

## Ep #58: False Third Options



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Olivia Vizachero

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You're listening to *The Less Stressed Lawyer* podcast, Episode 58. Today, we're talking all about false third options. You ready? Let's go.

Welcome to *The Less Stressed Lawyer*, the only podcast that teaches you how to manage your mind so you can live a life with less stress and far more fulfillment. If you're a lawyer who's over the overwhelm and tired of trying to hustle your way to happiness, you're in the right place. Now, here's your host, lawyer turned life coach Olivia Vizachero.

Hi, my friends, how are you? I hope all is well. I am going to do my best to not drive you guys crazy with my voice, but I came down with a case of laryngitis. I am just now getting my voice back. It's loud enough and audible enough to be able to record a podcast, but I may eventually have to, when this is an archived episode, have to rerecord it just so it sounds a little bit better. But I wanted to make sure I got an episode out to you this week. So, hopefully you will bear with me and deal with the little frog in my throat.

But I'm excited to talk about today's topic, so let's dive in. The idea for this episode, which is all about false third options, actually came out of one of our weekly coaching sessions. The group calls that we do inside *The Less Stressed Lawyer* mastermind. And the context was, that one of the mastermind members was getting coached; she's in charge of overseeing and implementing a change within her team.

Her team met her with some resistance when she announced the change, they weren't super receptive to it. She was trying to figure out how to navigate that situation. And someone asked me, in conjunction with the coaching that I gave to this one member of the mastermind, another one of my students asked about whether or not you need your direct reports to approve of the change that you're implementing?

In order to ensure your success as a leader, as a supervisor. In order to effectively implement the change. And whether or not their lack of support and their displeasure with the change implementation was a problem.

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And if you've experienced this in your own life, you're probably familiar with the fact that not everyone loves change, right? A lot of people have negative thoughts about change. I could probably do a whole episode just on that. But not everyone loves change, and that's just the primitive part of our brain trying to protect us and maintain the status quo.

So, of course, they were not super receptive at first. They went into what I call that knee-jerk 'no' reaction, where they were just opposing it because it's different from what they're familiar with. It's to be expected. So, the question is, is it a problem?

What I explained is that in these situations, where you announce a change and you're met with resistance. You're met with your team's displeasure. And their dissatisfaction with the fact that change is coming, and change is about to be implemented, really, you only have two options.

One option is to continue to proceed with the change that you announced. And to just work through and navigate their displeasure, right? They don't like it, they're resistant to it. You can't control how they think, what they feel, and what they do. I mean, you can control what they do to a certain extent. Because if they refuse to follow directions as a direct report, you can give them some type of negative consequence; terminate them, write them up. There are things that are within your power as a supervisor.

But ultimately, it's just a consequence that you can implement, you actually can't control their behavior. So, you can't control what they think, how they feel, what they do. And the only thing you can control is whether or not you proceed. And just let them warm up and come around to the idea after some time has passed. That's option one.

Option two, is you can appease them and cancel your plans to implement this change. That's another option that's available to you, to people please your team members, to give them what they want, and for you to not make the forward moving progress that you would like to make, by implementing the change that you decided upon.

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Also, we can explore whether this calls into question your role as a leader. Or going back on what you said you were going to do, and not making the progress that you might have promised higher-ups that you would make in your position. So, there are other negative consequences to that, but those are really the two options.

I explained on our coaching call that the false third option is that you announce the change, and you get to control everyone's response to the news of the change, make sure that they all are happy about it and like it and are excited to move forward with it, right? That's typically what we want. And I get it, it is ideal. It sounds super sexy; much unlike my voice today.

But it is understandable why we would desire that outcome. It's just not actually an option that's available to you in this moment. Once your team's already expressed displeasure, you're only left with the first two options. And I always tell people, they always have a choice, I just can't guarantee you're always going to like either of the options that you have, or any of the options that you have. So, this is an example of this.

And where people get themselves in trouble is they're hoping for and thinking and expecting that they should be living within that false third option, the option that's not really available to them. So, then it makes picking either of the other two options really unpalatable.

When you recognize that the false third option isn't available to you, that it's a pipe dream, and that your only two viable options are either option one or option two, it makes it much more palatable for you to move forward and select one of those two available options, and then proceed accordingly.

So, following this coaching call, one of my other students posted in our Facebook group for the mastermind, and she started a thread; which I thought was so genius; to have other people give examples of false third option situations that they've encountered in their own lives. This is something that I talk to my students about all the time, but I hadn't come up with a name for this framework.

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But now that it came up on our coaching call and the group, we've kind of coined a term, within the mastermind, that this is called a "false third option". I wanted to record a podcast episode about it, because it is something that I see causes a ton of people a ton of strife, because they're pining after the false third option that doesn't really exist.

So, I wanted to give you some examples of other false third options, situations that maybe you've seen in your own life. And hopefully, through giving you examples, you'll be better equipped to identify when you're longing for or thinking that you should be able to have that false third option, that's not really available to you.

That will help you stomach picking either option one or option two. And moving forward, not getting stuck and thinking that it should be different than it is. That it shouldn't be going the way that it has been going. Any of all that 'should' thinking that really doesn't serve you.

One example would be if you were getting bombarded with work, right? Your supervisors just keep giving you more and more assignments. They keep taking on more and more cases, more and more matters, and they just keep pushing the work off to you. And there really doesn't seem to be any limit in sight. All right?

So, option number one, when you are faced with that situation, and you're working way more than you want to be working; you're working late nights, you're working weekends, and it feels like you're just drinking from a firehose. Option number one is to set boundaries, and say 'no' to more work. And as you do that, you're going to expose yourself to your supervisor's disapproval, and potential consequences from you setting boundaries and saying 'no'. That's option number one.

Now, most people hate option number one, because they think that they shouldn't suffer any negative consequences from setting boundaries and saying no. They also think that their supervisors should be the ones to withhold work, stop the flow of work to them, and take care and manage

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their boundaries for them so that they don't even need boundaries in the first place.

Now, I tell my clients this all the time, would that be ideal and amazing if supervisors closely monitored your workload, paid attention to and recognized when you were overworked so that you didn't have to set boundaries and say, no? Yes, that would be outstanding.

However, it's just not what happens in practice. Especially under a for-profit, capitalistic model. As far as firms are concerned, they profit from you doing the most amount of work possible, and then paying the fewest number of salaries possible.

Do I think this is short-term thinking on the firm's part? Yes, absolutely. Because I think it leads to burnout. But that's neither here nor there. Most law firms that I encounter are focused on the short-term gains and the short-term ROI, rather than the long-term impact of having their attorneys be overworked.

So, option number one is to set boundaries and say no to more work, and to expose yourself to your supervisors disapproval and any potential consequences that result from it.

Option number two, is to people please and to keep taking work to appease your supervisors, and thereby work more than you want to, work more than what's healthy for you to work, right? To disrupt the work/life balance that you're striving for. That's option number two.

The false third option is to set boundaries and say no, and to control your supervisor's opinion; to ensure that they like it, that they approve of it, that they're fine with it. That is not something that's within your control. So, that's going to be the false third option here.

I also think another false third option is what I talked about a moment ago, of requesting or expecting your supervisors to be the ones who monitor and

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ensure that you're not overworked, for you, in your place. That's also not going to happen, more than likely. So, that's another false third option.

Now, another example that I have, that I've lived in my own life. As my student posted this thread in our Facebook group, I jumped in and I gave a bunch of examples that I could think of, and then a bunch of other people in the mastermind also added their examples.

I did notice a really interesting trend, which I thought was fun; I'm going to talk about that in a second. I'm going to give you two of the examples that I used from my own life, where I was able to recognize the false third option. The first one is in dating. All right, now, as you date, and as I have dated, I have encountered people who have different ideologies, different belief systems than me.

I used to date someone who had different political views than I did. I spent so much time being frustrated about his political leanings, his political opinions, his political beliefs, that I'd get angry about it. We'd argue about it. I'd want him to change his opinions and see things my way. He would also want me to do the same thing, but in his direction.

What I've since come to realize is that I can date this person, this particular individual, with his certain political beliefs that I don't agree with; it's part of a package deal. I'm not changing him, he's not going to change his opinions, more than likely. So, I can date him and also date his political beliefs because they come together. Or option number two, is I can date someone other than that person, whose political beliefs I agree with. Someone, where we're aligned on how we see politics.

And then the false third option, which is the one that when I was experiencing the situation I kept pushing for, because I didn't have this framework at the time. But the false third option is to date this specific individual, and to get them to change their political beliefs; that's not going to happen.

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When you recognize that the false third option isn't going to come to fruition, you can turn back and focus your attention on options one and two. Decide between the two of them. Which do you prefer?

I also see people encounter false third options a ton when it comes to delegating. So, option number one when you're thinking about delegating, would be to delegate with patience and expect it to require trial and error and learning to happen over time, in order for you to arrive at a good endpoint, a result that you're happy with, right?

It's not going to happen overnight. It's not going to be entirely seamless. There's going to be a learning curve, as you teach someone how you think how you work, what you like, what you don't like. All of your preferences, as they're learning a new skill set; all of the above, right?

Option number two, if you don't like the amount of effort that that takes and you're of the mindset, "It should be going faster than this. I shouldn't have to put this much work into it. They should just know what I like. They should know how to do this already." If you expect that you shouldn't have to train someone, option number two would be for you to *not* delegate and for you to always do everything yourself. Right?

Now, the false third option is this false expectation that you delegate and right off the get-go everything goes perfectly from the start. In my experience, and seeing how many people I coach and what their experience is like with delegating, option number three is the false third option, because it just doesn't happen.

There's a learning curve when it comes to delegating. And if you want to reap the benefits of delegating, by freeing you up to do more important work, to do work that is more within your zone of genius, is more aligned with your expertise, you're going to have to train someone else wants to do the other things that you don't want to do. And they're probably not going to get it right, at first. So, you get to pick between option one and option two.



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All right, now this next example I've talked about on the podcast before. But this is definitely another example that's come up from my life, and it's around the holidays. My parents are not holiday people. I am a holiday person, I love them. I grew up with big Italian holiday gatherings, and I miss them very much.

We stopped doing them after my paternal grandfather passed away. And I long for them. I love a big, loud family get-together. Now, my parents are not like that. And for years, since my grandfather passed, I was really resentful about how my family celebrates holidays. They're very small, I really don't like them.

And I used to really ruin my own holiday by being so frustrated with how we celebrated holidays. I'd constantly want my parents to do it differently than they were doing it. And I'd really take issue with them not listening to me, not prioritizing my needs or my desires, and all that stuff. So, very much in a state of emotional childhood and victimhood, at the time that I was indulging in this behavior and this belief system.

Since then, I've realized, here are my two options: Option one is for my parents to host the holidays. And for them to only invite a few people, which is their preference, right? It's their house, that's how they want to do it. They get to do it that way.

Option number two is that I can host and invite whoever I want at my own house, and I can do the whole shebang all by myself and take on all that work. Then, I get to decide the guest list and I get to invite 'the more the merrier'. All right?

Now, the false third option would be getting my parents to host and inviting our whole extended family, all the people that I want to be there. Which is never going to happen because that is not their preference. What I realized is that I'm not willing to host yet for a variety of reasons. I don't think I have the right space to host. And I am just not ready to step into that role quite yet.

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So, what that means is that I need to tolerate and make peace with the fact that my parents are going to do holidays the way that they want to do holidays. I get to choose between option one or option two, instead of longing for that false third option, which is never going to happen, it doesn't exist.

And here's what I wanted to say about the trend that I noticed inside *The Less Stressed Lawyer* mastermind Facebook group. I noticed a big trend with people talking about how their family members expected them to show up, and how they want to show up instead. They're not being a "want match"; that the two wants on each side of this issue don't line up.

Okay, so my clients want to act one way and their family members expect them or want them to act another way. And neither party is happy with what the other party expects. The consistency that I saw in this Facebook thread, was that the first option is for you to show up the way you want to show up, in your relationship with your family member or your friend.

And for you to show up that way and have them not like it. Like, they've expressed their preferences to you, you're crystal clear on what they are, and you're unwilling to do those things. All right? So, they're not going to like it because you already know what they want you to do, and you're not doing it.

That's option number one. You show up the way you want to show up in your relationship with them, whatever that looks like for you, and they don't like it.

Option number two is for you to appease them and show up the way that they want you to show up and abandon yourself and do it, even though it's not what you want. To show up this way, even though it's not aligned with your preference. Okay?

And the false third option, is to show up the way that you want to show up in this relationship and have the person on the receiving end of your behavior like it, right? So, let's get a specific example here. If your mom

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wants you to call her every day, and that's way too much communication for you.

Option number one is for you to call her at the frequency that you're comfortable calling her, and she cannot like it; she can have negative thoughts and opinions about the frequency with which you call her. Option number two would be for you to call her every single day even though you don't want to, and to please her and to put her desires before your own. And the false third option would be for you to call her as much as you actually want to call her, and to make sure she likes it, to make her like it.

Okay, I'm so curious to know if this last example resonates with you? Because so many people in this Facebook group thread had examples of relationships where people want them to show up differently than they want to show up. And they expressed that there's tension between these two options: option one and option two. And that in the past, they've been searching for the false third option or holding out and longing for that false third option.

There's a lot of freedom that comes to you when you recognize that false third option doesn't actually exist, and you just get to pick between options one and two. That that's the only choice that you're making here. And I want you to just take a second and identify in your life where is there a relationship where you're showing up in a way where maybe you're appeasing someone, and you don't want to be?

And there's definitely a different way that you'd prefer to show up, but you're afraid of their opinion about your behavior. You're afraid for them to judge you. You're afraid to be subject to their disapproval. I just want you to question if this situation is causing you a lot of strife?

If you're experiencing a lot of emotional turmoil and discomfort, it's because you're likely longing for that false third option. And if you recognize that that door doesn't exist, you can't knock on it, you can't walk through it, you're just left with picking between doing what's right for you and having them not

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like it, or appeasing them and sacrificing what's right for you, what's important to you.

Then you get to make a much more realistic decision, and it's going to move you closer towards a result that feels more intentional. That feels less frustrating. Where you're going to feel a lot less stuck. Okay?

So, that's what I have for you this week. I want you to take a look at this in your own life. Where are you experiencing a lot of frustration, a lot of resentment, a lot of disappointment? Let that be a cue for you to identify:

Are you longing for and holding out for a false third option that doesn't actually exist? And then, do your part to identify the two options that actually do exist. And then, make a decision on which one you prefer. And be sure that you know and like your reasons for choosing whichever option you choose. Okay? That's the recipe to moving forward.

All right, my friends, I hope you have a beautiful week. Stop choosing those false third options, they don't exist. I'll 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](http://www.TheLessStressedLawyer.com).