

Ep #91: It's All Happening *For You*



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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You're listening to *The Less Stressed Lawyer* podcast, Episode 91. Today, I'm going to introduce you to one of my favorite thoughts. 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 there, how's it going? I hope you are well. I have been traveling all around the U.S. the past couple of weeks. I went to a retreat with a bunch of other coaches in Malibu, California. Then, I went home for a little while; got to see my parents in Detroit.

And then, I made my way to Chicago to speak at ABA TECHSHOW. That's a technical legal conference, where they introduce attorneys to a bunch of different types of technology that make their practices more modernized, more up-to-date, more efficient, and more profitable. I love getting a chance to go there and see familiar faces and meet new people.

I got to teach on some of my favorite topics. I talked a lot about social media marketing. And then, I also talked about the mindset that you need to have in order to really implement legal technology effectively. So, those speeches went really well. I'm so glad that I got to pack so much in to the last two weeks.

And let me tell you, I am happy to be back in Charleston. It is so warm down here, y'all. I just can't get enough of it. Being in Michigan and Chicago during the winter months, not my favorite thing to do anymore. So, it is amazing to be back in Charleston, and back with my Snickies. If you've been listening for a while to my podcast, you know that I have a cat named Snickers. So, after our two-week hiatus it's so good to see her.

I hope wherever you're tuning into this podcast, things are going well for you as well. And without further ado, let's dive into today's topic. I want to

Ep #91: It's All Happening *For You*

introduce you to one of my all-time favorite thoughts. Now, I want you to remember the importance of our thoughts.

We think thoughts about the situations that we encounter in our lives. And those thoughts, which are just opinion sentences that run through our brains, run through our minds, they cause how we feel. Then our feelings determine how we show up. They drive the action that we take, and our actions ultimately produce our results.

Now, the thought that I want to introduce you to today is the thought, "This is happening for me." You want to use this thought when something happens in your life that you perceive to be a negative situation. It's never inherently negative; it's always inherently neutral. It doesn't have a positive or negative charge to it. The facts are just what the facts are. They're neutral on their own.

But then you get to think a thought about it. You may be encountering a situation that you think a lot of negative thoughts about. Oftentimes, instead of thinking, "This is happening for me," people think thoughts like, "This is happening to me. This is so unfair. This shouldn't be happening. This wasn't supposed to happen. I can't believe this happened."

I want you to take each of those thoughts and think about how do you feel when you think that way? What negative emotions do you create for yourself? And then, what negative action do you take from those feelings? What result does it produce? It's not going to produce a positive result, right? Because negative thoughts beget negative results, always.

So, when you're thinking, "This is happening to me," you're going to feel really out of control. When you think something is unfair, when you think, "This is so unfair," about whatever situation you're dealing with, you're going to feel really slighted or cheated, or maybe frustrated. If you're thinking, "This shouldn't be happening," again, you might feel angry or resentful.

Ep #91: It's All Happening *For You*

If you're thinking, "This wasn't supposed to happen," you might feel really disappointed or frustrated. Or you might think, "I can't believe this happened," and feel shocked or outraged.

So, if you're thinking any of those thoughts, and you're feeling those negative emotions, what kind of action do you take? You probably complain, you probably stew, you probably dwell, you probably argue with reality.

And remember, when we argue with reality we lose 100% of the time, because you can't change what's already happened in the past. You can only curate your thoughts to really support yourself in the experience that you want to have moving forward.

That's why I want to introduce you to the thought, "This is happening for me." When you think the thought, "This is happening for me," about a situation that previously you perceived to be a negative one, you completely change your experience of that situation. "This is happening for me," is such an encouraging thought. It's going to make you feel supported or trusting or secure or safe.

Another feeling that I think this thought conjures up for me is, I get to feel really assured when I think it. I get to know that whatever situation I'm dealing with, it's actually going to be a good thing in the long run.

Now, when you try this thought on... Remember, sometimes when we're working on building a new belief, or we're working on shifting a thought, we don't just have it click into place immediately. Sometimes you can get to this thought instantaneously. You encounter the situation that, by default, you think is negative, and you quickly pivot to this thought.

You're going to try it on, and it will sink into place very quickly. You're going to remind yourself, "This is happening for me," and then, in order to really anchor that belief, you want to find evidence to support that belief. Make the argument to support how exactly it's happening for you.

Ep #91: It's All Happening *For You*

Remember, when we ask the question in a way that assumes that it is happening for you, we give our brain more pinpointed direction for the evidence we want it to look for. And then, it's able to find that evidence so much easier.

Other times, though, it's going to take a little bit more work for you to believe this thought in the moment. So, time might go by, but I want you to try it on immediately, as soon as you encounter what you perceive to be a negative situation. Remember, those are just your thoughts about that situation.

But you're going to try on the thought, "This is happening for me," and you're going to ask yourself, "Okay, how is that happening for me?" And you're going to make the argument. Now, it may feel a little out of reach, that's okay. I want you to keep coming back to this thought over and over and over again.

Sometimes, after some time, you'll learn more information. You'll see how things unfold, and you'll get to have a clearer picture, a clearer understanding of how exactly the situation did happen for you. Other times, though, it's a little bit more of a trust fall.

You can keep trying this thought on, and even though you don't have the evidence to support tangibly how the situation happened for you, you just have to trust that it would have been worse had it not happened. Again, it's sort of like a trust fall, or like believing in Santa Claus, you just have to believe without seeing the magic of the situation.

I know that's not easy for everyone. But I really want to encourage you, if you try on this thought, more often than not you're going to be able to make an argument for it and see how it's possible that it did happen for you.

And when you do that over and over and over again, it's going to make it easier for you to trust in the situations where you can't see the evidence as clearly. That you can trust that it is happening for you. Because all the other times where you do clearly have evidence, you can see that it's happening for you.

Ep #91: It's All Happening *For You*

So, you use the situations where it's easy to access this thought to hold your belief, or anchor your belief, when you don't have as much evidence to support this thought.

Now, I want to give you a couple examples of where this thought has been applicable in situations my clients have encountered, or in situations that I've encountered, just so you can see what it's like to work on building this belief.

About a year and a half ago, I was working with a client, and they had asked for a bigger bonus from their law firm. They didn't end up receiving it. They were very frustrated; they came to our coaching session really upset about the situation, thinking a lot of negative thoughts.

They were definitely in the mindset of this was happening to them. And they felt very much like a victim. They felt very taken advantage of and disrespected, and undervalued about the situation.

I asked my client, "Tell me how this might be happening for you." And we worked on building an argument that it was in fact happening for the client. We came up with reasons like: This person had been contemplating switching firms, and with this new information it was an easier decision to decide to leave.

Ultimately, upon leaving, he received a better job title, a larger salary, and he's in a position that's a much better fit for him, and in a firm that's a much better fit for him. So, even though it felt like a "negative" situation initially, when we zoomed out a bit we could see all of the reasons that it was actually a blessing in disguise.

I also had another client more recently deal with a situation where she was working on a matter, and the attorneys that she was working with, they didn't communicate billing issues with a client. So, there ended up being a lot of unmet expectations at the end of the matter, and the client was really upset.

Ep #91: It's All Happening *For You*

Now, this caused conflict between the firm and the client, and my client had to be part of those conversations. Those conversations for my client were quite uncomfortable. My client was not thrilled with having to navigate those conversations. She was very frustrated with the situation.

But I asked her, "How might this situation be happening for you?" What we ultimately uncovered was that it was an amazing learning opportunity for how to not handle billing issues with your own clients. That you want to stay within the budget.

And if you anticipate having to go outside of the budget, that you have those conversations early and often so there aren't surprises. So people don't feel like they're caught off guard. So the firm doesn't have to be in the position where they end up offering a large discount because things weren't communicated beforehand, and it was just sprung on the client after the billing had already taken place.

So it ended up being a huge learning opportunity. It also ended up showing her an opportunity that she had to set a boundary with the people that she was working with. "If you're not going to handle client matters in a way where I feel comfortable working on your cases," because there's going to be a lot of conflict, a lot of unexpected turbulence in the client-firm relationship, "then I'm not going to work on your matters anymore."

We recognized that that is something that is within my client's control. What isn't within her control is forcing the other people that she works with to handle situations differently going forward. That's just not an option. We can't control other people's behavior.

So, this was another opportunity for her to learn how to set boundaries, to take care of herself, to support herself, and to control what's actually within her control, rather than focusing on what's not within her control. Those are really great lessons that came out of this "negative" situation.

When we look for evidence of how this has happened for her, we can find it when we dig a little bit deeper. As opposed to thinking, "I can't believe this happened. This shouldn't have happened. This is unfair. This is happening

Ep #91: It's All Happening *For You*

to me,” that she's the victim in this situation. We were able to shift her thinking and really empower her.

Another couple of explanations. I'll use a couple from my own life. One, I think I've talked about it on the podcast, but I went through a pretty horrific breakup in August. And one of the thoughts that I tried on early in that situation, early in my grieving process, was the thought, “This is happening for me.” The thought felt really unavailable to me.

I was basically telling myself, “Nope, this didn't happen for me, this is happening to me. This shouldn't be happening. This wasn't supposed to happen this way.” I had all of the thoughts that I was thinking instead of believing that this was happening for me.

I decided... Because I know the power of believing this thought, of coming back to it and feeling assured, feeling empowered, feeling trusting, feeling accepting of the situation. I know the power of working on building this belief. So, I put it on my nightstand essentially, figuratively, so to speak, and I kept coming back to it over and over and over again.

“Do I believe this yet? Do I believe this yet? Do I believe this yet?” It took me a while. I checked in around October and I didn't believe it yet. I was like, “Nope, I still don't believe that.” Then I checked back in in December. “Nope, I still don't believe that.”

Finally, in late January, I tried that thought on again and it finally clicked into place. I finally was able to access evidence for why the situation that I saw to be so, so negative, why it was actually happening for me and not to me. Why it was actually better for me. Why I wasn't a victim. Why I was actually benefiting from the way that things unfolded.

I started to find a lot of evidence to support that belief. I was able to see that I might have been settling before, and that I wasn't going to be with someone who had the same goals as me, or the same preferences as me... Not that someone needs to be identical to me. But that there was always going to be friction in certain aspects of my life with the person that I was with.

Ep #91: It's All Happening *For You*

And since then, as I've started to date again, I've been able to see examples of where people are more closely aligned with my values and what I want for my life. So, to see that that's possible, I can start to believe, "Oh, that devastating breakup happened for me, so that I can end up with someone who is more aligned with the life that I want for myself. They want the same things for their life/for our life, that I want for my life and their life and our life together."

So, as I kept trying that thought on, over time I was able to come back to it and let it fully sink in. And now, I feel so much better about what I previously went through because I've worked on building this belief. Now, that's an example, like I said earlier, of where you have to work on building the belief over time, okay?

Sometimes we know instantaneously that something happened for us. Either you have the immediate evidence to support it... Let's say, for instance, you go to a restaurant, and they lose your dinner reservation, okay? You could get frustrated about it, and get really upset, or you could just tell yourself, "I just believe deeply that this happened for me."

You go to another restaurant, you end up sneaking into the bar rather than getting a table, and you end up meeting maybe your next client, or maybe the next person you end up dating, or maybe you just make good friends with someone. But you trust that that relationship is going to be fruitful.

It happens so quickly that you can just immediately see, "Oh, I see exactly why that "bad thing" happened. It was because I was supposed to be here in this exact moment. And I wouldn't have been, had that other thing not gone the way that it went." That's where you get that immediate evidence.

Other times something "bad" can happen, and you can just latch on to this belief, and do that trust fall, where you believe deeply that it's happening for you, even though you don't quite have the evidence yet.

For instance, when I left my last law firm job, the reason I left is because the person that I was working for hadn't paid me in a while. We would frequently, at the firm that I was at, have inconsistent payroll issues. You

Ep #91: It's All Happening *For You*

would always get paid, just not always on time. I had been behind several paychecks, and I was out of money, so I was quite frustrated with the situation, obviously.

Let me clarify that I was frustrated because of the thoughts that I was thinking about the situation. My boss at the time, even though he was behind on payroll, hired a law clerk for a paid position, as a favor to a local judge. When I found out about it I was less than thrilled, to put it politely. I ended up having a conversation with my employer.

I was just very direct. I said, "Quite frankly, you don't have the financial capacity to bring someone else on. I feel like that should be very obvious to you." The person I was working for reassured me that it was the right decision. And in that instance I knew that I couldn't control him. It was his business; he gets to decide how to run it.

I could choose to stay and complain. I could choose to stay and make peace with it. Or I could choose to leave. I ultimately chose to leave, because I wasn't going to be able to stay and make peace with it. I had strong opinions about how his business should be run, and I also didn't want to stay and keep complaining about something that was outside of my control. So, I chose to leave.

Even though I didn't know what was going to happen next, I didn't know how things are going to unfold, I chose to deeply believe, in that moment, that him hiring that law clerk was happening for me and not to me. I just felt that deeply in my bones, with the strongest conviction possible.

Three weeks later, a business coach... I was in her program. I had joined her online program that taught you foundational selling, foundational marketing techniques... posted a position for a part time coach. As soon as I saw that job posting I knew that that job was mine. I knew that everything that had just unfolded in my professional life had happened, so I had the capacity to take on that position.

Sure enough, I applied, and out of almost 100 people I ended up getting the role. That was what really gave me my initial foundation to start working

Ep #91: It's All Happening *For You*

as a coach, to start pivoting my identity from being an attorney to being a coach. And it gave me enough confidence in my coaching abilities to start marketing myself in my own business. Putting myself out there. Being able to create consultations, create clients, create money in my own coaching business.

Had it not been for my boss hiring that law clerk, I honestly would have probably stayed a lot longer. Because I was so loyal. Because I loved the people that I worked with. That was the thing that really pushed me over the edge to leave, so I'm so, so grateful that it got that far.

Because it getting that far is what pushed me out the door and empowered me to make a decision that ended up creating this ripple effect, a really powerful, positive ripple effect, that led to me having this thriving business that I now have.

So, even though I couldn't see how things exactly were going to unfold at the time, when I had that conversation with my boss, when I learned that he had hired that law clerk, I deeply believed that it was happening for me. And then, I just trusted that for a little while, despite not having the evidence to support that belief at the time. I just trusted it, and then lo and behold, things unfolded the way that they did, and I got that evidence a little while later.

Now, you may be tempted to think, "Olivia, I don't want to blow smoke up my own ass. Okay? I'm not just going to gaslight myself into thinking that these "bad" situations are good. All right?" If that's you, I just want you to try doing this. This is one of those situations where it's like, 'let's not knock it until you try it.'

It is incredible how freeing this thought process is. It eliminates so much unnecessary negativity from your life, and I really want to offer that to you. I want that to be something that's available and accessible to you.

So, the next time that you encounter a situation that you perceive to be "negative," where you're thinking those thoughts, "This shouldn't have happened to me. This is happening to me. This shouldn't be happening.

Ep #91: It's All Happening *For You*

This wasn't supposed to happen. I can't believe that this happened. This is so unfair.”

When you're thinking that, I want you to try this thought on instead, “This is happening for me. How is that the case? How is this happening for me?” And make the argument, make the strongest, most compelling argument you can for how this is happening for you.

Don't let yourself off the hook here with an ‘I don't know.’ Or being dismissive, where you're like, “Nah, it's not happening for me,” okay? Really work to make a compelling argument for how this is happening for you.

If you can't get there right away, just keep coming back to it. After a little bit of time has passed, check in with yourself. “How do I feel about that thought right now? Has my belief grown any? Does that thought feel more accessible to me?” You'll be surprised, if you keep this thought in your top pocket or on the nightstand, how you're able to access it over time, even when you're not able to access it immediately.

This thought is going to be a game changer for you, so I really want you to practice trying it on in those situations... the big situations, the small situations that you perceive to be negative... and see how this starts to shift things for you.

Alright, my friends, that's what I have for you this week. I hope you have a beautiful week, and 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.