

Ep #102: Mixed Models



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With Your Host

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You're listening to *The Less Stressed Lawyer* podcast, Episode 102. Today, we're talking all about "mixed models". 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, my friends. How are you? I hope you're doing well. I am so excited to introduce you to a topic that I teach my clients frequently. This is a problem that I see people make, and it's a mistake that they make with "The Model". The Model is the coaching tool that I use with all of my clients.

I like to describe it as an equation for your life. There are five components, and I've talked about it on the podcast a lot. The five components are: Circumstances, thoughts, feelings, actions, and results. When you plug in information to any one of those lines, you learn other things in that model.

So, you learn if you're thinking a particular thought about a circumstance, and circumstances are just facts. If you identify a thought, and you plug it into the model, you figure out what emotion you feel when you think that thought? And then, when you're feeling that feeling, what do you do? What's the action that you take? And then, what result does it produce?

Now, you've heard me talk about this on the podcast before. But when you're doing what we call "running a model", that just means filling in those five different components of a model, to create that awareness to understand the thought, feeling, action, cycle, the think-feel-act cycle, that you're operating within.

When you plug in a thought, if the thought is negative, everything else in that model will be negative. If you're thinking a negative thought, you'll feel a negative feeling, you'll take a negative action or no action, and it will produce a negative result. If you're thinking a positive thought, you'll feel a positive feeling, you'll take positive, productive action, and you'll create a positive result.

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Now, one of the mistakes that I see people make when they're new to using the model is they create what we call a "mixed model". A mixed model is where you have some positive components of a model and some negative components of a model. You basically jumble them up together. So, this is based off of a misconception.

Typically, what I see people do is that they'll have a negative thought and a negative feeling, and then in their action line and the result line, they'll have a positive action and a positive result. That's never going to happen. You can have multiple models going on at once, sort of like the angel on your shoulder and the devil on your shoulder, but in the same model you're never going to have negative thoughts – negative feelings – positive action – positive results.

You're also not going to have positive thoughts and positive feelings, creating negative action and creating a negative result. So, you're not going to have the two combined in one model.

Now, the reason I wanted to record a podcast episode on this topic of mixed models, is because mixed models end up being pretty problematic. They cause issues. First and foremost, mixed models are a problem because you misconstrue the causal connection between what you're thinking, how you feel, what you do, and the results that you create. So, you mess with the awareness that you want to be creating by using the model.

One of the reasons we use the model is to figure out: What's the impact of this thought? When I think this way, how does it make me feel? What do I do as a result of feeling that feeling? What result do I ultimately create through that action?

And if you're misconstruing the causal connection, because you're thinking a negative thought drives you to take positive action, you don't actually learn what the actual impact is of that negative thought. It blocks you from creating that extra awareness.

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And then when you're blocked from having that extra awareness, because you're making this mistake by misconstruing the causal connection, you keep thinking the negative thoughts because you don't see them as a problem. You're like, "No, no, no, they're driving me to take positive productive action. So, this thought isn't hurting me, it's serving me," even though it's not.

Then you're not incentivized to shift out of that negative thinking. You're not incentivized to do the work to dismantle that thought because you realize that it's not serving you. So, we want to make sure that we're not mixing our models and that we're actually keeping things clear.

If it's a negative thought it causes a negative feeling, drives a negative action, produces a negative result. If it's a positive thought it causes a positive feeling, drives positive productive action, and creates a positive result. You want to make sure you're not mixing this up. Because if you have a negative thought that you're thinking and you identify the negative thought, you want to make sure you identify the impact of thinking that thought.

"When I think this negative thought, how do I feel? What do I do when I feel that way? And what result does it create?" You want to be seeing how that thinking doesn't serve you.

The other reason that mixed models are a problem is that you're creating more emotional resistance. You're making it harder to achieve what you actually want. It's like putting rocks in your backpack. You're still able to move forward, because like that angel on your shoulder devil on your shoulder situation, you are thinking some positive thoughts that are fueling you forward. If you're taking some positive action, it's coming from a positive thought and a positive feeling.

But you're creating resistance unnecessarily, because on the other side of things, you're also thinking negative thoughts, feeling negative feelings, and then creating resistance and slowing yourself down.

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Now, when you misconstrue the causal connection, because you're in a mixed model, you think the negative thought is fueling you, but it's not. You're actually taking positive productive action in spite of that negative thought. So, again, it's like weighing yourself down, and you're creating unnecessary suffering.

And because you're misconstruing the connection between the thinking and the action that you're taking from it, like I said earlier, you're not incentivized to shift out of that negative thought. So, you continue thinking it longer than you want to be. And then, you prolong your suffering longer than you want it to be. Alright?

So, let me give you some examples of this so you can see what I'm talking about, how you create unnecessary negative emotion and continue to carry that negative emotion with you. And then, I'm going to teach you how to address a mixed model if you find yourself in one.

Let's use the first example, we'll use the circumstance of your job. You can check in with yourself right now. What are the thoughts you're thinking about your job? Are they positive thoughts or are they negative thoughts? You might be thinking, "I hate my job."

Now, an example of a mixed model would be your thinking the thought, "I hate my job," and then that thought makes you feel resentful. But in your mixed model, instead of identifying the negative action you take from feeling resentful, you tell yourself, "No, no, that resentment, my anger drives me to take positive action."

So you might think, "Oh, in that model, I start searching for a new job. I interview really well. I present myself very confidently. I demonstrate the value that I would have at another organization. Then, I get an offer and I accept it." Those would be the actions that you take. The result you create is that you get a new job.

Now, that's a positive result from a negative thought, which isn't something that happens, that's a mixed model. Instead, what you want to do when you encounter a mixed model is separate it into the two separate models. We

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want to separate it into two separate models, so we can understand the impact of both thoughts.

A: You want to identify both thoughts. There's the negative thought that you've already identified. And then, there's the positive thought and the positive feeling that are driving you to take that positive action and produce that positive result. So, you want to be really clear on that causal connection in that think-feel-act cycle, and then the causal connection from the original line of thinking.

For this example, the thoughts you're thinking about your job, we want to break that up into two separate models. Okay? We'll start with the original thought, "I hate my job." That thought makes you feel resentful. If resentment was the only emotion you were feeling...

Think about putting yourself in an emotional vacuum where you're only able to experience one emotion at a time, rather than what is really the case. As a human, we get to experience multiple emotions at the same time, because we get to think multiple thoughts, right?

So, if you were only feeling resentful, how would you show up? What actions would you be likely to take? You'd probably complain, you'd stew, you'd feel sorry for yourself, you'd search for all the different things that you hate about your job. You'd really just dwell in that negativity. And you'd probably carry that negative emotion with you, sort of like bad perfume or bad cologne, into your interviewing process. Alright?

The result that you'd create is you don't interview well, and you continue hating your job, because you just keep looking for all the ways that you hate it. And you're probably not performing the way that you'd like to be performing at work. You're probably pushing stuff off and procrastinating. And then, as a defense mechanism, looking for all of the things that you hate about your job as a way to justify the action that you're taking, or the inaction better yet, right?

So, that would be the negative model that you're in. "I hate my job," is the thought, you feel resentful. The action you'd take is you complain, stew,

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feel sorry for yourself, look for the bad, interview poorly, and then you stay stuck in a job that you hate. You continue to hate the job and you don't interview well.

Now, in the positive model, where you search for a new job, you interview well, you get an offer, and you accept it, that's coming from a different thought and feeling. Okay? That might be coming from the thought of you thinking, "I can find something better suited for me." The feeling you might feel from that thought would be encouraged or committed.

So, you're thinking, "I can find something better suited to me," you're feeling empowered or encouraged, and then you take that action. You search for a new job, you interview well, you demonstrate your value to another organization, you get the offer, accept it, and you create the positive result of getting a new job.

Like I explained, when you encounter a mixed model, you want to separate it into two models, and then understand the impact of both thoughts. Now, when you see that the positive thought is what's actually driving you to feel a positive emotion, take positive productive action, and produce a positive result, you learn and realize that the negative thought isn't helping you do those things.

So, then you can start to see that the negative thought really isn't useful. It's creating a negative emotion, it's driving you to take action that doesn't serve you, and it's producing negative results.

From there, once you can see the impact that negative thinking has on the rest of the components of the model, on how you feel and what you do and on the results you create, you can start to realize that that thought isn't useful, and you want to get rid of it.

From there, you can do the work to dismantle the negative thought. That's one of the things that I teach my clients how to do. We work on poking holes in our thinking. A simple way to do that, and I cover this in depth inside the programs that I run, is just to ask yourself: How is this thought not true?

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So, in the instance of, “I hate my job,” you might start to look for the aspects of your job that you love, or at least like, or maybe even tolerate, if like or love seems like too much of a stretch. What are the parts of your job that you're grateful for? What are the parts that aren't that bad?

Obviously, if you're still there, you don't hate your job enough to just outright leave. So, there are aspects that you appreciate or enjoy. You want to start to look for those to poke holes in that negative thinking.

And when you dismantle the negative thought, you're going to replace it with a different thought instead. That's going to change how you feel, reduce your negativity, and help you move forward with greater ease. Because, can you find a new job while being weighed down with resentment? Yeah, perhaps. But you're going to make it a lot harder on yourself.

You're going to be taking all that action in spite of that resentment. When, what you could do, is dial down the resentment by getting rid of that thought, changing how you feel, and just freeing yourself up to take action from that positive emotion instead; from feeling empowered or encouraged and committed. That's going to serve you way more and make the experience a lot less emotionally taxing.

Another example of this would be, let's say you're thinking about the work that you have to do, and you're telling yourself, “I have so much to do.” You're feeling really overwhelmed. Well, a mixed model would be in your action line and your result line. You work on projects really productively, you efficiently complete tasks, you get through your work, and you create the result of getting so much done.

That's not going to come from the thought, “I have so much to do,” and feeling overwhelmed. If you're thinking that thought, “I have so much to do,” and you're feeling overwhelmed, those are negative thoughts and negative feelings. It's going to drive you to take negative action that doesn't serve you and produce a negative result.

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So, you've got a mixed model here, and you want to break it up into those two separate models so you can understand the impact that the positive thoughts have and the negative thoughts have on you.

If we were to break this model up into two separate models, we'd take the negative thought and feeling and put that in one model. Okay? You're thinking the thought, "I have so much to do," and you're feeling overwhelmed. If you could put yourself in an emotional vacuum, what is the action you would take, if overwhelmed was the only feeling you were feeling?

You'd probably procrastinate, maybe dwell, avoid your work, buffer, do anything that brings you temporary satisfaction and instant gratification and helps you avoid that overwhelm. You'd probably shut down.

Some people tend to work really unproductively so they try to multitask. They're constantly jumping from one thing to the next. They're not really completing anything. So, work feels like it's being completed, but you're actually not completing tasks. You're not getting things across the finish line. You're working in a really unproductive manner, not making great use of your time.

When you work that way, whether you're procrastinating or you're working really unintentionally, you end up creating the result of still having so much to do. So, that would be the negative thought model.

The second model, where you work on projects productively and you complete tasks efficiently, you don't buffer, you don't procrastinate, you just put your head down and get to work, you create the result of completing work productively. That's coming from a different thought and a different feeling than in the first model.

So, that might be coming from a thought like, "The only way out is through. Action reduces anxiety, I just need to start with one thing." Any of those thoughts would serve you here. And if you were thinking any of those thoughts, you might feel determined or in control, or committed or capable. And if you're thinking those thoughts and feeling any of those positive

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feelings, those are the thoughts and feelings that are going to drive you to take that positive productive action and produce a positive result.

Remember, if you encounter... I want you to be practicing utilizing the model in your day-to-day life. I used to do this on a legal pad in my office. You can just pick a circumstance; what's the situation that you're facing? Remember, keep it only restricted to just the facts. Then, figure out: What thoughts am I thinking about it?

And run a model. Pick one thought, and then figure out: When I think that thought, what's the one-word emotion I feel? What's the action I take when I feel that feeling? What result do I produce when I take that action?

If you've got negative thoughts and negative feelings, and positive actions and positive results, you've got yourself a mixed model. Whenever you find yourself in a mixed model, you want to separate it into those two separate models, complete both of them so you can understand the impact of both thoughts, and then dismantle the negative thought. Challenge it. Poke holes in it so you can change how you feel, reduce your negativity, and move forward with greater ease.

This is how you're going to get out of that unnecessary emotional suffering. It's how you're going to dial down your resistance to moving forward and getting stuff done. You're going to make it so much easier for you to achieve the things that you want to achieve day in and day out, when you are not misconstruing the causal connection between what you think, how you feel, what you do, and the results you create. Okay?

So, use this as you're doing your thought work, as you're running your models. Just to basically check your work, it's sort of like checking your work in math class. Are all aspects of my model positive, or are all aspects of my model negative?

If you've got a mix, you've got to split it up so you really understand the impact that your thinking has on the results you create. And you can identify which thoughts are serving you, which ones aren't, and you can shift out of the ones that aren't.

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I hope you find this helpful. Go out and practice with this. Be on the lookout for mixed models. And if you find yourself in one, do the work to get out of it. You're going to feel so much better if you do.

Alright, my friend, that's what I have 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.