

Ep #50: Problems Are Forever



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Olivia Vizachero

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You're listening to *The Less Stressed Lawyer* podcast, Episode 50. Today, we're talking all about how problems are forever. 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 are you? I hope your week is off to a fabulous start. My week is kind of a short week. This week, I'm getting ready to head down to sunny Miami, and I cannot wait to escape this Detroit weather. There's been a lot of snow and ice storms up here lately, and I am so sick of the cold.

So, I'm headed to Miami to meet up with one of my coaches, Brooke Castillo, with a bunch of my other coach friends for an event called Work Hard Play Hard. We're going to spend two mornings training, learning all these things about marketing our coaching businesses. And then from there, we're going to spend two afternoons/evenings, playing and spending time with each other, and just celebrating and having so much fun.

I can't wait to be down there. I checked the weather this morning. It's in the high 70s, low 80s. I cannot wait. I'm ready to soak up some sunshine. I had a little bit of a reprieve after being in Charleston and coming home, and I tried to rest and recuperate as much as possible. But this trip is the start of a pretty hectic couple of months for me.

I have a lot of speaking engagements all throughout the month of March and April. I'm going to be in Punta Mita, Mexico, for the Women in Trial Travel Summit, which is a really fun conference. Kind of like Work Hard Play Hard, in the sense that the learning takes place in the morning. And then all of the amazing networking takes place in the afternoons.

This is the first time I'm speaking at this conference. I'm really looking forward to it. It's a whole group of people that I think don't typically attend a

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lot of the conferences that I go to, whether it's Clio Con or ABA TECHSHOW, so I'm excited to meet a bunch of people. They're mostly from the West Coast. I mean, I think they're from all over, but predominantly from the West Coast. So, I'm excited to get exposed to them.

If you're headed to the Women in Trial Travel Summit, reach out to me ahead of time, I'd love to know. And definitely make a plan to meet up while we're there, and get to know each other. I'd love to meet you in person. All right, all of that probably sounds like a lot of fun, and it's going to be. I cannot wait to do those trips and do those speaking engagements.

What may not sound like a ton of fun, is today's topic, problems are forever. But I really love teaching this concept to people, because I think it is really life changing when we internalize it and we come to terms with the truth of this concept.

Now, it may not sound as exciting as the whole *Diamonds Are Forever* concept from James Bond. But it really is transformative to understand what your expectations are around encountering problems in your life and how to reframe your thinking around them, so you come to expect them. And you really decrease your disappointment and frustration when they occur when you encounter them.

So, I want to start by saying that one of the greatest causes of suffering that I see with my clients is that they hold this belief that something is happening in their lives that shouldn't be happening. They're encountering a problem, and they think that problem shouldn't be something that they're encountering.

Ultimately, what they're doing when this happens is they're arguing with reality. They have this belief that their life should be different than it is. And what's really going on beneath the surface here, is that there's an underlying belief that is built on this mistaken premise that there should not be problems, right?

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You're encountering a problem, and the reason that you're so upset about encountering a problem is that you think you shouldn't be encountering a problem. I know that sounds pretty circular, but stay with me here, alright? You may not consciously articulate this belief in this way. You may not actively be thinking that there shouldn't be problems.

In fact, when I talk to most of my clients about this, and I point out to them that they're really essentially believing this, that there shouldn't be problems; they're encountering a problem, they think they shouldn't be encountering it. So, they think that they shouldn't be encountering problems. They tend to argue with me.

They always respond, and they're like, "No, no, I don't expect that. I understand that there's always going to be problems." But when we dig a little deeper, when we "double click" on that belief, on that argument that they're making in response to what I've said to them, they're taking issue with each problem as it occurs in their life.

So, they may not think this on the 50,000ft. view grand scale of things. But when we zoom in, and we take it problem by problem, every time there's a problem, they're thinking that that shouldn't be a problem that they're encountering.

What that ultimately means, when you zoom out and you add it all up, they really are saying that there shouldn't be problems in their lives. That they shouldn't be encountering the problems that they encounter. Do you see how you're essentially saying the same things, if every time a problem arises, and you think that problem shouldn't be happening, you're essentially saying that there shouldn't be problems? That you shouldn't encounter problems in your life?

And the problem with this unconscious or subconscious belief system is that reality doesn't match that desire. The truth is, we will always have problems; problems are forever, just like diamonds.

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Seriously, though, life is 50/50. That's a concept that I learned from my coach, Brooke, who I'll be seeing in Miami this week. She taught me that life is 50% good and 50% ass. Fifty percent of the time you'll feel great, and 50% of the time you won't feel great. Fifty percent of the time you'll be winning, and 50% of the time you'll probably be learning, or encountering some type of problem.

I've actually taken this a step further to think that 50% of life will be a specific emotion, and 50% of life won't be. So, 50% of life will be boring, and 50% won't be. Fifty percent will be exciting, and 50% won't be. Fifty percent will be easy, and 50% will be hard. Fifty percent will be chaotic, and 50% will be calm.

Now, when you believe you shouldn't experience problems or deal with negative emotions, you end up causing your own suffering. Even on top of the suffering that comes from dealing with the problem in the first place. You've doubled down on the emotional pain that you experience by thinking that your life should be different than it is, that your experience should be different than it is.

I want to introduce a caveat here. If you've been listening to my podcast for a while, you know that problems are created in our mind, with our thinking; nothing is a problem until we think that it's a problem. They're just facts, as they occur, as we experience them, and then there's our judgement about those facts. We decide that those facts amount to a problem.

So, there's the emotional suffering that happens when we choose to think something's a problem. We think facts are a problem, and then we feel a negative emotion as a result of that thinking. Then, we double down on our emotional suffering by thinking that we shouldn't be experiencing that problem; that reality should be different than it is.

We double dose our emotional strife, we double dose our frustration, we double dose our disappointment. Now, you may want to argue with me here, especially if you're a newer listener. You may not think that problems

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are just created with our thinking. That there are actual problems that we encounter that are factually problems.

But I promise you, when you take a closer look and go example by example, you can see this play out in real time. Because what's a problem to one person isn't a problem to another person.

So, here are a couple examples of that. For instance, a judge rules on a motion that you filed. And the judge rules in your favor. You're not going to think that's a problem, but the other side probably is, right? A judge's ruling on a motion is a problem to one party, and probably a win to another.

If someone gives you feedback on a brief you wrote, someone might find that really helpful. Another person might find the same exact behavior really annoying and micromanagey. It just depends on how they think about it. If you got a flat tire.

If you're the driver, you're probably going to be really frustrated. It's an inconvenience that you weren't anticipating having to deal with. But if you're the tow company, or the tire company that you have to go to in order to get it patched or replaced, that's a benefit for them. That's an opportunity for them to make money.

If your mom calls you every day, or someone calls you every day, and you think it's amazing that they want to talk to you and you get to have such an amazing relationship with them, you wouldn't think it's a problem. Or, you could choose to think that it's a problem. That it's really frustrating and that they're overbearing and that they don't respect your time.

Same thing with family staying with you for a month. This actually came up at the mastermind live event in Charleston. One person in the mastermind had family stay with them for several months. Most people in the room agreed that that was a problem. But there were other people in the room that decided that it wasn't a problem. That they would consider that such an endearing thing, that their family felt comfortable enough and loved them enough to want to spend that much time with them.

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So, it truly is all about your perspective. It's not a problem unless you think it is. With that being said, though, we are going to encounter things in our lives that we are probably going to choose to think are problems.

Can you always work to reframe your thoughts? Yes, you can. But oftentimes, it's based on our belief systems and our values, and just the way we were raised, how we think about the world. It's going to be very challenging for us to think about something that we've historically always considered a problem, as not being a problem. All right?

Our negative thoughts, considering something a problem, are going to be really sticky. You may want to choose to think certain things are a problem. Now, you can solve the problem, if one arises, but it may just be a bridge too far to think that it's not a problem.

So, in knowing this, you're going to encounter situations that you will likely deem to be problems. You're going to encounter facts, and you're likely going to think that they're problematic, that you're encountering a problem, a challenge.

In light of that, because that is likely to be part of your human experience; actually, I'll guarantee it for you; I want to give you an example of the different life experience that you have when you anticipate and expect there to be problems, versus when you expect there to be no problems. Okay?

Now, I'm going to use the example of a comparison between me and my dad. My dad and I are very different, and I see how he thinks of the world. I can tell that in his mind, he's essentially playing a game of Whack-a-Mole when it comes to problems. They arise and his goal, all the time, is to extinguish them as they arise so he can get to the point where he's cleared the board, and there are no problems.

And every time a problem arises again, he's frustrated that another Whack-a-Mole had popped up, and then he had to whack it back down. He thinks that he should be getting to a point where he's free of problems.

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Now, I don't think like that. So, our emotional experiences in the world are very different. When problems in my life continue to arise, I'm like, "Ah, of course, there's more problems. There's supposed to be more problems. That's just part of life. Here's another one for me to deal with."

When another problem arises for my dad, he thinks, "What the hell, why is this happening? This shouldn't be happening. Why are there always problems? There shouldn't always be problems." He has this phrase that he uses, and I use it too, I just have a different meaning behind it than he does.

Where he says, "You know, if it's not one thing, it's another," as if like, something's gone wrong. As if it shouldn't always be one thing or another. Where me, I think the same thought, but I reframed it to think, "Of course, if it's not one thing, it's another." It's always going to be one thing or another.

My dad's a business owner. And as a business owner, you're encountering different problems all the time. He'll get really frustrated and agitated and almost discouraged, I'll add that in there, too. That problems keep arising. One day, it'll be an employee doesn't show up for work. And the next week, it'll be the furnace breaks. And the next week, one of the employees, he owns a collision shop, will back a brand new, fixed car into some inanimate object and damage the car. They have to fix it, and it comes out of my dad's profit. Those are all different things that arise.

Every time something like that happens, my dad gets super frustrated, because he's thinking that he should have reached a point where these problems are solved, where they don't arise anymore. I don't think that way. I think they're just going to keep coming. The hits are going to keep coming.

One day, I was at my parents' house, and my dad noticed... I didn't even notice it, funny enough. My dad noticed, because he has an eye for these things being in the automotive business, that someone had hit my taillight; my taillight was cracked. He automatically became really disgusted. Not at me, just at the fact that my taillight was busted.

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We talked about it, he could tell by the way that it was broken that I hadn't hit something, that someone had backed into me; that was how it was cracked. I noticed how upset he got. So, I started to talk to him about this underlying premise that there shouldn't be problems.

I said, "You know, the difference between you and I," and this was arising from a conversation about life coaching and how I teach my clients to reframe their thinking and change their thoughts, and how changing their thoughts changes their emotional experience.

So, I was explaining to my dad, "The difference between us is that you think people shouldn't hit my car. And I think, of course, people are going to hit my car." That's just the risk you take when you drive a car, and you exist in the world around other drivers.

They literally get to hit your car. Not intentionally, of course. We're never going to be thrilled that someone would intentionally hit our car. It's just the risk that you take that people make mistakes, there are accidents. And these things happen when you're a person who owns an automobile, and you take it out around other people who also own automobiles.

My dad paused for a second, and he goes, "You're so right. I definitely think that people shouldn't hit your car. And, I feel really frustrated when they do." I said, "Exactly, and I think, of course, this is bound to happen when you have a car, and you drive it around other drivers." I feel very accepting.

Now, that's not to say that I'm jazzed that I have to get a new taillight and that someone hit my car, I just don't get frustrated by those everyday annoyances because I anticipate them. And people who don't anticipate them get really frustrated because they catch them off guard, they're very surprised by it.

But that being caught off guard, being surprised, is all optional. When you anticipate that your life is going to contain problems, and you're going to

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encounter them on a pretty regular basis, you're not going to be disgruntled when you do, in fact, encounter them.

Now, there's another trap we also get caught in when it comes to problems. If we're currently experiencing them, we tend to think that we will outrun them, eventually. We mistakenly believe that we will eventually arrive at a point in time where all of our problems have been extinguished. And when we believe that we begin to chase the horizon, believing that the future will be better than the present moment we're experiencing right now.

Doing this causes, just like believing that there shouldn't be problems in the first place, doing this causes so much emotional suffering and disappointment. We have this expectation that 'there' will be better than 'here.' That when we achieve this thing, it'll be better than what we have right now. When we solve this problem, there will be better than where we're at right now. When we achieve this goal and reach this finish line, there will be better than what we experience and what we have now.

But the truth of the matter is, there will still be problems. Likely, they will be different problems; sometimes they're the same problems, but likely there'll be different. And, you really want to emphasize that and internalize that message. You will still have problems; they'll just be different. Which means 'there' won't be better than 'here,' it will just be different than here. You will still encounter the 50/50 that life has to offer you.

One of the things I teach my clients and that I practice myself in my own life, is that there is no 'there' there. We think that 'there' is going to be better. That there is something different 'there' than what we are experiencing right now. And that it will be better as a result, right?

When we think that way, when we anticipate that there's going to be a 'there' there, that 'there' will be better, we end up being in the pursuit of 'there' only for the destination. We're in it for the end goal. We're in it for the trophy.

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And when we do that, A- We tend to really not enjoy the journey because we're so focused, not on being present in the current moment, but on reaching that destination. Because we're so anxious and eager to get to that place that we mistakenly believe will be better. You're in it for how you think you're going to feel when you cross the finish line.

When you do this, you end up spending so much of your time anticipating an experience, that you end up being disappointed at the end of that race, at the end of that pursuit. Because it doesn't live up to your expectation, to your anticipation.

What is true is that there is no place where you arrive, where you feel good all of the time. There is no place where you arrive, where all of your problems are gone. You will still have problems when you arrive at that destination, whatever destination it is that you're pursuing. Your problems will just be different. Why is this? It's because problems are forever.

I want to give you a couple examples of this too, that problems are forever, they just change. Think about when you're unemployed. There's a particular set of problems you have versus being employed, different situation, different problems, right? Your problems don't go away entirely. Now, the problems that you are experiencing as an unemployed person might go away, but then you gain new problems.

Same thing happens when you're single, right? There's one set of problems when you're single. You have to handle all of the house obligations by yourself. You don't have dates to attend significant events. You don't have plans on Friday night, unless you're going out with friends or whatnot. Or you're like me, and you take yourself to dinner. But there are particular problems that you have when you're single.

And then, when you get married or when you're in a relationship, you gain a whole new set of problems. The original problems probably go away, and you have a whole new bunch of them.

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Same thing happens when you're an employee versus an entrepreneur. So many people that I work with are so eager and desperate to go out on their own and start their own businesses. And I always want to encourage them not to do it because they think it's going to be so much better, or that their new life is going to be problem-free.

Now, you get to have a preference. I prefer the problems of being an entrepreneur versus the problems that come from being an employee, which is why I've chosen to be an entrepreneur. But I'm not under the delusion that I'm going to be free or rid of problems altogether as an entrepreneur. They're just different problems.

So, as an employee, I don't have as much autonomy. I have someone who gets to set rules that I either have to adhere to or suffer a consequence, potentially. As an entrepreneur, I don't have that problem, right? But as an employee, I don't have to be responsible for getting paid. I just receive a paycheck; it comes to me.

Versus being an entrepreneur, that responsibility falls on my shoulders and my shoulders alone. I also see this with entrepreneurs in the beginning stages of their business versus later stages of their business. There's a whole set of problems you have when you're not making money. And then, those problems go away when you make money. But then, you gain a whole new set of problems.

You have to figure out what to do with your money, you have to pay taxes, you have to potentially hire more people, things of that nature. You gain a whole new set of problems.

Same thing with being a solo practitioner. There's a whole set of problems you experience as a solo practitioner. And if you begin to hire people and delegate, you extinguish some of the problems that you experienced before, but you gain a whole new set of problems with learning how to manage a team and supervise people.

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So, when you realize this, that problems are forever, and that you're just going to experience different problems as you achieve new goals, and you make progress throughout your life. Rather than being in it for the end point, for how you think you're going to feel when you cross that finish line. Consider switching your perspective and being in it for the journey. With falling in love with the journey.

If I was only in it for the end point, as an entrepreneur, I would only be able to celebrate my business a couple times a year. When I achieve certain goals, when I pass certain mile markers. On days when I achieve income goals or when I sign clients. That's not going to be every day out of the year.

Instead, I've made the active decision to fall in love with the journey. With the daily pursuit of these goals. With the practice of actively pursuing, day in and day out, what I'm striving for. The daily challenges, the daily triumphs, the daily learning, and the daily winning, I'm in it for all of it.

One of my mentors and inspirational figures in my life is Gary Vaynerchuk. He's an entrepreneur, and one of his lifetime goals is to buy the New York Jets. People are always cheering for him, rooting for him. Saying, "Gary, we can't wait for you to buy the New York Jets."

What he explains to them is that it's not about the day that he actually gets to buy the Jets. He is in it for the journey of becoming an entrepreneur who amasses enough success to become someone who has the net worth to be capable of buying the Jets. All right?

What does he have to do along that path, along that journey, in that pursuit to cross that finish line eventually? He's in it for the daily challenges. And when you're in it for the daily challenge, you fall in love with the path that you have to take to get to where you want to go. You're able to enjoy that pursuit so much more than only being in it for the end results.

Think about your work this way. If you're only in it for the deal closings, or you're only in it for the trial wins, you're going to have such a miserable

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experience in the days, weeks, and months leading up to those huge moments in your career.

What would it look like for you to fall in love with the journey? To fall in love with the daily challenges, the daily triumphs, the daily learning, the daily winning, the daily problem-solving that you do in order to inch your way a little bit further and make progress towards that end goal?

What if you weren't in it for the trophies? How would that change your day-to-day experience? It's going to make the problems you encounter on a day-to-day basis so much less of an issue.

Now, you may be thinking to yourself, "Olivia, if I'm always going to encounter problems, why on earth would I do anything differently? Why wouldn't I just maintain the status quo, save all of my energy, and not go out and challenge myself and risk feeling all of this negative emotion that comes from pursuing new things?"

I want to offer you a way to think about this. This is optional, you don't have to think about it this way. But if there will always be problems, instead of thinking, "Why not conserve energy, just maintain the status quo, and not do anything different?" I want to offer you, that new problems are better than having the same problems. All right?

Now, that's just my thought. That's not true. That doesn't have to be true for you. You don't have to adopt that mindset. But if you're growth-focused, which if you're listening to this podcast, you probably are, you probably look at the world this way already. That you would prefer new problems over feeling the stagnation that you experience when you're dealing with the same problems over and over again.

So, I want to offer you that new problems, being newly challenged by different situations, and learning and growing, which comes as a result of working through new problems, that that is going to be a much more exciting life to live than dealing with the same problems over and over again.

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How discouraging is it to constantly be dealing with the same problem for eternity? How much of a letdown is that? How much under-living are you doing when you're just dealing with the same problems over and over again?

I invite you to adopt that mindset; the mindset that new problems are better than old problems. So, let's not maintain the status quo. Let's go out and strive to accomplish new things, and risk experiencing new problems that we haven't encountered before. And that that will be better than experiencing the same thing over and over.

Now, I want to just add one more thing here. I want to highlight why it's a problem to think that it's a problem to have problems. Does that sentence even makes sense? I know it did. I want to explain why it's a problem to think it's a problem to have problems.

First, as I explained earlier, you cause yourself additional emotional suffering. Feeling uncomfortable is unpleasant. So, where it's really optional and voluntary, don't engage in that, right?

This is really unnecessary emotional suffering, that's completely within your control to dial down or eliminate altogether. I tell my clients, "Feeling like shit feels like shit." So, when it's in your control to not feel like shit, opt out of thinking in the way that makes you feel shitty.

Moreover, though, it's a problem to think that it's a problem to have problems, because of the action you take when you're thinking this way, right? You cause yourself that extra emotional suffering. You experience more negative emotions than you would otherwise, if you didn't think that it was a problem to have problems.

And what you end up doing, is that you buffer in order to escape the negative emotion that you're experiencing. When you think it's a problem to have problems, and you think that you shouldn't be having problems, you think that you should be feeling good all the time, you go about your life

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trying to curate an experience where you don't feel discomfort. Where you don't feel emotional pain.

So, you create false pleasure by way of buffering; drinking too much, eating too much, scrolling too much on social media, watching too much Netflix, spending too much money, traveling too much; doing things to escape your discomfort. And, all of that buffering creates more problems.

When you don't think it's a problem to have problems, you don't need to escape the discomfort that comes when you're experiencing and encountering a problem. You can just make peace with the reality of your human experience. That sometimes it's going to be that 50% discomfort; that 50% ass, that 50% negative experience; and that it's not something that you need to escape or avoid, you can just experience it.

Remember, I've said this before and I'll say it again, you have survived every negative emotion you've ever experienced. You don't need to go buffer in order to escape the discomfort that you're experiencing when you're facing a problem.

You can experience that discomfort, face it head-on, feel it all the way through, and you can experience it as just part of being a human. You don't have to make anything wrong about the fact that you're feeling that way.

When you stop thinking it's a problem to have problem, you stop needing to press the escape button all the time, because you start to believe nothing's gone wrong. "This is how life is supposed to be. Problems are a part of life. Problems are forever, there's no escaping them. They always come with the territory of being a human being. And, I can navigate them without needing to numb myself or escape the issue at hand."

In fact, when you don't escape them and you face them head-on, you reduce your problems rather than increase them. All right?

That's what I have for you this week, my friends. I really want you to marinate on this concept, on this topic, that problems are forever, and that

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it's not a problem that you have problems. Problems will always be a constant in your life. They will come and go. When they go, they will come again. And, you can always handle them. You're meant to handle them as part of your human experience. And the best-case scenario? Is that you just experience different problems along the way, rather than continuously experiencing the same ones over and over.

All right, go embrace your problems this week. 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.