

Ep #41: Handling Holiday Overwhelm & Stress



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Olivia Vizachero

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You're listening to *The Less Stressed Lawyer* podcast, Episode 41. Today, we're talking all about how to handle the holidays. 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, my friends. How are you? 'Tis the holiday season, right? And if you're anything like me, you might have quite a bit going on. Now, I take the last two weeks of the year off. And, I've done this for the past couple years. It is so amazing to be able to give myself some extra breathing room just to navigate the holidays.

But I actually just signed the lease on an amazing new condo, so I am moving during the holidays. So, that's going to make things just a little bit more chaotic for me. But that's okay, I have the space to do it.

Now, not everyone follows the Olivia Vizachero methodology of navigating the holidays, and they don't clear their schedules, like I started doing. I end up coaching a lot of my clients on holiday stress, and just the chaos that comes with trying to get everything done, and competing obligations, or desires and responsibilities, all that good stuff.

So, I thought it would be a really great idea for me to record an episode for you about how to handle the holiday stress or the holiday overwhelm, or how to navigate the chaos if your holidays tend to feel chaotic. Now, if they don't, amazing; that's so great. Congrats on curating a holiday experience, or end of year experience, that feels calm and intentional, where you feel really in control. That is fantastic.

That's my hope for everyone this time of year, that you're able to end the year strong, really, very intentionally. And you're able to feel really good about going into the new year and getting off on a good foot.

Ep #41: Handling Holiday Overwhelm & Stress

But if that's not you, that's okay, this episode is for you. To help you navigate all that's going on this time of year. So, I identified the common problems that I see people encounter, that I see my clients encounter, this time of year. And I'm just going to walk through them with you, one by one, and give you some tips and some mindset tools to navigate these pain points.

Okay, the first problem that I see, that tends to be the most common, is that people try to do too much during this time of year. Overwhelm comes from being overcapacity. So, if you're feeling overwhelmed during this time of year, it's because you're trying to stuff 10 pounds of potatoes into a 5-pound bag. You're trying to fit too many things into a finite amount of time.

And think about it, you've got your regular life that you're living day-to-day, normally. And, that's already probably really full. And then, you add in all the extra holiday stuff. If you have kids, they are probably off of school. So, you've got that added to the mix; family traditions, maybe travel, end of year stuff with work.

You mix all of that together. on top of what you already navigate and manage on a daily basis, and you're just over a capacity; you take on more without having any more room. And it ultimately doesn't work; something probably slips through the cracks. And, the experience is going to be really unpleasant, because the math just doesn't work out.

You're overcapacity. So, you're going to feel pressured, you're going to feel stressed, you're going to feel overwhelmed, and you're going to feel behind. Now, what's the solution for this, for doing too much? Well, the simple answer is you need to do less. Alright, you know, that phrase that everyone says now, "Say less," it's like that, but do less. Okay?

You want to start by simplifying your schedule as much as possible. And what I was thinking about, as I was planning this episode, is that we're going to weave in so many of the topics that I've talked about on the podcast to date. In simplifying your schedule, and simplifying what you

Ep #41: Handling Holiday Overwhelm & Stress

have on your plate through the month of December and into the new year, one of the ways that you get to simplify is by practicing constraint.

I want you to think real quick; during this time of year, what can you cut out? What can you eliminate all together? What can you reduce? This process starts by you being really honest with yourself about your capacity, about what you can actually accomplish.

I always teach that you want to get really clear on the math, right? I talked about that in the Time Management Series that we just went through. You want to make sure you're getting the math right. So, make a list of everything that you're planning to do through the holiday season; both with work and with your personal life.

Once you've made that list, estimate how long all of it's going to take you. For each item on the list, put an amount of time that you think you're going to have to dedicate, in order to accomplishing that task, that item. And then, add it all up.

Can you actually fit it all in? And, do you want to fit it all in? Sometimes you can make it work if you really stuffed it in, jam packed it in there. But the experience of that is so unpleasant, you might not want to. So, get clear on the math. And then from there, start to make decisions. If you're overcapacity, and it doesn't fit into the amount of time that you have available, what can you start to cut?

You also get to decide, if you don't have the capacity, what do you want to not agree to do, at all? Or, what do you want to not offer to do, at all? I watched so many people volunteer themselves, and I'm going to talk about martyrdom in a minute, but they volunteer themselves and take on too much.

I get that it feels good to say yes and to offer to do things. You get to feel really generous and charitable and helpful and accomplished. But if you don't have capacity to actually do it, it's going to feel good when you say yes to it, but it's gonna feel terrible when it actually comes time to do it.

Ep #41: Handling Holiday Overwhelm & Stress

Because you're either going to do it poorly, you're going to do it in a frenzied way, or you're not going to do it at all, and then that's going to trigger all of this guilt.

All right, so what can you cut out? Maybe, it's saying no to a work project, and pushing it into the new year. Maybe, it's RSVPing no to a holiday party that you would have typically gone to, that you really don't have time to make. Maybe, it's not volunteering to host an event or to cook something for the holidays.

Maybe, you can constrain with the number of people that you buy for, or the number of gifts that you buy the people in your life. Maybe, you can get them one extravagant gift, rather than a bunch of little things that have you scrambling.

You also get to constrain with how much you're working. So, this dovetails nicely into another way that you can simplify during the holiday season; you want to be making some decisions ahead of time. So, decide right now when you're going to take time off. I highly encourage you to decide to do this the same exact way every year. That way, you're not left wondering, when am I going to work? When am I not going to work?

I decided, a couple of years ago, that I would always take the last two weeks of the year off. Now, if that is like an ambitious goal for you, that's okay. Put it on your nightstand, so to speak, and let it sit there and let it marinate. And maybe eventually, you can work up to that. If that feels like a bridge too far, right now, that's okay.

What can you start with? Maybe, it's a few days. Maybe, it's a week. Whatever feels attainable for you, start with that, and just decide that you'll do it that way every year from now on. It will help you plan accordingly. And really start to get in the rhythm of what needs to happen when leading up to that time off, in order to really set you up for success.

When you're thinking about constraining and making decisions ahead of time, you also get to think about what do you not want to do, right? If

Ep #41: Handling Holiday Overwhelm & Stress

there's stuff you don't want to go to, if there are activities that you don't want to take part, and really check in with yourself. Again, tap into that candor, tap into your honesty, tap into that knowing internally; what is it that you want to do? How do you want to spend your time? How do you not want to spend your time?

If you don't like running around, scrambling, getting people all of these different gifts, or having to spend a ton of time researching trying to figure out the best thing to get them, maybe you don't want to do gifts. I did that a couple years ago; I was really not in a place to engage in gift giving. It wasn't a great year for me, I was just starting my business. I didn't have really, the financial resources to devote a ton of money to gift giving.

So, I just asked my family to not do it that year, and they agreed. We didn't give each other any gifts, and it took a lot of stress and guilt and worry off my plate because I didn't have to worry about receiving things and not being able to reciprocate. So, we just didn't do gifts that year; that might be available for you, too.

You can also decide that you don't get each other things, and you spend and invest in like, a vacation or something like that, or something for your house; you get to decide. You can also decide that you only buy gifts when people tell you what they want, rather than you having to do all the hard work and heavy lifting. You can just ask people what they want, and then buy them that.

I was going to bring this up later, but now's as good a time as any to talk about it. I have a really good friend that's a marriage coach. And one of the things that I've learned from her, when it comes to gift giving holidays, is that you normally get to pick between one of two things; you get to be surprised or satisfied, when it comes to the gifts that you receive.

Now, most people want to be surprised and satisfied. But that's not always an option that's available to us. So, if you have to pick, which would you prefer? Do you want to be surprised, and let the people in your life just buy you what they think you would like? Or, do you want to be satisfied, and tell

Ep #41: Handling Holiday Overwhelm & Stress

them ahead of time? Same thing goes with, do you want to be unique and original with the gifts that you buy people? Do you want to be thoughtful about it? Do you want to invest that time? Or, do you just want to make it easy on yourself? You get to let it be easy.

That's something I'm teaching my clients all the time. We love to make life harder on ourselves, unnecessarily, so you get to make this as easy as you want. Ask yourself, what are some changes you could make? And what are some decisions you could make, to make life easier on yourself this time of year?

So, that's step one. If you're doing too much during the holidays, you want to simplify. Practice constraint. Cut out whatever you can. Reduce whatever you can, and make some decisions ahead of time, to make your life easier. To either have a routine, or to have a game plan going into the holidays, rather than doing it in a reactionary manner, and scrambling and being really unintentional with how you spend your time.

You want to get really clear on the math, so you're not overcapacity. And, that's going to drastically reduce your overwhelm. Okay? Now, speaking of constraint, I mentioned a moment ago that you want to decide ahead of time when you're working and when you're not working. Especially if you tend to be someone who's an overworker, right?

If you plan to take time off during the holidays, and then you actually don't give yourself a break, you want to ask yourself, number one, why? What's going on that's causing that to happen? Typically, here's what's going on: Number one, you've got some negative thoughts about your ability to take time off. So, there's probably some limiting beliefs there.

You're telling yourself you have to work. You're telling yourself you can't take time off, that it needs to get done before a particular date. Now, you've heard me say this before, there are only four things that ever have to happen; you have to eat some stuff, drink some water, breathe, and sleep. That's about it.

Ep #41: Handling Holiday Overwhelm & Stress

I just had someone tell me, you also have to use the restroom, which I don't love talking about; I think it's a little impolite. But they've got a good point there. That is probably the fifth thing that you have to do. Other than that, though, you always get to choose, okay?

So, if you've got some negative thoughts, or some limiting beliefs on your ability to unplug and take time off and not work, you want to clear that up. You want to actually see where you get to make a different choice. Where you have more agency and control than you might think that you have.

The other reason that you work when you plan to not work is because of how not working feels for you. So, it probably conjures up a lot of guilt or worry or fear. And when that happens, you avoid those feelings by going back to work by opening up that laptop of yours, and logging on, and doing some stuff that you planned to not do, while you're "off" for the holidays.

Now, if you want to learn how to not work when you plan to be off, this is something you have to practice. And it's going to be uncomfortable at first, it will get better over time, but you just have to gag-and-go through that discomfort. You have to feel guilty and feel worried and feel afraid and feel a little, maybe, inadequate.

Because you think you should be working or that a "good" employee or "good" attorney or "good" business owner would be working during this time, right? That's how those negative thoughts or those limiting beliefs tie in with these feelings that you feel.

So, you want to change the thoughts. And then, you want to make a deal with yourself that you're going to feel uncomfortable on purpose. The more you do this, the more you're going to create evidence that it's safe for you to take time off. That it's safe for you to not work. That it's safe for you to unplug.

And when you create that body of evidence, it's going to create safety and security for you to continue to take time off in the future. But in the

Ep #41: Handling Holiday Overwhelm & Stress

beginning, it's going to be uncomfortable. That's okay, you can survive that discomfort.

Now, I want to encourage you, if you have a really hard time with unplugging, and not working, and honoring your decision to not work when you've made it, start small. Pick some windows of time during this holiday season when you absolutely will not work, and then honor that plan. Just see what comes up for you. Get really clear on the negative emotions that you start to experience, or that you anticipate that you'll experience.

I like to write them down and make a list. So, I get really clear and understand completely what negative emotions I need to experience, in order to stick to my original game plan, in order to follow through and honor that time off.

You get to try that, and create opportunities for yourself to practice this skill set. The more you do it, the better at it you will become. Now, in order to take time off, and to constrain and to reduce your overwhelm, and to make sure that you're not doing too much, you're going to have to work on saying no and setting boundaries, right?

If you asked me to do this, I will not agree. If you asked me to do this, I'm going to do this, instead. If you do this, then this is the action I'm going to take. Remember that a proper boundary is, "And if you do this, I will do this," statement. All right?

You also want to say no to things. And again, this is going to bring up that sense of guilt, worry, fear, feeling exposed, or potentially judged, maybe misunderstood. I think learning how to feel misunderstood is one of the greatest gifts you can give yourself. Knowing how to feel misunderstood and let other people misunderstand you, and have the wrong idea about you, is so powerful.

You really unlock next level freedom, when you learn how to just sit with that feeling of being and feeling misunderstood. And, not needing to correct the record, not needing defend yourself, not needing to, you know, set the

Ep #41: Handling Holiday Overwhelm & Stress

record straight. You're just able to sit with the discomfort and let them think what they want.

There's going to be amazing opportunities for you to practice saying no. Maybe, it's to other people. Maybe, it's to traditions. Maybe, you're like, "I'm not traveling this year, nope. If you want to get together for the holidays, you've got to come to me."

Or, maybe you're like, "I'm not hosting this year. I normally do and I'm sick of it." Or, someone wants to stay at your house but it's really not convenient for you, because you have so much going on with work. I work with a lot of transactional attorneys, and end of year is a pretty hectic time for them. It's probably not the best time for them to have people in their home.

I think the perfectionist in us thinks that it's gonna go really well, and we'll still be able to work. But oftentimes, that's not the case with my clients. So, it might be better for you to say no to people, and say, "Nope, I'm not going to do that." Or, you know, "I can't actually come over early and help you with X, Y or Z. I need to work/I want to work. I just want to rest; it's been a really busy year. I don't want to exit the holidays feeling more depleted than when I started them."

All right, maybe it's stuff with your kids. You're like, "I'm not doing an elf-on-the-shelf." That looks like so much work. I have one client, she's like, "It's so worth it to see how excited my kids get." And if that's how you feel, amazing. But if that's not how you feel, and it's just one more thing that you don't feel like doing, this is your permission slip to just say, "No, we're not doing it this year." And, any other traditions that go along with the holidays that you really don't feel up to, or you'd prefer not to do.

Now saying no and setting boundaries, dovetails into a whole other topic that you really want to address, in order to handle the holiday stress and chaos, okay? And, it's expectations; the expectations you have for yourself, the expectations you have for other people, and the expectations that other people have of you, or at least that you perceive that they have of you.

Ep #41: Handling Holiday Overwhelm & Stress

Sometimes, people don't actually tell us their expectations for us, we just conjure up the expectation in our head, and then we use it against ourselves. So, take a second and, you know, maybe grab a piece of paper, and write a list. Or, you can pause this episode and just brainstorm for a moment.

What expectations do you have of yourself during the holidays? What are all the 'shoulds' that come up for you? What are all the 'shouldn't' thoughts that come up for you? What are all the thoughts where you're like, "I have to do this. I need to do this. I can't do this," all that good stuff. "I must do this."

Make that list. Figure out what your manual is like, the instruction manual that you have for yourself, is during the holiday season. Now, if you have expectations for yourself that are misaligned with how you actually want to spend your time, you need to adjust your expectations.

So, what do you want to expect of yourself during this time? What is B+, A-level holiday eating look like? I don't think that's a word, but you get what I'm saying. What does it look like? Where can you give yourself some grace? Where can you give yourself a pass? Where can you let yourself off the hook a little bit? Where can you be kinder to yourself? Where can you practice self-love?

Remember, one of the things that I teach, is that you want to be defining "enough." And most people don't really get clear on their expectations for themselves or for other people, for that matter. And they don't define what a good "enough" job is, during seasons of their life like surviving the holidays.

And then, we just feel like we're missing the mark, right? We're not sure what "enough" is, but it's not this, and we need to be doing more. So, then you keep efforting and hustling. And, we want to avoid that. You want to get really clear on what you expect of yourself. Is your expectation attainable and objective? If it's not, it's a bad expectation.

Ep #41: Handling Holiday Overwhelm & Stress

So, you want to go back to the drawing board and figure out what you want to expect of yourself, instead; that is objective, that is attainable, that is sustainable. All right? When you address this, you're really going to dial down your overwhelm, your guilt, your disappointment with yourself, feeling inadequate, or selfish, or any of that stuff. You're really going to dial that all down.

Now, if you tend to feel a lot of frustration, resentment, irritation, annoyance, anger, and disappointment, during the holiday season, it's because you have expectations of other people that they're not meeting. You've heard me say this, time and time again, they are not causing you to feel these feelings. Your thoughts about their behavior, what they're doing or what they're not doing, that's what's causing you to feel these emotions.

So, if you want to feel better during the holiday season, we have to adjust your expectations. In order to adjust them, to get you to feeling better, we first have to take an inventory of what you expect of other people. Pick a couple of people in your life. And again, you can pause this episode, and take a second and work this through.

But pick a couple of people; the people that you feel the strongest negative emotions around during the holiday season. Maybe it's your clients, maybe it's your colleagues, maybe it's your boss, maybe it's family members, your spouse, your partner, your parents, your siblings, maybe it's your kids.

Whoever it is, you just want to take note of, who do you feel a lot of negative emotion about during the holiday season? And, you want to figure out why? What are your expectations of them, that they aren't living up to? What are all the things that you think they should do, that they're not doing? What are all the things that you think they shouldn't do, that they are doing?

Get really clear on the manuals that you have for the people in your life. Now, when we wish people behaved differently than they do, and we're wanting people to be different than they are, we set ourselves up for so much frustration. So, I always want you to be focusing on, is this something within my control?

Ep #41: Handling Holiday Overwhelm & Stress

When we're asking people or expecting them to be different than they are, that's typically outside of our control. Can you make a request that they change their behavior? Of course, you can. But they have free will, and they get to not comply with your request. All right? So, you get to decide if you want to say something or not, that part's totally up to you.

But regardless of whether or not you say it, you want to be really clear, is this an expectation I want to have? If I have it, am I likely to keep feeling frustrated, feeling disappointed, feeling resentful? And what would happen if I released this expectation if I just got rid of it?

Releasing expectations is never something that we do for other people, by the way. It's always something that we do for ourselves. It's a gift that we give ourselves, because having expectations that people invariably don't meet is really heavy. It leads to a lot of disappointment, a lot of discontentment, a lot of hurt, right? You get to be in control of how much of that you experience.

So, when you eliminate expectations, you dial that down significantly, and you give yourself the gift of feeling a whole lot better. I'm going to use a personal example, from my own life, here. I have had expectations of my parents around holidays in the past. I know I already told you about the charcuterie board/pizza scenario.

But outside of that, I've had the expectation that my parents have really lavish, big holiday parties. I grew up with an Italian grandfather who was definitely like the patriarch of our family, and he brought everyone together. We had these loud, big, fun Christmas celebrations, same thing for Thanksgiving. And I loved them, as a kid.

Since he passed, we don't do that anymore. Everyone kind of split off and does their own thing, and it really bums me out. Obviously, I feel bummed because of the thoughts that I think about this. But those are my thoughts. And when I think them, I feel bummed.

Ep #41: Handling Holiday Overwhelm & Stress

I kept having this expectation that my parents do it the way that I want it done. And after several years of disappointing myself, and really spoiling my holiday experience, because it was all I was focused on, I made peace with the fact that my parents don't like big holiday celebrations; I do.

They're not going to change, because they don't enjoy it. And they host, right now, so it's their call to make. I can either keep expecting them to be different than they want to be, or I can accept them for who they are. That choice is mine.

Lo and behold, releasing that expectation and getting rid of it, and allowing my parents to just be themselves, and enjoying the time that I spend with them during the holidays. However they do it, really leads to me having a much more enjoyable holiday experience, right?

So, get clear on what you expect from other people. And if you can whittle away at that expectation list, if you can take, you know, the dry erase board eraser and get rid of some of those expectations, do that. It's going to be a gift you give to yourself; you're gonna feel so much better. Also, what a gift you can give to the people in your life, because when you're feeling better, you're going to show up better.

Think of how you show up during the holiday season when you feel resentful, frustrated, irritated, annoyed, disappointed, angry, hurt, right? You do not show up, well, normally; we react really unintentionally when we're feeling feelings like that. So, think about how having these expectations not only upsets you, but creates problems for everyone else in your life.

It's like a ripple effect, one that definitely doesn't serve you. So, the fewer expectations that you have, the better everyone's experience is going to be both yours and theirs, because of how you're going to show up differently when you're not saturated with all that negative emotion.

Now, the last type of expectation, is the expectation that you perceive other people have of you. Or, maybe expectations that they actually have for you,

Ep #41: Handling Holiday Overwhelm & Stress

if they've actually communicated the expectation to you. And, you get to decide what you do with that information, or what you do with the expectation that you've conjured up in that head of yours. All right?

You've got a couple of options: You can people please and martyr yourself. If you want to meet that expectation, even though it's not something you actually want to do. That is a surefire way to make the holiday season as stressful as possible, as miserable as possible. People pleasing, self-sacrificing, abandoning what you actually want and care about, and martyring yourself.

If you're guilty of this, I want you to really take an inventory and ask yourself; why? Why are you people pleasing? Why are you abandoning what you want? Why are you martyring yourself? Normally, the reason is twofold; one, it's uncomfortable for you not to. Which, the truth of the matter is, there's discomfort both ways in people pleasing and martyring yourself, and in not people pleasing and not martyring yourself, right?

I always suggest, pick the path of discomfort that gets you what you ultimately want. So, that's gonna be part of it. And then the other part of it, is that sometimes it feels good, in the moment, to be a martyr; we wear it like a badge of honor, right? And then, we get to complain about it afterwards, which makes us feel pretty self-righteous and significant.

And if that's you, you just want to be onto yourself here. Okay? If you keep saying yes to stuff you hate doing. If you keep self-sacrificing for the sake of other people. And you're deriving some benefit from it, some pleasure. If it's a boost to your view of yourself, whatever the case may be, you want to know that. And you want to ask yourself; does this really serve me? Do I want to operate this way? Or, do I want to make a change?

I highly encourage you to test drive not people pleasing and not martyring yourself, this holiday season. You will have such a more enjoyable experience when you actually spend your time doing things that you want to do, rather than doing things you don't want to do just to keep other people comfortable.

Ep #41: Handling Holiday Overwhelm & Stress

So, get really clear when it comes to expectations. Which ones do you have for yourself, that you want to get rid of? Which ones do you have for other people, that it makes sense to get rid of? Just because you're disappointing yourself by having them.

And which expectations do you want to opt out of? Expectations that other people might have for you, that you're like, "No thanks. Return to Sender. I reject that. That's not for me. I'm not doing that this year."

Now, another thing that I see people do during the holidays is they expect people to be mind reader's. This leads to a lot of unmet expectations, a lot of disappointment, and a lot of frustration. So, if there's something that you want, whether it's an experience that you want, a gift that you want, whatever, a favor that you want, anything like that.

If you want someone else to do something, or you want to do something, and you want someone else to know about it, communicate it, ask for what you want. Make it really clear, don't make people guess, don't make them read between the lines. That's a recipe for disappointment and disaster. And, it's easily avoidable. All right?

My friend, Maggie, who's the marriage coach. Maggie Reyes, she once coached a woman on this, who hated gift giving holidays because her husband always bought her something she didn't like. And if that's you, if that's been your experience, listen closely.

Okay, I mentioned this earlier, but you get to just ask for what you want. Rather than leaving it up to chance, and risking your disappointment and frustration, and really sully the holiday experience. You get to just ask for what you want.

If you want someone else to host this year instead of you, ask them for it. They, for sure, get to say no. But there's a much greater chance you'll get what you want if you ask, than if you don't say anything at all; people aren't going to read your mind.

Ep #41: Handling Holiday Overwhelm & Stress

And a lot of times, they might think that it's something that you don't want. So, you get to clear up confusion, and you make it so much easier for other people, too, because everyone loves certainty. Help make it easy for them. Help create certainty for them, by just telling them what you want. And, trusting them to rise to the occasion. They may not always rise to the occasion, but give them the chance to do so.

Now, another thing that I see come up really commonly during the holidays, is that people end up dealing with or encountering or navigating really challenging relationships. Normally, I see this more on the personal side of things, rather than the professional side of things, but it could be in both.

When it comes to those challenging relationships, here's how I want you to address them. Number one, I want you to make a decision, ahead of time, about how you want to show up when it comes to interacting with the person that you have that challenging relationship with, okay? Decide for yourself that regardless of how they behave, this is how you want to behave. You might need to identify some boundaries, right?

I've worked with a couple clients, whose moms' make comments to them, about how they look, about how they parent their kids, just about all the things, about how they maintain their house. And you might set a boundary that, "If you say that kind of stuff, I'm going to leave. I'm not gonna stick around."

Or, if you have, you know, everyone always jokes that there's the crazy uncle with the politics. If you have a crazy uncle who likes to talk about the politics at the holiday dinner, you get to decide, "If you bring up politics, I will not engage with you."

That's one of my favorite boundaries to set with people, because I don't like upsetting the evening. If we aren't going to agree on topics of conversation like that, we're probably not going to convince anyone, and it's just going to devolve into an unproductive conversation. So, you just get to opt out of it.

Ep #41: Handling Holiday Overwhelm & Stress

You can leave. You can just choose to be non-responsive. You can walk away and go talk to someone else; you get to decide. But I want you to think about how you're likely to show up in those situations, and how you want to show up instead, okay?

Then, from there, I want you to get yourself to a clean place. So, do a thought download. Think about the person that you have the challenging relationship with, and write down all of the negative thoughts you think about them. Next to each of those thoughts, I want you to identify the one-word emotion that you feel, when you think each of those thoughts.

And then, you're gonna be able to start to see how you're likely to show up, as a result of thinking these thoughts, and feeling those feelings, right? It's probably not going to be in any way that's good. It's not going to serve you. It's not going to serve them. It's going to lead to a much more negative Christmas or holiday experience than you would prefer.

So, get clear on what your thoughts are. And then ask yourself; what can you choose to think instead? And, find some thoughts. They don't have to be the most amazing, beautiful, flowery thoughts. But find some thoughts that you can latch on to, you can anchor yourself to, that move the dial a little bit, that make you feel a little bit better.

The other thing that I want to encourage you to do, that goes in alignment or in accordance with that exercise that I just gave you, I want you to leave your stories about people at home. Don't bring them with you to the holiday dinner. Don't bring them with you to the family party that you go to. Leave them at home.

You don't need to bring 10 years of history and baggage and backstory with you, to every experience you have with the person that you have the challenging relationship with; that is a recipe for disaster. You're gonna walk into the room with that negative lens on, and everything they do is going to filter through it, so you're just going to be searching for evidence to be upset about. And when you're upset, you're not going to show up as the best version of yourself. So, leave your stories at home.

Ep #41: Handling Holiday Overwhelm & Stress

I like to say I have the memory of a goldfish. And, I really love to give everyone the benefit of the doubt; I'm very forgiving, I don't hold grudges. And if you're a grudge holder, I just want to encourage you give it a try, to just drop it for an evening, for a dinner, for one holiday season. Just give people the benefit of the doubt.

Assume positive intent, instead of assuming negative intent. That will make all the difference in the world, I assure you. Now, if you find yourself in a position this holiday season, that's less than ideal, that isn't what you wanted; maybe you're recently divorced. Or, maybe you just got laid off. Or, your family's far away and it doesn't make sense for you to travel home to see them, based on what you have going on. Or, it's the year you don't have your kids, they're with your ex.

Whatever the case may be there, if you have a lot of sadness around the holiday season, I want to encourage you process the sadness. There's nothing wrong with being sad, right? Being sad is part of the human experience. And you don't have to be angry that you feel that way, or be in judgment of the fact that you feel that way.

Sometimes, we want to think sad thoughts about the circumstances we encounter. And we want to feel sad, as a result. But if you can focus on what you can control and curate an experience from there, you can double down on the sadness. Or, you can really make an effort to make the best of the situation, okay? I encourage you to do that.

Make an effort, make an attempt to try and find some joy. Try and create a way to spend your time, this holiday season, that's in alignment with you, what you want, and that feels good. You get to cultivate and curate a little bit of joy.

All right, last but not least, this big piece, that I see people encounter after the holiday season is over or as it's coming to an end, and you're getting back into the swing of things; people have so much dread about returning to work. They're like, anxious ahead of time. Stressed out about all the

Ep #41: Handling Holiday Overwhelm & Stress

emails that they have waiting for them, and all the things they need to “catch up on.” They feel like they're behind because they took time off.

And so many people that I work with end up telling me that they wish they didn't even take time off to begin with. Just because it's such a hardship to come back to, after they've been off. If that's you, if you're guilty of talking like this, here's what I want to offer you. You want to change the way that you're thinking about coming back to work, okay?

This is only a problem, and you only experience dread, because of how you're thinking about it. So, you want to change your thoughts. How do you need to think about it, instead? I want you to think about how you want to feel, coming back after the holidays. Do you want to feel in control, and intentional, and capable, and determined, and committed, and calm, and grounded, and all of those good emotions?

Or, do you want to feel overwhelmed, and dreadful, and stressed, and rushed, and pressured? You get to pick now how you think about returning to work after the holidays. It's what's going to determine how you feel. So, take a few minutes and think about; what do you want to start practicing believing right now, in order to create a more positive, enjoyable experience as you return to work?

Now, that brings me to the overall point here, that I really want to drive home. Ultimately, your experience during the holidays is determined by the story that you tell, about your experience during the holidays. So, I want to invite you to craft a really positive story. A much more grounded story. One with a lot of calm and intentionality, all right?

Rather than one that feels very dramatic and chaotic and frantic. The quality of your life is determined by the quality of the stories that you tell. I highly encourage you to tell a good one about what your holiday experience is going to be like. Right?

You can say that you can't handle it all, and that it's the worst, and that you hate this time of year, and that you wish it was just January already, and

Ep #41: Handling Holiday Overwhelm & Stress

you're never gonna get through it, and you have too much on your plate. And, cue the negative experience when you think that way.

Or, you can think that you're going to make time for what matters most, you're going to cut out the rest. You've got a handle on things. You know what needs to get done, you're gonna do it. You have enough time to do it. You're in control of how you spend your time. You're only going to make decisions that feel aligned and in integrity with what you actually want.

And that you're really going to enjoy yourself spending a little time away from work if you choose to do that. Spending time with family and friends if you choose to do that. You're just enjoying spending your time; however it is that you do choose to spend it. All right?

You get to decide right now, that you're gonna have a great holiday season, and that they're gonna go smoothly. If you believe that now, or you practice believing it now, you're much more likely to make that your experience, as the holidays come around and you navigate your way through them.

Now, we covered a ton in this episode. Like I said at the beginning, we really tied in so many of the topics that I've been talking about throughout the first 40 episodes of the podcast: defining "enough", setting boundaries, saying no, managing your time, not people pleasing, reducing your expectations of others, navigating difficult relationships, all that good stuff.

If this episode really resonated with you, and you relate to a ton of what I talked about, I highly encourage you to join The Less Stressed Lawyer Mastermind, my six-month group coaching program. This is what we do inside that program. I teach you all of these topics. You learn how to master navigating them.

The tools and principles and concepts that I teach you, will become second-hand when you spend six months with me, inside the Mastermind, learning this stuff, applying the tools that I teach, evaluating what works and what doesn't, and consistently getting better and better and better at it

Ep #41: Handling Holiday Overwhelm & Stress

until you get the results that you want. If you struggle with the areas that I talked about today, the Mastermind is perfect for you.

Now, a little bit about the details. We start with an in-person event; it's February 1-4, in Charleston, South Carolina. It's a three and a half day, immersive experience. We come together. We meet each other. We have an amazing Welcome Dinner. Get to know one another, and start to bond and connect, and form that camaraderie and support system.

Then, we spend the next three days together and we get to work. I'm going to teach you the fundamental concepts that you need to know to manage your mind, manage your life, and really create the results that you're craving.

We're going to problem solve and address all the issues that are really holding you back from getting where you want to go. And then, we're gonna do a real deep dive on setting goals, and creating a clear roadmap that you're going to implement over the course of the next six months, to create the results that you want to achieve, the goals that you set. All right?

I'm going to teach, you're going to learn, we're going to workshop together and I am going to coach you so hard; it's going to be so good. We're going to get you past those limiting beliefs. I'm going to get you past those roadblocks. We're going to identify the obstacles that have been getting in your way, and I'm going to help you overcome them.

At the end of the three days, we celebrate all that we accomplished together, with the most amazing farewell dinner. And if you don't know me, I like to do things over-the-top. So, the venue for the live event is incredible. The dinners and the food are just going to be so exquisite. And the company you guys, is extraordinary.

We have the best group of people. I'm so excited to have so many of my current Mastermind members returning for the next round. And I can't wait to welcome the new ones, where this is their first time, and they're going to come and meet everyone. It's going to be so good. This room keeps

Ep #41: Handling Holiday Overwhelm & Stress

growing and growing, and getting bigger and bigger. I just love to see the connections expand and the relationships deepen. It's just so beautiful to watch.

If you are looking for support and accountability, this is the room you want to be in. This is the program that you want to join. And then, after we leave the live event, we're going to spend the next six months implementing the plan that we make when we're in-person with one another.

You're gonna stumble, that's expected. That's okay. I've got you, every step of the way. We're going to work on evaluating what's working, what's not working, and we're going to tweak your mindset and the action that you're taking, in order to make consistent, constant improvements. In order to get you across the finish line, to make your success inevitable.

If you struggle with the stuff that I talked about today, you want to make sure you join; don't put it off. Don't wait till the next round of the Mastermind; you just delay your progress when you do that. All right?

I want you to go to my website, TheLessStressedLawyer.com/mastermind and apply, right now. Enrollment closes as soon as the remaining spots fill. Okay, so when you hear this, don't wait. Make sure you go apply as soon as possible, so you can secure your spot.

Also, if you're thinking about joining, make the decision. One of the things that we do in the Mastermind, is learn how to make really empowered, quick decisions. The faster you make decisions, the faster you get what you want in your life. Let this be decision number one; it's like, your first homework assignment from me. Go ahead, get in there and join.

Don't leave it as an open to-do list item that takes up space in your mind, get it out of the way. And what you're going to do, when you sign up right now, is you're going to create so much relief for yourself, that you've got a game plan for next year to work on all of the issues that I talked about today. So, you stop struggling with them. So, life stops feeling so overwhelming. So, stops feeling so hard. All right?

Ep #41: Handling Holiday Overwhelm & Stress

It doesn't have to feel that way, and you don't have to do this work alone; you will get so much further, so much faster. The progress you make inside the Mastermind will truly blow your mind. If you want a better life, if you want more for your life, and you don't want to feel as miserable as you have been feeling, there's a better way to do it.

Join the Mastermind and I'll teach you what that better way is. You're ready. Now's the perfect time to join. Don't wait. If you need to get super resourceful in order to get in there, get super resourceful and get in there. The progress that you want to make is on the other side of making this investment in yourself; I promise you.

I can't wait to see you in-person, and for you to join me in South Carolina. We're gonna have an absolute riot. Personal development gets to be really fun and enjoyable. I promise, you're going to have the most amazing time with me in person, and over the course of the next six months.

All right, my friends. That's what I have for you this week. I hope you have the most amazing holiday season, and I will 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.