

Ep #81: Needing to Get Closure (And How You Actually Don't)



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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You're listening to *The Less Stressed Lawyer* podcast, Episode 81. Today, we're talking all about needing closure, and how you actually don't. 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.

Hey, friends, how are you? I hope you are doing well. I am really excited to dive in to today's topic. I have what some people might say is a hot take on closure. So, I'm excited to introduce you to it, and to talk about it and go through some examples.

Before I do that, this is the last week of the giveaway that I'm doing for reading and reviewing the podcast. So, get in there, go leave me a rating and review. Tell me what you think. If you're loving it, tell me you're loving it. I can't wait to hear your feedback.

I'm going to pick five. Not just one, but five reviewers, and I'm going to be giving away prizes, okay? They're going to be good, because I like to give good gifts and not just mediocre ones.

Part of my self-concept, which I talked about on the podcast a lot, is that I am a good gift giver. I promise to over deliver if you go ahead and you do me that kindness, you go do me that favor. So, thank you so much in advance. Get those in there so I can pick a winner, and hopefully I pick you.

Okay, without further ado, let's get in to the topic of closure, and really, whether or not you need closure. So, the hot take here, is that you don't actually need closure. That is a thought that people practice and rehearse... One that we learn from other people, too. We hear a lot about it in movies. We hear it from other people, "Oh, I just need closure."

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But you really don't. You don't need closure. If you've heard me on the podcast before, you know that I like to say there's only ever five things that you need to do: Eat, drink some water, sleep, breathe, use the restroom. That's it.

If it's not one of those five things, you don't need to do it. So, you don't need to have a conversation in order to get closure in that situation. you don't need to have the talk; you don't need to hash it out. You also don't “need” closure yourself. I'm going to talk about that in a bit. But you don't need closure.

It's also always going to be an opinion that you hold whether or not you have closure. Like, you can decide that you don't have closure. Someone else can decide that you do have closure, and no one's right or wrong. It's just a matter of opinion. Closure is subjective.

So, you get to decide, is the situation that I'm currently living in, is that closure enough for me? Do I actually “need” closure? And what facts would need to happen in order for there to be closure?

Thinking through that, here's what I want to introduce to you, it's what I want to offer you. The situation that's been eating at you, the one that you think you need to have a conversation about, where you talk about what happened, where you explain your side, your position, your point of view, you think you need to have that talk.

But you're wrong. No conversation is “needed” at all. All right? Now, I'm using air quotes. You can't see me of course, but I'm using air quotes every time I use the word “need” because we don't actually need closure, even if we tell ourselves that we need it. You won't die without it.

You won't die if you don't have that conversation. You won't die if you don't get that thing off of your chest. If you don't convince them. If you don't get them to come around and see it your way. If you don't explain yourself to them. If you don't defend yourself to them. You won't die. Okay? So, we don't “need” to have these conversations.

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Now, you might want closure. And you might be thinking that you need to have a conversation in order to get it, but you don't "need" to have a conversation in order to get closure.

It's easy to think that the conversation is what brings the closure, we hear that all the time. But the conversation isn't actually what creates it. You know what brings closure? Your thoughts. Remember, circumstances don't cause your emotions. Okay?

So, however you think you would be feeling when you "get" closure, that feeling... That's the only reason we crave closure is because you want to feel a certain way, a way that you don't feel right now. And you think that having the conversation is what's going to create that feeling.

But that's not how our emotions work, they're not caused by facts. They're caused by our thoughts about facts. So, you have the conversation, and then you would give yourself permission to think different thoughts. Then, those new thoughts would change the way that you're feeling and give you that sense of closure, whether it's feeling at peace or something like that.

So, think about it. That situation where you're really craving having that conversation, you're craving closure. What would you be thinking if you had the conversation that you keep telling yourself you "need" to have? Go ahead and find those thoughts.

Find the thoughts that you'd be thinking. Once you've said your piece, then find the feelings that you would finally get to feel if you were thinking those thoughts right now. Feelings, like I said a moment ago, feeling at peace, feeling acknowledged, and everyone's favorite, feeling understood, the conversation doesn't create those emotions.

Saying something to someone isn't going to make you feel those feelings, it's going to come from your thoughts. And you don't need to have a conversation in order to cultivate those feelings, because you have the ability to create them for yourself with your thinking, with those thoughts.

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So, what would you need to think in order to feel those emotions? I want you to take a second and find those thoughts.

I think the most amazing thing about learning this is that you don't need closure. And that if you want closure, it's something that you can create for yourself, another person doesn't create it for you. A conversation doesn't create it for you. You create it with your thinking.

You can get access to those thoughts right now. There's nothing standing between you and changing the way that you think about the situation. So, when you think, "How would I be thinking if I had the conversation that I've been craving? That I really feel like I want to have? That I "need" to have?" Of course, you don't need to, you won't die.

But if you were to have that conversation, what thoughts would you gain access to? Would you be thinking, "I'm right. I've said my piece. I've said everything that I have to say. I've said everything that I need to say. I feel complete. I am complete. I'm putting the situation behind me now. There's nothing left for me to do." You can think all of those thoughts right now.

I also want you to take a look at the thoughts that you're thinking that make you feel deprived of closure, that have you craving the conversation. What difference do you think having that conversation would make? What would change if you had it? Do you think that you would change their mind? Do you think that they would come around and see things your way?

That typically isn't what happens in these situations, and then you actually don't get the closure that you're seeking, you still feel unsettled. So, identify the thoughts that you would be thinking that would drive you to have this conversation, that make you feel compelled to have this conversation, and see if you can change them.

Rather than, "I need to explain myself," think, "I don't need to explain myself." Rather than thinking that things would be different if you said something, if you got this off your chest, choose to think that things won't be different, no matter what you say.

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If you're thinking they'll finally understand you, that they'll come around and they'll see things your way, and that's driving you to have this conversation, change your thoughts. Choose to think that they won't come around, that their opinion and their stance is their stance, and they're unlikely to change it based on whatever you present to them. Because they're coming at it from their perspective, and you're coming at it from your perspective.

Are you telling yourself that it shouldn't end this way? That it's a shame that it ends this way? That it should end better than this? If you're thinking those things, you're going to try and recreate a different ending, but it's not changing the ultimate result, that the situation is coming to an end.

One of my favorite thoughts is, "Things don't end on a high note. If they ended on a high note, they wouldn't be ending." Now, I don't tell myself that thought in every situation. I actually think that my legal career ended on a high note. Because the last case that I handled, we had a really amazing outcome in, and I knew it was going to be my last case. I wanted it to be my last case for that reason.

But I don't think that with relationships, I choose to think it's going to end on a low note, otherwise it wouldn't be ending. So, let's talk about a few different examples where people crave closure, and they pursue it, they seek it, they chase it, really, to no avail.

A big one, the most obvious one, is of course breakups. I was actually just talking to a friend of mine who is going through a breakup, and she was really seeking closure because she just really can't believe that this is the last time that she's going to talk to the person that she was in a relationship with. That the last time she talked to them will be the last time that she talked to them.

And what I really see is as long as you're craving this conversation you're really preventing yourself from experiencing closure. You're prolonging the time between you and the closure that you want to get.

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What I explained to her is, "That even though you really want to have this conversation, where you tie this beautiful bow on everything, that's not actually going to create closure. The breakup is the closure. You don't need to have a conversation. You don't need to talk about why things didn't work out. You don't need to talk about what was great about the relationship."

You don't need to do an evaluation with the other person. You don't need to tell them how they hurt you. You don't need to tell them what didn't work, what they should have done differently. You don't have to do any of that to create closure. The breakup is the closure. Silence is the closure. Moving on with your life is the closure."

Same thing when it comes to quitting jobs. I work with so many of my clients, that upon quitting they want to go in and do this debrief with their management and talk about all of the things that they didn't like about working there, and all of the things that the employer needs to change and do differently.

How they're doing things wrong, and they could be doing things better. And if only they had done things differently and better, then they probably wouldn't leave. But they're already leaving. They've already decided to leave. What's the point of having that conversation? Right?

You don't need to go into your boss's office and tell them how they're toxic, and explain how they're doing everything wrong, and tell them how hard you worked for them, and that they didn't appreciate you. You don't have to do any of that.

Quitting is the closure. Moving on with your life and going on to a different career, a different job, working for yourself, whatever transition you're about to do, that's the closure. The distance is the closure. All right? Cleaning out your office and moving on with your life is the closure.

Same thing with ending relationships, ending breakups, ending friendships. One of the best decisions of my life has been to end one of my closest friendships. It happened two years ago, and I had been unhappy in the

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friendship for a while. It wasn't feeling like a fulfilling, rewarding relationship to me. I was a little resentful. I was often annoyed. I didn't like how I was feeling. I didn't like how I thought about this person anymore.

I just didn't want to spend my time there. I didn't enjoy spending my time with this person. I really thought long and hard about it, and we ended up getting into an argument. It was a rather heated argument at the time. We were driving in her car, and I actually had her pull over. I got out of her car, and I said, "I'm all done. I'm all done." We never discussed it after that, our friendship just ended. It is one of the best decisions I've ever made.

Moving on is the closure. The silence is the closure. I didn't need to sit there and explain all of the things that I didn't like about her, all of the things that I think she should change, all the things that she did that I didn't like. I didn't have to go through any of that.

I didn't need to get her to see things my way. I didn't need to change her mind. I didn't need to defend myself. I didn't need to explain myself. I didn't need her to understand me. I made the decision that I wasn't here for that friendship anymore, and I moved forward. Moving forward is the closure.

Now, you may be saying, "Olivia, I get it. I don't technically 'need' to have this conversation, but I want to have the conversation." And if that's you, if you're telling yourself, "I want to have the conversation we've already gone through," with the fact that the conversation doesn't create closure. So, that's not why you want to have the conversation.

You can create closure all by your damn self, with your thoughts, by changing the way you're thinking about the situation. So, if you still crave the conversation, I want you to be really honest with yourself. Why are you craving it?

In most cases, it is to do one of three things. To change the person's mind. to change how they're thinking about the situation. You want them to have a different opinion about it. You want them to change their thoughts. And

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you think by having the conversation, if they just listen to you, if they hear you out, will change your thoughts.

You also want to make them feel a certain way. You want to say things and you're hoping that they'll feel certain feelings based on the things that you say to them. You want to control how they feel.

Or lastly, option number three, you want to control their behavior. You think that if you have the conversation and you say the things, that they'll do something differently, that there will be some different outcome. Maybe it's that they'll apologize. Maybe they'll say what you've been waiting for them, to say maybe their behavior will change.

But our actions don't control what other people think, how other people feel, or what other people do. So, your desire to have this conversation is really a desire to manipulate how they think, how they feel, and what they do.

And that's not how humans operate. That doesn't work. We don't get to control what someone thinks, how someone feels, or the action that they take, that's within their control. How you think, how you feel, and what you do, is within your control.

So, if you're craving this conversation, to get them to change their mind, to get them to feel a certain way, to get them to do certain things, you're not operating from a clean place.

Now, in very rare instances, I'll have this conversation with clients of mine. I'll ask them why they want to have this conversation, and it's typically, the main answers are the reasons that I just gave you. They want to change what the other person's thinking, they want to change how the other person's feeling, and they want to change how the other person is acting.

In very rare instances, people just want to say something to say it. They're not hoping for a different outcome. But it is very important for them to just feel heard. Now, you can't control whether someone hears you, whether they're listening.

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But if you just need to say it in order to feel proud, to feel complete because it's important for you to say what's true for you, to say what's on your heart just for the sake of saying it, not for changing the course of anything, and also not to create closure. If you just want to advocate for yourself by speaking up and saying the thing that's on your mind, you get to do that. All right?

Most people, when we really work through this, they realize they can also do all of that on their own. They don't have to have the conversation to feel that feeling. They get to just understand themselves. They just get to know that they're right for themselves. They just get to have their own back.

They don't actually have to say the thing in order to feel that way about their position, about their stance, they can just create that with their own thoughts.

When you realize that your motives aren't clean, that really the only reason that you would want to have the conversation is to change what someone's thinking, how they feel, or what they do, and you acknowledge that you don't have control over those things, most people lose the desire.

They quash the craving to have the conversation. They don't need to have it anymore. They don't even want to have it anymore, because they realize it's not going to accomplish what they think it's going to accomplish. Okay?

So, if there's a situation in your life where you've been craving closure, I want you to remember, you never need closure. But if you want it, you can create it for yourself, in your own mind, with your own mind. No conversation needed at all. All right?

Go give that a try. It's going to really free you up from thinking about how you need to show up, what you need to do, what conversation you need to have, and the things you need to say to create closure. None of that's necessary. You just get to create it for yourself. Have fun with that.

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All right, that's what I've got for you this week. I hope you have a beautiful week, and I will talk to you in the next episode.

Thanks for listening to *The Less Stressed Lawyer* podcast. If you want more info about Olivia Vizachero or the show's notes and resources from today's episode, visit www.TheLessStressedLawyer.com.