

Ep #39: Knowing Your Limits



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Olivia Vizachero

Ep #39: Knowing Your Limits

You're listening to *The Less Stressed Lawyer* podcast, Episode 39. Today, we're talking all about knowing your limits. 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.

Hi, my friends, how are you? So, last time I talked to you, I was traveling. And here I am again, traveling. I'm at the beach. Coming down to Florida to see a client and a really amazing friend of mine. She lives in Ponte Vedra Beach, which is just outside of St. Augustine. So, while I'm recording this in my hotel room, I am listening to the waves crash in the background, and it's just a beautiful day. The sun is out, I can smell the salt air. It's just a really wonderful weekend.

I hope your weekend, if you're listening to this on a weekend, is going as well as mine. If it's a weekday, I hope your weekday is going well, too. You know, I didn't do an episode last week. And, that's what I want to talk about this week. I want to talk about knowing your limits.

Because one of the things that I talk about really consistently to you, through the podcast, is about following through; about being consistent, about doing what you say you're going to do, right? And I made a commitment to do certain things in my business every single week, or every single month, or every single day. Whether it's social media, or this podcast, or doing a monthly webinar, I've made commitments.

And it's my job, as I see it, to follow through on what I've committed to. That's how you create a consistent business. I teach the exact same thing to my clients who are working on time management and have trouble sticking to a schedule; they make a plan and then they abandon it for the day, right?

Ep #39: Knowing Your Limits

Normally, the reason we don't follow through is because we're avoiding discomfort. There's some negative emotion that we associate with doing the action that we planned to do. And then, when it comes time to do it, we don't want to feel that feeling. So, we don't take that action that we decided ahead of time to take.

Now, when that's the case, when you have the energy to do it and your health is good and you feel well, and you're just avoiding the negative emotion that comes from doing the intentional action that you plan to do, your job is to gag-and-go through that discomfort, right? I've told you that before on the podcast. I talk about that all the time.

You want to gag-and-go. It's going to make you feel nauseous. It's going to be uncomfortable. It's going to be unpleasant. That's all okay, your job is to just gag-and-go and feel that negative feeling anyways. And, take action in spite of and despite that feeling.

But sometimes, the problem isn't a thought problem or a feeling problem, right? The negative thought that causes the negative feeling would be like, "I don't want to do this. I don't feel like it right now. I can do it tomorrow. Later's better, right? I should wait, I can do this in the morning."

All those thought errors that lead to you procrastinating, that lead to you not following through. "It won't make that big of a difference if I do it now or tomorrow," right? Even though we do know that it does make a difference, because tomorrow really never comes when you're just putting it on the backburner, always.

So, when it's not that issue, when it's not just, "I don't feel like it. I would have to feel bored if I did this right now. I would have to feel bothered or annoyed or confused or challenged if I did this right now." When it's not that problem and it's actually you don't have it in you.

What I mean by that, is like you don't feel well, right? You fall under the weather. It's the time of year where it seems like everyone I know has been sick, myself included. And there are certain times where you're really not

Ep #39: Knowing Your Limits

going to feel up to it. How do you know in those moments, whether you should push through, or whether you should know your limits and take a rest? That's what we're talking about today, knowing your limits.

Now, I want to give you a recent example. So, last time I talked to you guys, I was traveling for work. I went to a life coaching conference called Life Coach Live put on by the Life Coach School, and I was in Phoenix. While I was flying to Phoenix, there was a sick kid on my flight to Phoenix, from Detroit to Phoenix. He had a pretty bad cough, and he was like two rows kitty-corner from me.

His cough started out not too bad, but by the end of the flight, I was like, "Oh no." I saw the writing on the wall. I have a pretty weak immune system; I always have. And I really have to be careful with my immune system and with protecting it, and with taking care of myself. I get IV therapy a lot to keep my vitamins in my body really high. I've really had to learn how to prioritize rest.

Now, this was not always the case. It's definitely not how I always operated. I used to, back when I was a law clerk, going through law school before that, and undergrad, and then really, the entire time I was practicing law, I was really bought in to hustle culture.

That whole concept of like, you know, money never sleeps, very Gordon Gekko, who has time to rest, that's not how it works, you need to push through, you need to work harder, rise and grind, all of that. And when I would get sick, I would push through. I would just double down and overwork.

Of course, it didn't lead to anything good. I would normally end up sicker for longer because I wasn't taking good care of myself. But I really wore my overworking as a badge of honor. Now, over the years, the older I've gotten, I've learned that that doesn't work. Right? It really puts me out of commission.

Ep #39: Knowing Your Limits

I've had to learn to listen to my body, in a way that I haven't always listened to it before. So now, I'm really in tune with, "What does my body need from me? When do I need to rest? How can I take care of it?" In order to make sure I'm working in a way that's sustainable. In a way that I can continue to do for the long term?

Now, what I've learned by making this switch, is that it actually makes you more productive. Because you don't get run down. You don't get sick more often. And, you don't lose that productivity time. Right? Taking care of myself and resting and knowing my limits actually allows me to accomplish more.

I'm not out of commission. I don't have to take extended periods of time off or breaks to take care of myself when I'm sick, because I get sick a lot less frequently. I also have much less tolerance for being sick. I don't know if you're anything like me, but the older I get, being sick really sucks. So, if I can do anything in my power to avoid it, I want to avoid it. I don't like feeling sick; I'm not the greatest patient. So, if there's something I can do to avoid getting sick, I will do it.

Anyways, back to my story. I ended up being on this plane, and because of my weaker immune system, of course, I end up getting sick. I come home from my travels, and I was pretty out of commission. My parents were nice enough to let me come stay with them for a couple of days over Thanksgiving.

I'm an only child, so it would have just been me at home, by myself, not having any of the good Thanksgiving dishes, just recuperating all alone. And they were nice enough to let me come out. They weren't worried about whether I would get them sick or not. Luckily, neither of them got sick. It was just me, with my weak immune system. I stayed out there for a couple days.

Now, I knew that I had travel coming up this weekend. I knew that I was going to come down to Florida and see my client, my friend. And I wanted

Ep #39: Knowing Your Limits

to make sure that I had recuperated before that, because again, it was more airplane travel, which tends to take a lot out of me.

So, I was assessing; what are my limits here? What do I want to do this week? How do I want to spend my time? I had two things scheduled, that I ended up canceling, in order to prioritize my own self-care and rest. Over the course of the weekend, I was supposed to prep a webinar that I was supposed to deliver on Tuesday, November 29.

I was also supposed to record a podcast episode that would have come out last week. I made the executive decision, as I was resting and recuperating, to not push it, and not do either of those things. Now, this was not coming from, "I don't feel like it. I don't want to. I can do it later." It wasn't coming from a procrastination space, at all.

It was truly, coming from self-care. I'm going to give you my standard, in just a second, for how I make these decisions. But to foreshadow a little bit, what this looks like for me, is if I'm going to rest, I'm actually going to rest.

This isn't like, "I'm gonna go out and do something else, instead. I'm going to watch a bunch of TV and be awake." I'm actually going to go to bed. If it's between doing the thing that I say I'm going to do and taking care of myself, I'm going to be really clear about what it looks like to take care of myself.

So, in this instance, instead of prepping a webinar and instead of recording the podcast episode, I slept. I actually went to bed, in order to repair my immune system and recover. Okay. In choosing to do this, I did not beat myself up.

I wasn't shaming myself for, "How could you not follow through? You need to be consistent." I was really kind to myself. I said, "This is what we're going to do to best position you. In order to prep for your upcoming travel, to make sure that you have the energy to get through the weekend that is coming up ahead."

Ep #39: Knowing Your Limits

I was so kind to myself. It felt like a loving gift that I was able to give my future self, rather than beating myself into submission and really pushing my limits, or pushing myself past my limits, right? So, I want you to think about this when you're sick; what do you do? Do you push yourself past your limits? Or, do you take care of yourself?

I just had a client get sick. She took a whole day off of work. And, she had a lot of mind drama about whether or not that was the right call. And only you're going to know that answer for you, right? There is no universal standard of 'how sick is sick enough' for you to take time off, for you to give yourself permission to rest.

You're the only person that can write that permission slip for yourself. I can tell you that you're sick enough, but you may not believe me. So, you really have to cultivate your own sense of knowing when you're sick enough to warrant time to rest and recuperate, rather than pushing through being consistent and following your original plan.

I want you to come up with your own standard. And, there's a couple different ways that you can do this. All right, number one, you can just use a 1-10 scale. If you are, on a 1-10 scale, eight or higher... If you gave yourself a rating; you're like, "Oh, I'm sick enough. I'm at an eight. I'm at a nine. I'm at a ten. I'm at an eleven."

If you decide that you're that sick, you could have a protocol. It can be a decision that you make ahead of time, for what you do when you're that sick. Now, when you're at a five, you're like, "Yeah, I don't really feel great today," you might decide that a five isn't sick enough, and that you want to push through and that you'll rest later in the evening.

But you're going to stick to your plan, that you came up with in the beginning of the day or the day before. And you're going to follow through on it, even though you don't feel 100%. Because, rarely, are we going to feel 100%. So, you want to make sure that you're not at that bottom part of the scale; at like, "Oh, I'm kind of at a two," right? Feeling at a two is pretty good.

Ep #39: Knowing Your Limits

If you make that your standard, “Oh, I don't feel 100%,” you're probably not going to accomplish a lot of things that you planned to accomplish. Because that's so commonly is the case, that you don't 100% feel like it. So, you want to come up with your scale. What does an eight look like for you? How sick is that?

For me, my rule, if I'm using a 1-10 scale, I want to think about what am I going to do in lieu of my plan. I'm at an eight or higher? I'm going to bed. I'm going to be in bed resting. I'm not going to be going out, you know, running errands. I'm not going to be chatting on the phone with friends. I'm really going to take care of myself and prioritize my rest.

I want you to think about that. What will you do when you're at an eight or higher? Come up with that plan ahead of time, so you're not making decisions in the moment. You already have the “under-the-weather” protocol that you'll follow when you're at an eight or higher.

In those moments, when you're trying to assess, do I feel like it today? Should I prioritize my rest? Or, should I push myself to follow through. You just ask yourself: Where am I at on the sick scale? Am I at an eight or higher? And if I am, what do I do when I'm at that rating?

Another scale that I use, is what I call the “Tony Robbins Tired” scale. Because a lot of people don't follow through on things, because they're tired, right? And, there's two different types of tired. There's true exhaustion where like, you can't keep your eyes open. I used to stay up and really push myself past my limits, and I would be falling asleep while I was typing on my keyboard; like, typing gibberish, right?

Or, if that ever happened to you in law school, it used to happen to me, I'd be so tired during some of my classes, because I would be in the middle of trial, I was working full time and going to school. Some of my classes weren't super exciting, so I would kind of nod off during them.

Ep #39: Knowing Your Limits

And if I was handwriting notes, I would write gibberish. Right? It wouldn't make any sense. I'd kind of wake back up and I'd feel like, "What in the world was I writing?" It wouldn't make any sense.

So, maybe that's you sometimes; maybe you're truly, really exhausted. But then, there are other times where you're telling yourself you're tired, but you're not all that tired. Right? You just really don't feel like doing what you planned to do. The system that I use for assessing whether or not I'm truly tired and should rest, versus whether I'm not truly tired and I should just power through; I use what I call the "Tony Robbins Tired" scale.

There's going to be someone in your life that you find impressive, and for me, that's like Tony Robbins or Oprah. Maybe, you know, a political figure or a movie star. Or, you know someone else, maybe it's a professional athlete, whatever the case is for you. There's going to be someone who you're really enamored with, that you would give just about anything to spend time with them.

For me, one of my coaching idols is Tony Robbins. So, I use the scale of, if Tony Robbins were to call me up, and it's one of those days where I'm like, on the sofa. I really don't feel like it. I can just barely bring myself to do one more thing that I planned for the day. I'm like, I'm out of commission. I'm really tired. I don't feel like following through.

But if Tony Robbins were to call me, would I have some secret reserve of energy? Were he to be like, "Hey, Olivia, I'm going to pick you up in 30 minutes, you've got to be packed and ready. And we're going to spend 24 hours together. You get to ask me any questions you want to ask me; you can pick my brain. I'll give you all my secrets. But you've got to be ready."

You can't postpone, you can't put it off to tomorrow; it's today or never, right? There's a reserve of energy that, almost always, I would be able to tap into and get my act together; get packed and be out front waiting for him to pick me up when he said he was going to be there. And on the days where you're not truly sick, where you, instead just really don't feel like it,

Ep #39: Knowing Your Limits

you're going to be able to tap into that Tony Robbins Tired reserve, dig deep and come up with that extra energy to do something.

But there are going to be days where you truly don't feel like it; like, me on Thanksgiving. I barely made it through dinner. And as soon as I got done eating, I went straight to bed, at like, seven o'clock, right? That's a day where I don't have that extra reserve. And, all I want to do is go to bed and take care of myself.

So, figure out for you, who is your person, that most days you have that extra energy reserve to dig deep and push through, and get that stuff done. If it's there, if you're like, "Wup, if Tony Robbins called me today, or if Oprah called me today, I'd be able to tap into that energy reserve and get this thing done," then you know you're not truly exhausted. You're just a little emotionally tired, and you can push through your emotional tired to get the task done.

But other days, you really will be sick enough, just like I was on Thanksgiving. All right? And what do you do when you're that tired? When you're that under the weather? You want to rest. You want to give yourself permission to take it easy. To know your limits and to respect them.

If this is hard for you, if knowing your limits and respecting your own limitations when you're under the weather, when you're sick, when you really don't feel good, is a challenge for you, I want you to spend a few minutes and think about why.

Where did you learn that it wasn't okay to rest? Where did you learn that it's unacceptable to respect and honor your limits, and protect your immune system, and to take care of yourself and to recharge your batteries, when you're truly depleted? Where did you learn that? What were you taught along the way?

And, is that standard serving you? If it's not, what do you want to replace it with? How do you want to think about honoring your body and honoring your immune system, and taking care of yourself when you don't feel well?

Ep #39: Knowing Your Limits

You're going to want to change your thoughts. So, like that client that I mentioned a second ago, who was really under the weather this week as well, and took a whole day off. She had so much self-judgment around doing that.

Was she making the right call? Should she just push through? Being mad at herself for not feeling well, and not being able to get the work that she had planned to do, done? Her work there is to start to reframe taking time off and taking care of herself. What does she need to think about it in order to do it, and to feel good about doing it?

I've had to change my mindset from hustle culture, and beating myself up, and punishing myself, and telling myself that I need to push through. To, thinking about it, that it's the best thing I can do for everyone, is to take care of myself. And that I'm human, and that sometimes being human means you're going to be sick. And that, that's okay. Right? That it's normal. It's all part of the process. That it's our right, and okay and warranted, for me to take care of myself.

If you don't believe those things, you want to work on building up your belief. One way you can start by doing this, is practicing thoughts about other people being sick. Do you have judgments of them? Do you get discouraged or frustrated when other people take time off, when they're under the weather? Maybe, you do. Maybe, you don't.

But normally, if we give ourselves a hard time, we probably subtly give other people a hard time, too, maybe not to their face, just in our head. It's like an eye roll. Like, "Oh, do they really have to be sick? This is so inconvenient for me. So inconvenient for the work that we're doing." If you see it as an inconvenience, you're going to be really critical and harsh on yourself when you're inconvenienced by your own health limitations.

So, I want to challenge you to think about; what do you need to think about being sick, both yourself and other people, in order to have a much kinder relationship with it? In order to be so much nicer to yourself when it happens to you? Because it will happen to you, right?

Ep #39: Knowing Your Limits

We are all fallible; our immune systems are not perfect. And man, if yours is amazing, more power to you. But that has not been my life experience. It's not the experience my clients have, especially after living through a pandemic the past couple years. We've all had our own limitations when it comes to our immune systems.

A lot of that is always outside of our control. There are things you can do to take better care of yourself, like I do, to take better care of myself. But sometimes you're on a flight with a sick kid, and you just can't avoid getting sick yourself.

So, your work is to figure out; what are your limitations? And what does it look like for you to honor them when you're under the weather? How do you want to treat yourself? What do you want to do? What do you want the protocol to be?

And, how do you want to think about you honoring those limitations? Do you want to beat yourself up? I do not recommend that. Or, do you want to be your own best friend, here? Do you want to be kind to yourself? Do you want to say kind, nurturing things? Do you want to think kind, nurturing thoughts?

Do you want to have your own back? I highly recommend that you do have your own back, alright? You get to be your own best friend here, instead of a bully who's forcing yourself to push through. Even when it doesn't make sense. When it doesn't set you up for success. When it just pushes you to be out of commission a little bit longer.

So, figure out where your limits are, know them and honor them. It is truly a gift that you get to give yourself when you're not feeling 100%.

All right, my friend, that is this week's episode. I will talk to you next week. I look forward to it. I hope you do, too. Have a beautiful week, in the meantime. I'll talk to you soon. Bye.

Ep #39: Knowing Your Limits

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.