

**Ep #68: But Are You Free?
(The Most Important Question You Can Ask Yourself)**



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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You're listening to *The Less Stressed Lawyer* podcast, Episode 68. Today, we're talking all about the most important question you can ask yourself. 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. Man, I am so excited to record this episode. This is one of my absolute favorite things to talk about. I mentioned in the last episode, in the episode that I talked about setting money goals, when I gave you all my little life update... which I love to do at the start of each podcast episode, like I said, just to bring you along with me, and give you a little behind the scenes look at what's going on in my life... I talked about how I recently spent some time in northern Michigan.

I got away. I really listened to myself. I knew that I needed a little bit of a breather. I needed some downtime. I just wanted to be with people that I loved. I wanted to catch my breath. I just wanted to chill and enjoy my life for a second. Have some fun, relax, get out of my routine, get away, and just be. Just be with people that I care about. Just be with myself. Just be. I did that. I listened to myself, and I created that opportunity for myself.

I rented a place up north. I took friends up on an invitation to go stay with them for a few days. I made the drive. I took time off of work. I rescheduled some client sessions. I made myself available for those opportunities. I created that opportunity actually, by giving myself the time and the bandwidth and the availability to go spend my time that way.

One thing that was truly not lost on me, and I guess it's a little coincidental, because all of this was going on around the Fourth of July, which is all about freedom, I realized that I have truly created a life where I'm free to do what I want with my time. That doesn't mean that I don't have obligations,

Ep #68: But Are You Free? (The Most Important Question You Can Ask Yourself)

that I don't work, and that I don't have to work in order to make money. All of those things are still true.

I choose to have those obligations in my life. I'm happy to have them. I'm proud to have them. I love the business that I've built for myself. But I also love the freedom that I've created for myself. To be able to not have to answer to someone, and to be able to reschedule something when I need to.

To be able to get away. The financial freedom to rent a cottage on a lake at the last minute, and to be able to impulsively drive up north, and do all of that stuff to be able to get away. I've created a life that affords me the freedom to spend my time how I want to spend my time.

Because this all coincided with the Fourth of July, and the whole let freedom ring theme, I was thinking about this concept. It made me think of my favorite question, which is what this episode is all about. I'm going to ask you my favorite question.

But I want to give you some background as to where this question came from, how it came to me, how I came to know it, why I ask it of myself, why I think it's so powerful.

So, to give you a little backstory, y'all know I love a good backstory. But every year I pick a word of the year. One year I picked "Intentional." I think another year I picked "Sufficient," and I meant that in a couple of different ways. I meant self-sufficient, as in I can take care of myself and be very reliant on myself. I also meant sufficient as in feeling sufficient. Like, feeling like I had enough of the things that I had, enjoying what I had, rather than feeling like I needed or wanted more.

So intentional, sufficient. I've picked different words, but those are the two that really come to mind when I think of the words of the year that I've chosen. Then, in 2020, I read a book. It's a sobriety memoir called *We Are the Luckiest*.

Ep #68: But Are You Free? (The Most Important Question You Can Ask Yourself)

I read it, actually, while I was detoxing from taking Adderall. For those of you who don't know, I used to struggle with Adderall addiction. I will do a whole episode all about my struggles with that, and how I overcame it, because I know that a lot of people in the legal industry struggle with that as well. I want to be a resource and an open book about my own struggles with it.

But as I was going through detoxing from Adderall, I read this book called *We Are the Luckiest*. I've also talked, I think, a bit on the podcast about my relationship with alcohol. I'll do a whole episode on that, as well. But that is something that I've also struggled with.

Those two things really went in tandem with one another. I would take Adderall to stay awake, and then I would drink in order to be able to fall asleep. A very ineffective way to cope with my stress. So, those two things really went in tandem with one another.

I'd been sober curious, for a while. I've really done a lot of work on my relationship with alcohol. I still do consume alcohol. I don't like to glamorize drinking alcohol. Again, it is something that I've done a lot of conscious, intentional work in addressing my relationship, getting it in a place that feels more maintainable, feels more within my control, feels safer, and sustainable.

As part of that, with my sober curiosity, I chose to read I follow this woman on Instagram. The author's name is Laura McKowen. She came out with a book called *We Are the Luckiest*. I forget who else read it, maybe it was Glennon Doyle; who I also love; the author of *Love Warrior* and *Untamed*. *Love Warrior* absolutely changed my life. It was the first time I was ever introduced to the concept that discomfort is something that you need to embrace rather than avoid.

So, I believe Glennon reviewed, *We Are the Luckiest*. She said that the book was going to save lives, because Glennon's also sober. Again, there was just a lot that resonated with me, coming from Glennon reviewing this

Ep #68: But Are You Free? (The Most Important Question You Can Ask Yourself)

book. So, I decided to order it, and I was reading it as I was detoxing from Adderall.

And I frequently refer to *We Are the Luckiest* as probably my second favorite book of all time. It's one of the rawest, most honest, candid, beautiful things that I've ever read. I also love a memoir, so it falls right in line with kind of my preference, as far as it comes to literary categories and whatnot.

So, I read, *We Are the Luckiest*, and as I worked through and addressed my own relationship with alcohol, one of the things that Laura talks about in her book is this fixation with throwing a label on your drinking. So many people struggle with addressing their relationship with alcohol, because they don't want to label themselves to be an alcoholic. Because that word has a lot of negative connotations with it. It tends to have a lot of judgment with it.

She explains that the proper thing to focus on really isn't whether or not you consider yourself an alcoholic, that there's a better question to ask yourself. The question that she poses is the question: But are you free? Regardless of what you want to call yourself, do you have a problem, do you not have a problem, are you an alcoholic, are you not an alcoholic. That really doesn't matter.

The question is: But are you free? Do you feel like you're free from alcohol, it's hold that it has on you? Does it feel like it controls you sometimes? Do you feel out of control with it? Or do you feel free? And for me, because I've struggled with that word, it doesn't feel like it's the right fit for me, alcoholism, or being an alcoholic, that never felt like it aligned for me.

The question, but are you free, was so powerful. Because for me, especially at the time where I was reading this book, my answer was no. That also, especially, rang true with my relationship with Adderall as well. Although, I do use the word addiction when it comes to my use of Adderall in the past. I don't take it anymore.

Ep #68: But Are You Free? (The Most Important Question You Can Ask Yourself)

I didn't mean to make that sound like I take it now, and that I've fixed my relationship with it. I have fixed my relationship with it by abstaining, completely, from taking it. Because I do consider myself to have an addiction with it. That's not something that I can take sustainably, or that I would even want to take sustainably, because my life is so much better now that I no longer take it.

But anyways, I'm reading this book, *We Are the Luckiest*, and the author Laura McKowen poses this question: But are you free? Honestly, when I read it, I knew in that moment that that question is probably the most important question any of us can ever ask ourselves. It doesn't just need to come to the topic of substance abuse or drinking alcohol or anything else that you take.

It's such a beautiful question for, really, each and every area of your life. So, after I read this book, I decided that "Free" was going to be my word for the year. I want to say it was my word of the year in 2021, although I can't remember if that's true or not. I know it was my word in 2022, and I know it was my word this year, for 2023.

Honestly, I think it will be the word of the year for the rest of my life. It really is like the word of my life. It's the pursuit of my lifetime; to become freer and freer. To ask that question of myself, but are you free, in whatever area of my life I'm examining at that time. The reason that I love this word and this question so much, is that I think it really articulates and captures the goals that I've set for myself.

So, one of my goals is to be financially free. This year, my goal is to make a million dollars. That's just the tip of the iceberg for the financial goals that I have for myself over the course of my lifetime. But I'm striving to become financially free.

I also want to be geographically free. I've done a lot of work this year, especially since December of 2022, to become more geographically free. I now move every six months. I am in furnished condos. It makes it a lot

Ep #68: But Are You Free? (The Most Important Question You Can Ask Yourself)

easier for me to travel from place to place, because I have the goal of being geographically free. I want to move closer and closer towards a more nomadic lifestyle.

It doesn't just stop there. Those are two of the main goals, that I've set for myself within the past 12 months, that I'm actively working towards and making extreme progress on. But it doesn't stop there. For me, to be truly free includes being free from the weight of other people's opinions. Being free from the excuses that people make for why they aren't where they want to be.

Being free from crutches and coping mechanisms like alcohol, Adderall, or other things like that, that people use to tolerate the parts of their lives that they don't love. Being free from judgment and ridicule and doubt. Or from being free of my own self-judgement, self-ridicule, and self-doubt. Being free from regret and worry and fear.

Or free from society's expectations. Those external pressures that we put on ourselves, that we take on, when we think that we need to do things because it's how we're "supposed" to do them, how we should do them. Being free from traditional norms that might not serve me anymore, or ever, for that matter.

Being free in my body is a huge goal of mine. I've spent a lot of my life, more than I care to admit, criticizing and going to war with my body instead of being grateful, loving and at peace with it. That's something that I'm really working to change, and to become free of, that self-criticism. That unnecessary judgment. That meanness that we can all direct at ourselves. I want that to end. I want to be free of that. That's one of my goals.

Being free to love, boldly, passionately, uninhibitedly. Free of embarrassment or of making a fool of yourself. Free of worrying about that, is what I mean. Being free to explore this world, every part of it that I want to explore; nature, hobbies, adventures, myself, all of it. Being free to be

Ep #68: But Are You Free? (The Most Important Question You Can Ask Yourself)

unapologetically myself, to really know myself, to love myself, to enjoy being myself.

To become more me, and more free to be me, every single day. That is what I'm pursuing in my lifetime, this year, last year, next year, in all the years to come. I am pursuing free. That's my goal from this point forward for my life.

The way that I'm going to get there is really quite simple. It's by asking myself this question over and over and over again. You know I always say this, if you want better answers, you've got to ask better questions. So, the question that's going to guide me is very simple. I got it from Laura. It's the question: But are you free?

So, whatever area of my life I'm working on, whether it's free of other people's judgments or free in my body or free in relationships, free to love, free to travel, financially free, free of other people's expectations. No matter what it is, my question is, but am I free? But are you free?

If the answer in any particular area of my life is no, then I know exactly where my work is. My work is to focus on addressing my mindset, and changing my mindset, to feel freer, to change the way that I think, to change the way that I feel. Ultimately, to change what I do. Right? To take the action that enables me to become more free.

What do I need to do to become more free? To create the result of being freer? So, I'll use this question to guide me. I currently use it, and I'll continue to use it. It is so, so impactful. This is going to be a short episode because this question is so powerful, I don't need to overcomplicate it. But now I want to ask you this question: Are you free?

Really be honest with yourself. I want you to take a second, if you don't want to be... I almost get choked up when I ask this question. It's such a powerful question. It's the secret. It's like the key to unlocking the life that you're meant to live. It's so, so powerful.

Ep #68: But Are You Free? (The Most Important Question You Can Ask Yourself)

When I got the idea to record this episode, I was just so excited to record it and to ask you this question. So, you can have this question, and you can bring it into your own life. The same way I've brought it into mine once I borrowed it from Laura. I hope you borrow it from Laura. I hope you borrow it from me.

Are you free? Are you free to do what you love? Are you free to work when you want to work? Are you financially free? Are you free from the weight of other people's opinions? Or do you still care what they think? Are you still letting their opinions, their judgments control you? Are you free from making excuses for why you aren't where you want to be?

Or are you taking radical ownership of why you are where you are? Why you have what you have? Why you don't have what you don't have? Are you owning that? Are you being radically honest with yourself? Are you free from the crutches and the coping mechanisms that people use to tolerate the parts of their lives that they don't love?

Or are you buffering with the booze, with the food, with that social media addiction of yours, with the Netflix, with sleeping? Are you buffering, are you escaping the parts of your life that you don't love? Are you tolerating aspects that you don't enjoy? That you don't prefer? Are you free from judgment, ridicule, and doubt?

Are you free from your own self judgement, self-ridicule, and self-doubt? Are you free from regret? Are you free from worry? Are you free from fear? Or are you beholden to those things? Are you letting them control you? Are you free from society's expectations? Or are you living under the "should?" Is the "should" just suffocating you? Are you free from the traditional norms that don't serve you?

The expectations, the rules that you no longer want to subscribe to, are you still subscribing to them? Are you still living your life in accordance with them, even though they don't align with the life that you want? Are you free in your body? Or are you like I have been in the past, criticizing it endlessly,

Ep #68: But Are You Free? (The Most Important Question You Can Ask Yourself)

going to war with it? Or are you grateful for it, loving of it, and at peace with it?

Are you free to love who you want to love, the way you want to love? Free of embarrassment? Free to love boldly, passionately, uninhibitedly? Are you free to explore this world, nature, hobbies, adventures, yourself, all of it? Are you free to be unapologetically you?

Are you free to be yourself, the version of you that you like the most? The version of yourself that feels the most authentic? The version of yourself that you prefer? The one that you want to be the most? The version of you that you've been longing to step into? Are you free to be that you?

Being free is the pursuit of a lifetime. It is the thing that I want most for my life, and every day, I become more of it. Because I work at it. I ask myself this question, and then I pursue it relentlessly. Being free is also the thing that I want most for your life, too.

I want you to take a second and answer this question: But are you free? If you don't like your answer, you know where your work is. Let me be clear, it's time for you to get to work. If you don't like your answer, the time is now. It's time to get to work.

I promise you; nothing changes in your life if you don't change it. If you don't decide right this minute to do something differently, to pursue free the same way I pursue it; intentionally, every single day, with this relentless passion to become more of the most beautiful thing that you can become; freer each and every day.

Make the decision to pursue the life where you get to be free. The life where you are free. In all of the ways that I mentioned in this episode. That's what I want for you, to be free in each and every one of those ways, and in more. I'm sure you can think of your own ways, the areas of your life where you currently don't feel free right now.

Ep #68: But Are You Free? (The Most Important Question You Can Ask Yourself)

I want you to think what would be different about your life, what would your life be like, if you were free in those ways? If you were free in those areas? Freedom is available to you, in every single one of those areas. I promise you.

You do have to work for it, though. I do not want to be unclear about that. I want to be as direct as I possibly can be. It is available to you. Freedom is available to you, but you have to work for it. It is waiting for you, but you have to claim it. That is what's true.

If you want to get started, if you answered your question, and you don't like your answer, and you want to do something about it, and you want to take me up on the invitation to do something about it right now, right this minute, I want you to join me inside the August class of *The Less Stressed Lawyer* Mastermind.

That is the place where you are going to learn how to relentlessly pursue free. The place where you're going to learn how to live a life on your own terms. How to stop caring about what other people think. How to work when you want, how to do what you love, how to accept yourself and be more of yourself, and get rid of all of the "shoulds" that have been holding you back and limiting you.

To get over the buffering, all of the ways that you self-sabotage, and the ways that you cope and tolerate the parts of your life that you don't love. I'm going to teach you how to be free from all of that. To be more authentically and unapologetically you; the you that you want to be.

If you are ready to get to work, and I know you are, I know you're ready to make this change; you're sick of doing it the other way. You've got to join me inside the August class of *The Less Stressed Lawyer* Mastermind. I cannot wait for the next time I ask you this question, but are you free for you to have a different answer. An answer that you love.

Alright, my friends. That's what I have for you this week. I hope you have a beautiful week. I'll talk to you in the next episode.

Ep #68: But Are You Free? (The Most Important Question You Can Ask Yourself)

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.