

Ep #99: Great Expectations



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With Your Host

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You're listening to *The Less Stressed Lawyer* podcast, Episode 99. Today, we're talking all about great expectations. 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.

Hello there. How are you? I am so excited about this episode. This comes up all the time in my coaching sessions, and it's probably one of my favorite things to coach on. A big reason is because I've done this own work in my personal life and my professional life, and it has made such a difference for me.

I have really changed the way that I think about things as a result of doing the exercise that I'm going to give to you in this episode. It has changed my life. It has changed how I feel about my life. It has changed what I do. It has made such an incredible impact. I'm so excited to share it with you. I often find that when I coach my clients on it, it is an absolute game changer for them as well. So, I expect this to be no different. I think it's going to be a game changer for you.

So, what the heck are we talking about today? We're talking about great expectations. One of the main benefits that you get out of coaching and working with a coach is that you reduce your emotional suffering. There are a lot of reasons that we suffer emotionally. Of course, it's always coming from our thinking, because our thoughts cause our feelings. But a category that I see to be one of the most common sources of emotional suffering comes from the expectations that we have.

Emotional suffering happens when there's a gap between our expectations and our lived experience. It's the space in between those two things, which is where our suffering lives. So, if you're thinking about it on a spectrum, there is what we expect, then there's our lived experience, and there's a gap in between the two.

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So, our reality doesn't match our expectations, and it's the space in between which has all of our emotional suffering in it. It's where all our negative emotion derives from.

Now, through coaching, we want to reduce our emotional suffering. The easiest way that we can do that is to change our expectations, and have them more closely aligned with what our lived experience is.

The way to do this is to start by just figuring out what you expected in the first place. So, you have to ask yourself that question: What did I actually expect here? I want you to answer it as honestly as you possibly can and see what comes up.

Now, your brain might offer you the answer, "I don't know. I don't know what I expected." We don't want to just stop there, that's a really easy default response that our brains love to serve up to us. But we want to push past that initial 'I don't know' and search for: What did I actually expect? What was my expectation in this situation?

And like I said, give yourself the opportunity to answer as honestly as you possibly can. You will be surprised with what comes up for you. I have answered this question: What did I expect this to be like? What did I expect to happen? And when I give myself permission to just answer honestly, normally I catch myself giggling because my answer is pretty ridiculous.

Obviously, ridiculous is a judgment. It's just an opinion, a thought. But I will laugh at my own expectation because it's so wildly outside the realm of what my reality is. And oftentimes, I'll come to find that I don't actually even want what my expectation originally was.

So, I'll see what my expectation was, and I'm like, "Oh, if I actually played that out, I wouldn't really like that reality." It allows me to very easily change what my expectation is going forward.

Now, that won't always be the case for you. Sometimes that will happen. You'll be like, "Oh, my goodness, I can't believe that was my expectation."

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That was so clearly outside the realm of what I should have expected. I'm going to quickly change that.”

Other times, you'll be like, “No, I did have this expectation. That expectation, to me, seems reasonable.” But because reality doesn't match it you then still get to decide: Do I want to keep that original expectation? Is it serving me to have that expectation? Or am I setting myself to be frustrated or disappointed, because I'm expecting one thing and my lived experience is another?

Now, the reason that changing your expectations... Starting by figuring out what they are in the first place, then deciding if you want to keep them or change them... The reason this is so effective is because, remember, our circumstances don't cause how we feel.

So, if we want to feel better, rather than going through all of this work, all of this effort, jumping through hoops to try and change our circumstances, sometimes our circumstances are within our control. Sometimes they're not. Sometimes you can just change the circumstance. But a lot of times, you can't. So, a direct route to feeling better, without having to exert all of this effort and twist yourself into a pretzel, as I like to say, is you simply just change your expectation.

The reason it's so effective is because an expectation is really just a thought. So, if you change your thoughts, you'll change how you feel. and then you'll feel better. Also, by changing your expectations you get access to new thoughts.

So, instead of thinking that things shouldn't be happening the way that they are, or that something's gone wrong, or that something's a problem, you get rid of all of that line of thinking, and then you get to feel so much better, because you get access to even better thoughts, to more positive thoughts.

Now, I want to walk through some examples of what I mean by this. Because I have done this work myself, like I said. I have figured out what my expectations were in different areas of my life, and I could see how my expectations were causing all of my emotional suffering. And then, by

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changing my expectations I was able to feel so much better about different aspects of my life.

I have also done this work time and time again with my clients. We'll go through and we'll figure out, what's the current situation? What were their expectations? We'll see the gap between the two, between their expectation and their lived experience, their current reality. And then we'll decide: Do we want to change the expectation? And how might we feel better if that expectation does, in fact, change?

When we do that work to change the expectation, they get that benefit of feeling better and reducing their emotional suffering. So, I want to give you a bunch of examples where this has come up in both my life and in the lives of my clients, so you can start to see how changing your own expectations can impact your life and make you feel better.

The first example comes from one of my client sessions last week. One of my clients has been interviewing candidates for an associate position, and one of the things that my client keeps encountering is that people don't want to do the work that the job entails, that the job position requires. As we were talking about questions that she could ask for her interviewing process, one of the questions that we came up with was: What are your expectations? What do you expect to do in this job?

She's had a lot of resistance to people engaging in activities like conducting discovery or doing document review. I think doc. review gets a really bad rap. People talk about how they hate it, all the time. I used to have very negative thoughts about doing discovery. And what I recognize now, is that I had this expectation that all of my work assignments would be very exciting, alright?

When that's your expectation, when you encounter an aspect of your job that you don't consider to be exciting, you make it a problem. So, there's the gap between what your expectation is and what your lived experience is. So, you expect things to be exciting 100% of the time, and then they aren't and you make it a problem.

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So, you end up feeling really bored, really frustrated and annoyed with the work that you have to do. You'll feel bothered, and you'll talk about how you don't like this aspect of your job. You'll complain about it, and you'll dwell on it. And you create a really negative experience for yourself.

Now, what I've learned is that no matter what you do, there will be aspects of your job that you don't love. I love what I do for a living, and there are aspects of my job that I don't love. But because I've changed my expectation, and I don't expect myself to love 100% of my job, I don't expect myself to enjoy every single aspect of running a business, I no longer have that resistance to those parts of my job.

So, if there are parts of your job that you don't like, I want you to check in with yourself and ask yourself: What did you expect? Did you have this "great expectation" that every single aspect of your job would be amazing and super entertaining? If you did, is that actually realistic? What happens when you start to shift your expectation to be more in line with your lived experience?

Which would be that some parts of your job you're going to absolutely love, and you're going to find those things very exciting. Other aspects of your job are going to be less exciting and less interesting. And that isn't a problem. Nothing's gone wrong, that's just the way that it is.

One of the concepts that I teach, you've heard me talk about it on the podcast before, is that everything in life is 50/50. So, when you change your expectation to expect 100% of your job to be exciting, and you switch it to 50% will be exciting and 50% will be boring, what happens? How does that shift your experience of the more boring aspects of your job, of the parts of your job that you don't love or really enjoy doing?

I will give you the spoiler alert, your resistance dials down significantly. Your emotional suffering when you're engaged in doing those activities is greatly reduced, because you're not thinking that it should be better than it is.

One of the realizations that came out of this conversation that I was having with my client, was that a lot of the people that want to work with her, the

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people that she's interviewing, they want trial experience. As we started talking about it, it's like, "Okay, well, what do you expect, if you want to get trial experience?"

There's a lot of prep work that goes into being prepared and trial ready. And part of that requires you to review documents, okay? To review "evidence", to do doc. review. If you want to be prepared and aware enough to properly question witnesses, whether at a deposition or at trial, you need to know the facts of the case. And one of the ways that we learn the facts of the case is to review the documents that are at the center of the case.

I get it, some cases are more interesting than others. I did complex commercial litigation, and I also did criminal defense. So I can tell you, based on my personal preferences and areas of interest, the facts of my criminal defense cases tended to be a lot more interesting than the facts of my complex commercial litigation matters. But if you want trial experience, and you're expecting yourself to never do anything boring, you're really going to set yourself up for a lot of emotional suffering.

Because in order to be adequately prepared to go to trial, you're going to have to learn the underlying facts of the case. And in order to learn the underlying facts of the case, you're going to have to engage in the document review or the discovery process. That's just all part of the deal. Now, if you expect it to not be, you're going to set yourself up to be really frustrated and bothered when that part of the job comes time to be completed.

I was recently coaching another client on this issue as well. Because boredom tends to be an emotion that my clients, and myself, we don't like feeling. I've had to do a ton of work on expanding my capacity to feel bored and not making it a problem, and not doing everything in my power to try and escape that negative emotion.

So, I was asking my client, who was telling me that she was feeling like she was in a bit of a rut. She was feeling really unfocused and unmotivated, I was like, "Alright, well, tell me what's been going on." She's like, "I'm not

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loving work right now.” I'm like, “Okay, well, tell me why. Tell me, what is your expectation of work?”

One of the things that we identified through the course of our conversation was that she expects work to be exciting or entertaining. That was the word she used, “I expect work to be entertaining all of the time.” Again, some of the things that she does as part of her job aren't going to be entertaining.

Entertaining, whether you find something to be entertaining or not, it's going to be your thought, it's going to be an opinion. But you get to choose it. And sometimes we don't want to just try and gaslight ourselves to think something's entertaining if we deeply believe that it's not. But the problem here isn't with something being entertaining or not, it's with your expectation that things be entertaining all the time.

Now, what got really interesting is, as we started to have this conversation, I asked her, “Is that something you really want?” Because if you play that out in our brains, our perfectionist-where-everything-is-absolutely-ideal part of our brains, we would think that entertaining would be fun. But if you play that out, my guess is that entertaining, while it wouldn't be boring, would probably be also stressful and filled with a lot of pressure.

So, if you were thinking of the situations that would feel very “entertaining” to you, are your clients going to have very high expectations? Is work going to be chaotic? Are you going to need to be on more than you normally are? Are you going to have calls maybe at different hours of the day? Is your structure going to go out the window? Are you going to have to respond to things?

I was thinking of a PR crisis, essentially. That would be quite entertaining. But if you have a PR crisis on your hands, you're going to be working odd hours and needing to respond to issues as they come up, with press inquiries and whatnot. So, it's also going to feel chaotic and stressful. So, do you really want 100% entertainment all the time?

Or is there some benefit to things being a little less exciting than 100% entertaining? Is there some benefit to things being a little boring and

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mundane? Then you, at least, know what's coming down the pike, right? You can prepare. You know what's predictable. You know what to expect. There's a lot of comfort that comes with knowing what to expect. There's also a lot of comfort in doing the same stuff over and over and over again, because you're able to build up a competency.

So, you can label it as “boring”, or you can label it as “easy”. The choice is really up to you. But when we start to shift out of the expectation that things be entertaining all the time, when you encounter a part of your day that isn't entertaining you don't make it a problem, and you don't have as much resistance to just embarking on it and moving through it. Because you're not telling yourself that something's gone wrong.

This also came up for me. I've done a ton of work on working through my own resistance to feeling bored. I worked with one of my coaches on weekday boredom, or better yet, week night boredom. I was feeling really bored after I'd get done with work during the weekdays. One of the ways that I would work to escape my boredom was I would have a couple glasses of wine. Because everything's just a little bit more exciting with a couple glasses of wine. At least that's what I would tell myself.

The problem with that though, is the older I get wine really has an effect on me. So, I wouldn't like how I would feel the next morning. I'd have some brain fog. I'd have a dull headache. I just wasn't operating at my prime. So, I wanted to reduce my weeknight alcohol consumption. One of the ways that I was going about doing that was changing the way that I think and how I feel about weeknights. Because I was buffering with alcohol in order to escape the negative emotion that I was experiencing.

And the negative emotion that I was experiencing was being caused by my negative thoughts about my week night experience. So, my weeknights basically look like I get done with work around six or seven. And then I hang out and just chill and veg for about an hour. Then I figure out dinner; whether I order food or I cook food that takes between an hour and two hours.

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And then, I have a little time if I want to watch something. While I eat I normally turn on the TV. Then I can either do a little bit more work, or I can scroll on social media, and just consume and sort of entertain myself with that. And then, it's time for me to go to bed, and the day starts all over again.

I was making this situation on my weeknights a problem. Now I live alone, so it's just me on my own, and I was feeling bored with what my weeknights entailed. So, my coach asked me, "What did you expect?" I sort of giggled to myself, and said, "You know what? I expect my life to be exhilarating all the time." And she's like, "Okay, what does that even mean? What would that look like?"

At the time, I think I was binge watching *Succession*, and I said, "I want my life to kind of look like it does on the show *Succession*, which is all about a billionaire's lifestyle, flying private, being on yachts, going to galas, and just being all over the place jet-setting all of the time."

And I laughed when I said that as my answer, because that is definitely not my life right now. I aspire to have that one day be my life. But with that being said, I recognized A: That's just an unrealistic expectation for me to have at this season in my life.

I also don't want that to be my life right now. I travel a decent amount for work as it is already, and it is very exhausting for me. It really takes a lot out of me. So, to be jet-setting on a plane every single day, or to be out at a function every single evening, that would have a profound impact on my health and on my ability to prioritize my business and achieve my business goals.

I would be depleted from my coaching calls. I wouldn't be on top of my game. I wouldn't mark it the same way that I do now. So, that would all take a toll on my business, and I'm not willing to sacrifice my business success for that day-to-day experience.

As soon as I articulated what my expectation had been, I was very quickly able to replace it to match my reality. I was like, "Oh, I actually want my life

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to look like what my life looks like right now. I want to have these sort of mundane Tuesday nights, where I have time to just unwind and then prepare for the next day, and I go to bed at a reasonable hour, and I wake up and I do it all over again.”

As I shifted my expectations, I significantly decreased the boredom that I was experiencing on an average Tuesday night. So, my emotional suffering was greatly reduced as soon as my expectations changed.

Speaking of resistance to things being mundane, I coached another client of mine on this recently, where she was just kind of feeling blah or meh when it comes to her day-to-day life as well.

She was like, “Basically everything is the same. I wake up in the morning. I get my kids up. I get them ready for school. I get ready for work. I take them to school. I drop them off. I go to work. I work. I leave work. I pick the kids up from school. I get home. I spend some time with them. I prepare dinner. I get them ready for bed. I get myself ready for bed. And then, I go to bed, I wake up and I do it all over again.

And I was like, “Right, that sounds like an average day with kids. What's the problem? What was your expectation?” She sort of giggled, which is typically what happens when I ask people to answer this question honestly and sincerely. She said, “You know what? I kind of expected my life to look like wanderlusting in Italy.” I love that answer, who doesn't want to be wanderlusting in Italy?

But as we started to explore that, I was like, “Alright, what if you did that? How could you do that?” She could either take her family to Italy and they could all wanderlust together, or she could go to Italy... Because we all have free will to do whatever we want... and leave her kids with her husband.

Would that have an impact on her marriage? Maybe? Would that have an impact on her kiddos? Maybe, maybe not. But you get to decide: What am I willing to do? What am I not willing to do? As we started to unpack it more and more and more, she realized that she likes the schedule on the routine

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and the systems that her family is in. She likes how that benefits her kiddos.

Then we also analyzed, “Okay, if you weren't wanderlusting in Italy, could you be doing things on weeknights? Could you be out to dinner? Or could you be mixing up your routine a little bit?” She realized she doesn't really want to do that either, she actually prefers the current status quo. But because her expectation was wanting it to be different than it is she was suffering emotionally.

But as soon as we figured out what the expectation was, and then we played that out and realized, “Oh, that thing that I'm expecting it to be like, I wouldn't even actually prefer that if that's how my life was. So, I don't really want to change anything.” Then the resistance to the current reality starts to melt away. And your emotional suffering starts to melt away, as well.

Another expectation that gets a lot of people in trouble is they expect their clients to always be happy. If you're expecting this of yourself or of your clients, you're expecting your clients to always be happy, and that doesn't match your lived experience, you're going to create a lot of emotional suffering for yourself.

So, you're going to be worried all the time. Or you're going to feel inadequate. You're going to feel guilty, because you're making yourself responsible for how your clients feel.

Now, I like to distinguish between ‘what's within my control’ and ‘what's not within my control.’ It's your job to control everything that is within your control. But it is not your job to control how your clients feel, because their feelings are caused by their thoughts and they're in control of what they think, not you. If you have this expectation, you're going to have an immense amount of pressure on yourself. Because you're expecting this great expectation of your clients always being happy.

Now, if you change that to have your expectation be more in line with your lived experience... Which might be, “Some of my clients are happy, some of my clients aren't. Most of my clients are happy, but there will always be a

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few who aren't. It's my job that I expect myself to do a good enough job or to give my clients what they need, not necessarily what they want.”

Those are all different expectations to hold yourself to that are really going to decrease your emotional suffering. But expecting your clients to always be happy is a really, really, really high bar to set for yourself. So, if you do set that for yourself and them, you're going to create a lot of emotional suffering.

And that emotional suffering is truly optional. You just have to change your expectation of what your client's experience will be like in order to feel better.

Another great expectation that is very common for people to have is that they expect themselves to know more than they do. So, when I'm coaching my clients who feel like they're not enough of an expert on something, or they feel like they're behind when it comes to their knowledge of their craft, of their practice area, of what they do day in and day out, they focus on all of the things that they don't know instead of focusing on the things that they do know.

When I ask them, “Well, what do you expect of yourself? What's the expectation that you're holding yourself to?” They'll typically either say, “I don't know what I'm expecting of myself.” Or they'll tell me they just expect themselves to know more. But “more” isn't specific enough.

So what happens is, you're always thinking you should know “more” than you do and you always feel inadequate. If this is you, the gap between what you know and what you think you should know is going to create a lot of emotional suffering for you.

Now, the way to get out of that emotional suffering isn't simply to just learn more. Because if this is the line of thinking that you bring with you to your work, you're always going to tell yourself that you should know more than you do. The standard that you're holding yourself to, or the expectation that you have for yourself, is always going to be greater than where you currently are situated in your current reality.

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You're always going to feel like you're not measuring up. So, the solution here is to change your expectations. Instead of expecting yourself to know more, or to know everything, to never have questions, to always know what you're doing 100% of the time, you want to change your expectation to more closely match reality.

“I expect myself to know some things and I expect myself to not know other things. I expect myself to be learning every single day. I expect myself to get better and better as each day passes. I expect that I'm not going to know how to do a lot of things. Especially the more complex they are, the more I'm not going to know.”

If that's your expectation, you're going to feel so much more competent inside your work life, inside your day-to-day operating within your practice, because your expectation is going to more closely match your lived experience. Which is what we want.

I think I've talked about this on the podcast before, but I also did this exercise with myself. I was feeling really pressured and behind when it came to work. I asked myself: What's my expectation? What do I expect? And my answer was, I expected myself to get to the end of the day and be done with everything.

When I realized that that was my expectation, I realized how unrealistic it was. Because we're always going to have stuff on our to-do lists. That's literally the nature of a to-do list; you cross some things off, you add some more things. You cross some stuff off; you add some more stuff. That's how they work. The point of a to-do list isn't to get to the bottom of it, it's just to keep track of what you have on your plate.

And the nature of this career is that there's always going to be stuff on your plate. There's always going to be more work to do. And when I realized that my expectation was to get done with everything, I started to realize I wouldn't even want that to be the case, because if I had no more work left to do I would be in a seriously bad situation. I wouldn't have any money

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coming in. I wouldn't have clients to coach. My business would really be in trouble.

When I use this example with clients of mine, they realize that they're wanting the same thing too, or they're expecting the same thing of themselves to “get done” with everything by the end of the day. And that that would be a worst case scenario for them, as well.

Now, you might not be as extreme as wishing that you're done with everything, or expecting that you're done with everything on your to-do list, but you might be expecting yourself to get through more of your to-do list than you do in a given day. And that is also an expectation that leads to a ton of emotional suffering.

Because there's your expectation that you have for yourself, and then there's the reality of the time you actually have to get stuff done. So, in order to feel better, to feel less overwhelmed, less behind, less inadequate, to feel more proud, more accomplished, what you need to do is have your expectation for yourself match what you actually have time to do in a day.

I teach this in the way that I teach time management. When I teach you how you want to go about planning your day, we really focus on the math of time management. Because you need to have a clear understanding of how much time you have available, what can you get done within that period of time, and make that your expectation.

Rather than your expectation just being a wish list of what you'd like to get through and accomplish between the start of your day and the end of your day. You have to focus on the time that you have available, and focus on the math, in order to actually feel good about the job that you've done in a given day. If you don't, you'll always feel badly about yourself.

People think it's what they accomplished or what they didn't accomplish that determines how they feel. But I promise you, it's not. It's the expectation you had for yourself about what you accomplished. And if you don't meet the expectation, you're going to feel bad because you're going

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to think negative thoughts about yourself. If you change the expectation, you get rid of those negative thoughts, and then you'll feel better.

I want to run through a few more examples just to drive this home. So, when I work with people on business development, they'll expect to sign clients right away. As much as I believe that things can happen very quickly, I also believe at the same time that it is okay and not a problem if things take time.

Now, I normally see it takes a bit of time for the action that you take to compound, to build up, to create the results that you want. So, if you start off month one of marketing yourself and you don't sign a client, if your expectation is that you sign clients right away, you're going to feel very discouraged and frustrated.

If you change your expectation to include, "I'm going to have to take some action for a while, and it's going to take some time for that action to compound and build up, before I start seeing positive results come from the action that I'm taking," then your expectation is going to be so much more closely aligned with reality. And you're going to dial down all that frustration and disappointment.

So, I always tell people, "Let's adjust your expectations to allow for the action that you take to have time to take root." We want to make space for that so we can dial down you feeling discouraged, or you feeling disappointed, or you feeling rejected, or you feeling like you failed, feeling inadequate. That's all based on what you choose to expect from your business development efforts.

If you expect something that's unrealistic, you're going to create a lot of emotional suffering for yourself. So, you want to make sure that your expectations are much more in line with reality.

Now, I coach so many people on developing business, that through coaching thousands of people on this I've seen some statistics come out of all of that coaching. So, I know what is reasonable to expect, or what likely

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happens, how long it takes more action to take root. And that's one of the things that I work with my clients on.

I tell them what they can come to expect based on what I've seen other people do. And when you set those expectations to be in line with reality, you feel so much better and so much more encouraged, and so much more capable than if you expect something that is unlikely to happen.

Speaking of expecting things that are unlikely to happen, if you get work product back from colleagues, from the people that you supervise, and you experience a lot of negative emotion around it in response to the work that you receive, I want you to ask yourself: What did you expect? Did you expect to not have to train the person? Or maybe you thought they'd catch on faster than they are? Did you expect to get a flawless work product back?

When you force yourself to answer the question 'What did I expect' you'll be really surprised by what you come up with. Then you can ask yourself: Is that expectation realistic? Or was I setting myself up to feel frustrated and disappointed? I strongly encourage you not to expect a flawless work product, because you're probably not going to get it.

Now, there are things you can do to make it much more likely that you get a work product that meets your expectations. But expecting a work product to be completely flawless, especially when someone's learning how to do something for the first time, or the first few times, you're really going to set yourself up for all of that negative emotion.

If you change your expectations to anticipate that there will be errors, or to anticipate that you will need to train longer than you think you should have to, you will reduce your emotional suffering substantially.

Same thing goes with the expectations you have for yourself when you're learning how to do something new. Are you expecting yourself to figure it out right from the get go, right from the start? To be able to do something for the first time and to nail it? If that's your expectation, you're going to

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suffer emotionally a lot. Because whenever we're learning something new, it takes time.

I did a whole podcast on this, about the messiness that's involved in learning something new. So, when people come to me to learn how to manage their time, or learn how to develop business, and they struggle in the beginning, if they experience a lot of negative emotion as it relates to that struggle, as it relates to being involved in the messiness of learning something new, it's because they expected something of themselves that isn't in alignment with reality. Okay?

So, all you need to do, in order to reduce your emotional suffering, is to change the expectation you have of yourself. Expect it to take time for you to learn how to do something new. Expect it to take time for you to build a skill set for the first time.

Another very common expectation that my clients have is that they expect everyone to like them. And if this is you, if you expect everyone to like you, my guess is your reality is not going to match that expectation. So, what you want to do is change your expectation to more closely match reality.

What if you expected not everyone to like you? Think about this in the context of food. We don't like every type of food. That doesn't mean there's anything wrong with the food, that just means we don't prefer it; other people might prefer it. Like, I don't like Chicago style pizza. No offense to the people from Chicago that are listening to this.

I understand there are two types of Chicago style pizza; there's the deep dish Chicago style, and then the tavern style pizza. I'm talking about the deep dish. I think it's more like a casserole than a pizza, but that's just my opinion. There are people who love Chicago style deep dish pizza. That doesn't make them wrong or me right, or me wrong and them right. We just get to have different preferences.

Same thing when it comes to people. You might love people who are loud and the life of the party and the center of attention, or you might dislike them. That doesn't make the person wrong for being a particular way. It just

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means you get to have preferences. Other people get to have preferences as well, and you might fit within their preferences or you might not. And that doesn't mean anything wrong has happened. It doesn't make you bad. It just means that people get to prefer you or not prefer you.

And if you adjust your expectation to make room for the fact that some people will like you and some people won't and that's totally fine, you're going to feel so much better when people don't think that you're their cup of tea, when they're not your biggest fan. You're like, "Yeah, they're entitled to that opinion. Nothing is wrong with me. I am me, I am fine. I like how I am. And I leave space for not everyone to agree with my opinion of myself. It's totally fine."

Same thing applies to other people. Do you expect other people to never say or do something that you don't like? If that's your expectation, when people invariably do or say things that you don't like you're going to be really frustrated. You're going to be really annoyed, very resentful, or disappointed.

So, if those are emotions you commonly experience, I strongly recommend you adjust your expectations. That is the way to reduce your emotional suffering the quickest. Because, and I say this time and time again, you cannot control other people's behavior. So, people are going to do and say things that you don't care for. And if you don't want to experience negative emotion as a result of that, change your expectation.

Now, the pushback that I get when it comes to talking about great expectations, and the emotional suffering that comes from having expectations that aren't in alignment with the reality that we experience, the pushback that I get is that people tell me, "What? Am I not supposed to have expectations?"

I've said this before, you're allowed to have expectations, you just have to take the frustration and the disappointment that comes with them when those expectations are not met. I promise you, reality will deliver on not meeting your expectations. That's going to happen time and time again.

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So, this is an example of where you really want to hold two things at once, and these two things are sort of going to seem in conflict with one another. You can change your expectations to be more in alignment with your current lived experience. And you can also solve for, “How do I make this better? What's within my control, in order to get the current reality to be more closely aligned with what I want my life to be like? What do I want things to look like?”

An example of this, we'll use the delegation example. You can expect yourself to get a work product back that is not flawless. And you can wrack your brain, get super curious and be resourceful, and think of all of the things that are within your control, that are within your power, in order to tweak your delegation process to get a work product back that more closely aligns with what you expect.

So, you're able to want things to be better and different, without arguing with your current reality thinking something's gone terribly wrong. If we were thinking about the boredom that you might experience with work, you can adjust your expectation and expect for some parts of your job to be boring. And also, to take an inventory and say, “Are there any changes that I could make to make aspects of my job more exciting?”

If you want to learn more inside the area of law that you practice, but you don't want to feel inadequate in the process of learning more, you can adjust your expectation and say, “What I know right now is great for the level I'm at in my career currently.” And you can set specific goals to get certain levels of experience.

So, you can set the goal, “I want to take my first deposition this year,” and then put yourself out there for those types of opportunities. Or maybe you want to expand into a particular practice area. Do the things that set you up to be able to do that, while also not making it a problem that you don't know how to do yet.

This is how those two things coexist at the same time. You're not arguing with your current reality, you're adjusting your expectations to be more in

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line with your current reality. And, you can want things to improve moving forward.

This is the difference between arguing with where you are versus accepting where you are and wanting things to be better. I want you to accept where you are, to accept reality as it is right now without arguing with it. And if you want things to be better, tap into your own resourcefulness and start to solve for, “What changes could I make to improve moving forward, without making my current situation a problem or a negative experience for me?”

Alright, we went through a lot of examples. I love giving you very specific examples, so you know how to spot this stuff in your own life. What I want you to do is start to pay attention: Where am I experiencing emotional suffering?

Get clear on what those emotions actually are, because that intel really helps you figure out ‘what am I thinking that's making me feel this way?’ It will help you start to identify your expectations.

But where there is emotional suffering, simply ask yourself: What did I expect? And then, force yourself to push past the ‘I don't know’ and answer that question honestly and sincerely. You will be shocked with what your brain offers up to you.

And once you identify your current expectation, ask yourself: What do I want to expect moving forward, in order to have my expectation be more closely aligned with my lived experience? It's going to help you feel so much better day in and day out.

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.