

Ep #57: Your Thoughts About People



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Olivia Vizachero

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You're listening to *The Less Stressed Lawyer* podcast, Episode 57. Today, we're talking all about your thoughts about people. 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 overwhelmed 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 doing today? I hope your week is off to a marvelous start, mine is. I had quite the week last week. I had four different speaking engagements, all in one week. And I don't know that that has ever happened to me. I do speak pretty frequently to different organizations, but that many all in one week was definitely a first.

Speaking of another first, I got to cross off of my list one of the most incredible things that I've been dying to do, which is speak to a law school class. I actually got invited by a former colleague of mine that I worked with when I did criminal defense work. She's now a law professor. I ran into her at another speaking engagement I did to a Women Lawyers Association, in March. And she invited me to come speak to her class. I got to do that last Thursday night, and it was incredible.

The students were amazing. They were so engaged in the conversation. I coached them live and they really participated. They were really transparent in front of their classmates; it was just absolutely incredible. I can't wait to do more of that.

One of my goals... I've never mentioned this on the podcast before, but I'll mention it now. One of my goals is to actually teach the coaching concepts that I teach my clients in the form of a law school class. I really believe that we could make such a meaningful impact on the legal profession if we taught this stuff in law school. To better equip students before they enter the practice of law with all of the tools they need, with the mindset resources that they need, in order to navigate practicing law.

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That's definitely a bucket list goal for me, to be Professor Olivia Vizachero. So, keep your fingers crossed for me. And if you work at a law school, reach out. Jokes aside, though, seriously, if you work at a law school reach out.

Last week was super exciting and this week is also off to a good start. I have a lot of speaking lined up for both this month and next month, especially in conjunction with open enrollment for *The Less Stressed Lawyer* Mastermind. So, I've got a bunch of upcoming events that I'm going to be doing.

One is a two-hour workshop on How to Thrive as a Lawyer. That is going to be on May 12, at noon. And then on May 19, also at noon, I'm doing a two-hour open coaching call. So, if you have never had a chance to get coached by me, and you want to see what it's like, definitely come to that.

And then on May 26, the last day of enrollment for *The Less Stressed Lawyer* Mastermind, I do this incredible call. It's a 'meet and greet' and info session. You can come and meet everyone that's going to be in the next round of the mastermind.

And if you haven't joined yet, and you're on the fence, you can come and get any questions that you have answered by me. So, make sure that you sign up for those events. The best way for you to do that is to head to my Linktree. And the URL for that is: linktr.ee/thelessstressedlawyer. I'm going to give it to you one more time: [linktr.ee/the less stressed lawyer](https://linktr.ee/thelessstressedlawyer). If you go there, you can register for each one of those events that I just mentioned. Okay?

You can also sign up for the waitlist for the next round of the Mastermind, which you absolutely want to do because that is how you get the first opportunity to enroll. Early enrollment is open from May 12 - May 14 and only people on the waitlist get the opportunity to enroll during that time before general enrollment opens up to the public. Spots in the Mastermind are limited. So, if you want to make sure that you snag your spot, and you

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don't want to have to compete with the general public in order to do that, get on the waitlist so you can sign up as soon as doors open.

There's also going to be a special bonus if you sign up day one of open enrollment, of early enrollment, on May 12. You get a bonus one-on-one private coaching session with me. So, if you've been dying to coach with me in a one-on-one setting and you also don't want to miss out on all of the amazingness of the Mastermind, you get the best of both worlds if you join that first day. All right?

So, that's enough about me, let's dive into today's topic. I have been dying to have a conversation with you about what we're going to be talking about today. And it's a little outside the box, it doesn't have so much to do with the practice of law. But it is just an observation that I've had when talking with people in the world, when talking to some of my clients.

It's been living rent free in my head for the longest time, so I finally decided to record an episode on this sort of ancillary topic. I want to specifically talk to you about the thoughts that you have about people. And specifically, the focus of this episode is the thoughts that you have about people generally, so, not individual people in your lives. Okay? Not like your mom or your husband or your wife or your client, a specific client. But, what are the generalizations that you have made about people in the world?

So, one of the most common thoughts, that's negative, that I hear people say, and they say it so flippantly, just like so off the cuff. It's such a negative thought it makes me cringe every time I hear it. I get taken aback by it. The thought is, "I hate people." People will say this, just in passing through, like, "Oh, my God, I hate people." And it's such a negative thought, right?

How do you feel when you think this thought? This isn't meant as a call out, but I want you to check in with yourself. Do you think this thought about people? If you do, check in with yourself. How does this thought make you feel? And then, how do you show up in the world when you feel that way? When you're experiencing that emotion what do you do? What don't you

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do, better yet, right? What results does it create in your life when you're thinking the thought, "I hate people," when you're choosing to believe that?

Other variations of this, are thoughts like, "People are the worst." Or maybe it's more specific than this. "People are fake. People are disappointing. People are selfish. People are cruel. People are ungrateful. People are exhausting. People are horrible. People are mean." What are the thoughts that you think about people, about society?

One of the other thoughts that I hear parroted pretty frequently now is, "The world is going to hell in a handbasket." Or, "The state of the world is really terrible." This is akin to judgments about our society or about people generally, right? If the world is a bad place, or if the world is getting progressively worse, in turn, we essentially think people are getting progressively worse. Because people are what determine the direction of the world, our future, and the quality of it.

So, you want to check in with yourself and ask yourself: What judgments do I make about people generally? And do these judgments serve me? If this is you, if you're like sheepishly or shyly raising your hand, and feel seen by me explaining some of this, if you're like, "Olivia, I think some of these thoughts," I don't want you to judge yourself. I just want you to get curious and be honest.

Why do you think this? Why do you think these thoughts? How do they pretend to serve you? What do they pretend to protect you from? One of the reasons that I am actually so bothered when I hear people talk like this is, the first thing that comes to my mind is, "What a painful way to go through life." Because being a human in the world, you are going to interact with other people. You just are.

It's practically impossible, unless you're like Emile Hirsch, or whoever he plays in the movie *Into the Wild*. I think that's it. Where he goes to Alaska and lives off the land. Also, spoiler alert, he dies in that movie, very young, so I highly don't recommend doing that. But if you are a person in the

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world, you are going to come into contact with other people, probably on a daily basis, or something close to that.

If one of your most practiced thoughts is, “I hate people. People are the worst. People are horrible,” or terrible, or some variation of these very negative thoughts, how is your experience going to be in the world? What is it going to be like? It's going to be negative.

Every time you bring that thought, you bring that lens with you to your interactions with other people, you're going to taint it with negativity. You're going to really tarnish your experience interacting with others as you're thinking this thought if it's one of your most practice thoughts.

So, if this is one of your most practiced thoughts, you want to be really honest with yourself; does it serve you at all? How is it not serving you? How is it negatively impacting your life? I'd love for you to get really clear on that.

If you're in control of how you feel, if every negative emotion that you feel is caused by your thinking, and you're thinking this negative thought, “I hate people. People are the worst,” and you feel disgusted or frustrated or angry or annoyed or irritated because you're thinking these types of thoughts; disappointed, discouraged, underwhelmed maybe. If you're thinking these thoughts and feeling these feelings, you're doing this to yourself.

You're creating this emotional experience for yourself. Other people and their behavior, that is not what's causing your negative emotions. It's your thinking about people. So, if you're thinking these thoughts, “I hate people. People are the worst,” and you're experiencing these negative emotions as a result of it, ask yourself is that the experience you want to create for yourself? Or do you want to feel differently? Do you want to feel better on a daily basis? If so, you have to be willing to give up this thought.

You also want to ask yourself, when you're feeling disgusted or frustrated or angry or underwhelmed or disappointed or discouraged or irritated: How do you act? What do you do? Do you judge other people? Do you look for

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their faults? Do you look for more evidence that people are the worst? That's what we do when we think negative thoughts like this.

Our brains are so capable and competent, that when we give it a negative thought like this, when we rehearse it in our mind, when we repeat it to ourselves, our brains say, "Not a problem. I'm going to go look for more evidence to confirm that this belief is true," so that's what they do. They go out on a mission, and they search for evidence to confirm that belief.

You're going to be on the lookout, you're going to be hunting, for more proof that people are awful, that people are horrible, that people are the worst. You're going to look for more of a substantial reason to hate people. You're going to look for supporting evidence to bolster your belief that you are right to hate people, that that's an accurate way to look at the world, that it's justified. Okay?

And then when you do that, you're just going to hate people more, and you're probably not going to show up great in your interactions with them. You're going to have more negative interactions. There's going to be more conflict in your life. You'll probably argue more, maybe you'll withdraw.

So, you'll have less positive experiences to counterbalance the negative ones. It's just going to be so much easier for you to indulge in believing this thought that, "People are the worst." So, you're going to have greater reasons to hate them.

Now, if you don't love the results that this creates, and you don't think that thinking, "I hate people. People are the worst," serves you and you want to operate differently, I have a couple of suggestions for you. First, I'm going to talk about the strategy, and then we're going to address the mindset.

But one thing I want you to do, is really catch yourself when you're indulging in all-or-nothing thinking; "Hey, this is a little perfectionistic;" so I want you to be on the lookout for this.

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When you think a group of people is either all or nothing of something; all bad, 100% bad, 100% cruel, 100% selfish, 100% fake, 100% disappointing, 100% horrible or mean. When we think like that, it's so extreme, and it's so unrealistic, right? People aren't ever 100% anything. So, you want to be on the lookout for this. This is normally pretty bombastic, pretty dramatic thinking, and it's definitely optional. So, you want to highlight it for yourself, so you can snap out of it.

I'm going to give you some thoughts in a second to replace it. So, be on the lookout for all-or-nothing thinking. You also want to avoid generalizing. Try not to slap labels on humanity as a whole, on people as a whole. Can you be more specific? Can you narrow in on maybe it's just the one person that you're interacting with, and not people generally, right?

Maybe you can have different assessments of every individual person that you meet, rather than needing to bundle everyone all together and judge them as a whole. I also want you to practice operating from curiosity instead of judgment.

If, whenever you're interacting with people, instead of judging them, you worked on operating from curiosity, thinking thoughts like, "I wonder why they're behaving like this? I wonder what's driving their behavior? I wonder why they're doing this? I wonder why they said what they said? I wonder why they're being this way?"

If you get curious, and you assume positive intent... This is a favorite hack of mine from my friend, Maggie Reyes; she's a marriage coach. She always tells people, "If you just assume positive intent, and then ask yourself why did someone do something, you're going to come up with such a different answer than if you're operating from our default negativity bias." Okay?

So, get curious and think, "What are some other reasons people might be doing what they're doing?" Rather than thinking of the worst-case scenario, and the worst reasoning that would be driving them. Okay?

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Also, I've talked about this a lot on the podcast, but see if you can get yourself to understanding or accepting what would you need to think about their behavior to feel understanding? What would you need to think about what they've said or what they've done in order to feel accepting of it, instead of being in judgment of it? Okay? Those are a handful of tactics that you can employ when you're interacting with other people.

You also want to change the way that you're thinking about people collectively, instead. And you can do this along a spectrum. I've talked about spectrum thoughts before; when we're creating a bridge of different thoughts that we can think, rather than going from, "People are the worst, and I hate people," to, "People are amazing, and I love people."

Which those are two thoughts that are totally available to you, and you can start practicing them now. You can start building your belief in those thoughts now, even if they feel like a little bit of a stretch, like a little bit of a bridge too far at the present moment. That's okay. But you could think something as positive as, "People are amazing. People are wonderful. I love people," or even just, "I like people."

You could think something that's more middle of the road, just to start to move you out of that negative space, that negative mindset. So, you could choose to think something like, "People are doing the best they can with what they've got." That's one of my favorite thoughts to think. "People are generally good." Or you could think something like, "People are nuanced. People are dynamic. People are complicated," even.

That's not the most positive thought, but that is more positive than, "People are the worst, and I hate people." You can also think, "People are different. People are complex." Ask yourself, what do you want to choose to think about people, instead of some of the more negative thoughts you may have been thinking in the past?

Another good way to think about this is: How do you want to feel when you think about people, when you interact with people? Make a list of some of the positive emotions you want to experience. What would you need to

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think about people in order to feel those feelings? Do you want to feel connected? Do you want to feel trusting? Do you want to feel loving? Do you want to feel understanding and accepting? Do you want to feel appreciative? Do you want to feel encouraged? Do you want to feel enriched or supported?

These are great emotions to create for yourself. And remember, you do create them for yourself. Other people don't make you feel these positive feelings. You make yourself feel them by choosing thoughts that create those emotions for you. You're in complete control of your emotional experience. You always want to make sure you remember that.

When you know that you're in control of your emotional experience, you're going to curate a much different emotional experience than you otherwise would when you're blaming your emotional experience on external forces. When you're outsourcing control over your emotional experience to other people; to what they say, to what they do.

So, I want you to reclaim control of your emotional experience. Put yourself in the driver's seat for how you feel when it comes to thinking about other people. What do you want to think? How do you want to feel? How do you want to show up? What do you want to do? What don't you want to do? What result do you want to create? What lens do you want to wear, do you want to have on, do you want to bring with you, into all of your encounters with other people?

As you are part of society, you're going to be interacting with others. Whether it's in your work life or your personal life, you're going to be engaging in situations with other people. It gets to be as positive of an experience as you allow it to be. And that's going to be determined by how you think about those people that you're engaging with, that you're interacting with.

So, you can't think, "I hate people," and expect a positive outcome, it's never going to happen. If you're thinking a positive thought, you'll get a

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positive result. If you're thinking a negative thought, you'll get a negative result.

I know it's easy to brush this off, and to tell yourself, "I'm just kidding. I'm just making light of it. I'm being a little facetious." But the thoughts that we think matter. The way that we speak to ourself matters.

And I see stuff like this in like pop culture. There are T-shirts that say things like, "I like my TV shows, and maybe three people. I like wine, and maybe three people. I like my cat, and maybe three people." And it's a joke on really not liking most people in the world. So, we say this really callously and casually. And when we do that, we demean and belittle and make light of how important our thinking is on cultivating the experience that we have.

So, I want you to not diminish the importance of the thoughts that you think, of the impact they have on your life. They make all the difference in the world. Make sure you choose them carefully. You can choose to think that you hate people, and that people are the worst. Or you can choose to think different thoughts.

Thoughts that make you feel much more connected, much more supported, much more enriched. It will make all the difference in the world, and the experiences that you have as you engage with others. Okay? So, take this tidbit with you into your life. And if you're guilty of this, come up with your list of thoughts you want to think instead, of feelings you want to feel instead, and go to work practicing.

If you tell your brain what you want it to think, it will find evidence to support it. You will start looking for the best in people instead of looking for the worst in them, and that will make all the difference in the world; I promise you. It's a completely different experience that is available if you choose to make the switch. I'm so excited for you to make it.

Alright my friends, that is what I have for you this week. I hope you have a beautiful week, and I will talk to you in the next episode.

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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.