That's a super common thought that my clients think. They think, "I don't know how to manage my time." And when they think that thought, they feel super confused.

And when we feel confused, you know what we tend to do? We tend to indulge in confusion, we indulge in 'I don't know' thinking, we don't get resourceful, we don't figure it out. We don't search for solutions. We don't evaluate, figure out what's not working and make a plan to change it, to adapt.

We don't do any of those things, we just spin in confusion. And we create the result of, still not knowing how to do whatever it is that we're trying to do. In this case, it's managing your time, right? If you think, I don't know how to do it, you're not going to know how to do it.

It's just going to create more of that loop, more of that cycle. Instead, you need to think, "I can figure out how to do this. I can learn. I am learning." Those are thoughts that are going to serve you a lot more.

Another thought you might think about time management is that, "Nothing I do seems to make a difference." And if you think that thought, what a painful thought, first and foremost. Second, if you think it, you're probably going to feel defeated, or really discouraged, or maybe just dejected altogether.

And you're going to, again, avoid, quit, give up, not figure it out, and not stick with it, not evaluate. And, nothing you do is going to make a

Ep #28: Thoughts About Time & Your To-Do List (Time Management Series)

difference. Because you're not doing anything, you're just going to create more of that result.

You also might think the thought, "I should be better at managing my time." That's a really common thought my clients think. It's like; if I'm so smart, why can't I just manage my time, right? We get all through law school, we take the bar exam, we know a thing or two about a thing or two. So, we think that this should come easily to us.

And I always counsel my clients, to get them to see like, that's not true. We've never learned how to manage our time. No one's ever taught us how to do this. So, it makes perfect sense that we're not great at it. We've never learned, we've never been taught.

But if you're thinking that you should be better at it, even though that thought doesn't make any sense to me, there's no reason you should be better at it if you've never learned how to do something. It's like; I should be better at riding a unicycle, even though I've never ridden one, right? That doesn't make any sense.

But regardless, people still choose to think this thought, that they should be better at time management. And when they think it, they end up feeling really ashamed or inadequate. And when they're feeling ashamed or inadequate, what do they do? Avoid, Avoid, Avoid, right? Give up, avoid, buffer with all the things that bring us temporary pleasure instead.

They don't stick with this. They don't get curious. They don't evaluate. They don't practice to make progress, and make incremental improvements over time. Which means, that they don't get better at it, and then they just keep feeding into this belief that they should be better at it. Right.

You also might think about time management that, you don't want to do it or that you hate it. "I hate managing my time. I hate sticking to a schedule. I don't want to manage my time. I don't want to stick to a schedule." If you're

thinking any of those thoughts, you're probably going to feel controlled, forced, stifled, constrained, a lot of very uncomfortable emotions.

And what are you going to do when you feel those feelings? You are going to rebel. You're going to resist these feelings. You're going to avoid them at all costs, by doing anything else that gets you to feel like you have agency, like you have control, like you have freedom, right. We create a resistance rebellion cycle. It's very reactionary.

Now, what happens when you do that? When you avoid managing your time, and you don't do it well, or you don't practice it, you never create the results, the positive results, of having managed your time effectively. So, you never find out what it's like to be someone who manages their time well. It might be awesome; you might actually not hate it.

I think the process that we hate, is attempting to do it but not doing it in an informed way. And then, we feel awful as we're going through the process, we think we're doing it badly. And, all of that feels pretty awful. Right?

If you're doing it well, and you create all of this freedom in your life, as a result of managing your time effectively and efficiently. And you create space to do the things that you enjoy most in your life, managing your time, if you do it that way, becomes really awesome. It creates all this freedom, and you really get to enjoy your life as a result of doing it.

But if you never try it, if you never stick with it, if you're always starting, stopping, and giving up, you never actually experience the result of excellent time management. So, you never really know. You just keep believing that it sucks, that you don't like doing it, based on, really, no evidence at all. And you keep not managing your time well, as a result.

So, that might be you. Check-in with yourself; do you think that it sucks sticking to a schedule? That you don't like it? That managing your time is awful, that you hate doing it? If you do, I promise you, you're never going to do something that you hate, it takes so much discipline. So, we really want

Ep #28: Thoughts About Time & Your To-Do List (Time Management Series)

to clean up that thinking if that's a thought that you're commonly thinking about managing your time.

All right, I also want you to do a thought download about your workload, about your to-do list. What are the thoughts you think most frequently, most commonly about your workload and your to-do list? It might be thoughts like, "Oh, my to-do list is so long, it's never ending." And when you think about that, in that way, you're going to feel really overwhelmed, really pressured, really stressed. And you're going to react and avoid, right?

So, you're never going to get to the end of it, because you're working unintentionally, or you're not working at all. It's just going to feed into that thought, and create a self-fulfilling prophecy. Same thing goes if you think your workload or your to-do list is really unmanageable, right? You'll probably feel out of control, helpless, or hopeless, defeated, maybe.

And from there, you're going to react or avoid. And then, you're not going to manage your workload. You're not going to make your way intentionally, through your to-do list. So, you're going to keep feeding and creating evidence for this thought, that your workload is very unmanageable; that thoughts not going to serve you.

You might also think the thought, about your to-do list or your workload, that you don't know where to start. And if you're thinking, "I don't know," I talked about this a moment ago, you're going to feel confused or overwhelmed. And then, you're going to spin out, and indulge in 'I don't know', and stay confused. And then, you're not going to figure it out.

So, you still won't know where to start, you don't actually get started. Instead of just deciding you do know where to start, picking a starting point and getting started. Right. That's a much more intentional way to go about working.

You might think the thought, "I should be further along," when it comes to your to-do list. And if you're thinking that, you're going to feel really guilty.

Ep #28: Thoughts About Time & Your To-Do List (Time Management Series)

And when we're feeling guilty, what do we do? We tend to avoid, we tend to buffer, we seek that temporary pleasure, that instant gratification. And as a result, this is what you create.

You don't get further along; you stay right where you are. So, it's super easy to keep thinking, I should be further along. I always challenge people to think; should you actually be further along? And what I mean by this, is not do you want to be further along. Of course, you probably do want to be further along, but *should* you be further along?

And if you look at the actions that you've been taking, you probably should be exactly where you are. That's a little bit of an uncomfortable truth, I understand that. But the more honest you are with yourself about how you manage your time, the faster you're going to be able to make improvements in this department.

So, you probably should be exactly where you are. Ask yourself; how is that true? Look at the actions that you've been taking. And ask yourself; does it make sense that I'm here? Does it make sense that I haven't gotten more done? The answer will probably be, yes. If you've either been avoiding or constantly reshuffling, it will make perfect sense that you've accomplished exactly what you've accomplished.

All right, those are a few thoughts that you might be thinking about your workload or your to-do list. I want to encourage you to spend a few more minutes with this, and think through and identify; are there any other thoughts that you think about your to-do list or your workload, that really aren't serving you? Write them down, find those feelings.

Ask yourself; what do I do, or what don't I do, when I feel this way? And then ask yourself; what result does it produce? As it relates to my to-do list? As it relates to how I treat time? What I accomplish? How I tackle my to-do list? What results do you create when you think those thoughts about your to-do list?

Ep #28: Thoughts About Time & Your To-Do List (Time Management Series)

And last but not least, I want you to do a quick thought download and run a couple models about particular tasks that you have on your to-do list. So, identify a few tasks that maybe you've been avoiding. Tasks that are outstanding that you haven't completed yet. What are the thoughts that you're thinking about each of these tasks? Go task by task.

Sometimes when we bundle all of the tasks together, and we're just thinking about our to-do list, we don't identify other thoughts that aren't serving us. So, if you go task by task, you're going to get much more specific thoughts, and you're going to see how those thoughts are presenting as roadblocks, for you completing that particular task.

You might think that a particular task is time consuming. And if you're thinking that thought about it, you might feel exasperated, or exhausted, or tired ahead of time. And what will you do when you're feeling those feelings? You'll avoid, or you'll do something that's less time consuming, because you've decided that time consuming is a problem. Right?

Now, when we do that, we create the result of not completing that particular task. Also, I always want to turn people on to the truth, that literally everything we do is time consuming. So, you can decide right now, that something being time consuming actually isn't a problem. If you stop making something being time consuming a problem, you're going to dial down your resistance and your avoidant behavior so significantly.

You might also, think a particular task is hard, or difficult, or complicated, or tedious. And if you think those thoughts, you're going to feel a negative emotion as a result; maybe challenged, maybe annoyed, or frustrated. And if you're thinking that thought and feeling those feelings, you're going to avoid and do something else instead. And you'll still have the hard thing to do, you don't complete the task, you just avoid it.

You might also think about a particular task, that you shouldn't have to do it. If you're thinking that thought you'll probably feel entitled, righteous, maybe slighted, or cheated. You might think that it's really unfair that you

Ep #28: Thoughts About Time & Your To-Do List (Time Management Series)

have to do this, right? Those thoughts aren't going to serve you. They're going to conjure up these negative emotions, and what are you going to do when you feel them?

You're going to avoid; you're going to do something else. You also might react by way of complaining, that happens all the time. And what happens when we avoid, or we complain? We don't complete the task, right? We still have to do it.

Another thought you might think about the tasks on your to-do list, like the individual, specific tasks is the thought, "I don't want to do this." Right? It might not sound like a good time to you; it might not sound like fun. So, when you're thinking about a particular task, I don't want to do this, you're going to feel; maybe bored, bothered, annoyed, frustrated, irritated.

And when you're feeling those feelings, you're totally going to avoid, you're going to do something else that brings you more pleasure. You might complain, right? And you're still not going to want to do it. You're probably actually going to want to do it less after you've done those things. Because now you've taken more time, and just allowed more resistance to grow, rather than gagging and going through the discomfort and just getting it done.

But I promise you, every time you think, I don't want to do this, you're going to make it so much harder on yourself, for you to do the task. So, that thought's not going to serve you.

Neither is the thought, "I'll do it later." If you're thinking, I'll do it later, you might feel detached or relieved. And even though relief sounds like an emotion that might feel good, oftentimes it doesn't serve us. So, I'll do it later, it also might make you feel hopeful. Or, like encouraged, that you'll do it later.

And those are tricky emotions, hope normally doesn't serve us. So, I'll do it later, is going to create an emotion that's going to drive you to take your

foot off the gas, take a break, and you're not going to complete it, you're still going to have to do it later. Right. So, that thought might not serve you either.

Neither will the thought, "I deserve a break." That's a super common thought that my clients think. They'll complete one task, and then their brain will serve up to them the thought, "You deserve a break. I deserve a break." And they'll feel entitled to take a break, and then they'll take one. So, they don't complete the other tasks on their to-do list.

Now, I'm not advocating for working all the time. I'm not trying to celebrate hustle culture here. But you want to make sure your breaks are intentional. I'm all for taking breaks, you just don't want them to be unplanned. Normally, that's a way of avoiding work in a very unintentional manner. Rather than being kind to yourself, and engaging in self-care activities, and giving yourself an opportunity to rest.

So, if you're thinking, I deserve a break, and you're feeling entitled and you're taking a break, you're probably self-sabotaging a bit and not setting yourself up for success, as it relates to managing your time and completing the items on your to-do list.

You might also, be thinking the thought, "I'd rather be doing something else, than completing this task." And if you're thinking that, you might feel deprived over whatever that something else is. You want to be doing that, you'd rather be doing that, and it conjures up an emotional experience of deprivation.

And what do we do when we feel deprived? We either react to it or avoid it, and we go do the activity that we'd rather be doing. So, if you think that, it's not going to serve you, it's going to lead to you avoiding the task that you want to tackle.

And lastly, you might be thinking thoughts like, "I should have done this already," about a task on your to-do list. And if you're thinking that, you'll

Ep #28: Thoughts About Time & Your To-Do List (Time Management Series)

feel guilty or disappointed with yourself, and man, do you create resistance to completing the task, when you're feeling guilty and disappointed. You're going to want to avoid it and beat yourself up, instead. And then, do something else that distracts you from that guilt or disappointment, and brings you some temporary pleasure.

And guess what? As a result of thinking, I should have done this already, you're still going to create the result of not having done it. So, that thought's not going to serve you either.

Maybe, about particular tasks, you think the thought, "I'm terrible at doing what I say I'm going to do, when I say I'm going to do it." And if that's you, I recorded a two-part podcast episode about the skill set, developing the skill set, of following through and being consistent.

If you haven't listened to that yet, make sure you go give that a listen. But right now, I just want you to realize, if you think that way about yourself and about a particular task, you're going to create more of that result. You aren't going to follow through, you aren't going to complete the task. You aren't going to do what you say you're going to do, when you say you're going to do it.

So, you want to be on to yourself. Do you think that way, about yourself, about your habits, when it comes to time management and tackling to do list items? If you do, we've got to course-correct, those thoughts aren't going to serve you. Okay?

All right, we've just created so much awareness in this episode, about how you think about time, time management, your workload, your to-do list, and particular tasks on your to-do list. So, you should be able to start to see how your current thinking is creating your current results, in each of these areas.

However you're thinking, it's going to cause your emotional experience, it's going to cause how you're feeling. And your feelings drive the action you

Ep #28: Thoughts About Time & Your To-Do List (Time Management Series)

take or don't take, and that action is what produces your results. So, curating the right thoughts is so important here when it comes to managing your time effectively and efficiently.

All right, the first step, like I mentioned earlier, to cultivating the mindset that you need to have to manage your time well, is by gaining awareness as to what you're currently thinking. So, we just did that. Now we know what's causing your problems. We're on to yourself about where you have room for improvement, when it comes to your mindset. We're going to talk about that a couple of episodes from now.

And in the next episode, we're going to do an exercise together to create some more awareness. I can't wait to get into that. We'll talk about that in the next episode. In the meantime, have a beautiful week. Talk to you soon.

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.